



Brand management software comparison guide

See what your brand can accomplish with the right brand
management software



What's inside

Table of contents

What are your brand management software needs?	4
Look & feel: Design & UX features	6
Brand guidelines explained	8
Creative workflow for brand assets	10
An essential feature of brand management software	10
Taking shortcuts with brand templates	13
Digital asset management: The backbone of brand management software	15
Search functionalities: Questions to ask	16
Metadata handling and support	17
Supported file types	17
Relevant file format features to look for in a DAM	17
Image and video manipulation	18
Asset organization	19
Upload and import features	19
File sharing and web publishing features	21
Protecting your brand through user access control	23
Bonus brand management capabilities	24
Hosting and licensing for brand management software	26
Pricing	29





Comparing brand management software solutions and features

These days, brand management is not just important, it's a necessity. There are more ways for brands to reach out and stamp their unique impression on consumers than ever before, and keeping up with their ever-changing needs is a central challenge for today's organizations.

That's why leveraging the right brand management software solution can make all the difference in preventing those branding blunders, and help ensure your content is controlled, consistent, and compelling.

Yet, brand management software can seem like a pretty broad concept at first glance: what does it encompass? What exactly are its features? How will it be used, and what needs will it serve?

This comparison guide will answer these broad questions and more, helping you understand the typical features of a brand management software solution, and show you what to look for when comparing different solutions.

What are your brand management software needs?

Brands come in all shapes and sizes, including the content they're distributing. So a necessary first step is to really lock down what your organization's specific needs are from a brand management solution, and what problems you hope to solve with it. Answer the following questions, and be sure to always keep them in mind when comparing software:

1. Why exactly am I looking for brand management software?

Ask yourself:

“Do my employees spend more time than necessary working with media files due to inefficient content distribution and workflow processes?”

“Do I want to securely share media with business partners without the fuss?”

“Do I want my company's media to be better organized for quick access?”

“Do I have a problem making sure branded content is always up-to-date and consistent?”

These are tell-tale signs that a brand management solution is sorely needed, so if you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, then the right software can really help improve the efficiency and potential of your team's brand operations and overall management of content.

2. What type of brand assets do I ordinarily work with?

A brand management solution should ideally support all the file types you see yourself using in the foreseeable future, such as videos, documents, PDFs, images, creative files, etc.

3. Who will be using our brand management platform?

Do you have an idea who will be using your brand management platform? If so, what type of solution would best solve their pain points when it comes to brand management? Do they need to access the system regardless of their location, bandwidth, or external or internal access?



4. Can the solution be integrated with other software my company uses?

Many of the inefficiencies associated with managing a brand come from unnecessary uploading/downloading, repetitive manual processes, and an overall lack of a smooth end-to-end content lifecycle process.

A quality brand management solution should integrate with the tools you rely on daily to improve efficiency. For example, if you need to get images from your brand management platform onto your website, make sure that the solution you are looking into has a plug & play integration with your content management system, and/or you can leverage API documentation.

5. What's my budget?

As everyone's needs are different, a quality brand management platform should be flexible and future-proof, meaning it's priced depending on your specific requirements, with the option to expand its capabilities as your company grows. This saves you having to reinvest in different software once you outgrow your initial solution.

Aside from the ongoing costs, it's also important to think about the direct and indirect costs that come with implementing brand management software across your organization.

Look & feel: Design & UX features

Brand management solutions are intended to be a long-term investment; something your team can rely on and integrate within their everyday workflow to get the job done. So, a quality brand management platform should not only be easy to use, but it should ‘look and feel’ like your brand too. That means customized colors, tone, and style. While it may seem like a minor thing, it helps to ease the adoption of the platform throughout your organization so it can reach its maximum potential.

Here are some relevant UX features to look for when comparing solutions, and what each functionality means in clear terms:

Features	Explanation
Customizable homepage	Customize what appears on the homepage of your brand portal such as a slider, navigation tiles, quicklinks or commonly used collections of brand assets.
Site-wide custom theme that is on brand	The platform is all about encouraging brand consistency. So the solution should practice what it preaches and allow you to apply an on-brand theme that aligns with your brand identity.
Multi-themed brand portals	Allows the option to have a different look and feel for different teams.
Sleek, clean interface	Pretty self-explanatory: robust functionality should not be at the expense of an intuitive interface. If it looks easy to use, then inevitably users will use it.

