Netstarter's Guide to Magento 2
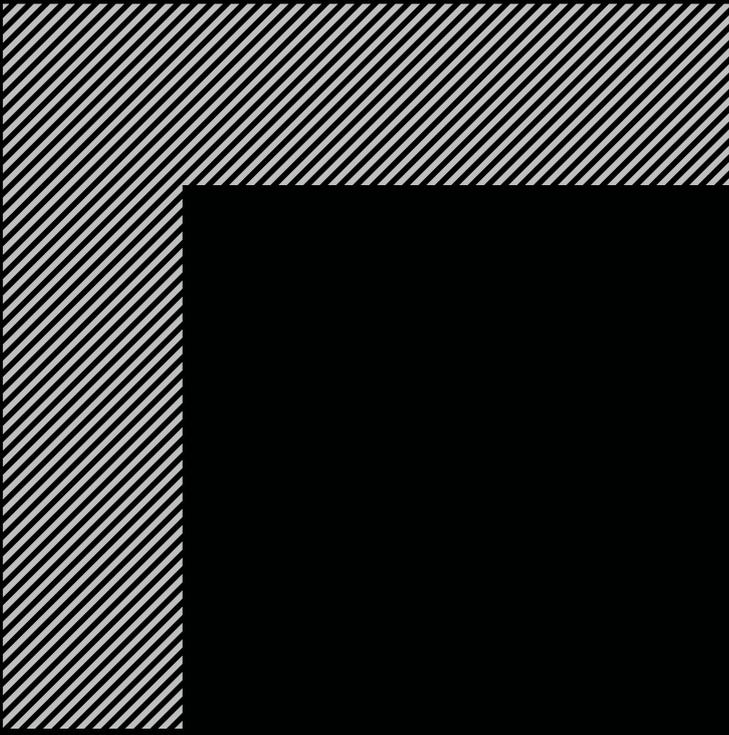
netstarter
a salmat company

Ensuring a smooth transition to the world's best eCommerce platform

If you were waiting for market approval to get on board with Magento 2, this is it. Like its predecessor, Magento 1, Magento 2 ranks alongside the top eCommerce platform solutions in the world while continuing to be more cost effective than the competition. Its integration is faster and more efficient, with the design flexibility to highlight your unique market niche.

As Magento 1.x is phased out – Magento will now only provide security patches and the clock is ticking on this as well – it's time to make the transition to Magento 2.x. The new platform provides a superior experience based on vastly updated technology, i.e. new coding structures and database architecture. This is not an upgrade. It is a full-scale re-platforming for your business that will take time in order to minimise the disruption to your business.

With that in mind:

- This is an opportunity to review your marketing strategy today and set your business up for success for the next several years.

- Don't get left behind. The early adopters have come and gone, issues have been ironed out and it is now time to move. Don't wait until you're unable to grow your business on the old platform. Migration doesn't have to be a complex process. Netstarter is here to help minimise risk and make your migration as smooth as possible.

What is ⬡ Magento®

Magento is a top-performing platform for digital buying and selling. It is available in both open source and commercial enterprise editions.

All versions are based on the flexible architecture that Magento is known for, enabling merchants to personalise the customer experience according to the business's USP. Merchants can individualise stores within the digital shop using pre-set extensions or by designing their own.

Previously, that flexibility could be overwhelming and ROI proved difficult. Users and system integrators were tasked with creating their own basic features such as mobile-friendly design, or employing coding companies to have crucial features added. This all changed with Magento, but ultimately, Magento 1 has passed its used by date and is now limited in its core speed, and slow speeds on the previous platform will no longer be fixed with upgrades.

In 2015, Magento announced the release of Magento 2, which utilises a modern technology stack to improve on speed and ease of use both on the customer side and the merchant side. Magento 2 is an overhaul in technology that delivers on the promise of vastly improved performance. It has gone a long way to fix the pitfalls of its predecessor and integrate high-performing extensions.

Customers and merchants now benefit from the streamlined processes and the scalability to allow your business to grow. Estimates put Magento 2 running around 20 per cent faster than Magento 1.

