Frontify®

DAM vs BAM

A Comparison Guide

Digital Asset Management vs Brand Asset Management

While there are many benefits to using Digital Asset Management (DAM) – in today's experience-driven world – you also need to make sure your assets are in line with your brand identity. This means that, for your organization to be successful, you also need to acquire Brand Management software, in addition to your DAM. Clearly, there are quite a few drawbacks to using multiple solutions. But what if you could manage both your brand and your assets in one centralized space? You'd not only increase brand quality, but also make all of your guidelines and resources easy to find for anyone, anywhere, at any time. We call this Brand Asset Management, or BAM for short. This comparison guide is meant to be a handy way of understanding the difference between DAM and BAM, and help you discover what it is you, your teams, and your organization really need.

Key Learnings

→ The differences between DAM and BAM.

→ Understand what your organization (and individual teams) really needs.

→ The power of Brand Asset Management.

→ If you only need DAM: Discover which features are important to include.

→ See the value of holistic solutions, rather than just another tool.

What is Brand Asset Management?

Brand Asset Management is a modern fusion of two different legacy solutions: Digital Asset Management (DAM) and Brand Management. It combines the best of both systems to provide businesses with a space where their teams can collaborate on brand related projects and store their assets. As a result, it offers an extensive list of benefits that both impact business growth and move organizations closer to their goals.

What makes it different from Digital Asset Management?

Think of Brand Asset Management (BAM) as an upgrade to traditional Digital Asset Management (DAM) solutions. While Digital Asset Management simply focuses on storing, organizing and sharing digital assets, Brand Asset Management has three distinct functions. First, it makes approved brand assets – like logos, images, patterns, and core messages – easily accessible to employees. Second, it offers a cloud-based workspace where people can create, collaborate on and approve projects (in the context of the brand.) And third, it does what a DAM solution does: it delivers a centralized space to store, organize and share digital assets.
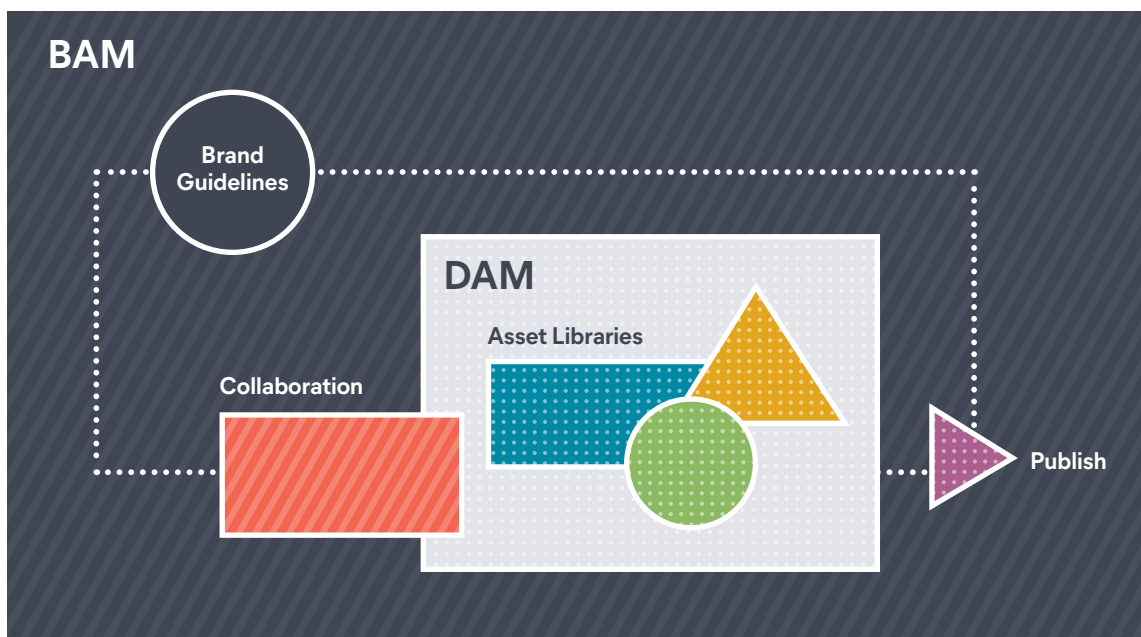
Key Features	DAM Comprehensive archive of digital assets, rendered useless without context.	BAM Supplying people with all the assets they need (DAM), with guidelines on how to use them, in addition to an integrated team collaboration space.
Media Library	✓	✓
Logo Library	✓	✓
Icon Library	✓	✓
Text Library	✗	✓
Document Library	✗	✓
Pattern Library (UI)	✗	✓
Template Library	✗	✓
Guidelines	✗	✓
Collaboration Features	✗	✓
Workflow Solutions	✗	✓
Marketing Automation Templates	✗	✓
Print-On-Demand	✗	✓