Customizable login page and account logo	This is every user's first impression. A welcoming login page with a branded logo can help users feel at home.
Customizable top navigation	Customize the top navigation menu with the most important links to your brand assets and creative workflows.
Translatable interface	Change how things are named in the brand portal to reflect your specific business terminology.

Brand guidelines explained

Branded content goes through a lot of hands these days, and in increasingly varied ways. With the additional pressure of churning out content thick and fast, it can be so easy for a well-meaning marketing campaign to turn into a real branding blunder.

Consistency is key, and without it, your brand will suffer. That's why online and dynamic brand guidelines are so essential to brand management solutions. Brand guidelines serve as an online style guide so all relevant stakeholders know exactly what your brand is about, and how it should be communicated.

Here are some typical brand guideline features, and how each feature can help ensure brand consistency:

Features	Explanation
Visual guidelines	Define and illustrate the visual identity of your brand, i.e. the font, colors, logo etc. to ensure aesthetic consistency.
Easy-to-use editor	Brand guidelines need to be flexible, not static. Having an intuitive editor means brand guidelines can be quickly updated when needed.
Versioning	This can be convenient if a brand guideline changes or an update needs to be reversed to a previous version.
Interactive links and visuals	Embed video, gifs or other types of interactive brand content in your brand guidelines for a richer, more multi-dimensional experience (that a static PDF just cannot provide.)

Downloadable elements	Many platforms allow you to download particular brand elements, such as images, logos, and font packages for convenience and smooth distribution.
-----------------------	---



Creative workflow for brand assets

As you surely know, a smooth creative workflow process is key to consistent content for teams. And you probably also know that it's easier said than done. With both internal and external parties having to communicate and collaborate to push the progress of projects, a quality creative workflow tool is a necessity these days to prevent bottlenecks and reduce the cost and time-to-market of brand campaigns.

An essential feature of brand management software

Creative workflow capabilities are a crucial aspect of the whole brand management package, but these features can vary widely between vendors, so it's important you find one to fit your team's specific needs.

But generally, what should it do? Its main purpose is to get everyone on the same page and encourage simple, straightforward collaboration between all stakeholders that have input in creating and reviewing branded content. That way, the content you manage is aligned with your brand guidelines, and done so efficiently.

Here are some typical features to look for when comparing creative workflow capabilities:



Features	Explanation
Create timelines and tasks	Plan and keep track of your media creation workflow (tasks, deadlines, etc.).
Customizable workflows	Creativity should be flexible, as everyone's processes differ. So look out for flexibility, with options to customize the naming of jobs, campaigns, and overall processes to fit your needs.
Assign roles and provide feedback	Share work and define roles for specific users and add comments or annotations.
Centralized communication	The ability for stakeholders to comment and notify relevant parties throughout a project is essential to avoid miscommunication. This should be clear and obvious to all users within the platform.
Annotation tools	Use shapes, arrows, and different colors to provide feedback on content directly within the platform. Often has the option to directly approve or reject a file without downloading it.
Personal task overview	Everyone needs to know what they're personally responsible for in a project, and there should be notification functionality to ensure smooth progress.
Video playback	Provide commentary and feedback on videos.

Version control	Digital content can go through a lot of iterations before everyone's happy. The ability to visually compare different versions of an asset is an important aspect of collaboration.
Publish and push final brand content directly to your DAM library	With one click, send the approved assets directly to your DAM library or to the "waiting room" for approval and tagging by an administrator.
Links from your digital asset management library to the creative workflow	Allows you to quickly locate the original file if any changes need to be made.

Taking shortcuts with brand templates

Creative teams are swamped with requests these days. Consumers are increasingly hungry for fresh and engaging content, but resources are limited. Yet there are safe shortcuts to take. Brand templates can be a godsend for designers and saves them from reinventing the wheel when dealing with everyday creative requests for posters, banners, ads, business cards, and the like.

A common feature of brand management solutions, brand templates are all about automating the creation of content to save time and resources, while leaving no room for potential inconsistencies.

Features	Explanation
DIY (Do-it-yourself) templates	You can upload content, typically InDesign packages, and convert it into a template, which later can be used and customized by colleagues, with minimal design skills needed and without relying on professional services from your vendor.
Customize and edit templates	Look for vendors that provide unlimited customizable templates. This ensures that everyone can make use of templates they need and customize them how they like, without having to rely on designers to repeatedly create the same assets.