L

> "Magento 2 is an overhaul in technology that delivers on the promise of vastly improved performance."

The platform better facilitates sales and promotes search engine optimisation, not to mention offers new features and partnerships built directly into the platform – all of which comes out of the box and functions across multiple devices.

In May 2016, Magento also released a Cloud edition that removes the merchant's responsibility for hosting and infrastructure. This new service allows for a transition to continuous deployment. This is enabled by a best in class DevOps, release management and management tools for simple and easy upgrades, testing and rapid deployment.

Start migrating now

Migrating your eCommerce site is not a small task. This is a big milestone for your business, and it's important to carefully evaluate your current extensions and technical capability before making the switch.

But keep in mind that the industry is already embracing the modern technology available with Magento 2, and merchants are migrating en masse.

Delaying the migration puts your business at risk of limiting your potential for growth. Merchants are starting to see operations slow as they reach a limit on the volume of traffic, the number of transactions and the number of products that are supported by the Magento 1 platform. Upgrades are no longer available.

While the sites continue to function, operations are no longer as efficient. Sites that do not migrate may eventually need to rely on costly custom workarounds to keep running day-to-day.

"It doesn't have to be a complex process. Netstarter is here to help minimise risk and make your migration as smooth as possible."
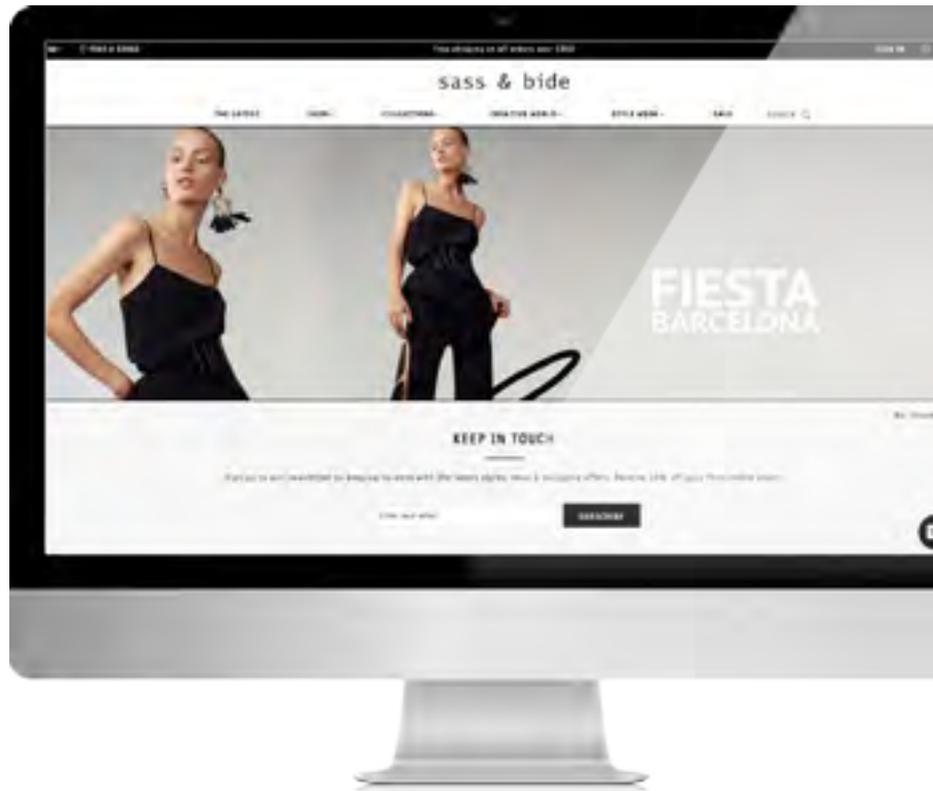
Key features