What do you normally need in addition to DAM?

→ You need help focusing on the overall perception of your brand and working towards improving it.

→ You need to have a modern-approach solution for content creation, one that tends to every team's needs, unlike the outdated DAM.

→ You need to make your brand guidelines and assets readily available to everyone within your organization.

→ You need an online workspace where cross-functional teams can collaborate on projects and cross-check digital assets against brand guidelines.

→ You need enhanced productivity by keeping both your digital assets and brand assets organized in a centralized location.

All in all, you need greater control over your brand image, enabling your teams to mold customer perceptions more effectively – leading to more sales and more revenue. Different teams have different needs, meaning if you want to make sure your entire organization can benefit from the software you're acquiring, you need to understand their specific requirements:

Designers want to save time on locating, recreating, and redistributing designs. They want to improve efficiency by centralizing design elements, guidelines, brand assets, and UI patterns in order to stay aligned with brand, marketing, and product teams, and work seamlessly across the company with one centralized brand platform.

Marketers wants to speed up the creation of on-brand content, often with DAM as a center-piece – with shareable guidelines, brand collateral templates, and streamlined approval processes for internal or external teams. They need to automate marketing tasks and heavily decrease the cost, effort, and time spent creating campaigns and related material.

Developers want to increase efficiency by centralizing design elements, assets, and UI patterns. They need to create an intuitive and transparent brand ecosystem where everyone can collaborate and pitch in – resulting in a seamless workflow that increases company-wide output.

Brand Managers want to boost the value of the brand by increasing its consistency across internal and external channels, both online and offline. They're looking for software that makes it easy to spread brand awareness throughout the company (and to the public) by making brand values, assets, and guidelines readily available to all teams.

HR Managers want to build a stronger brand from the inside out, with a central hub for company guidelines — establishing on-brand HR marketing resources, enhancing internal and employer branding, and increasing brand awareness (and ambassadorship) for the entire company.

This, and more, can be achieved with Brand Asset Management. It's essentially a collaboration hub that is built around the idea of enabling the entirety of a company, including a variety of teams, by giving them access to the right tools and features all centered around the core of your organization — your brand.

How does BAM benefit your business?

While the added functionality may be a benefit in itself, as you get more bang for your buck, there are also some unique benefits that come from using BAM.

Improves Team Collaboration

Collaboration is vital to the success of any project. But collaborating effectively is tricky – especially when you're working with multiple teams or using different tools, apps and systems. BAM makes collaboration a lot easier, by offering a virtual workspace where projects can be created, annotated and approved. It also makes it possible to coordinate the collaboration process and automate transitions between tasks, by allowing you to create a logical workflow and assign work to different members of your team directly from the platform.

Centralizes Resources

No matter what your job function is, you need to have access to the right resources and data to do your job well. But endlessly digging through folders and constantly chasing down marketing and brand management teams to get information can be tedious and frustrating. As we mentioned above, BAM eliminates this, by providing you with a centralized location to keep all of your assets, guidelines, and templates. This makes it easy for your teams to access logos and images as they need them, and refer to brand guidelines as they work on digital marketing and brand related projects. As a result, this ensures that all digital assets fit perfectly into your overall brand strategy and match your brand identity.

