Building Your Strike Team ✉

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Taking the leap to wrangle all the product content that exists throughout your organization into a single, organized place is a complex undertaking. No matter the size of your organization, it requires coordination across multiple stakeholders. Done right, it will boost your sales and decrease your overhead. But to get it right, you're going to need what we at Salsify call a Strike Team. That's our term for a cross-functional team responsible creating those critical processes needed for successful product content management within your organization. This group needs to be ready to sprint, deliver some quick wins, and drive change throughout your organization.

The most successful projects are the results of the hard work of many and a shared vision by all. The foundation for a great Strike Team has four key pillars:

- Great Communication
- A Clear Plan
- Defined Roles
- Passionate Resources

Prioritize Great Communication Twice

Great communication happens when it's a priority for the organization AND it's a priority for every individual in the organization. We recommend you use all of the following for your Strike Team:

- Have weekly check-ins across the Strike Team.
- Get buy-in from directors and VPs across other business units.
- Establish goals for the first 30 and 60 days right up front.
- Put together a manage-up strategy so we are telling our executives rather than having them ask us for status.

Explicitly Define Team Roles
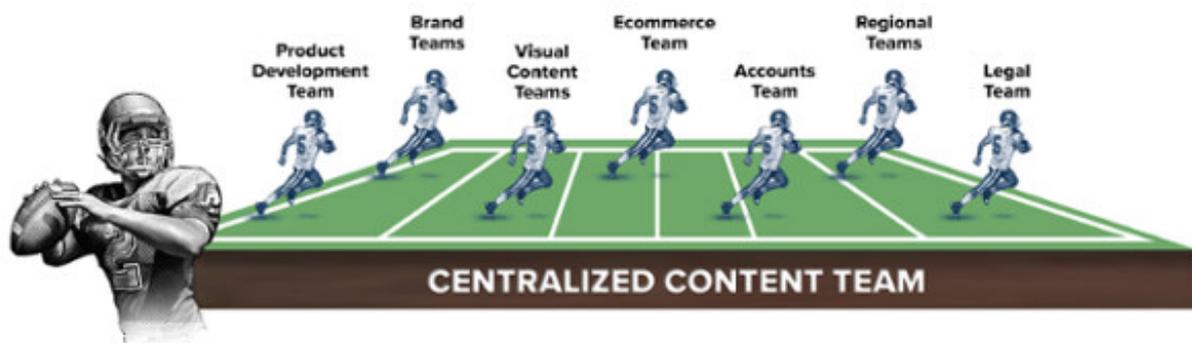
Learn more about team management from "Winning at Distributed Commerce"

The most important pillar of a great Strike Team is each member knowing what they own and what their deliverables are. This is crucial for driving efficiency and accountability. When Salsify customer champions work with our customers on implementing or expanding their product content management systems, we work with the following Strike Team members:

Executive Sponsor

Role: Defines business success and strategic initiatives.

Responsibilities: Starts with the end in mind and keeps focus on the goal, and reports project status, business achievements, and new opportunities monthly or quarterly to the C-Suite.

Project Lead

Role: Devises the tactical plan and can act as the key linchpin between the individual contributors and the Executive Sponsor, who holds the business relationship.

Responsibilities: Owns the tactical project plan, defining the different roles and responsibilities for the other team members, and communicates on short term and long term goal status.

Existing Systems Expert

Role: Understands the different internal systems that store your content across the organization today. This is usually a key stakeholder from the IS or IT department.

Responsibilities: Defines the tech stack and where this project fits, supplies and provides access to basic product content (ERP, PLM, DAM, CMS, etc.), and defines content automation specs and capabilities.

E-commerce Account Expert

Role: Understands your company's current retail relationships and requirements

Responsibilities: Defines who within the company will manage each retail channel and sets company's go-to market commerce strategy.

Brand Team and/or Marketing Peer

Role: Develops marketing content or owns relationship with agency

Responsibilities: Develops digital assets and marketing strategy (including product catalogs)

Develop a Clear Plan

Any major project or deadline can feel insurmountable unless broken up into smaller parts. Having a clear plan and defining your goals is a great way to start. When you first tackle centralizing all product content across your organization, there are a hundred moving parts that need to be organized. Taking an agile approach can help.

Create a shared project plan between all stakeholders that:

- Contains weekly milestones.
- Outlines clear next steps and highlights potential roadblocks (get out in front of it!). This will help you to avoid finger pointing, group dissention, and siloed priorities.
- Has well defined goals throughout. Well-defined goals should include who, what, when, and adequate resources (human capital and financial capital); and allow the project team to figure out the how (and maybe even when). Poorly defined goals tell you what, but nothing more.

For example, our Google Shopping project had a comprehensive plan. The goal was to build a Google Manufacturer and Merchant Center direct connection to empower our customers to be able to merchandise through Google Shopping, making sure that had ownership of their product content with Salsify.

Passionate Resources

Passionate resources are a result of the successful execution of the first three pillars. Resources cross the change-curve chasm with a giant leap rather than a slow climb down and back up. When resources are aligned towards a goal, have clear roles, and have a defined plan - they become SUPER passionate about the result.

Share & Celebrate Milestone Victories

Why just celebrate at the end of a project? Celebrate those little milestones along the way, too. Did you do something amazing as a team? Celebrate it and keep that momentum going. Celebrate these passionate resources and don't dismiss wins of any size.

At Salsify we use a #wins Slack notification that gets shared out to the entire company. Wins that Customer Success achieves with our customers are shared by a #win, project update sent to the company, next steps (and who they need to help). And happily, the Strike Team also delivered ahead of schedule!

The most successful projects have one thing in common: the hard work of many and a shared vision by all. It's about bringing together a great team to solve the problem at hand, utilizing great communication, clear plans, defined roles and passionate resources.