Thomas Sjöberg: You have an optimization for Tish you could say?

Peter Norlander: [laughs] *Exactly. Going all overboard sometimes.*

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Thomas: You're listening to PIMtalk, the product marketing podcast, brought to you by inRiver.

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Thomas: Welcome to episode two of PIMtalk, the podcast for product marketers, merchandisers and PIM professionals. I'm your host Thomas Sjöberg, and every second Tuesday, we come together to share knowledge, experiences and challenges, for us to be able to create better product stories and product experiences. We want to do this for you and with you, so please contact us and tell us what you would to hear about. If you have any guests that you would us to have on the show, you can reach out to us through email at PIMtalk@inRiver.com or contact us with a message on Twitter @pimtalkpodcast.

In this episode we got to talk to Peter Norlander that is going to share some good tips for us for a successful PIM. Here we go.

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Thomas: I'm very happy to be joined here by Peter Norlander, a PIM consultant and one of our Champions. Welcome to PIMtalk, Peter.

Peter: *Thank you very much Thomas. I'm very happy to be here.*

Thomas: First could you just tell us a little bit about yourself?

Peter: *Well, I'm Peter Norlander. I'm born and raised in Sweden in Halmstad. I moved to learn to study and then I started working with PIM. I've been working with PIM for several years. I love practicing karate, I'm a black belt in karate. That's one of my core interests. Well, I've have got a son two years back, so I'm very much family time from now. I moved to a house and all that.*

Thomas: You're a black belt or both in Karate and PIM?

Peter: [laughs] *Yes, I try to be.*

Thomas: How come you started to work with PIM?

Peter: *Well, I was fresh out of school and my boss Hannah she said, "Okay, we need someone to work with PIM." I said, "Okay, fine. I'll do that." I realized that it was actually very rewarding because I could work with very technical things, at the same time that I could work with people and talk with the customers and see how they're doing, then what's their problems, and try to find good solutions to their problems. It also fits me very good*

because I really like to optimize things. I like when things are optimum sometimes to my wife's frustration. She thinks I'm going a bit over the edge sometimes.

Thomas: You have an optimization fatigue, you could say?

Peter: [laughs] *Exactly. Going all overboard sometimes trying to find the most optimal route when going somewhere and doing some things. Yes, PIM is all about optimizing your workflow and working with products, and how you should handle things to minimize manual labor and things like that. It fits me very good.*

Thomas: Peter, you come from the partner side. Just to explain a little bit about how it works when you work the inRiver product marketing cloud. inRiver, we are providing the service, the software that then can be configured to support how different companies will sell and market their product. The actual implementation is done by a partner, and that's where you come from. Why do you need a partner? What is your role in the big picture here?

Peter: *Exactly as you said, you provide the system, the software and we provide the knowledge of how you should implement it and use it. We work together with the customer to be a real good partner. We try to figure out together with the customer what would be the most optimal solution for them. How do they want their business system to work together with the rest of their system architecture? How should they be working with their products and so on?*

Thomas: You're also experts in integrating with different kinds of ERPs and with ecommerce systems, and another kind of all the surrounding systems as well?

Peter: *Yes, exactly. We try to see that the whole picture of where should the PIM system be getting its information and where should the PIM system be feeding information to the different systems.*

Thomas: I heard that you just started a new job. Maybe you can tell us a little bit about that?

Peter: *Yes, I did. Actually, did that last week. It's Diamir Consulting. It's a very new firm that's focusing heavily on inRiver PIM and Episerver.*

Thomas: Even if you're a quite new company, there is quite a lot of experience with inRiver, that's how I understand.

Peter: *Yes. That what got me so interested in going here, is that I feel that even if I have a lot of experience with working with the inRiver software in the solutions, there are some people here who have been working with it a lot. It feels we can challenge each other and hopefully create some very good solutions. I feel this will be really reporting up.*

Thomas: You were recently also awarded as the-- I don't know what we call it, but most invaluable-- Maybe you remember.

Peter: *I think it was partner ambassador of the year. That was new.*

Thomas: That was new. That was also for acknowledging that you do a lot of work within the community, and post the blog post, helping other partners on the Slack channels, and also other ways being a good ambassador for inRiver.