Boosts Efficiency

No one likes performing repetitive tasks or doing unnecessary work. But we usually end up doing it anyway. BAM minimizes these types of inefficiencies in a few ways. One, by storing all brand assets (in high resolution formats) on a single platform, BAM erases the need to regularly recreate campaigns or content. At the same time, BAM also accelerates project timelines, by offering a workspace where people can collaborate and communicate on digital marketing projects. It also tracks changes to projects and brand assets, allowing them to be updated and saved in their most current iteration.

Speeds Up Approval Process

Audiences are quick to bounce from trend to trend and brand to brand. That means businesses need to roll out projects quickly, to avoid missing their window of opportunity. BAM makes this possible by shortening the approval process. Using its virtual workspace, managers and teams can easily review projects and give feedback right where the team is working. As a result, projects are able to move down the pipeline faster, so they can be published, shipped out or shared sooner.

So what do you actually need? Is DAM enough?

When it comes to a traditional DAM, the software is needed to make sure you and your organization has a centrally located collection of assets, simplifying the use of digital files. This enables you to up the use of approved assets, and make sure those assets are worked on (and stored) in one place – for everyone to access.

Which types of assets do your different teams use?

When looking at different DAM vendors, take one step back to think about what type of assets you need to store. Is your organization only using digital imagery and videos, or do you also need to store logos, icons, text snippets, code, documents, or other essential assets? A lot of DAM vendors will only provide you with a single, general library to store all of it. With large collections, that could leave you with a sense of confusion. If not now, then maybe as your company and its collateral grows.

Are you keeping data security in mind?

For bigger companies especially, security is massively important. You need to make sure that the software you're choosing is up to industry standards, that the data you host there is kept safe. You need to make sure the DAM vendor can supply you with SAML-based SSO, private cloud hosting, and priority support. This way, you won't have to worry whether or not your data is secure.

Are you thinking one step further?

Acquiring "just DAM" is often a very marketing-centric task, helping the team centralize their asset operations. There's a pretty fundamental thing to keep in mind though: Would you actually get a company-wide buy-in to acquire the tool if it's essentially software used for one thing, and one team only? A better approach is to identify a tool that generates cross-functional collaboration and includes aspects that an entire company can draw benefit from – not just DAM. Understanding the value of BAM as a company unifier, with functionality that not only improves your team's operations but the company as a whole is gold. If you can get software that is heavily used by the entire company (marketers, designers, developers – anyone), not only will you get a quicker buy-in – you'll improve the overall performance of your company – bridging team silos and increase the overall efficiency.

Are you ready for the budget discussion?

Your team needs DAM, that's for sure. But it's also likely that your design team has (or needs to acquire) a brand guidelines tool to produce design guidelines, and connect their design tool stack to a centralized collaboration platform. Maybe your product team needs software to bridge the design-to-development gap? It's likely that you have a branding department that wants to keep brand management oversight, making sure the company is operating on brand. Maybe your HR department needs to establish employer branding guidelines? If you're working with externals, consolidating all operations with one project room for monitoring progress, approving project milestones, and setting up tasks, could also be beneficial. Yeah, that's a lot of software, right? Not really. That's BAM. That's software that'll make budget discussions a lot simpler, while also making sure the entirety of your team is on board (and on-brand).
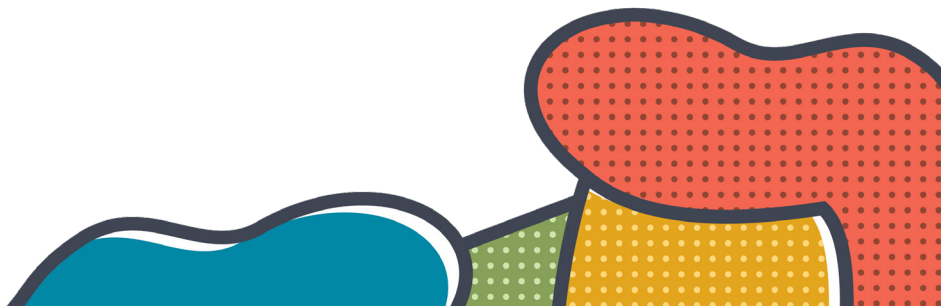
What kind of tech should you look for?

