Migrating to
Magento 2

Magento is proud to present 'Community Insights' to help merchants develop strategies and tactics to better serve their customers.

The Magento Partner Community is a trusted network of consulting and technology companies that help merchants grow their business, and create engaging customer experiences with the Magento Platform. These organizations provide valuable insights and practical takeaways from their real world experiences with merchants like you.

Magento®

Migrating to Magento 2

The data-driven value of Magento 2, what to know before beginning, one of our top strategies for mitigating risks, and real insights from a Magento 2 retailer.

Introduction
What's in this Whitepaper

Summary

For years, Magento has been the top ecommerce platform for Internet Retailer's Top 1000 merchants, and many retailers are currently considering or planning for migration to Magento 2. And as anyone in the digital commerce industry can tell you, migrating or upgrading an ecommerce platform is no small feat.

We've created this Migrating to Magento 2 guide to help retailers navigate this process, and to share key lessons we've learned. These sections are broken down to the following:

- The Top Benefits of Magento 2
- What to Know Before You Start
- A Top Risk-Mitigating Strategy
- The Value of Magento 2 Based on Retailer Data
- Real Insights from a Magento 2.0 retailer.

Why Trust Corra?

One of five Global Elite partners, Corra has worked with Magento for nearly a decade. Corra has won 4 consecutive Magento partner awards, and this year a client on Magento 2 won the Great Explorer Award for International Expansion. Corra participated in the Magento 2 merchant beta program, and in the first six months of 2017, the Corra team has launched Magento 2 sites across 4 continents.

The Top Benefits of Magento 2

We focus in on the data-driven benefits of Magento 2 in later sections. However, our clients have consistently pointed to three key benefits that have made a difference in their ecommerce efforts. If you are just beginning to weigh migration to Magento 2, here are the areas that stand out:

1. **Performance**
   From a performance standpoint, Magento 2 enables faster performance out-of-the-box. This is an important factor to consider, because customers are more likely to leave your site if they experience long page load times.

2. **Security**
   Security enhancements bring forth preventative measures and get rid of vulnerabilities. As a result, retailers gain peace of mind and are able to focus on your number one priority: creating a wonderful site experience.

3. **Admin Interface**
   An improved Admin user interface provides efficiency and flexibility in how ecommerce teams manage their day-to-day. A favorite feature among our clients is the Content Staging and Preview functionality. This feature allows teams to easily create, preview and schedule content updates and promotional campaigns.

Getting Started
What to Know Before You Begin

Revisit and Refresh

Have you been looking to redesign your site? The migration process can be the perfect opportunity to revisit the front-end experience. For instance, you may want to make changes to certain templates in order to leverage Magento 2 native functionality. Or maybe you've been sitting on A/B testing results and want to utilize this time to implement some of those changes.

It's also an opportunity to review the customizations you have in place and find ways to optimize their performance, and which pieces of functionality are actually needed. You should consider any and all of these facets in advance to more easily integrate them into the migration process.

Take advantage of any low-hanging fruit, cut loose anything that isn't serving your business goals, and make those changes you've been putting on hold.

The Cost of Migrating

Magento 2 relies on a different framework than Magento 1, making data and theme migration in itself a significant driver of the cost of the project. In addition, the difficulty of migrating over is highly dependent on the level of customization on your site. A standard migration is considered to be one with very little customizations and few integrations points. Meanwhile, a complex migration could be one that has a lot of customization to the theme, many integrations and custom modules, or various business logic has been applied.

Magento's data shows that for both standard and complex migrations, much of the effort and cost will go toward the front end, customizations, extensions and integrations.

