

## ETIM-UK Case Study: Venture Lighting Europe Ltd



**Venture knew that they needed to improve and streamline their technical product data, but where to start? With insights from Venture's Clive Riddell, Technical Manager and ETIM Coordinator (pictured right), this case study explains how the EDA supported Venture in their journey from a collection of Word and Excel documents, towards a "slick" ETIM-optimised PIM system.**



*"There is no doubt, ETIM-UK is a massive undertaking but will provide rewards in the future," says Clive Riddell, Venture's Technical Manager and ETIM Coordinator.*

### Introduction to Venture Lighting

For over 30 years, Venture Lighting has built a reputation as market leaders across Europe in metal halide lighting technology and today with LED products, with over 2,500 products across:

- Industrial and commercial
- LED Display Lighting
- LED Emergency Lighting
- LED Floodlighting
- LED Streetlighting
- LED Retrofit Lighting
- LED Domestic Lighting
- HID Lighting Control Gear
- HID Lighting Lamps

### Venture's data challenge

Venture receive regular requests for their product data in multiple formats from UK wholesalers. Meeting these requests and keeping track of which wholesaler is using which data version is time consuming. In addition, Venture's customers in Germany require data to be delivered using the ETIM Classification model. Venture acknowledged that they needed help to streamline and improve the storage and accessibility of their product data.

### Starting the ETIM journey

Venture first heard about ETIM-UK at an EDA introductory presentation in May 2017 and eagerly accepted the offer of a free EDA data audit by the EDA's ETIM-UK Project Manager, David Bate. In July 2017, the half-day data audit took place attended by Venture's Paul Mettham, Product & Marketing Director, Clive Riddell, Technical Manager and ETIM Coordinator, and Rob Horn, Data/IT Advisor, to run through Venture's ETIM-readiness and identify practical steps and make recommendations.

### Venture's existing systems

Venture has a Sage ERP system, but all their attributed product data (none of which was optimised for ETIM) was held on a collection of Word documents and Excel spreadsheets maintained by a part-time, two-person team. Venture's digital assets

(including product images, application images, and logos) were held on separate servers but with no corresponding meta-data or copyright tags, and the dynamically produced datasheets had no protection enabled.

Venture's starting point was to create a Data Strategy and Process Document which is linked to their Product Life-Cycle Process Plan. To help implement this, David's main recommendation was for Venture to invest in a **Product Information Management (PIM) system** which was configured to store the ETIM classification, ideally version 7.0. A PIM would end Venture's reliance on spreadsheets and instead provide a centrally maintained single source of classified product data for printed catalogues, multiple language datasheets and multiple web sites.

A PIM system configured in this way enables Venture to meet all future data requirements for trading in UK and across Europe, as the ETIM Classification automatically translates into 17 languages thanks to its logical unique coding structure. Additionally, data can be served-up into all print media and online channels without any time-consuming work-arounds.

### **Practical actions recommended by the EDA**

As Venture explored their PIM options, the EDA suggested a number of practical steps to help improve the quality and consistency of their product data and related assets, including:

1. Audit and de-dupe current data for each stock keeping unit (SKU)
2. Identify missing digital assets for each SKU and plug the gaps
3. Create a glossary of abbreviations
4. Map existing digital assets to existing SKUs and ranges
5. Define meaningful, standardised long-tail descriptions using product attributes to optimise them for search engines
6. Identify cross-sell/up-sell opportunities for existing products
7. Create a spreadsheet of marketing features or USPs which can be easily loaded into the PIM when implemented.
8. Design and create data sheet templates for use in other languages across Europe
9. Explore BMEcat© functionality, the preferred transfer protocol for data

### **PIM choice**

Venture took the EDA's advice and in July 2017 started their PIM system research. By December of that year they'd settled on ProPlanet and its EezyBridge Digital Asset Management (DAM) add-on, a system recommended by the EDA for:

- user-friendly interfaces
- intuitive operation
- easy online installation and you can get started immediately
- easy to share your data with users and customers
- minimum investment and monthly adaptable subscriptions
- your data is safe in the cloud and accessible anywhere online
- software is offered as an online service (SaaS). You do not pay for the purchase, but for its use.

Here Clive explains their product choice:

*"We chose ProPlanet primarily because of the recommendation from ETIM-UK and its cost-effective price, but also because the system was easy to use. We were also impressed by the professional, friendly support and advice offered by ProPlanet during the implementation phase.*

*"Admittedly, there were some initial "teething" issues regarding data compatibility, particularly with our agent in Germany, this was due to versioning issues but with ProPlanet's assistance this has been resolved."*

### **Creating the standard for the UK**

As Venture prepares for their PIM system, they also want to take a leading role in translating the ETIM Standard for the UK through the EDA's Standardisation Working Groups as Clive explains:

*"I'm involved in the creation of the ETIM standard for the UK for the Lighting Control, Luminaires and Emergency Lighting products.*

*"Venture Lighting is very pro-active in ETIM and we've invested in a ProPlanet PIM system where we'll manage our ETIM-classified product data. Our sister company in Germany, Auer Lighting, is already requesting our product data in the ETIM structure and we're making progress.*

*"There is no doubt classifying and processing our products into the ETIM structure is time consuming, but we are committed to proceed. Every new product is automatically "ETIMised" but we have to go back and do the same for all our product. We have appointed a member of the team to work part-time to apply the ETIM classification. Progress is steady, and we've populated around 70% of the data fields for 4,089 SKUs. There are probably 1,500 SKUs still to be loaded into our database and we are considering whether to include our street lighting range.*

*"Within the ETIM-UK Standardisation Working Groups, which the EDA is leading, I found the open forum discussions very helpful. At each meeting we review the UK's interpretation of ETIM's structure, its synonyms, values and general "language". Having other manufacturers around the table gives us a good insight into how they use ETIM and what benefits and problems they may experience going forwards. There is no doubt, it's a massive undertaking but will deliver rewards in the future."*