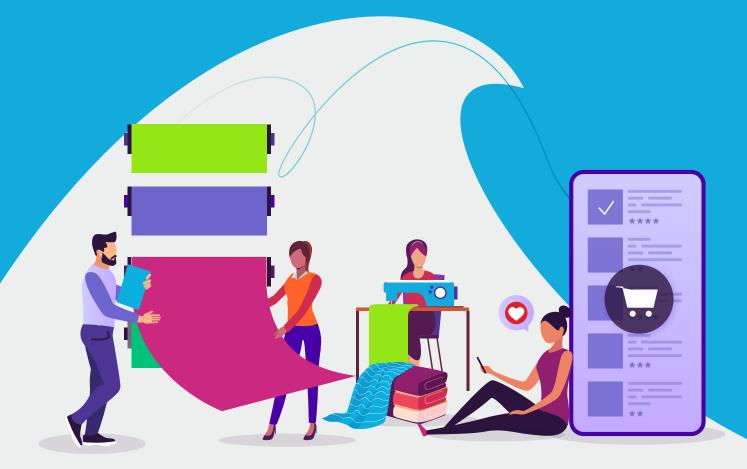# Chilewich launches a more responsive online presence

Magento (an Adobe company) provides the flexibility and power to handle growing business opportunities

"It was important for us to choose a system integrator who took the time to really understand our business, so we would have as few surprises as possible in the discovery phase. We have nuances and complexities that make us different and Capgemini took the time to understand as much of it as possible."

Ayesha Ahmad
Chief Digital Officer and General Manager, Ecommerce
Chilewich | Sultan LLC

Chilewich, at its core, is a textile design company. Founded by Sandy Chilewich, the company creates beautiful and durable products for consumers, contractors, and hospitality. From placemats to floor coverings to table runners, Chilewich created a whole tabletop category from innovations in woven-vinyl.

The family-owned business celebrates rich textures and versatile colors with unique materials that can be used indoor or outdoor. Its sleek, elevated contemporary designs are known throughout the industry.

Growth outpaced online presence

The company's pride in its product was being let down by its existing website platform. It was six years old and could no longer keep up with the growing demand for products without significant investment in development time.

"It was a custom-built site, and the technology and platforms have progressed significantly since," says Ayesha Ahmad, Chief Digital Officer and General Manager, Ecommerce, Chilewich. "If we wanted to make a change,

we had to do a lot of development work, and it did not give us a lot of flexibility. Making changes was costly and having to engage developers for everything was time-consuming."

The other challenge was the backend. Chilewich is more than a direct-to-consumer business, so multiple business units needed a digital presence. With the old system, each backend system had to be maintained separately.

"When we were having a sale on our website, the previous site would require manual changes to the pricing of every product on sale," says Adele Rishty, Manager, Ecommerce and Digital Marketing, Chilewich. "It was extremely tedious and not flexible. We had just outgrown the site."

Moving to a more powerful online platform

Chilewich chose to work with the Digital Customer Experience (DCX) group at Capgemini on the project based on a thorough sales engineering process to understand the business requirements. The Chilewich team conducted a lengthy assessment of options. Initially, it wanted a solution that would integrate with the existing ERP system out-of-the-box, but quickly realized the focus needed to be on the e-commerce platform rather than stressing easy integration.

"We really needed a best-in-class e-commerce platform," explains Ahmad. "We learned from our current website issues and knew we needed to have one license for all five sites. We did not want to maintain multiple licenses and backend systems. That is a colossal waste of time."

Chilewich liked the power of Magento Commerce and the control it gave to users, even those who are not developers. It also requires only one license for both B2B and B2C sites, as well as an improved UI/UX experience. The user-friendly and intuitive platform meant Chilewich no longer had to rely on a development team to make changes.

Launching to meet new market demands

Even being launched two weeks into the lockdown in New York City, the new site is already showing early signs of success. It is completely responsive on mobile devices, a critical factor as the majority of traffic is from mobile.

While the site is not quite three months old, Chilewich has seen its mobile conversion rate increase by 30 percent year over year. Some of the increased site traffic is from the COVID-19 lockdown but Chilewich attributes a portion of the gains to the new site.

Preparing an online sale now takes half the time, and seeing transactions in real-time means Chilewich can troubleshoot if needed. For example, any issues with the ERP system is flagged before they become a customer concern. And Chilewich continues to fine-tune the sites as they get feedback from customers.

"A significant part of our business is our ability to customize our product," explains Rishty. "We have different custom

calculators on each line of business, based on different pricing. Capgemini understood the layers of complexity around these calculators and delivered it from the first staging site. It was impressive how much they really understood what we needed for our customers."

With more people ordering on their phones, Chilewich has already added PayPal and will add Google Pay and Apple Pay in the coming weeks. Magento makes additions such as mobile payments much easier.

Readying for online growth

"Magento is very powerful and opens up a lot of opportunity for future planning," says Rishty. "For example, the Page Builder functionality is a huge game-changer. The previous site had a few box templates, and we had to use developers to make special pages. Now with Magento Page Builder, I have a long list of new landing pages and ideas of how we could really help our customers browse the website."

Magento also positions Chilewich for growth. Shipping internationally was never an option on the previous site, but it can localize payments in different languages, especially with its integration with Braintree. It means international customers are now a possibility, rather than a very daunting process.

The success of the project is based on the early planning stages. Ahmad points to spending time detailing and articulating what the new site needs, so the features, functionalities, and nuances were captured before discovery.

"Doing your homework in the beginning is going to save time in the end," says Ahmad. "The more precise you can be, the fewer surprises and costs that will come up later. There are going to be some bumps in the process but having the assurance of a solid game plan before you begin is vital."

Technology and solutions:

- Magento Commerce Cloud Enterprise Edition implementation
- Magento Commerce Cloud B2B customizations
- Strategic experience analysis
- Experience design
- Digital marketing
- AheadWorks threshold shipping integration
- Yotpo integration
- Multiple store configurations
- In-store pickup

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