Looking for the right software to manage your assets, digitally, is already an important step towards future-proofing your organization. However, if your DAM lacks usability and key features, you'll miss out on some of the amazing advantages that should come from using DAM. Below, you'll find some of the essential technicalities you need to keep in mind, as you look over your options for acquiring a DAM only.

Cloud-Based

First of all, your software of choice should rid your local folders of assets – taking them to the cloud. That way, you'll provide your team with one centralized hub to find them. Make sure that all users have access to the latest assets – all the time – preventing misuses while increasing brand consistency.
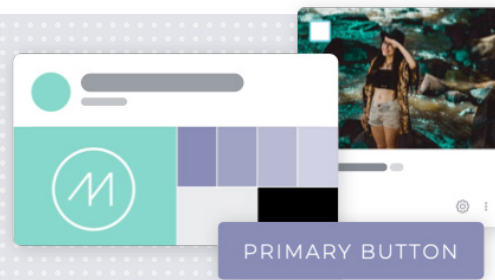
Access & Sharing

Once you've moved your assets in the cloud, you'll want to make sure that everyone has access to them. If your DAM solution provides you with shareable invite links, different permission rights, or target groups; you can tick that off your list.
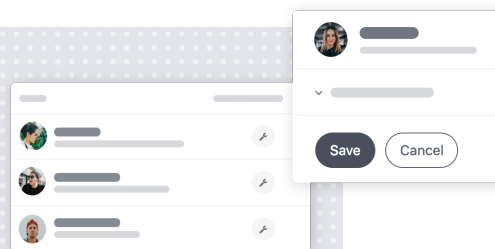
Search & Localization

With time, there will be a lot of assets accumulating in your asset management system. To quickly find and manage them, smart search possibilities can help. By setting up assets with filters and facets – digital efficiency and accuracy will be improved as well.
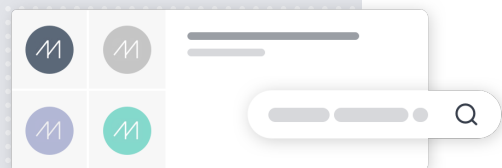
Asset Organization

By categorizing your digital collateral, you'll heavily improve your search possibilities. Choose a DAM where you're able to manage assets in folders and collections, or where you can assign tags, statuses, and set up asset relations.
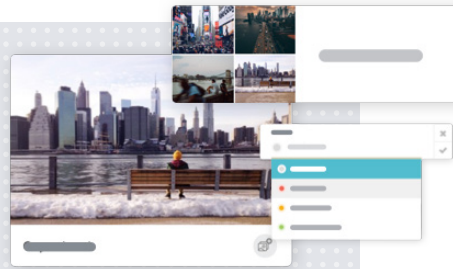
Metadata

For DAM to function properly, metadata is indispensable. Be it the name or size of the file, validity specifications, texts, moods or numbers – you need to find a DAM that helps you to set up both standard and custom metadata.
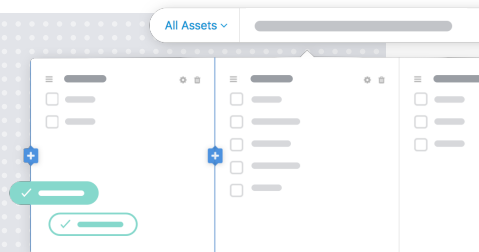
Support for All Asset Types

To make your DAM the single source for digital assets, it's necessary to upload, preview, and work on all types of files. A DAM doesn't end with PNGs and MP4s. At best, you'll even find dedicated spaces for different asset types like icons, logos, documents, code, and more.
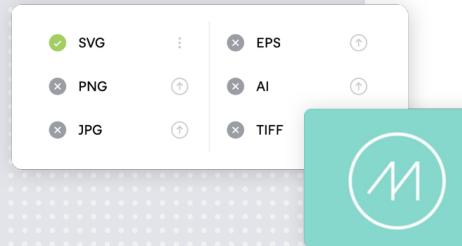
Various Export Formats