Peter: *Thanks.*

Thomas: Glad to have you here. Now when we have you here on the podcast, I would we really to extract more of your knowledge. I've asked you to come up with five good tips that you can share about PIM and how that can be used in a good way.

Peter: *Yes. That was a hard question because there's many things to say and--*

Thomas: Well, it's not hard for you.

Peter: *It's hard just compiling it down to five. [laughs] I got together five tips that I think is more suited for the ones who are in their end of their implementation, or who'd like started working, or have had their PIM for a while at least. Because you have a lot of good ideas, we have talked about previously on different channels on PIM point and thinks like on what you should think about when you're implementing your PIM system. I focused more on the continuing the tips for those who have.*

Thomas: By the way, cool.

Peter: *What I would like to highlight first, is don't fall short on your investment. Make sure that everybody in your organization, are they actually utilizing the full power of your PIM system? What I see is that you start by implementing the PIM system for one of your channels, you have to minimize the product so you can get it working. Maybe you start for your e-commerce, that's pretty common. You started with your e-commerce and then you're up and running and everybody pats their backs and like, "We made it." and you're happy with that.*

Then you don't realize that we could take this so much further. There's many more parts in your organization or people that's working with the product information that could benefit from the PIM system. If you wait too much, then I see that a lot of organization tends to feel like, "Okay, yes. The e-commerce division, they implemented their PIM system, and now we need help to handle our part of the product. We need something else because the PIM system that's for e-commerce." while they could be using the same system and benefit from working together on their PIM system.

Thomas: Is this due to that in many cases, these other stakeholders are not part of the initial project? They are not part of the actual, when they purchased the PIM? Or in the analysis workshops and so on?

Peter: *Yes. You can take everything at once because if you try to fill everybody's needs when you do the first implementation, it would take too much time and you will never get to finish your project. You need to limit the scope. That's very important but you also need to realize that you shouldn't stop. You should always try to what can we do next? How can we*

improve ourselves? Let's compare it to-- Say you got a new job and you realize I can't take the bus, or I can't take my bicycle anymore to work.

I need to buy a car because I have to drive to work. You go head on and you buy a new nice electrical car so you can go see your missions to work. Then you solve the problem that you have to get to work but you still have to-- Sometimes on the weekends, you want to go over to friends or you maybe go to grocery shop. Then you say like, oh well I take the taxi as I have always done when I'm going to have to solve those issues because I didn't have a car before. When you realize I can simply use the car that I've already bought to solve the big issue and I can solve all the other small issues with this one as well.

Thomas: You mentioned that usually, it's the e-commerce department or that e-commerce, it's the driver of the PIM implementation, what would you say is the next step that company can have the most value of their PIM investment?

Peter: *Well, that is usually changes quite bit because some of the companies they're like. Okay, the e-commerce, that's our biggest challenge and maybe the next biggest channel is the app or is a printed catalogue or something like that is just far away and solve that. I mean it's just another challenge but for others, it might be that we're having a very hard time struggling or struggling with how we should maintain our campaigns or planning your release system. Maybe we shouldn't take a new channel or maybe we should start with the planning feature or something like that. How can we do our planning of the product enrichment or the when we should release new products and things like that. The next step is usually a bit more specific case by case.*

Thomas: All right so that was the first one. What more do you have for us?

Peter: *All right so the second one, it goes in a bit in the first one but let your PIM change with you. You can have a PIM you've used it for maybe quite a while and also that you be open to what do we need to change, how are we working with? Maybe you have changed in your assortment, taking in new kinds of products that you need to enrich in very differently from the first one. Maybe you need to realize that we need to have a new workflow, we need to optimize our workflow so you can ultimate some process that you have done manually. Maybe you're having new markets, maybe you have a change in your system math you have implement another system that you would like to see to and so on. Also, that the market changes but people want new kinds of information or information in a new way and listen to what the market wants so you can change that, the PIM system accordingly so you can work with the products in that way.*

Thomas: How do you actually make sure that you can do this changes all the time. I mean many times you do a project, then you're down and you work like that. Then you don't have a process, or you don't have a way to follow up on the changes that needs to be done. You let us work with many companies around this, do you have any ideas around that?

