

BLOG | MAGENTO MIGRATION

Is Magento a good fit for me?

JOANNA SUAU
June 7th, 2019

Magento was one of the first solid eCommerce solutions to enter the market. It's known to be the first open source PHP-based commerce platform. If you Google "eCommerce platform", Magento features high on the first page of the search results.

At a first glance, it looks like a perfect out-of-the-box solution for those who want to set up their store quickly and run it efficiently. And for a long time it was the best-of-breed option when said choice was limited to a handful of options available on the market.

However, with time, the approach to eCommerce changed drastically. Along came the omnichannel approach that retailers had to embrace if they wanted to keep up with competition. With this shift came the concept of headless commerce solutions that can handle the ever-growing demand for more and more commerce channels.

With so many commerce solutions available on the market, retailers nowadays have a much bigger choice of platforms best suited for their business. For this exact reason, we have created the ultimate buyer's guide that entails all the major considerations when choosing an eCommerce solution, to help with evaluating your eCommerce solution options.

Should retailers choose Magento?

The short answer is both yes and no. It all depends on individual circumstances. We know how important it is to tailor a commerce solution to your needs, thinking about the current business requirements and future ability to grow, change, and adapt. If you are considering Magento, but don't know whether it will be a good option for you, this article may help you take an informed decision.

There are, of course, plenty of use cases where Magento is a good choice. Similarly, there are a lot of use cases where using Magento is not an ideal solution. Below, we will list all the use cases that has our Magento stamp of approval, and then we will move on to the scenarios where you should consider an alternative as a result of some of the problems with Magento. In case we've missed a scenario that is vital to your business, don't hesitate to contact our solution specialists that will help you evaluate your individual situation.

Use cases where Magento is a good solution

No budget, time or resource constraints

Magento is certainly a good choice for well-established retail giants that don't need to think twice about their budget, and can spend a lot of time and resources on adapting the platform to their needs. Typically, they would already host their store on some powerful server and wouldn't be too concerned about high minimum technical requirements you need to meet to run a store on Magento efficiently.

Similar recommended platforms: Shopify Plus

All-in-one solution

It is also a good solution for those who want to have an all-in-one solution that covers all major aspects of retail to feel confident that they haven't missed anything important, like an inventory management system, robust catalog, currency localization, customer notifications, reporting, handling of taxes and shipping, etc. If you are not too particular about details such as the type of carrier you want to use, Magento could be your go-to guy (well, platform). It natively supports a lot of great features that you don't have to look for, they're already integrated in the platform, or you can buy a Magento extension to plug in.

Similar recommended platforms: Shopify Plus

Community-backed platform

If you're looking for a platform that's backed by a thriving community of users and developers, Magento is also a good option. It's been on the market for many years and it has invested heavily in building a strong community and partnerships. To the point that you can hire a Magento certified developer who knows all the nooks and crannies to advise you along the way. There's a lot of forums and even a dedicated Stack Overflow channel where Magento users and developers help each other.

Similar recommended platforms: Shopify, Wix

Low technical knowledge required from store admins

Magento is perfect for the retailers with very low or no technical knowledge who wants to keep tabs on the store's administrative side. Magento's dashboard is feature rich and it has a low barrier to entry, so it doesn't take a genius to learn how to master the basics in short time. Similarly, for more advanced knowledge, it's fairly easy to find courses and suitable online help.

Having said that, please note that you would still need a technical-minded person to install Magento and set up your store, or customize and plug in extensions for you.

Similar recommended platforms: Shopify, Shopify Plus

When you should think twice about choosing Magento

Below, you'll find a list of major use cases in which we think Magento will prove a bad fit for you. Not because it's a bad solution, but because you can do much better or cheaper with an alternative. Each use case presented will provide you with an alternative we think you should consider instead.

Customer-driven commerce

If you are all about a seamless customer experience, you need to think like a customer. What do they expect from a retailer? How do they shop? How do they use a commerce channel?

Keeping up with customer trends means being agile and able to innovate when necessary. This is something Magento is not good at. Megento is a generic platform that is great for retailers who want a standard, solid, out-of-the-box solution they can easily manage.

However, be aware that there seems to be a clear discord between what a customer expects from a commerce channel and what retailers think it's important. These misconceptions often lead to a clunky shopping journey and many frustrated individuals on both sides. It becomes painfully obvious especially during peak holiday season when demand is so huge that many retail sites crash under the load of traffic.

So if you truly want to ride the innovation wave and appeal to your customers, you need to build your retail experience around usability, which comes down to two basic factors, ease of use and speed of delivery. If your retail channel is fast and secure, and the checkout process is hassle-free, you're guaranteed the customers will love it.

Is there an alternative?

The most cost-effective and easy to implement alternative is an API-first solution. An eCommerce API is easy to customize and adapt to your customer needs. They are also great for optimizing performance. It is fairly easy to add, update, or replace existing integrations, so you can make sure you always use best-of-breed solutions available on the market without the need to replatform.