Magento 2 promises enhanced performance and scalability. New features increase conversion rates through productivity improvements that boost your business's agility. These features address functionality on the merchant management side, as well as the customer experience.
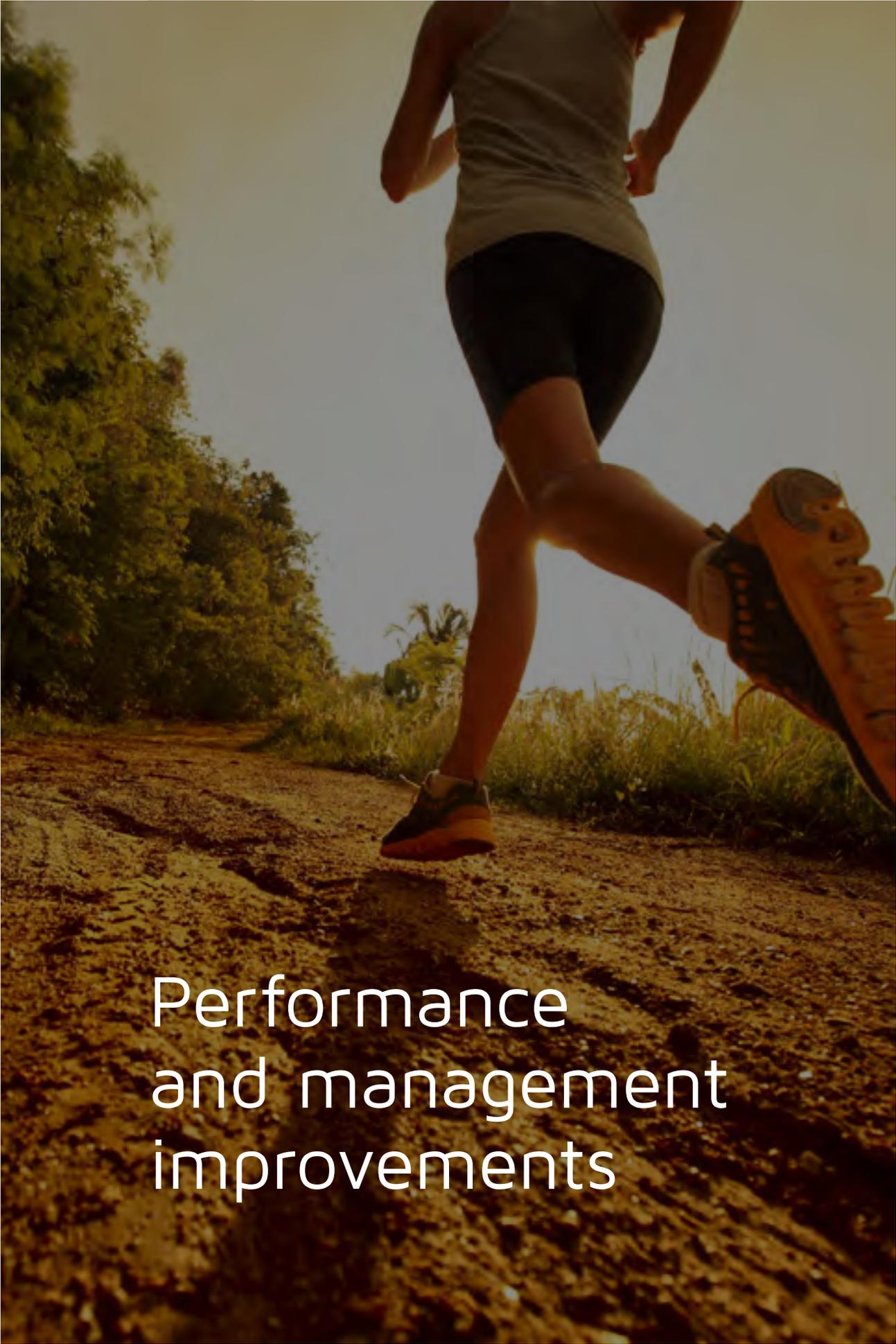
Performance
and management
improvements

Server side features

Version 2.x introduces native caching support by partnering with software provider Varnish. One traditional issue with Magento has been its heavy reliance on caching, which is used to speed up website rendering for customers. By introducing Varnish, Magento 2 significantly reduces its reliance on caching while supporting a better caching solution. This optimises catalogue rendering while making menu options available without leaving the server.

