

C O R R A

Migrating to Magento 2

Introduction

SUMMARY

For years, Magento has been the top ecommerce platform for leading retailers and many are currently considering or planning to migrate to Magento 2. As anyone in the digital commerce industry can tell you, migrating or upgrading an ecommerce platform is no small feat.

We've created this guide to help retailers navigate the process of migrating to Magento 2, and to share key lessons we've learned.

WHAT'S IN THIS WHITEPAPER

- The Top Benefits of Magento 2.3
- 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 retailer

WHY CORRA?

For more than 15 years, Corra has been the global digital agency that experience-driven brands and retailers trust to accelerate their B2B and B2C growth. Working at the intersection of business strategy and customer experience, we are known for our thorough approach to technology assessment and our unmatched ability to deliver complex digital commerce solutions to leading lifestyle brands.



MAGENTO GLOBAL ELITE PARTNER



**2018 #1 MAGENTO COMMERCIAL PARTNER
IN NORTH AMERICA**



**60+ MAGENTO 2 PROFESSIONAL & PLUS
DEVELOPPER CERTIFICATIONS**



LAUNCHED 35+ MAGENTO 2 SITES



4X PARTNER EXCELLENCE AWARD



OMNICHANNEL PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD



**GREAT EXPLORER AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL
EXPANSION**



25 INTERACTIVE MEDIA AWARDS



5 WEB AWARDS



2 CRAIN'S BEST PLACES TO WORK IN NEW YORK



2 NJBIZ BEST PLACES TO WORK IN NEW JERSEY

As the #1 Magento Commercial Partner in North America and one of the first five inaugural Global Elite partners, Corra is a leader in the Magento Partner ecosystem. We have worked with Magento since the platform hit the market in 2008, and we were one of two Global Elite partners to be selected to participate in the Magento 2 Merchant Beta Program. During this pivotal phase, we helped the Magento team fully vet their product roadmap, test the platform across a varied set of use cases, and

drive hundreds of important bug fixes. Solving these complex challenges early and promptly, allowed us to strengthen our core relationship with Magento, get ahead of Magento 2 as a solution and to become known for our ability to tackle complex projects and customizations.

Today, we are proud of our Magento successes, including obtaining more than 60 Magento 2 Professional and Plus developer certifications launching over 35 Magento 2 sites - more than any other competitive agency - and building the world's first B2C and B2B site on Magento Commerce Cloud. For three consecutive years, Magento recognized us as #1 and #2 partner worldwide, an acknowledgment of our unmatched effort in driving innovation and creativity within our client ecosystem. Our other accolades include winning four consecutive Partner Excellence Awards from 2012 through 2015, the 2016 Omnichannel Partner of the Year Award, the 2017 Great Explorer Award for International Expansion, and the 2018 Commercial Partner of the Year Award - Americas. In addition to Magento-specific awards, we have been awarded 25 Interactive Media Awards, five Web Awards, two Crain's Best Places to Work in New York, and two NJBIZ Best Places to Work in New Jersey.

The Top Benefits of Magento 2.3

If you are just beginning to consider migrating your site, you need to understand the top benefits and new features from Magento 2.3. Our clients have consistently pointed to three key benefits that have made a difference in their ecommerce efforts, 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. With Magento 2.3 you will see improved indexing performance through sharding and parallel processing of indexers to reduce the indexation times. Magento has said this significantly reduces the indexation times by over 60% to support large sites and quicker product updates. For example, when Corra migrated St. John Knits to Magento 2, their page load times reduced from 9 seconds to 4 seconds.

2. SECURITY

Security enhancements and new tools bring forth preventative measures, as well as get rid of vulnerabilities on your site. The latest Magento 2.3 features ensure retailers have a protected and trustworthy site; these security features include ReCAPTCHA, Two Factor Authentication, ACL for Cache Management, and WAF for Cloud. This allows retailers to focus on what matters most, creating a powerful site experience.

3. ADMIN INTERFACE

An improved Admin user interface provides efficiency and flexibility in how ecommerce teams manage their day-to-day. This clean interface offers new user-friendly rearrangements from moving Pages and Blocks under Content to moving Email Templates and Promotions under the Marketing section now. They streamlined the process of adding products by adding all default required fields to the first screen of product creation. No more worrying about why your product isn't showing up on the front end, between setting it to Enabled, In stock and adding a quantity greater than 0, Magento 2 has shortened the process to just a few steps. Another process Magento streamlined for users is adding products to a category, users just have to type in a category to add products to it. Checkboxes are now a thing of the past.