Peter: *That's quite hard but you need to have an internal PIM Champion or someone who wants to improve your processes internally so they can-- someone who can see that more like how are we working with our products globally? How are we working throughout the*

company? How are we working with our product information so they can see, okay they're doing things that are a bit weird, there we can optimize that. You need to have some kind of--

Thomas: You need an owner.

Peter: *You need an owner, exactly. Also, some, maybe a bit of a visionary or like a digital strategy so that we can do-- How can we solve different things.*

Thomas: Okay and I guess it's important to have a partner that can understand your business and can also help you in the change process over time.

Peter: *Yes, of course, that's very important but also-- The partner can't see everything. They don't see how you're working on a daily basis. That's also I think important that you see your partner as a real partner. Invite them in to see, hey let's go through how we are working together and see if we can optimize things, can we make it more efficient and let's invest a bit of time to see if we can improve this because it's a bit hard standing on the outside and say, hey let's do like this and it has to be quite obvious.*

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Speaker 1: PIM Stands for Product Information Management and inRiver stands for PIM. Want to learn more about how your organization can benefit from PIM software? We've put together a free white paper where you can learn what you need to know about how your e-commerce platform can benefit from PIM. Go to www.pimtalk.com to download the free guide to help you better understand how PIM can work for you. That's www.pimtalk.com.

[music]

Peter: *The next thing I want to talk about is have real training for everybody who is using the PIM system. What I see is that when you implement the PIM system and people are going to start working it, the partner has some kind of training or education for the users and they start working with it. As with all new things, when you have like, okay there is so many new things to see and to understand, you can't take it in all at once. It's hard to do when you have this kind of first training session, you can't go into all the nitty-gritty details and tips and tricks because the people aren't ready for it because you need to get used to what is the basics in here.*

Thomas: Yes you also need to start working with it and find out what you need to do in order to work effectively and you will see that you will have question around certain functionalities and you can't have it all from the beginning when you are totally new to the system.

Peter: *Exactly, I would suggest that you have some basic training so people can get working and start utilizing it and like, "Okay, this awesome," and then after a while, a couple of weeks at least or may be one or two months, then maybe you should have a newer training session for like, "Okay, how can we improve things?" Then people will have more questions*

on, "Okay, I don't like this, how can I improve my workload? Can I do anything differently when I do all this?"

Thomas: I guess that it's good to have one or a few users that can coach the other users and also--

Peter: *Yes, that's very important, you have some kind of owners who'll receive the whole picture of the PIM so they can coach new users and everybody to start working with but not* **[unintelligible 00:19:13]**

Thomas: Besides more specific training that usually the partner does the actual configuration and implementation of the PIM system for a starting company, there is also the customer academy for instance that we do at inRiver that can help this as well as exploring all the new functions and features

Peter: *That's usually also what I recommend because the partner does one kind of training but you look at it more like a more general perspective so you cannot get a bit different input so I think it's very good.*

Thomas: All right

Peter: *The other one would be that this is more like when you are implementing but also when you're continuing on so let best of breed be best of breed. If you have a best of breed so and you have implemented a PIM, you have an e-commerce system, you have an ERP and you have different kinds of key components in your system map, let each system do what it does best.*

Thomas: What does the PIM system do best?

Peter: *That is handling the products information and that's the marketing information regarding products. The example that we used the most it would be that okay, don't have prices and stock information in PIM because that's typical ERP information because it's much more easy to handle that in the ERP if you need to introduce more warehouses, you need to have different kinds of currencies or you need to have different prices for different vendors or things like that.*

Thomas: Price is so much more than value. It's usually complex and especially in certain industries.

Peter: *Yes. Very much so.*

Thomas: What would you say if we see the PIM versus the e-commerce system or digital asset management system? What kind of information lives in what system here?

Peter: *Well, for example, in the PIM, you have all the product information, the things that you need to have in your different channels. For the e-commerce system, you would have more general, maybe you have a-- let's say you, for example, you sell a grill and then you maybe need to show that, "Okay, we know how to have a barbeque, how to get your--*

when you're grilling your vegetables or your meat that you get it perfectly done. Then maybe you need to have an article about barbequing. How should you do it the best way?" These kinds of grills, how would do you do it the best way? These kinds of grills.