Database scale

As business grows, Magento 2 allows the merchant to split out databases in order to streamline more requests. Traditional grouping into one database on a single server means requests during high volume trading, such as sales, can slow each other down. The split server allows multiple avenues for database support for products, order management and checkout.

Content scaling

On the product end, merchants have increased capacity to grow the number of individual SKUs any one website supports. This is enabled by Magento 2 Enterprises split database structure.

New Admin interface

Magento has now introduced responsive design as part of its overall offer, extending to the Admin interface itself.

The biggest advantage to the new Admin interface is its ability to render on mobile. The previous iteration didn't include a mobile optimised view, so although a number of apps were created separately to manage your website from a mobile device, they never accessed the full feature set of the standard Admin.

In addition to the mobile view, the design is touch-screen friendly, changing the size of icons for the size of the screen. At any point someone on a tablet or smart phone can interact easily with the opening console.

The new Admin also features customisable grids for better control on product filters, and the ability to remove and re-order columns along a grid. These grids can then be saved under the Views tab for regular use.

Product creation and rich content

Product creation is faster because of server side changes where rich content allows for quicker rendering out of the database. Although this has always been a Magento feature, Magento 2 makes the process less demanding in the backend. Achieve more efficient response times thanks to new guided product creation workflow and integrations with YouTube and Vimeo.

Import/export improvements

Running product exports during sales used to be a significant problem for the server. Now those loads have been reduced, making imports and exports easier to manage, as well as increasing the functionality. Magento 2 can import 100,000 records in 20 minutes while exporting the same amount in six minutes.

All product types and options can be easily updated by loading a single file. Magento has also updated the field labels to make them more user friendly for their merchants.

Magento 2 also has improved error handling by providing a downloadable CSV file to highlight row errors. For instance, merchants can now export any customer or product data, and manipulate that data at any point outside Magento before pushing it out to an email service provider – something existing Magento users will appreciate.

Customer experience enhancements
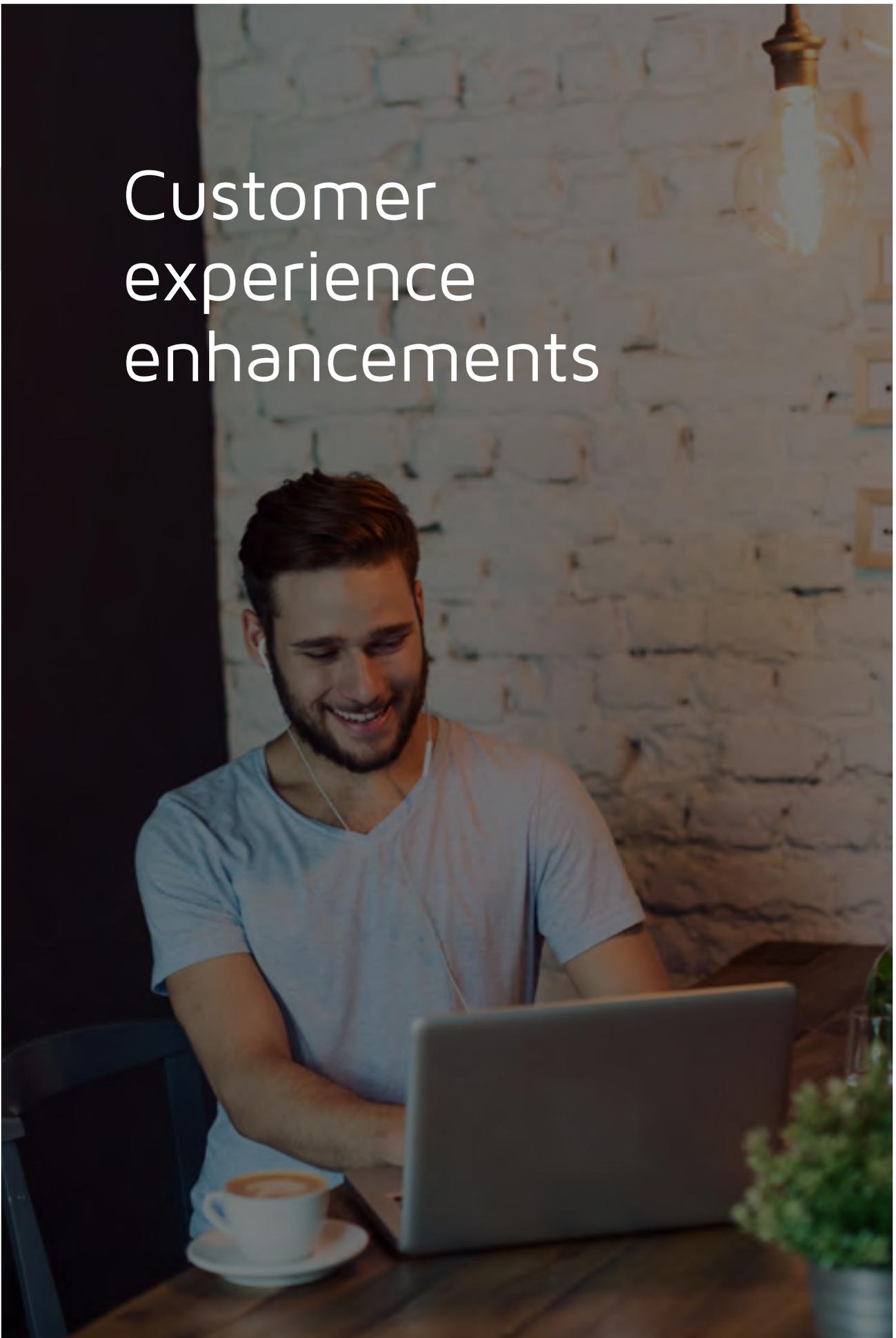
Client side features