The bullets below, via FitForCommerce, highlight the most significant drivers of cost and time for a migration to Magento 2. Furthermore, Corra's own client data reflects these findings:

Significant Cost-Drivers:
- Data migration
- Complex UI requirements
- Theme migration
- Complex customization of business logic
- Experience of partner
- Early version of extensions
- When Magento 2 was implemented

Not Significant:
- Revenue
- Transaction volume
- Integrations via APIs
- Widely used and mature extensions

Third-party Extensions + Technology Partners

A key component of a smooth migration is selecting the right third-party solutions and extensions. It's important to determine what extensions play well with Magento 2, and whether you will need to make updates or changes. If your site has a lot of extensions installed, we recommend doing the research upfront and reviewing the Magento Marketplace to see what compatible extensions are available. As a result, you will be able to better predict problem areas and issues that may arise.

Another approach is to partner with an agency to do this legwork for you. All of Corra's partners have been vetted for their Magento 2 experience and working extensions. Furthermore, we work closely with our partner network to ensure their technology is up to speed with client and platform requirements. Whether you work

with an agency or evaluate extensions and providers yourselves, it is important make sure the technology works for your needs before you get started.

Preparing for Success

Migrating to Magento 2 provides an enormous opportunity for retailers to access improved site performance and updated features and functionality. It's also a chance to review your current ecommerce practices and refresh for the future.

Setting your organization up for long term success on the Magento 2 platform requires preparation, and now is the time to start. By sorting through the recommendations above, you can begin to lay out a framework to move through a smoother migration.

MVP Champion
A Risk Mitigating Strategy

Retailers considering migrating their ecommerce operation to the Magento 2 platform have a lot to consider from the outset. In addition to third-party extensions, technology partners and cost, there are the various risks unique to each business. It's crucial to develop a plan to mitigate these risks before you begin the migration process. Setting up a framework within your organization can be the key to success when adopting new technology. One great strategy is to appoint a MVP Champion.

What is an MVP Champion?

Website design and build projects require work best with a diverse team of experts – project managers, merchandisers, business analysts, designers, marketers, developers. Instead of having one or two people carrying all aspects of the project, each team member brings varied expertise to the particular role they own on a project.

One role that is often overlooked is the Minimum Viable Product Champion, or MVP Champion. This person doesn't need to be an expert in any particular knowledge area; they just need to be prepared to keep the team focused on the ultimate goal and to repeat what can be the hardest word to say during a project – "no."

The minimum viable product will vary for each project you execute, but the principal remains the same. At the outset of the project, the core stakeholders should list and prioritize the goals of the project. Then the MVP Champion will make the case to the project sponsor on where to draw a line down the priorities list to separate the "must haves" from the "nice to haves." Ultimately the project sponsor

should decide, but the MVP Champion should push to have as few "must haves" as possible since the rest of the project team will almost always push for more features, not less.

It's all too tempting to try to incorporate additional scope into a website rebuild project; after all, it can be more efficient to do more things at once since you're already making changes. But with a replatform to a relatively new software, it becomes even more important to limit the scope of the project to only what you truly need to make up a minimum viable product. The main goal of the project should be the replatform itself, not every bell and whistle anyone on the team has ever hoped for.

Choosing a Champion

So who should you select for this role? The MVP Champion must keep the number of "must haves" to a bare minimum, so it's important this person be someone who is inside the business, who the project sponsor trusts and listens to, and whose sole incentive is to have the site running successfully and stably on Magento 2.

> "If you have a fixed timeline, keeping the project's scope to a minimum is the most important thing you can do to mitigate risk."

If the MVP Champion doesn't understand the business, they won't know where to draw the "minimum viable" line. If the project sponsor doesn't trust or listen to them, their pleas for simplicity will be in vain. And if the MVP Champion is trying to incorporate special features of their own, their integrity is compromised.

It's helpful if the MVP Champion has a project management background. Someone who has experienced how scope, timeline, and budgets can change and seen risks emerge on past projects can better foresee these challenges recurring. But these are not necessities. The key to this role is keeping your (and the rest of the team's) eyes on the prize and making the prize as accessible as possible.

Why Does it Matter?