To further boost digital efficiency, DAM should provide export assistance for different channels, making features like automated image resizing and cropping essential. This way, you'll be able to download assets in the right (predefined) formats – increasing the strength of your digital delivery.
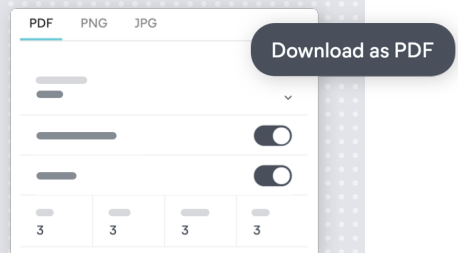
Control & Security

Security issues are often raised in the digital space; justifiably so. To keep control over your asset circulation and prevent potential misuses, centralized download controllability, copyright/license notices, and trademarks should all be at hand.
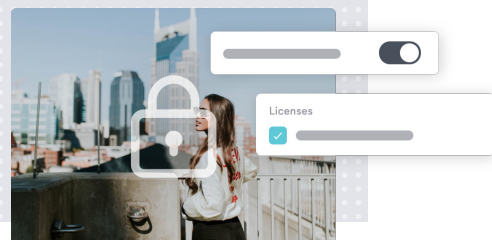
Automation

Automation is a big part of making daily business operations a part of the digital world. DAM shouldn't fall short on this one. With features such as automated tagging, expiry actions, or approval process, your DAM can help you rationalize every step of the way.
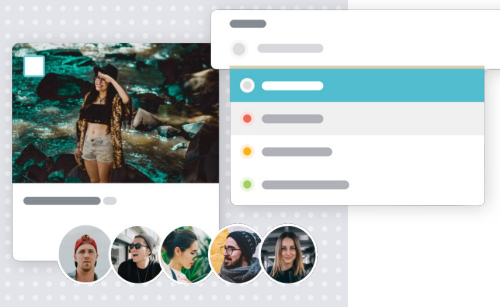
Stay in the Know

With the aim of inviting all relevant stakeholders to your DAM platform, information on the latest changes might be hard to come by as the user list increases in size. That's why you want your DAM to provide you with activity tracking, version-history details, and notifications on project changes.
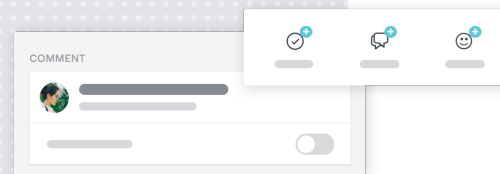
Integrations

Your DAM should also be able to integrate with other tools and software to streamline daily processes. What if you'd be able to directly pull imagery from various stock image providers, embed analytics, or let information flow into your business communication hub?
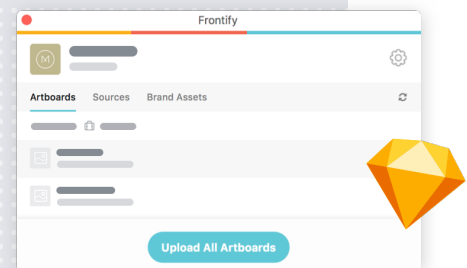
Advanced Collaboration

