Microsoft CloudDAM

A mobile-first, cloud-first marketing platform made possible by STYLELABS

STYLELABS

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and into the Cloud

Microsoft – a global enterprise in the truest sense of the word with 100,000 employees and a mission to enable every person and company on the planet to achieve more. A mission that can only be achieved by a restless determination to face the future by shaping the future. Nowhere is this more evident than in Microsoft's mobile-first and cloud-first world, made possible by Windows Mobile and Azure Cloud.

But while Microsoft was successfully helping others to optimize their lives and workflows, its many different Marketing entities were experiencing a somewhat dispersed and disorganized approach to the storage and sharing of digital assets.

This made it difficult to know which assets were being produced and distributed, and the sharing of assets was problematic.

Thus Microsoft envisioned one centralized Digital Asset Management system (DAM) for all its Marketing teams. Given Microsoft's pre-eminent Azure platform there was only one place to build this system – the Cloud.

And Microsoft soon discovered that there was only one company able to provide the necessary Marketing Content Hub - STYLELABS.

Microsoft envisioned one centralized Digital Asset Management platform for all its Marketing teams.

"This madness has to be fixed"

Payal Tiwana, Director, Marketing Automation Cloud, Marketing IT, Microsoft Corporation

BRING ORDER TO CHAOS
in one inspiring year

Microsoft has grown rapidly but also haphazardly. The result was a company comprising 30 divisions and areas serving multiple sectors and geographical markets. And many of these entities – Western Europe, Latin America, Windows Phones, Microsoft Stores, Field Marketing, etc – had their own Marketing team or at least a local Marketing operation.

Each of these teams was creating its own assets such as images, audio, video, pdfs, ppts etc. They were then storing these assets on their own Sharepoint sites, on OneDrive, or simply on laptops.

Even worse, some assets were stored outside the company at Marketing or Creative agencies. Thus Microsoft was, in some cases, not even in control or possession of its own IP!

People in one division had no idea of which assets had been created by another division. Even if they knew that certain assets had been created, they didn't know where to look for them or how to access them. This made it impossible to achieve brand coherence, or to share assets. Consequently, new assets were commissioned

when those assets might have been available from another Marketing team. The inevitable result was asset duplication and unnecessary costs.

In some instances, the lack of an overall system for tracking the location of assets even led to the leaking of assets, in advance of new product launches, for instance.

BUILDING A NEW CAPABILITY
from the ground up

Microsoft's Global Marketing Operations (GMO), a headquarters function, was more than aware of the problem. And they had identified the desired solution – a cloud-based DAM system that would house and index all digital assets while making those assets instantly accessible to any authorized person.

That's why Microsoft moved quickly to select STYLELABS in order to build a solid DAM foundation across the enterprise, expertly integrated into Microsoft's own Azure Cloud platform.

Welcome to Microsoft RAD

Microsoft RAD (Retail Asset Distribution) is the official source for retail partner in-store and online marketing assets.

Microsoft employees, vendors, agencies and partners use RAD to source approved marketing content for local execution. Non-Microsoft users must be a Microsoft sponsor when registering. Contact your Microsoft account manager or vendor manager for more information.

RAD is hosted on CloudDAM - an enterprise grade asset management platform - powered by GMO on Windows Azure for reliable, regional performance.

Microsoft employees or vendors sign in here
Sign in

Non-Microsoft employees sign in here with a Microsoft account (aka Windows live ID)
Sign in

Reflecting this vision, Microsoft's new platform was called CloudDAM.

"There's nothing that exists like this out there"

Payal Tiwana, Director, Marketing Automation Cloud, Marketing IT, Microsoft Corporation

AZURE CLOUD AND STYLELABS
made for each other

Microsoft's best in class Azure Cloud offered a perfect platform for such a system. But Microsoft still needed an optimized Marketing Content Hub. And that's where STYLELABS came in.

But it wasn't that simple.

For a start, nothing like this existed. It would have to be planned and built, step by careful step, from the ground up. And it would have to be a world class, service-based model that delivered:

• A modern, attractive and intuitive UI, supremely responsive on all devices from a mobile to a laptop;
• High performance in terms of speed. People simply don't have time to wait for more than a few seconds while searching and previewing assets, downloading or uploading;
• A great search engine. It's very easy to store assets but it's not so easy to find them. A DAM is of little use if you can't find assets quickly in all global languages.

