

Reliable, more secure, high availability enterprise grade e-commerce made possible with Zend Framework



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Roy Rubin,
Chief Executive Officer,
Varien

Customer: Varien

Geography: Los Angeles

Industry: e-Commerce Web

Challenges:

- "Costs associated with training new developers" were too high.
- Supporting their own in-house framework without the wisdom of an open-source community was proving to be difficult.
- Needed "a professional framework which had support," that is, a company standing behind it where Varien could go for support.

Solution: Zend Framework and PHP 5

Varien, in business since 2001, has been building e-commerce solutions for major clients for over half the lifetime of e-commerce on the web. With clients that process more than 10,000 orders/day using multiple servers and cluster architectures, Varien knows the challenges that face enterprises building reliable, secure, and high-availability web sites and services. The Magento® open-source e-commerce engine that Varien has developed uses PHP 5 and Zend Framework because of the large open-source eco-system that supports and enhances their investment in Zend Framework. "We considered Java & Struts, and had many discussions among our team on which technology to use for Magento (our new e-commerce engine), but once we knew Zend was behind the open-source Zend Framework, encapsulating and supporting the features we needed for our large corporate & enterprise clients, we immediately chose Zend Framework. We're extremely happy with our decision," said Roy Rubin, CEO at Varien.

Since Magento is an open-source project, Varien knew that the code base used to develop it would need to be well documented and easily understood by a large community of developers. PHP 5 and the Zend Framework provided the perfect fit for developing Magento®.

The Challenge

Varien had their own homegrown, in-house framework and found themselves with a workable, but not optimal solution. Varien had chosen PHP for its lower learning curve, stronger community support, and lower costs for maintenance. However, their in-house framework had inherent challenges:

- Hiring talent to use the Varien framework was difficult & not a 'career-builder'
- Two months of training or more was often necessary to get new staff up-to-speed
- Supporting their own framework without the collective open-source community wisdom was proving to be difficult

Says Yoav Kutner, CTO at Varien, "We were happy with our framework, but the costs associated with training new developers were not worth it. We needed a professional framework which had support, would continue to evolve outside of our company, and had a strong community of developers already versed in the code."

The Solution

Varien chose to go with industry standard PHP 5 and the new open source Zend Framework to provide them with an extremely simple, object-oriented, and flexible solution that encapsulates best practices, agile & testing methodologies, and that would result in very rapid development of enterprise-grade web applications. Varien's development teams as well as their e-commerce clients benefit from Zend Framework because it provides them with all of the following:

- Widespread *community support* gives Varien and their Magento users an open source framework with a wealth of documentation and momentum behind it. This enables Magento to grow as developers outside of Varien contribute to the Magento code base and don't need to learn an unfamiliar framework. This benefit also applies to new staff at Varien as well, because Varien can more easily find developers that are already familiar with Zend Framework.
- An *object-oriented library* of code that gives them a simple and painless transition to data-using web services. Web services are especially important in e-commerce where the sharing of information between various fulfillment, payment, and other programs is integral to successful business practices and work flow.
- A *use-at-will architecture* that enables Magento developers to use Zend Framework for the functionality they need and not be burdened by any parts they don't. Flexibility is an important part of the design of Zend Framework and this philosophy continues to guide the ease-of-use and modular nature of future enhancements as well.
- *Licensing* that protects not only Varien, but the entire ecosystem of products that get built upon the Magento code base, allowing Varien's customers to build, extend, and deploy many applications on their Zend Framework & Magento engine code with greatly reduced worry about later intellectual property issues.

"We chose Zend Framework because it had a committed company behind it, a strong community, and because it would continue to evolve and become an increasingly standard code base."

Yoav Kutner,
Chief Technical Officer,
Varien

"We chose the Zend Framework not only because it had a committed company behind it," said CTO Yoav Kutner, "but because it also had a strong community. We saw that the Zend Framework would continue to evolve and Magento would benefit as an open-source product in its own right, because it would use an increasingly standard code base."

With a clear roadmap for companies to depend upon in the future, Zend Framework is the leading open-source PHP framework and it has a flexible design that lets you easily build modern web applications and web services.

The Result

With their team of over fifty PHP, Web 2.0, and HTML developers and designers, Varien has built with Zend Framework a new industry-standard e-commerce engine, Magento, that is reliable, secure, and engineered for performance. Magento provides integration with multiple online stores, call centers, and real-time brick & mortar point-of-sale (POS) retail systems on-site.

Roy Rubin, Varien's CEO, makes the point, "We made the decision to go with Zend Framework to enhance our PHP development. By switching from our own framework to the open-source Zend Framework we have been able to significantly reduce our development time and better service our clients."

For more information please see: framework.zend.com