One of the biggest client side changes is the improvement to checkout features. Magento 2 has reworked the way the checkout renders to allow multiple products to be added to the cart faster. Merchants can now process a cart with more than 300 line items.

One issue that will always exist is the inability to place a cart under cache because of the dynamic nature of the content at any point in time. You can only cache content that doesn't change regularly, like product data and content. User details and products added to cart are dynamic in nature and so can't be cached.

With the goal to optimise the speed and performance of the checkout to facilitate sale, Magento 2 has partnered with Varnish to change the way the site renders, and the process that brings products and customer data to the checkout. As a result of the partnership, indexers can run without any impact on the customer experience. Processes are now done in parallel and are less reliant on a single funnel into the database.

Partnerships with PayPal and Braintree Payments further expedite the checkout process and assist PCI compliance. Customers can now pay with PayPal without leaving the site. They also offer direct access to securely saved credit cards to better serve repeat customers.

Fields hosted by Braintree collect sensitive payment information at checkout through small, transparent iframes that replace individual payment fields. Magento's Admin also offers direct access to Braintree settlement reports.

Elastic Search

Netstarter has found that customers are going straight to a page's search engine rather than going through a traditional navigation. This approach is more efficient for a customer who already knows what they want.

The Elastic Search tool indexes all of the information a merchant needs to quickly and efficiently answer any customer query. This is a significant improvement that allows for the support of synonyms and stop words, but it is also built on a server that allows for scaling both horizontally and vertically, catering for increased traffic by either increasing the size of the servers or by increasing the number of servers.

Elastic Search supports 33 languages out of the box. Smart indexing ensures that it doesn't impact customers. As you create your database and increase the number of queries, the tool has the ability to scale along with the merchant, all with minimal setup. This includes applications for reporting, personalisation, performance and storage, with real time data and analysis – to determine what people are searching for and what opportunities you as a merchant could be missing.

Enhanced CMS

At the end of 2016, Magento acquired BlueFoot, the host of its popular CMS and page builder module, which is expected to be integrated directly into Magento coding for version 2.3.

Improvements to the management interfaces allow for streamlined searches in the Admin, the set-up of search synonyms and the creation of new content. Previously building and creating content was limited by the ability of the merchant or user to manipulate HTML.

Highlights of the CMS include BlueFoot's defining drag-and-drop functionality, which allows users to build content-rich product pages – all without technical expertise.