The system also had to be effortlessly scalable in real time in order to accommodate new users and the ad hoc addition of high asset volumes and large files etc.

STYLELABS is a leading software company whose success is based on its global Marketing Content Hub platform ((m)) for companies in retail, fast moving consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, media, etc.

Microsoft quickly realized that (m) delivered everything they needed in order to support a DAM for a community of 200,000 users:

• Basic use cases such as upload, store, search, preview and download media files;
• A user friendly and responsive UI and UX for both end users and power users;
• Impressive performance that leverages Microsoft Azure's high availability and hyper scalability through Platform as a Service (PaaS). The STYLELABS technology stack – a careful selection of Microsoft technologies and best

in breed open source – was nicely aligned with Microsoft and Azure preferences and came conveniently wrapped with sophisticated security as well as mature and modern Hypermedia APIs for integration.

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the roll-out

Different flavors for different divisions

Enterprise companies typically roll-out new technologies like CloudDAM at an enterprise level, with the system delivering the same service, or 'flavor', to all users.

In one sense CloudDAM was no different – a 'traditional' subscription and tenant based model in which every one of the Microsoft subsidiaries was considered a tenant – and a customer.

But Microsoft's GMO wanted to offer a truly service-based model called DAM as a Service, with each Marketing team able to adapt the system to meet their own specific

requirements. This was another area where ⓜ represented the optimum solution as it offers a client driven, configurable domain model and metadata schema.

Thus CloudDAM allowed all the different Marketing entities to have their own 'flavor' or mini-DAM, customized with their own UI, domain model and workflow.

The big advantage is that while each team has its own DAM, the assets remain in one central, Azure Cloud repository.

This enables cross-tenant search so that assets can always be found in the subscriptions of other tenants. The sharing of assets happens globally while you stay in your own tenant area.

Gaining acceptance

It is often the case that building a solution such as CloudDAM is only part of the challenge. The bigger challenge lies in gaining acceptance and selling it internally.
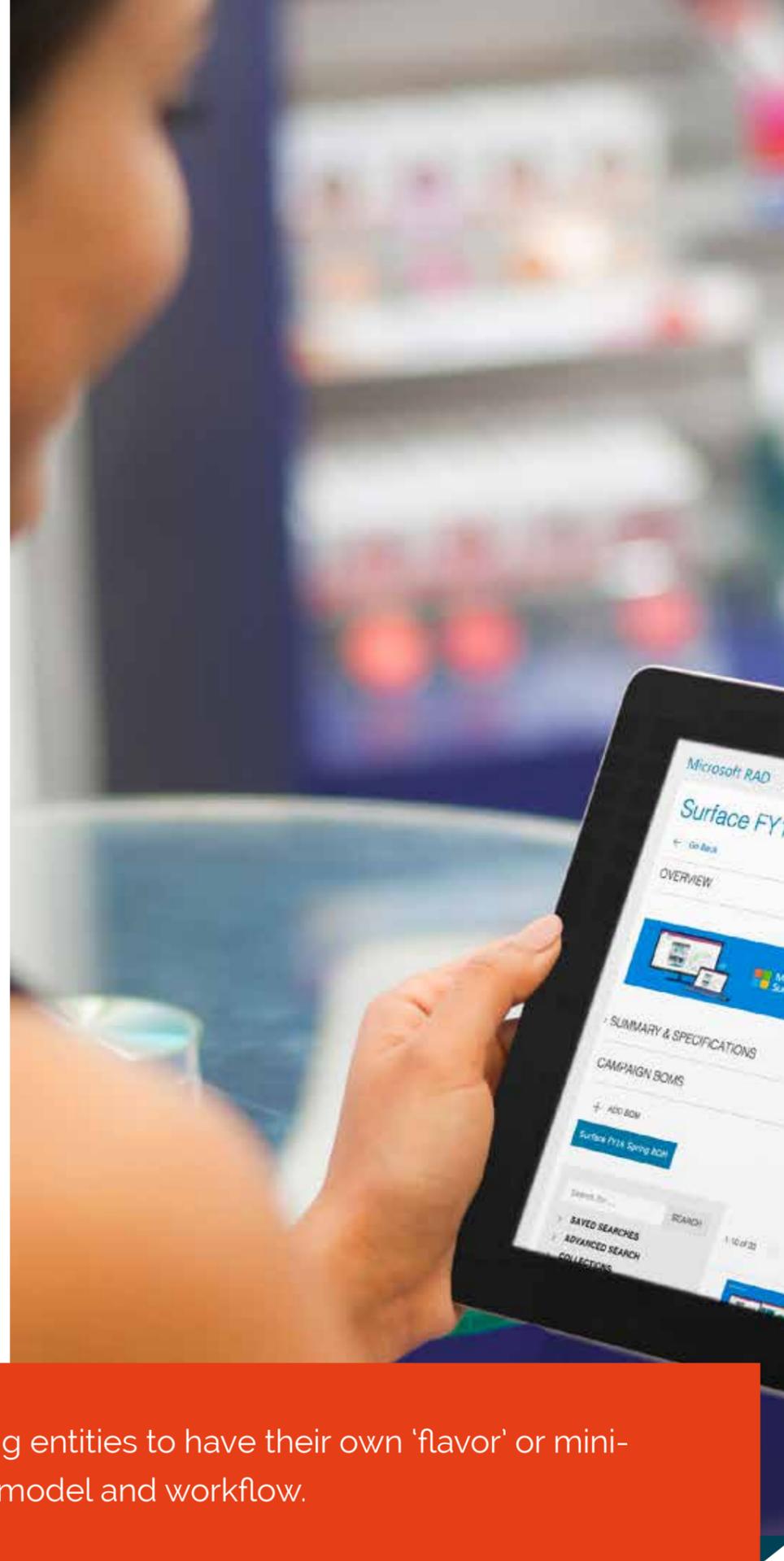
It was therefore decided to build a live version of CloudDAM in order to demonstrate its benefits to users. Remarkably, due to close and fast-moving cooperation between Microsoft and STYLELABS, a first version of CloudDAM went live within six months.