Auto-update to templates	Templates need a little refresh now and again to prevent outdated branding being published, and a platform that auto-updates templates in bulk can save on a lot of manual work.
Replace images with one click	What separates good brand templating functionality from bad is the degree of convenience, and it should be simple enough for anyone to use. Replacing images in an instant, direct from your digital asset management library can save a lot of time and effort.
Flexible and configurable elements	Control placement of text, images and logos, or allow the ability for the user to move elements around within the design. You can even set parameters around font size, font style options and more so that the design is on brand every time.
Being print-ready	Most content created online stays online, but there are always occasions when you need to print posters, cards, brochures and the like. Look for platforms that allow content to be converted to print-ready PDFs and sent directly to a print provider. The ability to monitor the status of print jobs can also be a big convenience.

Digital asset management: The backbone of brand management software

The most powerful brand management software platforms are fueled by an equally powerful digital asset management library. A centralized home for all your company's content, it serves as the backbone for all other brand management capabilities.

Fuss-free file-searching is one of the key features; a DAM library makes your colleagues' lives easier by enabling them to quickly find the files they need, when they need them.

But not all DAMs are created equally. Here are some of the most common features of DAM relating to searching and finding content:

Features	Explanation
Ability to add custom metadata filters	The possibility to extend your DAM system with custom filters, such as "GPS location" which allows for more detailed filtering.
Quick-search function (AKA keyword search)	Simply type in a keyword and get a list of search results, i.e. 'Google style.'
Automatic duplicate finder	A handy way to prevent duplicate work clogging your content library, many DAM libraries automatically detect duplicate files in the database and suggests them for deletion or versioning.

Specific color search	Choose a color and receive images which contain that color (HTML code).
Boolean search	Ability to search using word/phrase combinations.
Recently added file search	Quickly find recently added files.
Vertical (category) search	Filter your media by general characteristics (such as searching for images categorized as “beach”, “mountain”, or “people”).
Multilingual categories	Enable users to search in different languages.
Search within documents	The DAM search engine not only scans through metadata, but also within document content.

Search functionalities: Questions to ask

To find out whether a particular DAM incorporates the search functionalities you need, you should ask your colleagues how they usually search for assets. Some example questions could be:

“Do you ever search for images based on the individual that produced them?”

If so, you should make sure the DAM you choose offers the required metadata filters to search “by author”.

“Do you ever search via specific phrases?”

If so, you should choose a DAM that enables you to carry out a full text search in documents such as .pdfs and .docs.

“Do you search via a combination of words and phrases?”



If so, look for a solution that supports Boolean search, i.e. combined keyword searching.

“Do you often search by color?”

If so, you need to look for a DAM that has a “search by color” feature.

Of course, the types of questions depends on your work and the files you typically deal with. Alongside filtering, a DAM system should also permit a basic quick search, meaning you simply type in a keyword, and all files marked by that keyword pop up.

Digital asset management encompasses a lot of features. Here are some common ones to look for that you might need as part of your solution:

Metadata handling and support

Metadata is the ‘hidden’ information that describes your content files. A quality search function relies on metadata to narrow down your search process by finding exactly what you’re looking for.

A more basic type of metadata are often called tags. These are basically keywords that you can add to your files to make them searchable (alongside such fields as “Title” and “Description.”)

Supported file types

When comparing solutions, it’s important to make sure they support the files you work with on a regular basis, i.e. audio, video, image, and documents, as well as ones you may see yourself working with in the future.

And make sure you consider the file formats you work with during the content creation process, such as InDesign (.indd) and Photoshop (.psd).

Relevant file format features to look for in a DAM

- Media previews can save you time because you don’t need to download a file to view it and it is especially important if you are working with large files, such as videos and TIFF files. Keep in mind, however, just because a file is supported, does not automatically mean that the DAM

solution offers a preview of it. So make sure you read the fine print and ensure that your vendor offers you [details about which file formats](#) are supported and to what extent.

- Automatic file conversion is another handy tool that some DAM systems offer. Conversion means that even if you upload a file in a specific format, you can download it in another format (if you need a lower resolution of an image, for example.)
- Auto-tagging with Artificial Intelligence (AI) identifies thousands of objects such as vehicles, pets, furniture or scenes within an image and generates tags, with a high accuracy level, for images uploaded, saving time when tagging assets.