Whether you want to drag-and-drop groups of products onto a page or use third party content such as Google Maps, YouTube and Vimeo, it is now easier than ever to integrate static blocks (aka content blocks) in order to better design all areas of a website.

B2B modules

Magento acknowledges the potential for growth into the B2B market. With its commercial edition, Magento 2 provided a new release for merchants whose main customers are companies, or for B2C merchants to grow their B2B solution within the platform.

The B2B function includes support and management of quote requests, as well as shortcuts such as ordering by SKU, creating requisition lists and re-ordering.

In the commercial edition, companies have control of their own accounts and account hierarchy, and the ability to assign super users with different levels of permission. This allows a merchant to set limits on how much clients can buy against their account, or whether they can hold an account at all.

The merchant can also assign specific catalogues for different accounts to view. For instance, a hardware customer and a landscape customer may purchase similar products, but a merchant can provide different offerings through separate catalogues, specifically tailoring products to your customers' needs and providing opportunities to promote new products to different customer groups, as well as tiered pricing depending on a category group designated within the module.

Merchants can easily respond to quote requests, as Magento simply directs the request to a responsible party who can authorise discounts within the workflow. The B2B market also requires efficient product re-ordering, or the ability to include amendments, both of which are featured in the new module.

Continuing to focus on growth, the module features a flexible application programming interface for easy integration with enterprise resource planning solutions from Magento partners like Netstarter.

The separate module also enables B2B product data and customers to be hosted in the same database, despite having the same product data and different prices for B2C customers.

“ Magento 2 built out a new release specifically for B2B. ”

Netstarter Stack

Netstarter Stack

For more than 12 years, Netstarter has delivered enterprise-level eCommerce solutions for B2C and B2B customers. We combine industry-leading technology with commerce innovation and proven digital marketing strategies to help brands achieve success with Magento Enterprise. Using that experience we have created a tailored module stack for our merchants.

The Netstarter Stack is the streamlined solution to complete the Magento 2 migration. It features eight modules essential to meeting your customers' expectations of the modern eCommerce experience.

Search Engine Optimisation

It is crucial to configure the Magento site upon and after installation. The SEO module automatically facilitates the recommended SEO configurations upon installation. It creates on-page optimisation on category, product and CMS pages. Pagination implementation also improves website crawlability.

Schema data called rich snippets are used to send organisation details to search engine result pages through seven key features:

- Logos and Products use schema data to send organisation and product-related details to search engine result pages.

- Breadcrumbs use schema data to portray how a product has been structured in the site.

- Reviews display the review count for individual products.

- Social tags send social media-related links within the structured site.

- Sitelink Search Boxes implement a site search box inside Google search result pages.

- Data layer attributions implement a set of variables that assist the data flow to Google Analytics, which can be useful in creating custom reports.

- Enhanced eCommerce tracking introduces a complete revamp of traditional tracking by providing more ways to collect and analyse eCommerce data, such as shopping behaviour analysis.

Checkout

Our highly optimised single-step checkout process incorporates a number of value-added features to streamline the user experience and improve conversions.

This module supports a responsive design, contains mobile optimised input fields, allows users to create an account post checkout, overcomes PayPal rounding issues, supports DPID (Delivery Point Identification) validation, integrates with advanced freight calculators, eliminates unnecessary fields, features a post checkout survey, and integrates with leading payment gateways and fraud protection tools.

The checkout can be easily customised to accommodate the specific requirements of your business and is available in a number of different design layouts.

> **Netstarter Stack streamlines the user experience and improves conversions.**

Multi-select attribute swatch

The category listing page allows customers to refine their product searches. The multi-select feature provides the same product for different attribute values, allowing products to be properly filtered even when removing the attribute selections. For instance, an attribute selection for the colour red will return with a list including product A (a dress for example), which is red and black.

Store Locator

This module helps customers find a store near them using a suburb or postcode, and can be globally configured. Location can also be determined by refining the search by state, area or current position. Store location information also drills down to specific store details such as opening hours.

Postcode Auto-complete

This module generates different regional postcodes across Australia. Postcodes are important not only to populate the addresses in customer accounts and checkouts, but also in the frontend store locator searches.