The advantage you get in having a MVP Champion is you can constantly keep an eye on exactly what is needed and what is not. This makes finding flexibility in budget and timeline a far easier and more scientific process. If you have a fixed timeline, keeping the project's scope to a minimum is the most important thing you can do to mitigate risk. More time to do less work means more buffer. When working on projects for new technologies, more buffer is something you should constantly seek.

Having a strong MVP Champion will also give you confidence in your plan. By stabilizing the scope, you inject stability into each other area of your project plan – your budget, your timeline, your risk profile, etc. Sometimes schedules have to be pulled in unplanned ways. Budgets can get slashed. And when things like these happen, you'll have peace of mind knowing you have an expert who has been pushing for the "must haves" all along. This way, you know what features need to be squeezed into the newly abbreviated timeline or reduced budget.

A team member who can consistently rule items out of scope and reduce complexity will make your project less risky and raise your chances of success. Trusting your MVP Champion's judgment when they rule that new bell or whistle out of scope during the project can sometimes be painful. But when you have a stable, effective site with all the advantages the Magento 2 brings to your business, you'll be happy you did.

The Value of Magento 2
Corra Client Metrics

Often in business, we find ourselves sticking with what works instead of adopting new technologies to drive our strategic goals. This approach has a long history in the ecommerce world, with the mantra being "don't rock the boat too much." IT departments have wrestled with this in regards to installing Windows on workstations for years. This has evolved to the point that Microsoft now supports older environments because their customers don't want to deal with retaining user issues and application upgrade challenges.

While it's important to consider the risks of adopting new technology, it's also worth acknowledging the benefits. When it comes to Magento 2, the benefits are many. The team at Magento has completely reworked the platform with the lessons learned from Magento 1.x, and the result is a list of benefits that should allay any fears one might have about the migration.

The Numbers Prove the Value

Whenever there is an option to upgrade a working, functional system, particularly one that is as entrenched in business as an ecommerce platform, healthy skepticism is important. New features can be great, but as anyone who has bought the newest car or phone design can attest, it seldom is as shiny and awesome as one might assume. This is where a strong endpoint measure of success makes the difference. What are the results, who did it, and how did it turn out?

Fortunately, a large number of sites have moved to the Magento 2 platform already, and Corra has worked with many of them. Any early pain points that new

technologies often experience have been dealt with, giving us a clear picture of the benefits.

Here are the results our clients have seen:

Magento 2 Results from Corra Clients

5-20%
INCREASE IN CONVERSION

10-20%
DECREASE IN BOUNCE RATE

60-100%
INCREASE PAGES PER SESSION
AND TIME ON SITE

60%
DECREASE IN SERVER RESPONSE
AND PAGE DOWNLOAD TIMES

YOY Metrics After Migrating From Magento 1.XX.

These are some great numbers, and ones that any good optimization program would be envious of. While these results also reflect the design work that Corra did to support the projects, we believe that the improvements to site speed, checkout and page load capabilities are a big part of the success.

It's All in the Features

One of the striking numbers above is server performance. Magento 2 has shown marked increases in load times compared to Magento 1 and other platforms. According to Magento, 50% faster load times are typical. Indeed, our benchmarking has validated that this number is generally the floor of the results, with some clients seeing well over 100% improvements after launch. This kind of speed is great for engagement, since the user can move through the site quickly without pausing.

A second area where Magento 2 has done well is in customization. With an

entirely reworked codebase, supported by more extensive APIs, retailers are able to customize without thought to the platform forcing any barriers. This feature, combined with the new extension ecosystem, has positioned Magento as a flexible, extensible and affordable platform solution for a range of businesses.

> With a reworked code in checkout, Magento has not only improved checkout speeds incredibly, but also done so in a way that makes it easy for the user to make that buy.

The way Magento handles extensions has been reworked as well. The library is no longer an open marketplace, but instead a curated garden of tools proven to work on the platform. The goal was to improve the quality of extensions, and ensure that each one is useful, easy to use and install, as well as relevant to the right business. While the marketplace started out slow when Magento 2 first hit the ground, it has since grown exponentially.

