Magento Success Story

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ABOUT THE CLIENT

This client is a precious metal dealer that originally launched in 2012 with a goal of selling the lowest cost, highest quality bullion available. It began as an offshoot to a website that discusses the precious metal market and the value of hard assets and preparation. When they wanted to provide a resource for readers to purchase gold and silver bullion, the client's eCommerce site was born.

Not only does this client have some of the best precious metal prices in the market, they also offer secure storage solutions for precious metals investors.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The client had started to outgrow their legacy eCommerce platform. Their existing site was not very user friendly, especially for their internal users. There had been a lot of developer involvement in the creation of the site, making it difficult for business users to make a change without getting IT involved.

The precious metal industry is rife with fraud issues, which was another issue that the client wanted to address for the security of their customers. In keeping with their 'Lowest Price. Period.' commitment to their customers, there is not a great deal of price inflation to protect against fraud. If someone were to get away with a fraudulent order it could take days to recoup those losses. With average order values in the thousands of dollars, that is not a liability that the client can afford. Upgrading their eCommerce site would give them the opportunity to further improve their fraud prevention capabilities.

The client decided to move to Magento to not only make their site easier to manage, but to ensure that their site could continue to change and grow with their company. Leveraging an industry-leading platform would also provide their customers with a safe, easy, and secure process for purchasing precious metals. This also allowed them to set goals to increase average monthly site users and annual revenue.

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TECH TALK

eCommerce Platform:
Magento Commerce 2.x

ERP:
Linnworks

Fraud Prevention:
Signifyd and Kount

Third-Party Modules:
Optimonk, nFusion, Dotmailer

The overall solution to the client's eCommerce site was to re-platform their site from their legacy UberCart platform onto Magento Commerce 2. Their industry specifications required integrations with fraud prevention tools, more advanced transactional email communication capabilities, and real-time precious metal market pricing feeds, as well as admin customizations for customer service order entry and review. Along with those integrations and modules, Magento was integrated with their existing ERP, Linnworks.

Fraud Prevention

Due to the very real threat of fraud in the precious metals industry, we integrated Magento with fraud prevention tools Signifyd and Kount. These two tools work with the client's custom order process to prevent fraudulent orders from being approved.

Kount and Signifyd review an order before and after the order is created in Magento respectively. So, when a customer places an order, that order is first reviewed by Kount, which will either approve the order, decline the order, or put the order under review. If the order is approved by Kount, then the order is created in Magento.
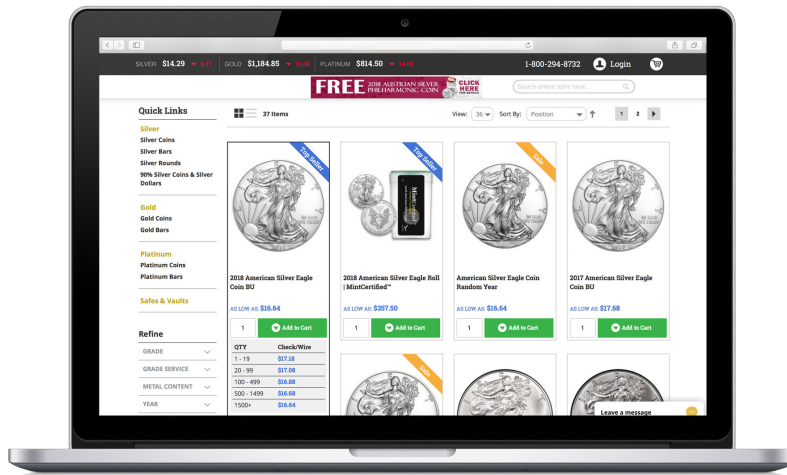
The order is only reviewed by Signifyd if it meets the criteria established by the client. They decided to only move orders on to Signifyd's review if the account placing the order is less than four months old. So, if a shopper who has been with the client for years places an order, that order will be reviewed by Kount and then sent through the order lifecycle. If a new user places the order, the order will be reviewed by Kount and then by Signifyd before moving through the rest of the order lifecycle.