Image and video manipulation

Image and video manipulation is a convenient feature for any brand management platform. In terms of cropping, resizing or rotating files, image manipulation within your online platform can be incredibly handy as it saves you the hassle of having to download a file, edit it with design tools, and then upload it back into your system.

Features	Explanation
Resizing and cropping	Change the size of your images/videos or remove the outer parts of your images to improve framing.
Format conversion	Convert your files to another format (for example, from .doc to .pdf, .tiff to .jpg and more).
Flipping and rotating	Create mirror-reversed images or change the orientation of images and from landscape to portrait.
Change color space	Adjust the color space of your pictures (For example RGB to CMYK)

Bulk edit files	Manipulate multiple files at the same time.
-----------------	---

Asset organization

Folders are only one way to organize your digital content. As you likely know from your own experience working on a shared file server, a system where different employees and departments work with shared data often leads to duplicates. This occurs because everyone has their own preferred way of organizing files. A brand management platform with a DAM library can allow you to organize your media by tags and categories that you define, which you can then easily filter or search upon.

In addition, you can also create groups of files — “collections” — which will allow you to group media files from different categories into a shared folder and provide them to internal or external users, without creating any duplicate files.

Features	Explanation
Add categories	Create by adding media file categories based on general characteristics.
Tagging / Adding keywords	Mark your media files with custom keywords to make them easily findable.
Grouped media collections	Group several files into collections for sharing.
Embeddable collections	Embed public collections of brand assets on your website.

Upload and import features

Whether you have an on-premise solution or a cloud-based one, you will need to be able to import all your existing digital assets into that system. Manually adding metadata onto imported files one

by one is time-consuming. Depending on the volume of your existing data, it is easiest to upload at least several files together in batches.

Because large uploads will take at least a few minutes, it is handy for you to also edit your assets in batches as you can change titles, adjust tags, and write descriptions during the time it takes for the files to upload.

If you often get sent media by external photographers or agencies whom you don't want to give permanent system access, you should choose a platform that allows uploads from external parties.

The following are some features characteristic of the upload / import process:

Features	Explanation
Single or multiple file upload	Uploading one or several files at a time.
Extracting and editing metadata during upload	The system will automatically extract available metadata during media import. You can also add or edit metadata during file import.
Uploading files via “Drag and Drop”	Select files from your computer and drag them into the relevant browser window.
Upload additional or related files	Add additional attached files to existing ones or link assets together that are related to one another.
Upload files without logging in	Third parties can upload files to a “waiting room” area without direct access to your entire system.

File sharing and web publishing features

Managing your brand doesn't happen in a vacuum. Companies need to be able to easily collaborate with external stakeholders at a moment's notice and that's where file sharing and web publishing features come in handy.

File sharing functionality is useful if your team spends a lot of time sending files to colleagues, partners, and clients via email. As you may have already noticed, email was not designed to accommodate large file transfers. Sending attachments of over 20 MB is a pain, yet you would likely need to be able to transfer at least that amount or more to send a raw high-resolution image or video.

Without a file sharing feature within your brand management platform, you will have to spend valuable time figuring out how to transfer large files without breaking any rules about which IT-sanctioned tools are available and allowed for use.

If file sharing is important to you, you need to investigate thoroughly whether your chosen solution offers convenient and stress-free sharing features such as public sharing, secure individual sharing, and stand-alone file transfer such as [Bynder Express](#) (without the files going into your DAM library.)

You may also want to provide files for download on your website through the use of embed codes, which would save you time by hosting them from your brand management platform instead of your website platform. Some organizations may even want to make specific parts of their brand library publicly available to everyone. Open asset libraries are a unique feature of brand management software that allow for this.

Features	Explanation
Open asset library	In an open asset library, users can access your brand portal without logging in. You can also partition your brand portal so that only part of it is publicly available and the rest is private to your company.
Embed codes for websites	The system provides codes that can be copied and pasted into a content management system, so that files can be downloaded directly from the company website.
Bynder Express	Bynder Express is a file transfer tool to share files both internally and externally.
Social media sharing	Share media from your brand management platform to social networks.
Creating and sharing file collections	Group media files and share them as media collections.
Instant download link	The system provides links where media can be downloaded instantly without having to manually download from a designated download page.
Public collections with gallery view	Create media galleries which are publicly accessible via a link.