Additional Features from Magento 2.3

PWA STUDIO

The PWA Studio allows developers to build front end experiences easily while reducing the time and expertise needed to create engaging mobile experiences. Retailers can see an increase in mobile conversions and shopper engagement with PWA.

PAGE BUILDER

The Page Builder tool was created to save marketers time by giving them the ability to change content faster without having to edit any HTML or CSS code. With this new feature, it will save you time and money, while enables your team to create and update content quicker than ever.

MULTI-SOURCE INVENTORY TOOL

In Magento 2.3, you also have access to the Multi-Source Inventory tool, which will help you streamline your operations. This enables you to view and manage inventory quantities across multiple sources within the Admin, as well as the ability to control what sources within stocks can fulfill orders. Retailers are then able to leverage Magento's Source Selection Algorithm, which automatically selects the best shipments based on the order of sources. These features allow you to understand your inventory in real-time, maintain what fulfills orders for each of your sites and improve your checkout performance.

With all of these new features in 2.3, you are probably contemplating if it's worth the undertaking to migrate to Magento 2 as well as wondering what will happen if you don't upgrade by June 2020. If you keep your site on Magento 1, it will continue to work but Magento will no longer publish Community and Enterprise 1.x security patches, leaving your site vulnerable. PHP 5.6 will also reach the end of life on December 31st, 2018 and will no longer create security updates. You are putting your site and customers at risk by leaving your site on Magento 1. To ensure you are providing a trustworthy shopping experience to your customers, we recommend you move forward with upgrading your site to Magento 2.

Getting Started: What to Know Before You Begin

REVISIT AND REFRESH

Have you been looking to redesign your site? With the updated mobile experience and responsive designs on Magento 2.3, the migration process can be the perfect opportunity to revisit the front-end experience to make improvements. Use this time to evaluate how your visitors experience your site and conduct an audit of what is still needed/not needed and what's missing that can be implemented. 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.

BY MIGRATING TO MAGENTO 2.3, YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO:

- Handle larger volumes of SKUs and daily orders
- Create better mobile designs and site experiences
- Manage and produce your content easier
- Leverage the improved search and SEO features
- Reduce the number of steps to checkout to combat cart abandonment

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 have 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 lists below, via FitForCommerce, highlight the most significant drivers of cost and time for 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 (risk mitigation)
- 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 work 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 to 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 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 A 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 principle 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. Lastly, if the MVP Champion is trying to incorporate special features on 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. The person with this background will foresee these challenges 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 the 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 gives you a buffer. When working on projects for new technologies, a 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 every other area of your project plan – your budget, your timeline, your risk profile, and more. Sometimes schedules have to be pulled in unplanned ways, or budgets can get slashed and when things like this 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 that Magento 2 brings to your business, you’ll be happy you did.

The Value of Magento 2: Success Stories

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 outweigh any risk. 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 a 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 already moved to the Magento 2 platform, and Corra has migrated over 35 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:

These positive results are numbers 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.

5-20%

INCREASE IN CONVERSION

10-20%

DECREASE IN BOUNCE RATE

60%

DECREASE IN SERVER RESPONSE
& PAGE LOAD TIMES

60-100%

INCREASE PAGE SESSION
& TIME ON SITE

IT'S ALL IN THE FEATURES

One of the results showcased 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. Our benchmarking has validated that this number is generally the floor of the results, with some clients seeing well over 100% improvements after launch. Recently, Corra migrated [St. John Knits](#) site to Magento 2 and saw an increase in page load times from 9 seconds to 4 seconds on Magento 2. 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 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, and designing this kind of checkout is easier, as consideration doesn't have to be given to multiple pages, buttons, and headers. The one-page checkout allows for better personalization including CTAs, and other upsell options that can be positioned more readily without considering which step it may 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: a solid platform where 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 see 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. Miracle Ventures has been a Corra partner for five years, where we have worked on many 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 implementing 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-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.

Now with KikiRio up and running on Magento 2, what are Brian's 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 presently.

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. June 2020 will be here sooner than you think, as you consider migrating to Magento 2, 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 lifestyle, fashion, and beauty brands. Combining award-winning creative skills with technical capabilities concentrated on the Magento, SAP Commerce Cloud and Salesforce Commerce Cloud platforms, Corra produces channel-blurred customer journeys designed to create heart-stopping moments and drive measurable results.