If an order is placed under review by either Kount or Signifyd, that review is a manual process. An order under review can have a rather lengthy lifecycle as the order is manually reviewed by both Kount and, if needed, Signifyd.

Once the order has been cleared by Signifyd and Kount, the payment is validated by both companies, the funds are verified, and the order goes through. All of these specific steps required additional customizations by our team in Magento. We built the entire workflow for the order lifecycle based on whether an order is approved, declined, or put under review at every step of the way. We also customized how data is communicated between our client and Kount or Signifyd. These thorough layers of security are necessary to safeguard the client's revenues.

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Marketing Activities

This client has one of the most sophisticated online marketing strategies of any client we have worked with. They do everything that they can as far as online marketing goes: not only are they marketing their products, but they are optimizing site content for SEO and executing Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP). An additional page view is just as valuable to them as a sales conversion. They are also using more traditional ads and affiliate marketing.

In order to maximize these marketing efforts, the client wanted to leverage some third-party tools that integrate with Magento, primarily Optimonk. Optimonk uses onsite retargeting to get users more subscribers and customers. The software tracks visitor behavior, detects existing visitors, and displays targeted offers to boost conversions.

The client is using Optimonk to market their products on other sites as well as setup marketing activities on their own site. For example, Optimonk displays a targeted offer to visitors when an exit intent is triggered. So, when a customer goes to close out of the window or tab, a popup will be displayed to try to entice them to keep browsing or make a purchase.

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At the heart of the client's marketing strategy is content marketing. This business started as a blog discussing the precious metal market and the value of hard assets and preparation. What started as a site to discuss those topics has turned into a source of podcasts, videos, and written content as well as interviews with precious metal insiders. All of that content works to drive potential customers to the eCommerce site.

Dotmailer Email Integration

Due to all of the different fraud prevention steps required to verify a purchase, the client needed extended transactional email capabilities in order to keep their customers informed as their order progresses through the fulfillment process. While Magento's transactional emails are great for sending order confirmation or shipping update notifications, the client's purchasing process required something more detailed. In order to achieve the level of communication the client required between their system and their customers, we integrated Dotmailer.

Dotmailer has an existing Magento module that we were able to leverage in this instance. Our team customized the status changes in the Magento product flow, then indicated to Dotmailer that when a product reaches a certain status to send out a designated email. Along with these custom emails, the Dotmailer module is handling all of the client's email needs. This allows for more control and better continuity across all emails.
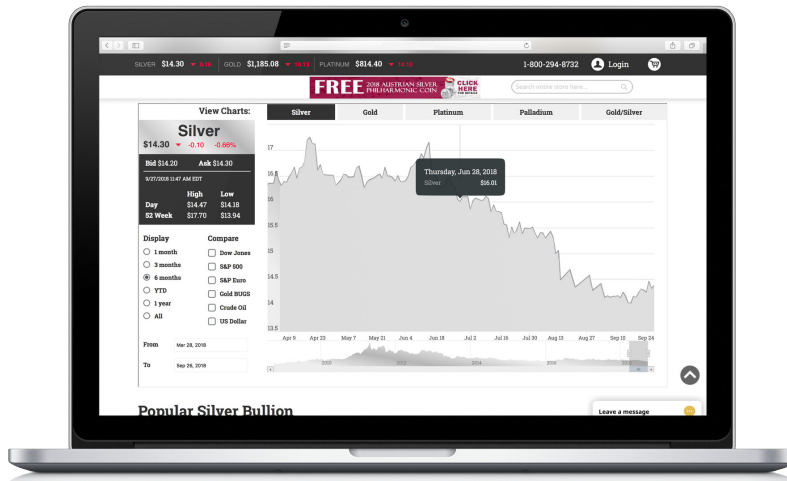
nFusion Pricing Integration

One issue with working in the precious metal industry is that pricing changes constantly. The market price of gold or silver is not constant, and retailers need to keep up with those changes. Because of this variability, this client was not able to utilize Magento's pricing engine. Instead, our team built an integration between Magento 2 and nFusion, a precious metals automated product pricing engine.