Protecting your brand through user access control

Managing user access is important when many people and departments in your company work on projects together within the system, and especially so if your company often works with external parties. As an admin user, you will likely want to be able to control which person can access and see certain assets. Being able to define roles and access levels for groups of users is key to any well-organized brand management software solution.

Features	Explanation
Secure login	Each user of the system has their own password-protected account.
Defined user profiles	Ability to create custom user profiles by defining the system rights (including edit, upload, and download permissions) of individual users or user groups.
Access control	Control which users can access what parts of your system.
Single sign-on (SSO)	Sign into your platform using your existing corporate credentials.
Google sign-on (Google SSO)	Sign into your platform using your existing Google credentials.

Bonus brand management capabilities

As mentioned, brand management solutions come in all shapes and sizes, which is why most vendors offer a customized package for your specific needs. For example, if your business is international, you might want your brand management platform to support multiple languages and allow switching between languages.

If you want your brand portal to reflect the visual branding identity of your business, you should pay close attention to a vendor's custom theming capabilities.

Here are some additional features that may be suitable for your specific needs:

Features	Explanation
Integrations	Connect your brand management platform to popular tools you already use like Slack, Hootsuite, and Adobe Creative Cloud.
Multiple language support	The system supports different languages, and allows users to switch between languages.
API	An interface which allows users to integrate media stored in the brand management software directly into other systems.
Mobile accessibility	The brand management system is accessible from mobile devices.

Set automatic expiration dates for assets	Protect your brand by avoiding misuse of digital assets and content.
CMS plugins	Directly import media files from your brand management platform into your content management system (CMS).
Contact sheet	If you want to proof multiple images on a single page or get a visual representation of selected assets, you can create a contact sheet and export it to PDF.



Hosting and licensing for brand management software

As with most software solutions, you can typically divide them into two categories: On-premise and cloud-based.

On-premise software means it's hosted and installed on your company's on-site server, and is a more traditional method of providing software.

Alternatively, vendors can host the solution for you, typically in the cloud (accessed online via a web browser.) This is what's called the "Software as a Service" (SaaS) model, and is more the norm these days. However, both types of solutions have their pros and cons.

Benefits of an on-premise solution	Benefits of a cloud-based solution
Performance is not dependent on your internet connection. If your external internet connection is unreliable or generally slower than your server connection, it's worth considering an on-premise brand management solution, as it'll run independent of internet performance.	Scalable and subscription-based. Cloud-based brand management platforms require less maintenance on your behalf, as no physical implementation is needed. That means you don't have to worry about installing infrastructure, maintaining the server, power costs, and all other variables that come with on-site implementations. That means you can pay a recurring yearly/monthly fee, i.e. a subscription, rather than any sizable upfront costs. A big benefit of this method is that scaling the solution when your brand grows is a lot more straightforward.
Personal control and responsibility. Your IT staff will be in complete control of the version installed, feature updates, and data security. You are responsible both for backups, and protection of data from hacking attempts and other security risks.	No need for dedicated IT support. If you don't have, or intend to have, a team of IT professionals on board to manage the upkeep of the platform, a cloud-based solution is likely the best option. On-premise solutions require you to buy a license for the latest software versions, coupled with lengthy on-site infrastructure updates, which can lead to delayed updates and potential downtime. Updates to cloud-based systems can be rolled out smoothly when they're available, minimizing downtime and stagnation.
	External access. If you want to make your system accessible to external parties (people who do not have access to your servers), you should choose a cloud-based solution. SaaS solutions are accessible via web browsers from anywhere in the world.



Pricing

The cost of a professional brand management software solution can vary from vendor to vendor, and heavily depend on whether you want to host the solution yourself, or license a SaaS.

Don't forget to take into account the hidden costs of on-premise solutions, such as hardware and software costs (dedicated servers, back-ups, etc), ongoing maintenance fees, one-off installation fees, IT hand-over costs, project management costs, updates, security testing, etc.

If you wish to remain more flexible, you should go for a cloud-based solution, where all updating and support is usually included and there are no physical set-up costs. Moreover, a SaaS solution is scalable, meaning storage capacities are quickly and easily extendable.

To see how Bynder can help your team effectively manage your brand, [get in touch for a demo](#) or [request pricing](#) today.

