Requirement of B2B capabilities and more modern eCommerce solutions leads Real Goods to Zoey

The Company

REAL GOODS
Off-Grid Living Since 1978

Real Goods

Founded in 1978, about 10 employees

www.realgoods.com

What They Like About Zoey

1. Zoey's attribute model makes ie easier to manage products.
2. They have been able to reduce the number of vendors they engage with, and reduce their monthly costs by 50%.
3. Zoey didn't require a major third-party build investment like on other open source platforms, heavily reducing the upfront cost to get a new site live.
4. Real Goods was able to bring their blog into the eCommerce site, instead of living separately.
5. Moving to Zoey has seen across the board improvements in their visitor analytics.

The Challenge

After six years on Magento 1, and with that platform being discontinued, Real Goods was ready to take the next steps. After evaluating a number of options, they selected Zoey as their next generation platform for managing B2B orders.

The Success

- Access to more B2B-centric capabilities such as Sales Quotes, to improve internal workflows and order management.

- Managing products and their attributes has proven easier than their previous solution, saving time and energy in product data management.

- Consolidation of their eCommerce and blog into a single solution, improving SEO and allowing easier maintenance.

- Conversion rates are up, bounce rates are down, and session lengths are up.

What Makes Them Special

Real Goods has a hybrid approach to sales that includes both selling the products that customers require, but also designing a solution that they can help install. This products + services approach provides a stronger customer-centric approach, but also means requiring an eCommerce platform that does more than list products.

ZOEY

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By the Numbers

50%

**REDUCTION IN MONTHLY COSTS
SINCE MOVING TO ZOEY**

1

**PERSON NEEDED TO SET UP ZOEY
AND MIGRATE DATA**

Ready for More

After more than six years, Real Goods was ready to take the next step and move to a modern eCommerce platform. With limited internal resources and budget, the next move was one that would be an important choice for the business' online growth and future.

Meanwhile, as their business was reliant not just on product sales, but also services, having a solution that could manage more complex eCommerce scenarios allowed for better customer segmentation, along with the ability to provide and manage quotes.

Real Goods' previous eCommerce store had been built on Magento 1. Sean Connolly, Website Administrator for Real Goods, said that the upcoming end of life support for that version of Magento meant it was time to figure out the next steps.

"We were looking to get off that and get on to another platform that was more stable, more future proofed," Connolly said. "We wanted something that we knew was going to stay up to date with the latest security threats."

The natural first step was Magento 2, but Real Goods, like others, discovered that it isn't just a simple migration, but instead a full rebuild of their website to move over. The quotes received made such a migration impractical.

"Some of the prices we were quoted were two full years of eCommerce revenue for us," Connolly said. "It was kind of a non-starter." Meanwhile, a simple version upgrade still didn't resolve some of the business goals for the future without further development, adding to the cost.

Needing a New Solution

Real Goods' Magento development partner suggested they check out Zoey as an option. Since design could be handled internally and more features came out of the box, it required a lot less set-up investment time and money vs. a custom build on an open source platform.

Zoey also offers a data migration tool for some platforms, such as Magento 1, that can speed up the initial data input. The experience migrating data was smooth enough to put Zoey at the top of the list.

"I was sold pretty much right away, especially after we actually did the migration as a test," Connolly said. "I ran the migration tool to bring all our customer, order and product information over. That pretty much just worked."

Having a successful data migration was critical given Connolly being largely a one-man shop. Connolly noted, "I'm a contract employee for Real Goods. The manpower for this big job getting this eCommerce site up is just me. I saw how well the migration worked, and I felt like we're already halfway there. I just had to skin this website and go through all the settings, and then start testing different kinds of orders and scenarios. It all worked right out of the box."

Connolly found Zoey intuitive as someone who is able to work their way around the administration settings of web software. Connolly said, "It seems like most of the same options are there, much easier to access, more intuitive to find where I need to look for a particular setting if I didn't already know. I'm pretty well taken with how well designed and solidly built Zoey is."