Your DAM should offer you the ability to collaborate with your team to get the most out of your assets. Find yourself DAM that enables you to send assets through approval processes, set up customized workflows, leave or request feedback, and work on assets in bulk to boost team collaboration.
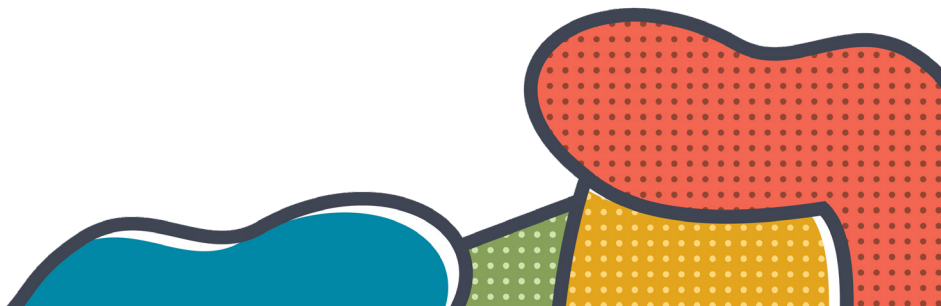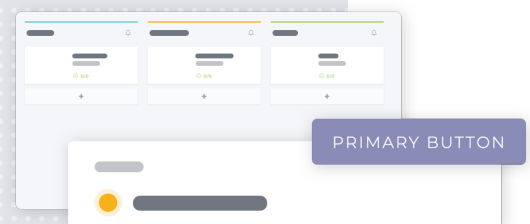
Are you looking for a solution provider or just another tool?

When you're looking for your perfect solution, don't forget to future-proof. It's not all about millions upon millions of amazing features – it's also about finding a vendor that listens to its customers, provides smooth transitions and onboarding, customizes the solution to your needs, and perceives you as a sparring partner to improve the solution with – not just as another bag of money.

What's the support like?
Make sure the vendor offers around-the-clock support features, making sure you're not left alone for days, waiting for an answer from an obscure email address you found in the footer of their website. Look for in-app support, and test their readiness during the trial period.

How modular is the solution?
Sure, a lot of vendors will offer you packaged solutions – generally to show you the spectrum of different-sized solutions they offer to fit your needs. These pre-defines solutions can be quite boxed in though, and you need to make sure that they'll actually fit your needs. Maybe you don't need feature A, B, and C – but only B and C. Regardless of the solution you acquire today, make sure you're always able to scale it up with the growth of your company.

Are they really listening to your ideas?
A good software vendor will make customer-centricity a key part of its product development. Ask them how much of their product roadmap is sourced through listening to their clients' ideas, requirements, feedback, and needs. If they're the ones deciding every move, without listening to their users – it's probably not the best way forward.

Do they actually connect on a personal level?
We've all had one-way communications software. The kind of thing where you have an issue, and you're spending hours deep down in random forums to find a way of solving it. Software should not be closed up, you need to make sure that the vendor you choose is a partner and not just another tool.
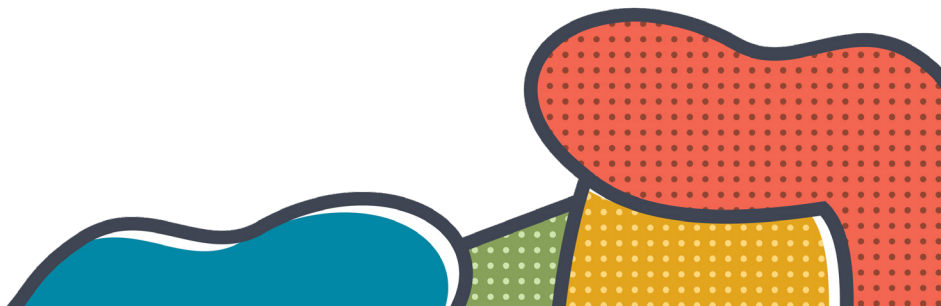
What's Next?

No matter what your needs are right now, make sure you also look to the future. DAM is essential for a lot of aspects of your daily operations, but in an increasingly experience-driven and brand focused world – so is Brand Management. With BAM, you'll have both solutions, and getting that sweet company-wide buy-in will be a lot easier.

About Frontify

Frontify is a cloud-centric, all-in-one brand management software, used by all kinds of company sizes to increase brand consistency, make brand asset operations more efficient, and increase involvement by enabling cross-functional collaboration.

Frontify®

Your Case

Now that you know what to look for, we truly hope you'll find the right fit for your use case. If you want to further discuss your needs, and see what we can offer, we're more than happy to walk you through our platform, answer questions, and show you software that's made for anyone.

Request Demo