

# James Hardie Designs its Digital Future with Clouinary's Digital Asset Management Platform

**50%** reduction in asset readiness time, from photoshoot to publication

Major cross-team efficiency gains by eliminating manual image requests

Critical image-related needs fulfilled in seconds not weeks

A global leader in interior and exterior building products, **James Hardie** was founded on the principle of building strong one-to-one relationships with key partners and customers. The challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the company's need for rich online engagement, particularly in communicating the breadth and detail of their product offerings.

Clouinary's Digital Asset Management platform enabled the company to centralize all of its image assets, creating a streamlined and highly accessible image repository available to multiple teams across Australia, including marketing, sales, product, engineering and HR.



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— **Monica Ikladios**, James Hardie's Head of Digital



#### INDUSTRY

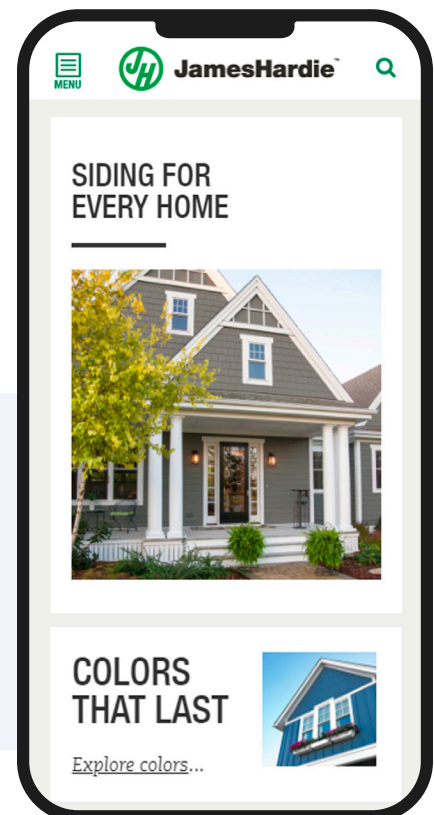
Building materials

#### SIZE

5,000 employees

#### HEADQUARTERS

Dublin, Ireland



## ABOUT

## James Hardie

Founded in Australia in 1888, James Hardie pioneered modern fibre-cement that is used worldwide today. Today, the company is the global leader in the production of interior and exterior building products, generating more than \$2.5 billion in net sales and employing 5,000 people around the world.

## THE CHALLENGE

## Creating a Single Point of Truth for Complex File Sharing Needs

James Hardie's Australia services many customers through its network including the likes of hardware stores, builders, property developers and architects, as well as connecting directly with consumers. Consequently, it has a large and complex network of sales and marketing teams dedicated to serving the varied needs of these disparate audiences.

"We've noticed that thanks to the COVID-19 lockdown measures, our customers have been turning to our online channels for advice and information when perhaps they might previously have been more reliant on face to face contact," explains James Hardie's Head of Digital Monica Ikladios. "Now more than ever, digital has a crucial role to play in every single step of our sales journey, from brand recognition right through to conversion, sale and supply chain."

The one thing that unites all James Hardie Australia partners and customers? The need for high quality, constantly updated imagery and other marketing content showcasing the company's products and usage in building projects. From a consumer and brand perspective, it's crucial that the company's online channels are kept up to date with all the latest interior and exterior design trends. For trade audiences in particular, an engaging and innovative product portfolio is a must.

"Digital assets are so incredibly valuable for our sales and marketing teams, but managing the sheer volume of assets and the number of image requests across the Australian market was a very real business challenge," says Ikladios. "We have so many products, and so many different images of each product (in-situ and otherwise) being produced all the time — and it all needs to be stored in an easily searchable and shareable way."

Often, the company would have multiple photo shoots taking place at various locations, with no central repository for all the images nor any shared filing system or naming convention. The marketing team would regularly be tasked with finding images featuring a certain product and spend hours manually searching through disparate folders to find them. Marketing Executive Jeanine Williams recalls: "I'd just think — oh wow, where do I start? And then have to email multiple people to gather what I could!"



"We didn't have a single solution and that was the problem — everybody was doing their own thing. That's when Cloudinary came in."

— **Monica Ikladios**, James Hardie's Head of Digital

The team needed to streamline the entire asset lifecycle, including establishing a central repository, a clear cross-company framework for storing and sharing, as well as guidelines for publishing across multiple channels.

#### THE CLOUDINARY SOLUTION

## Tagging Strategy as the Building Block of Success

First on Ikladios' list of requirements was a user-friendly solution that didn't require a lot of technical investment. "We're a very lean shop in terms of technical expertise, so we needed something that we could set up and configure without a lot of engineering input. Cloudinary ticked the box there," she says.

But where Cloudinary really stood out was in its ability to support complex filing structures, as well as providing advanced search functionality.



"When we started thinking about the volume and complexity of the folders we needed to create and share, many competitors weren't able to meet our needs."

— **Monica Ikladios**, James Hardie's Head of Digital

In the company's new asset lifecycle, all new images are immediately stored on Cloudinary's DAM, and filed and tagged according to a clear framework that is shared across the company. 'Collections' of images can be shared easily using a link, alongside specific guidance on usage permissions and intended audiences (for example, some collections are targeted at builders, whereas others are for consumer audiences).

A representative group of subject matter experts came together from across the business to identify the most efficient way to describe and tag image assets, agreeing to structure files by products and then by function. "We spent a lot of time figuring out what tags we should have in against all of our assets, and I'm really glad because of the richness of the search," explains Ikladios.

"If there's any bit of advice I give to anyone who's starting their journey, I would say spend some time figuring out your tagging strategy — it's really paid off for us. Now we have a really sophisticated, seamless workflow where all the teams can access and work with assets in real time and everyone's using one solution."

#### THE RESULTS

## Centralization, Simplification and Straightforward Sharing

Today, thanks to Cloudinary, James Hardie Australia has a centralized and streamlined central repository for its digital assets, with a simplified filing system and complete ease of sharing.

The lifespan of a James Hardie asset, from photoshoot through to publication, has halved; even better, the marketing team has shaved significant hours of admin work from their to-do lists, ensuring they stay focused on what really matters.



“Cloudinary has cleared up so many requests for us simply by enabling teams to serve themselves with real time access to high quality, customer-ready assets that are ready to use in multiple settings. It’s meant that everyone can be so much more responsive to customer needs.”

— **Jeanine Williams**, James Hardie Marketing Executive

Cloudinary has even brought some unexpected benefits into the business. For example, the sales teams have found that the power of a centralized hub with its advanced search functionality have armed them with a powerful set of selling tools in one-to-one meetings with customers and partners. Now, a salesperson in New South Wales has highly visual examples from every Australian region at their fingertips, something which wasn't possible with the old decentralized system.

Ikladios concludes: “Having the ability to control what imagery and assets we’re allowed to share, and where, is crucial for us. In the old system, there was no clear understanding of what you could and couldn’t use, particularly with regards to legal permissions. With Cloudinary, that problem has been completely solved.”

## About Cloudinary

Cloudinary’s mission is to empower companies to deliver visual experiences that inspire and connect by unleashing the full potential of their media. With more than 40 billion assets under management and 7,000 customers worldwide, Cloudinary is the industry standard for developers, creators and marketers looking to upload, store, transform, manage, and deliver images and videos online. As a result, leading brands like Atlassian, Bleacher Report, Grubhub, Hinge, Lyft, NBC, Mediavine, Peloton, Petco and Under Armour are seeing significant business value in using Cloudinary, including faster time to market, higher user satisfaction and increased engagement and conversions. For more information, visit [www.cloudinary.com](http://www.cloudinary.com)