

Avon Gets a Global Data Makeover



Avon standardized its product categories globally as part of an MDM initiative, says VP Peter Winters.

In 2001, Avon Products Inc. embarked on an MDM initiative to improve management of its product portfolio by creating a common categorization scheme for all of its lines, from beauty to fashion and home goods.

For instance, an offering like scented shower gel might have been categorized as a personal care product in some markets but as a fragrance elsewhere. Now it's categorized the same way globally.

"We went from roughly 10 product categorization schemes to one," says Peter Winters, vice president of enterprise information management.

At the same time, Avon embarked on several business transformation programs, including a move from country-based marketing to one based on clusters of countries, and from local supply chain operations to regional and global ones. Both initiatives required standardizing the free-form product and supplier data generated by local offices, Winters says.

Using MDM technology from Data Foundations Inc., Avon converted hundreds of thousands of items in marketing and supply chain systems worldwide into a standard format.

In addition, Avon "looked at opportunities where we could design major new systems to work with the centralized MDM strategy from the start" as legacy systems were phased out, Winters says.

Now, he says, Avon can analyze product performance, confident that the aggregate data for products, locations and suppliers are standardized and accurate.

— MARY BRANDEL



Data Foundations, Inc. was acquired by Software AG in October 2010.
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