Recommended platforms: Elastic Path, Commercetools, Moltin

True omnichannel experience

Some businesses recognize the importance of omnichannel, which they no longer treat as a nice-to-have but a mandatory requirement. A true omnichannel, as opposed to multichannel strategy, needs to create a seamless, fluid, and consistent journey on any device a customer uses to interact with a brand.

If you're an advocate for an omnichannel experience, Magento will prove a cumbersome solution. It's been designed to support its main channel of distribution well, the website. Anything beyond that is not natively supported, not even mobile. The only way to add some responsiveness is to invest heavily in a Magento-certified specialist to help you adapt your project for mobile users, or if you are a Magento 2 user, buy a mobile app building extension that you can plug into your system.

Is there an alternative?

Any headless platform will get you to where you want to be in less time and for less money. Additionally, there's no device onto which you can't deploy your project, be it a website, mobile, IoT, smartTV, wearable, VR/AR, etc. All you need to do is to think how many channels you need and make them look and feel consistent.

Recommended platforms: Moltin, Snipcart, React Commerce

Feature-rich solution

One thing you can't accuse Magento of is being stingy with features. This is the main reason Magento 1 platform was initially so popular. Retailers were able to simply purchase extensions they were interested in, adapt them to their system, and start using them almost straight away. In theory Magento sounds impressive.

In practice, it can quickly grow to an unruly beast if you don't have a proper system to maintain it; and the bigger it gets, the more difficult it becomes to handle. Firstly, due to its size, each request needs a lot of memory to get processed. This has a huge impact on the performance of sites that run on Magento, especially at peak traffic. Secondly, it gets increasingly difficult to add new features, because of the ever-growing system dependencies. The platform becomes unstable and easy to break. By now, you are probably familiar with the phrase "locked within a monolith platform". It is not only a marketing slogan, but a common problem for those who opted for an all-in-one solution that they ended up outgrowing.

Is there an alternative?

A good alternative for this would be an architecture that is designed to grow with the business. Typically, it would have a core system that will allow for multiple integrations and at the same time orchestrate the entire intricate web of features and services to work seamlessly together as one organism.

Recommended platforms: BigCommerce, Moltin, Woocommerce

Best-of-breed technology stack

Seamless and tailored integrations that solve the unique needs of a business are considered by some the cornerstone of each well-designed architecture. They allow to think in terms of "the sky's the limit" and mash up the existing platform with only best-of-breed services that interact with each other seamlessly and in real time.

Magento locks you into a very specific technology stack and rigid and brittle integration patterns. If you want to add anything, you are confined to a handful of extensions that you can purchase and plug into your project. There's no room for innovation or choice. Additionally, as we've mentioned before, the more extensions you get the more difficult Magento is to maintain, unless budget is not an issue for you, in which case you can invest in a powerful hosting provider to carry the load efficiently.

Sadly, the outdated and thus sub-optimal technology stack is also true for the new shiny Magento 2, which has been announced back in 2013, but not released until 2017. The framework chosen to built the newer version of Magento, Knockout, was in its peak of fame back then, but the usage and interest in this solution quickly plummet among the developer communities around the world due to the major performance issues when building complex systems. Basically, the bigger the code base, the harder it is to maintain the entire system, and Magento's code base size and complexity is quite impressive (see the video below).

The unfortunate case of Magento 2 technology stack selection shows us how important the speed-to-market is and how vital it is to use the most modern technologies if you want to be the best in your field.

Is there an alternative?

A platform that advocates and actively supports the open architecture approach would be the perfect solution for you. You'll need to find a solution that will serve as a glue and orchestrate your entire network of cutting-edge tooling of your choice, so that you can be on top of best-of-breed solutions and innovate as you seem fit, easily discarding old integrations and replacing them with more modern ones.

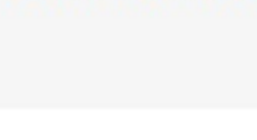
Recommended platforms: Moltin, Snipcart, Woocommerce

Summary

Whether you'll be happy with Magento or left frustrated all boil down to your expectations and what you're planning to use it for. Hopefully, this article provided some food for thought in your quest to find the best solution for your commerce endeavour. Make sure your checklist of must-have features includes parameters like: price, ease of integration, and flexibility, so you take an informed decision not just in the spur of the moment but for the years to come.

Stay on top of industry trends with the latest blogs and articles from our eCommerce experts.

Share on



Joanna Suau

Like what you're reading?

Check out some of our other great content here

BLOG

The truth about Apple Pay for ecommerce

BLOG

How to choose an ecommerce chatbot (14 solutions reviewed)

BLOG

B2B Mobile Commerce Apps are Hot: Here's Why

PRODUCT

Overview

Developer Docs

Request Free Trial

SOLUTIONS

Automotive

Consumer Products

Manufacturing

Healthcare

Wholesale

Ecommerce APIs

Headless Commerce

Microservices

PARTNERS

Become a Partner

Solutions Partners

Technology Partners

Tech Blog

SUPPORT

Customer Support

Community Forum

Training

RESOURCES

Customer Case Studies

Ecommerce Blog

Resource Library

Developer Docs

Tech Blog

COMPANY

About Us

Careers

Contact Us

News

Privacy Policy

Terms of Use