On every page listing products, the cached data associated with those products is updated every 15 seconds, which is essentially real time. That data is then pulled from the nFusion server, cached, then used to live update the products on the site. This way, nFusion calculates and passes the price onto Magento. nFusion also manages tiered pricing as well as regular pricing. This integrated system is a good solution for the client as it uses the changing market price to calculate the retail price.

Shopper Personas

When setting this site up, one of the focuses was optimizing the shopping experience for the client's two personas: the investor and the collector.

THE INVESTOR

The investor is a customer who is looking for gold and silver bullion to put into an IRA and treat like an investment. His goal is to find the lowest possible price for his investment, so he isn't necessarily loyal to our client's site. While he trusts them, he will shop elsewhere if he finds a better price.

In order to target the investor, each PDP has a callout that says "as low as X over spot" to let shoppers know how much our client is charging over the market price. This gives shoppers the ability to easily compare their prices with other sites.

Additionally, the site has entire category called Gold and Silver IRAs. This takes customers to a page that helps them learn more about investing in gold, silver, and platinum.

THE COLLECTOR

The collector is someone who is shopping for specific pieces as part of a series. Certain mints have different lines of coins and bullion with additional pieces released annually. In order to accommodate those shoppers, the site is set up to easily navigate to different lines and mints. So, if someone is looking to add to their collection, they can see all of the available lines and easily find the piece missing from their collection.
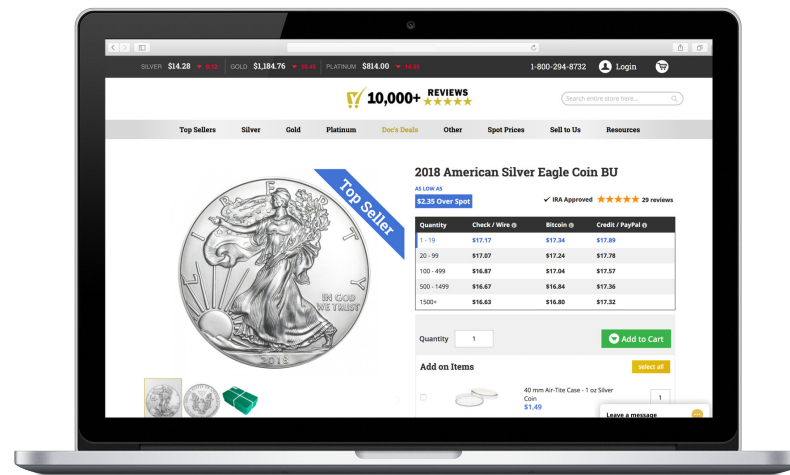
The client's catalog structure was organized to make it easy to find the newest coin in a series. Home page real estate is used to market the newest coin lines, and they even do presales so they can market coins before they are even for sale. This gives our client an idea of what the demand is for a specific new release, and makes their site a source of information for customers as well as a point of sale.

Admin Customizations

In a typical Magento implementation, customers shop on the front end and admin ordering capabilities are in the back end. These admin ordering requirements are typically very basic, and most organizations don't rely on Magento alone for their back-end ordering needs. This client, however, is using the Magento admin to be their customer service order entry portal, so our team customized the admin panel to meet their needs.

Along with backend pricing customizations with nFusion, our team also worked to make the admin ordering process more user friendly so that admins have as intuitive a shopping experience as front end shoppers. Inventory levels, error messages and pre-order warnings, and delayed shipment notifications are all things that wouldn't display on the backend, but that our team customized for the admin ordering process. The client also wanted terms and conditions, payment customizations, and shipping methods to be visible in the admin, so our team customized those specifications as well. All of these additional features make the admin ordering process much smoother and more similar to a typical B2C frontend shopping experience.