CloudDAM was then evangelized within Microsft via a campaign that included cold-calling, show reels, training and roadshows around the globe.

At first, convincing internal marketers to use the tool was difficult. But the more they used it, the more they noticed how easy it was to store and download assets. Very quickly, the platform gained traction and potential tenants were lining up.

A large scale deployment plan was then put into place with tenants onboarding on a regular basis.

Within a year, more and more Microsoft Marketing tenants around the world were using CloudDAM, and well over 200,000 assets had been stored on the system.

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Ultimately and more holistically, CloudDAM is helping Microsoft to transform its digital marketing by enabling a lean, controlled and predictable process that supports marketing leadership.

ROI and strategic value

The numbers for the original business case were based on an ambitious percentage of savings in terms of ease of search, the re-use of assets, and a reduction in security leaks. Remarkably, the target savings per tenant were achieved within a year of the start of the program.

As well as driving internal and external production costs down, CloudDAM is also delivering more significant and strategic value in two key areas:

• Providing more control over the access to and distribution of assets before they are fit for public release;
• Reducing time-to-market.

Ultimately and more holistically, CloudDAM is helping Microsoft to transform its digital marketing by enabling a lean, controlled and predictable process that supports decisions in the marketing leadership.

For more details about CloudDAM and STYLELABS see www.stylelabs.com

Tenants were quickly growing to love the way that CloudDAM enables them to:

• Store and retrieve the latest and approved versions of file and non-file based content;
• Support processes around content through creative project management;
• Collaborate and further integrate with new and emerging Microsoft Azure tools and other marketing platforms used across Microsoft;
• Publish content to other channels such as websites or other downstream systems;
• Accommodate editorial content such as brand or campaign guidelines.

Dedicated and central support for tenants

Key to the success of CloudDAM is a team that keeps CloudDAM clean and hygienic by checking for corrupted files, performs system maintenance, ensures availability, and approves or disallows assets. This team also monitors the way in which CloudDAM is used, identifying and sharing best practices, and constantly working to improve the system.

"From one region we received an email saying CloudDAM was a blessing. Others were saying that it was their favorite tool in the world."
Payal Tiwana, Director, Marketing Automation Cloud, Marketing IT, Microsoft Corporation

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