Better Tools, Less Time Needed

Connolly has found Zoey's product and attribute creation tools to be much more suited for their business. "One thing I loved right away about Zoey is all of the product attributes are freestanding and you can assign and remove whichever ones you want to any product." Being able to make adjustments as needed has reduced the amount of time required to manage products, allowing that time to be reinvested in other, more important tasks. Other solutions take a more rigid approach to attributes that don't always make it easy to evolve the data architecture.

Real Goods was also able to consolidate their blog into their eCommerce site for the first time, reducing the number of platforms they had to manage, and with it hosting accounts and other supporting services. "After we went live with Zoey with eCommerce, the next big project was to move the blog content over. That works well, the blog looks nice in Zoey, so we can shut down the WordPress site and hosting," Connolly said. "It's great to consolidate that part of our web presence as well, and is better for our SEO."

Seeing Real Results

While working through the normal teething issues any new website would encounter in terms of helping those searching or coming back to find a new website, Connolly has seen great signs of improvement over their previous solution.

"One change that has been a reality for us: Better conversion rates," Connolly said. "Our bounce rate has gone down. People like the new homepage more than the old homepage. Getting a little bit longer sessions, which is something we want to see." All of this is great encouragement for the Real Goods team that the latest changes are helping the business.

They're also saving money, thanks to consolidating a lot of investments down to a single bill with Zoey. "We've almost halved the cost of monthly ownership/overhead of keeping the site up and running… than we were paying between Amazon hosting costs, our developer and web host manager cost. It's less money overall and just having a single source for all of that vs. paying three separate bills for the Magento site, it's obviously simpler." Moving the blog over saved them a bit more.

Connolly has given Zoey's support team high marks for being responsive and flexible. "I'm impressed with how quickly the support team has made changes with how it works, even adding features into the admin. There's clearly a flexible codebase you've got it built on." Connolly also appreciated the comprehensive Zoey support documentation available.

"Being thorough with the support docs makes it so that a person with decent competency in website building can probably get most of the answers to their questions right there without having to open a ticket," Connolly said. "I think you did a nice job on tutorials and guides in the knowledgebase area.

"It makes it so somebody like me is more likely to take on eCommerce site gigs for people if I know there's a platform like Zoey out there where I can do that without needing full-on developer level knowledge of building from the ground up."

Looking to the Future

At the time of this case study, Real Goods is evaluating some of Zoey's more advanced B2B capabilities to further build out the website. One area of exploration is for the customer groups feature.

Connolly said, "I could foresee a future that we have a customer group for installers, people who… if you're a contractor and go to Home Depot, you get a better price when buying a contractor price. I could see us doing something like that in the future. Installers, registered as a Solar PV installer, gets to see your own pricing, some of your own pages."

They are also reviewing the Sales Quotes feature, which would further consolidate the business around eCommerce by letting their sales team quote out not just the items being purchased, but installation.

"Custom systems design and quoting - those are the big jobs," Connolly said. "There is a lot of back and forth involved with salesperson and customers for complex solar setups like this. Many variables. How much room is on their roof, landscaping changes between now and the system being installed that might change where the shade is, where panels need to go. So there's lots of back and forth. It is mostly being handled over the phone and through an old, dated POS system that they use in the warehouse.

"We want to use the [Sales Quotes] feature as a way to easily and electronically keep a living record and document of this sort of back and forth conversation between the customer and sales rep — tweaking the quote, tweaking the system being built. Streamline, simplify, digitize that whole part of the business where we plan to make a bulk of the revenue."

Zoey's Sales Quotes feature makes it easy for both sides to amend and review what's required before a customer approves and completes an order. Over time, Connolly said this may allow them to retire even more systems and move more on to their eCommerce site.

Ultimately, Connolly has been pleased with the experience moving to Zoey. "The conversion from Magento 1 to Zoey was really great, worked well, and told me right off the bat that Zoey was a solid platform, and easy to work with," Connolly said. "I really appreciate Zoey."

About Zoey

Zoey is a powerful eCommerce solution for B2B and wholesale businesses. We offer three major solutions to run a business: A mobile app for taking orders on the go, a self-service web portal for eCommerce, and a web-based admin for product, customer and order management. Our featuress include net terms and credit limits, sales quote generation, customer groups, access restrictions, and quick order capabilities.

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