

The skills you need working in

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

What's a *DAM* Career?

What makes someone a DAM professional is not just what they can do, and what tools and techniques they know how to use, but what mindsets and perspectives they hold towards (Digital) Asset Management and how they constantly work towards making user experience better.

It's not often that a DAM-based job position is called "Digital Asset Manager" verbatim. 'Digital' is often included, with different similes such as 'technician' and 'specialist' (Reijerkerk & Nyitray, 2023). No matter what, what's actually needed to succeed in a DAM space is to actively work towards improving others' experience based on what their direct needs are.

MINDSETS & Philosophies

Asset Management of any kind requires a deep understanding of why people use assets the way they do. Some key ideas DAM Professionals should always have in mind (PMI, n.d.):

- Even though these are digital assets they should be treated like an asset:
 - They should be maintained.
 - They should have a lifespan
 - Existing assets should be available to the right users.
 - They should be measurable.
- Digital assets will evolve and change over time. Systems need to be able to accommodate constantly shifting and updated versions of assets. There is no true final digital asset management platform. It will always be changing, so users and professionals should know how to control the change.
- Reusability and searchability is the cornerstone of a DAM. All users should have minimal or no cost to a user trying to find or reuse an asset. The duty of anyone working on a DAM is to make the user's experience the easiest it can be.

Useful *TOOLS*

DAM has many correlative principles and ideas similar to the Six Sigma & lean management styles of thinking. The goal is to make people's work easier for them regardless of station or relation. As well minimizing error and overly manual tasks is a part of this, and what DAM often strives to fix (Goldstein, 2021).

A good tool that parallels DAM thinking is Six Sigma's DMAIC improvement cycle:

Define

Create a clear specific definition of the problem being faced.

Measure

Measure and track the current process through metrics to understand improvements.

Analyse

Find the root cause of the problem & make connections.

Improve

Test solutions through a scientific method and implement a plan.

Control

Document the process and how the solution worked, to repeat it.

Workshops and group brainstorming are common when trying to design a DAM system. Here are some relevant tools for use in succession (Carner, 2019):

- Rapid ideation: Groups are formed and all ideas are thrown into one bucket and shared to see what angles can be worked from.
- Dot-voting: Everyone gets a set number of dots (regardless of hierarchy) and hands them out to different ideas showing their support and weight towards them.
- Rapid Prototyping: The best ideas are shown in whatever format best describes the experience, without much deliberation.
- Personas: Develop different use cases through the lens of who the different users are for the system.

DAM *SKILLS*

Emotional Intelligence: People skills, people skills, people skills!

DAM requires understanding and knowing people and what they need. A part of this behaviour is understanding that between uploads and downloads there's a person doing something, and that there's a person inputting information for someone to read. Naturally some of that information is going to get lost (Leslie, 2017).

DAM Professionals are typically outside a typical company hierarchy and department silo structure. They need to be able to talk between different departments and levels in order to identify problems and create solutions between otherwise separated people. Other soft skills often sought are time management and creativity. There needs to be discipline while allowing for imagination and ideation to expand and improve constantly.

Hard skills such as programming, information systems knowledge, and data analysis are always useful. (Reijerkerk & Nyitray, 2023). Education is commonly at least a bachelor's degree, and can require a master's or doctorate depending on the sector

While the skillset is primarily based around digital technologies and their usage, it is better to think of these skills as what they are doing: analysis, organization, and human psychology. DAM isn't just a storage system, it's a system for people, so you need to know strategies that those people respond to.

In *SUMMARY*

Digital Asset Management holds a wide range of introduction points, from Six Sigma to the science of people. No matter what your skills or knowledge, what matters above all is the desire to learn how to make people's lives and experiences that little bit easier. DAM is about helping people first and foremost, so sorting someone's shelf or cleaning up a room is the spirit that makes a successful DAM, and the people who made DAM successful.