Partners with Pivotree to Build Industry Best-Practice Data Model

Introduction

Gourmet Foods International (GFI) was founded by Russell McCall in 1967 and has become the nation's premier supplier of specialty and gourmet food products to both the retail and foodservice industries.

From the digital merchandising standpoint, item onboarding, maintenance, and general management of data stewardship was not being handled in the best possible way in their new PIM platform. In a bid to address these issues, GFI looked to Pivotree as a key partner to help solve their digital commerce aspirations from a data-centric perspective.

With a foundational understanding of the food industry, Pivotree brought forth a data-centric model to build and revitalize their functional data design, and solve GFI's friction points in their data standards.

Key Successes:

1. Built an industry-best practice backbone data model including updated categories and category-specific attribution and meta-data

2. Converted existing SKUs and SKU values into the new data standard developed by Pivotree

3. Migrated the full data set into GFI's PIM platform

The Story of Gourmet Foods International (GFI)

For over half a century, Gourmet Foods International (GFI) has maintained an unwavering passion for connecting consumers with perfect specialty products from all over the world, including:

- Domestic and Imported Cheeses
- Meat and Seafood
- Hors D'Oeuvres
- Bakery, Pastries, and Desserts
- Condiments and Spices
- Pastas, Grains, and Beans
- Oils and Vinegars
- Food Service Supplies
- Olives and Vegetables
- Beverages

GFI has expanded to a national footprint with 10 distribution centers located across the United States. While the scale has dramatically increased, the customer-centric philosophy and mission remain true to their roots. GFI is dedicated to being the preeminent solution for the distribution and education of specialty foods to all consumer segments.

The Opportunity to Build a Data Model Based on Industry Best Practices

Pivotree's engagement with the customer included the opportunity to build a unique, library-sciences-driven data standard for GFI. The data model, specific to the food industry, included updated product taxonomy design, category attribution, and associated meta-data management. These features would be leveraged to empower a much more efficient and effective item onboarding process, and an overhaul of the customer purchasing experience.

Why GFI Chose Pivotree

Pivotree, a known leader in the industry, was selected for this engagement owing to its deep experience and expertise in the practice. With expert Information Architects and Data Analysts, Pivotree has deep expertise in building functional data standards across a multitude of industry verticals, including the food industry. Pivotree's end-to-end data management group allows customers to work with the Pivotree team to not only integrate best of breed PIM & MDM platforms, but also to manage end-to-end data stewardship of product information.

How Pivotree Responded

Pivotree and GFI partnered closely, developing a project plan and defining style standards for the initiative. The project included taxonomy design, schema design and the migration of existing data into the new structure via implementation support.

Taxonomy Design
Beginning with Taxonomy Design, Pivotree used best practice principles to review GFI's current product classification/organization structure, and developed a new structure to align with GFI's business requirements and objectives. The project leveraged a recent Pivotree innovation enabling both data analysts and GFI to quickly visualize, review and amend work-in-progress, strongly contributing to the project's eventual success. The taxonomy was designed to be suitable as both, the "backbone" structure (PIM model) and merchandising. As part of the taxonomy work, Pivotree re-classified all active SKUs into the structure, ensuring adherence to the new design, and improving the placement of product.

Schema Design
The next key deliverable was to develop attribution for the new taxonomy - schema design. This entailed reviewing GFI's current product data attributes, and proposing, designing and developing attributes consistent with Pivotree best practices. This included the definition of attributes, and also the identification of navigation attributes. Pivotree worked alongside GFI's subject matter experts to help determine the ideal set of attributes for each terminal node of the taxonomy, ensuring a blueprint for long-term data governance and maintenance. Finally, the existing values were mapped into the new structure, maximizing the choice for GFI's customers across the entire product range.

Support
The last step in this initiative was for Pivotree and GFI to partner closely on the implementation of this new data model to their data management platform, Precisely. Pivotree engaged with GFI's technical team to identify the best roadmap for implementation of the changes to their environment, and supported the defined execution tasks. Pivotree provided expert guidance, support and testing during this last crucial phase of the project.

Next Steps

Given the success of the joint data readiness initiative, Pivotree and GFI are now working together in a new consulting project. Pivotree is currently partnering with GFI to:

Consult on how best to configure their data model to support future eCommerce needs

Provide advanced modeling support

Define and collaborate on future state deliverables

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For more information, please visit: www.pivotree.com or contact: sales@pivotree.com