Address Auto-complete

Like the Postcode Auto-complete module, this module populates fields requiring customer mailing information.

FAQ Manager

This module allows merchants to create FAQ categories to aid the customer in finding the answers they require. The responsive feature includes the ability for the merchant to include contact details so the customer can ask further questions directly if required.

netstarter
a salmat company

No matter whom you use to facilitate your eCommerce migration, it's important to partner with a provider that understands just how different the new Magento 2 framework is compared to the Magento 1 platform.

Netstarter is the trusted advisor for Magento 2 migrations and builds in Australia and New Zealand, and we are Australia's largest eCommerce agency. We have been a creator and distributor of marketing content for companies doing business in the Asia Pacific market since 2005.

Magento recognises Netstarter as a longstanding and esteemed Enterprise partner, and we have been recognised time and again for outstanding work. Our experts are already proving our prowess in Magento 2 by winning Magento's Excellence Award for Best Web Design 2017 alongside Australian fashion brand sass & bide for its launch in July 2016. We are a three-time Magento site of the year winner for the last three consecutive years (2015, 2016 and 2017), and were named Magento's Partner of the Year APAC 2017.

Our longstanding partnership with Magento stretches back to 2011, and we remain a forerunner with the platform. Netstarter was the first partner worldwide to launch a website on Magento 2, and we deliver the highest number of Magento 2 sites in the region since its launch in 2015.

Magento entrusts us with the rescue and support of existing Magento merchants, as Netstarter's team of developers are leaders in innovation and creativity. Our collaborative approach brings together dedicated specialists in the full spectrum of digital commerce, including CRM, hosting, email marketing, ERP, social and search, so our merchants can power their campaigns.
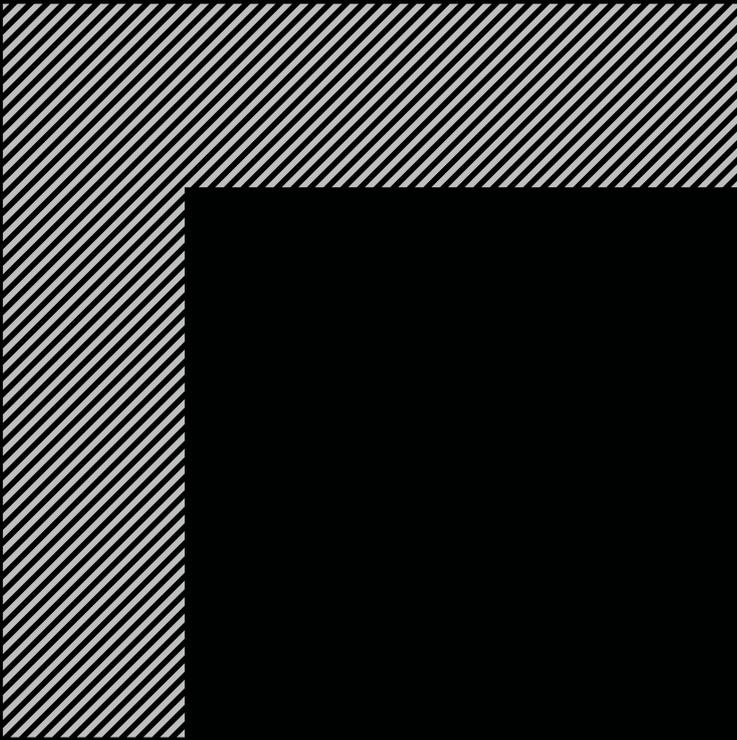
We look forward to continuing to deliver complex Magento solutions for some of Australia's biggest brands as well as yours.

" Netstarter is a forerunner in Magento 2,
delivering the highest number of Magento
2 sites in the region since launch. Magento
is proud to recommend Netstarter as an
Enterprise partner able to deliver and
service any merchant. "

Sydney

Level 2, 116 Miller Street
North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia

contact@netstarter.com
Phone 1300 725 628

Melbourne

Level 7 South Tower, 485 La Trobe Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia

contact@netstarter.com
Phone 1300 725 628