There's usually something that the CMS can handle better when you need to have more general information.

Thomas: More editorial [crosstalk]

Peter: *Yes, exactly. More editorial contents.*

Thomas: I guess in the PIM, you have the descriptions of the product, you have different attributes, you have information to be able to create the categorization, such facets. You have relationships between products, you have the images, you have other kinds of media--

Peter: *Videos and everything.*

Thomas: Yes. You also manage translations maybe if you work in several languages. If you're producing a lot of images and you have a whole photo-shoot process and so on, that is something that you might want to separate them for.

Peter: *Yes. It could also be used. I have a lot of customers who used the down functionality within the PIM system as well. They have their approval process and everything in inRiver but then it's mostly a bit more basic.*

Thomas: It basically depends on your needs when it comes to that?

Peter: *Yes. For the editorial content, I had a customer who wanted to have their editorial content in more available in different kinds of channels. We created an opportunity for them to do it in the PIM system as well. The PIM system is, and especially inRiver, it's highly configurable. You can do a lot of things when you configure it pretty much however you want it but has also a bit of a danger if you don't do things that you shouldn't do within the PIM system, you should do that should probably be handled somewhere else. You could handle prices and stock and everything in PIM as well but the solution for it wouldn't be as well-functioning or--*

Thomas: It's optimized perhaps.

Peter: *Precisely. [crosstalk] Yes. As optimal as it would be, as another system, could do it. That's what I mean. Let best of breed be best of breed. The one that is most optimal to handle should handle it.*

The last thing would be to challenge your partner. As a customer, the partner comes in and challenges you as a customer to how you're handling your products. It's a dialogue but I also think that you as a customer should challenge your partner with-- if you have new ideas or think outside the box, "Okay, we are doing things like this today but maybe we could do it like this tomorrow." Take that up with your partners, say like, "Hey, can't we do like this?" Don't get me wrong, don't confuse it with that you shouldn't listen to wisdom or if your

partner says that, "Okay, that's a very bad idea because this and this and this," then you should listen to that please but if you have ideas, figure it out together with your partner if, "Is that a good idea? Could we do things differently?"

Thomas: Super. Now we had five great tips there. It's a lot to digest. I think we have a lot of good things here.

Peter: *I actually have a last bonus for the partners out there specifically is that the PIM community is growing quite big and so I would urge everyone to participate. Take advantage of the community. There's the forum, Slack channel, there's all the meet-ups and pinpoint everywhere where you could talk with a lot of intelligent people to test your ideas or see if you can do things differently.*

Thomas: I think that's great. We're seeing more and more that PIM professionals are sharing information with each other, doing blog post as you have done and also the Slack channel and in other places as well. I think that's great for everyone. Also, we're working a lot with building the community for the customers as well, with different user forums both that we do trying to find customers that can benefit from meeting with each other. We also support our partners in doing customer forums for their customers.

Then we have our user conference pinpoint in Europe and also in America for the first time this year and other activities as well. I think you should definitely utilize that. If you go to the Academy, you will also meet other people that work with PIM as well. That's a great opportunity to share knowledge and also get to know new exciting people.

Thank you so much, Peter, for sharing your knowledge and the tips here.

Peter: *Thank you very much for having me.*

Thomas: I guess I'll see you around.

Peter: *Yes. I hope so.*

Thomas: Bye.

Peter: *Bye.*

[music]

Thomas: To recap a little bit what Peter talked about. First, don't fall short on your investment. Second, let your PIM change with you. Three, have real training for everybody. Four, let best of breed be best of breed. Five, challenge your partner.

In the next episode we're going to talk about PIM and Print with Karen from InDeap and Artur from Sigma. If you have any questions around Print and PIM or inRiver in particular, you can reach out to us around that. If you like PIMtalk, please spread the word and also go into iTunes and give us a good review that we would appreciate a lot.

It's time to end this episode. Thank you for listening and again if you have any feedback, tips or questions, email us at PIMtalk@inriver.com or messages us at Twitter @pimtalkpodcast. If you would like to see some behind-the-scenes materials, blog posts and live streams, you can follow PIMtalk on Instagram as well.

I hope you have a really good week and see you in 14 days. Bye.

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