

# **Phase In/Phase Out**

## **Tactic Overview**

Periodically, a manufacturer will release a next-generation version of a product. When that happens, old versions are discontinued. Though this seems simple and routine enough on the surface, it presents some challenges that retailers should be aware of.

## **Creating Smooth Transitions**

It is very important to have a process in place for removing old versions of a product from the site while adding the new version. There are several issues to target.

The first issue is site navigation. It's important to ensure no broken URLs remain on the site after transitioning between product versions. Broken URLs can have a negative impact both on SEO and on shopper experience, so this is vital.

Next, the retailer should pay attention to product specs and details. The phase-in/phase-out process should include a method for replacing sell sheets on the site that might be outdated after the transition is complete.

Ratings and reviews should also receive consideration. In some cases, it may be appropriate to keep the old reviews, but in others, removing the old reviews and starting from scratch will be important. If there are significant product differences that might change or improve performance, then it is best to remove the reviews, even if that means taking a significant amount of content off of the site. However, if the product's basic function is essentially the same, it may be more helpful to keep reviews, especially if they are good ones.

Choosing a good Product Information Management system is a good first step to ensuring that these transitions cause no problems on the e-commerce site. Product Information Management systems help to keep all of this information organized, which makes it easier to reduce the kinds of costly errors that can arise during the phase-in/phase-out process.

## **Action Items**

- **Create a process to address site navigation issues.**
- **Replace old sell sheets as necessary.**
- **Create a process for addressing the use of ratings and reviews between versions.**
- **Implement a product information management system to reduce errors.**