Linnworks Integration

The new Magento implementation needed to be integrated to the client's existing ERP, Linnworks, with Linnworks responsible for the transfer of data to Magento. The integration points were:

» **INVENTORY BALANCES:** Linnworks passes inventory updates to Magento over the API using the Linnworks module. The frontend does not display inventory balances, but it does display if the product is a Delayed Shipment or Pre-Sale. In the admin panel, inventory balances are shown for each SKU during checkout.

» **ORDER CREATION:** Linnworks pulls for new and open orders in Magento every ten minutes.

» **SHIPMENT UPDATES:** Linnworks pushes order update data to Magento every ten minutes. If an update is required, there is also a manual option to push updates from Linnworks to Magento.

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DEFINE PHASE DELIVERABLES

Define Meeting Agenda

Project Vision Document

Design SOW

Project Management

During a Magento project like this, our team will typically consist of the following roles: Project Manager, Business Analyst, UI/UX Designer, and Magento Developers. The team follows a general delivery methodology that is broken into three steps: Define Phase, Design Phase, and Develop and Deploy Phase.

DEFINE PHASE

The beginning of the project consists of a Statement of Work (SOW) and meetings with the client. In this case, our team worked with the client team to conduct a general define meeting and create a vision document.

During these discussions, we learned about the client's customers and what their expectations are of a site, as well as what the client team wanted to accomplish with their new eCommerce instance. This information, along with a ranged estimate for the initial phase, was packaged into a vision document for the client team's review and approval. Once the vision document was approved by the team, the Design Phase could begin.

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DESIGN PHASE DELIVERABLES

Personas

Graphic Designs

Style Guide

Functional Document

Technical Design Document

Development SOW

DESIGN PHASE

To begin the Design Phase, we discussed tech and creative designs with the client team. Using the information learned during these discussions, our team developed designs for the project and the UI/UX Designer started working on personas and mock-ups.

The design process began with the UI/UX Designer working with the client team to define the site's personas. Personas help focus the design on the end users who will actually be using the site. From there, design goals were defined and an initial mockup discussed. As is typical for an eCommerce project, the mockups went through several iterations as the client team honed in on what they wanted for their site.

After the designs were reviewed and approved, functional designs began. This consists of taking the Designer's mockups and outlining every element on the page that will need custom work.

The goal of a functional design document is to eliminate confusion as to what different elements on a page will do. The Business Analyst annotates the document to specify everything from where a link leads to how many characters can fit on a button. This was the last customer-facing document.

DEVELOP AND DEPLOY PHASE DELIVERABLES

Weekly Status Reports

Testing Plan

Training Plan

Go-Live Checklist

Once the functional design documents were approved, the team could move onto the technical designs, which are internal documents that show how the site will operate behind the scenes. The technical design documents are the last piece of documentation needed before jumping into actual development.

DEVELOP AND DEPLOY PHASE

With all designs approved, the Magento Developers could begin building and testing the site. After the scoping meeting was completed, the Magento Developers could begin the development sprints. From there, the team moved into testing.

Once testing was completed the site was ready to go live. Once Go-Live was complete, our team moved on to the next phase of the project, providing support through a Managed Services agreement.

THE RESULTS

By implementing Magento Enterprise 2, the client now has a fully featured, stable, scalable, and extendable platform that will support future business growth. Integrations with Signifyd and Kount ensure fraud prevention and customer security, and the extended email capabilities allow the client to keep customers informed throughout the purchasing process.

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ABOUT BRITESKIES

Briteskies works with merchants to seamlessly develop eCommerce solutions for B2B or B2C sites. If you are looking to implement a new eCommerce environment, upgrade your current eCommerce site, or need to integrate with your back office systems, our certified consultants have the functional and technical expertise to assist you in achieving your business goals.

We are proud to be a Magento Professional Partner, an IBM Advanced Business Partner, and an Oracle Gold Partner. Our talented team consists of certified developers in Magento, JD Edwards, and WebSphere Commerce, as well as IBM i Application Specialists.

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