Another oft-cited example of improvements in Magento 2 is the one-page checkout capability. With a reworked code in checkout, Magento has not only improved checkout speeds incredibly, but also done so in a way that makes it easy for the user to make that buy. One-page checkout systems are proven to work for the impulse buyer (hello Amazon, we are looking at you), and designing this kind of checkout is much more freeing, as consideration doesn't have to be given to multiple pages, buttons and headers. Moreover, a single page allows for much greater personalization, as CTAs and other upsell options can be positioned more readily without consideration to the step on which it might appear.

What Does it Mean for You?

If we add all this up, we start to see a picture of what Magento 2 brings to the table, namely a solid platform upon which a dynamic, responsive and scalable website can be built. But that is only the beginning of the story. A great design is required to really get some of those great results. More specifically, a design that takes these advantages into account, to create a unified experience that will be effortless for the shopper to travel through.

The Retailer Perspective:
Miracle Ventures' Magento 2 Story

The Background

With more than 20 swimwear brands, Miracle Ventures, is the largest women's swimwear manufacturer in the country. A Corra partner for five years, our two companies have worked on quite a few projects together, including 5 Magento sites. Brian Nowicki, Director of Creative, Ecommerce & Technology, was kind enough to share insights from their latest project – building a Magento 2 site for their new brand, KikiRio.

While most of the other Miracle Ventures brands focus on one-piece swimsuits and tankinis targeted at the women 40+ demographic, their new brand, KikiRio, is aimed at millennials. This brand is an out-of-the-box idea to tackle the bikini swimwear market, and Magento 2 was the solution for them.

"Well, we're a different kind of client because I do the management of a lot of elements of the project," Brian said. While his background is on the creative side, he has absorbed various IT and ecommerce roles as he progressed in his career at Miracle Ventures. Many of his skills are self-learned and self-taught, and he has learned from his fair share of mistakes throughout the process. At this point, however, he has accumulated several years of experience working with the Magento platform.

Working with Magento 2

The other Miracle Ventures sites currently exist in Magento 1.13, with the intent to bring them over to Magento 2 for more stability and expansion capabilities in the

near future. For KikiRio, Brian and his team went with Magento 2 in order to create a new server environment using Rackspace Managed AWS.

From a speed standpoint, Brian says Magento 2 is much better.

The biggest driver of time on the project was a familiar one: product upload. Brian used an extension called uRapidFlow that he has used on Miracle Ventures' other Magento 1 sites. However, the process in the new platform is different, and Brian admits that importing the product catalog took longer than he had anticipated.

So now that KikiRio is up and running on Magento 2, what are his first impressions of the platform? From a speed standpoint, Brian says Magento 2 is much better. His team is very happy with the speed and performance of the site.

Of course, with any new technology, there is a learning curve. One area where this is evident is the user admin, which Brian notes is a significant change compared to the Magento 1 admin his team is used to. He's optimistic that any issues they're encountering will change over time as people learn the new interface, though he does consider this to be a pain point at present.

But even Brian points out a potential solution to this problem, at least for other retailers thinking of making the move to Magento 2.

"I would recommend getting a demo of Magento 2, logging into the demo admin, and playing around there," he said. "My advice would be to try and get familiar with the admin and accustomed to all the changes before you kick off your project."

Conclusion

Wrap Up

Magento 2 is an exciting platform, and many more retailers will continue to make the transition. As you consider if and when it will be right for you, hopefully this guide can serve as a foundation to your success.

If you are interested in learning more about Corra and Magento, please feel free to email us at hello@corra.com.

About Corra

Corra is a global digital agency creating transformative commerce experiences for fashion, beauty and lifestyle brands. Combining award-winning creative skills with technical capabilities concentrated on the Magento, SAP Hybris and Salesforce Commerce Cloud platforms, Corra produces channel-blurred customer journeys designed to create heart-stopping moments and drive measurable results.

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