CASE STUDY

eCommerce Website & Customer Loyalty Program

McGuckin Hardware

ORGILL

McGuckin Hardware

eCommerce Website & Customer Loyalty Program

Boulder, CO

125,000 unique products, 85% available online

1,300% online sales increase year-over-year

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A 66-Year-Old Family-Owned Home Store in Boulder, CO

Serving Boulder since 1955, McGuckin Hardware is well-known for its broad product offering and quality service, earning the moniker of “Boulder’s Favorite Everything Store.”

From its 60,000 sq. ft. brick-and-mortar store, McGuckin offers products across 18 different categories ranging from traditional home improvement staples, such as plumbing and electrical, to more niche areas, like outdoor sporting goods and housewares.

In total, McGuckin offers customers about 125,000 products with unique SKUs.

As a member of the Ace Hardware cooperative, McGuckin was a relatively early adopter of online commerce. The store had a website that offered online sales for a number of years and primarily used Epicor’s website and eCommerce solutions to support that effort.

With thousands of local residents familiar with the McGuckin Hardware brand, the retailer also utilized the Ace Rewards loyalty program as a way of keeping in touch and communicating with their customers.

Both of these legacy solutions presented some limitations for McGuckin. However, one of the main challenges for the retailer was the difficulty in enriching product information and data on their own. This meant that the store could only feature about 30% of their total assortment online. They recognized that there might be a turnkey solution by leveraging product data from Orgill’s Industry PIM, but changes would need to be made to their legacy systems to accommodate this. In addition, the McGuckin team was also looking for the ability to offer enhancements such as buy online, pickup in store (BOPIS) or curbside pickup.

The Ace Rewards program proved limiting as well. McGuckin Hardware had a strong customer base, but the management team felt restricted by the Ace Rewards program because they could not directly control messaging to their own customers.

The McGuckin team knew they would have to look for new alternatives for access to both richer and more comprehensive product data and an eCommerce engine that could offer the functionality and flexibility they needed to grow their online presence. They also knew that this would likely require a retooling of the McGuckin.com website to accommodate all of these needs.

Around this time, McGuckin, which had been doing business with Orgill on the hardlines distribution side, discovered that beyond the Industry PIM, Orgill and its global technology partner, Unilog, could deliver exactly the kind of solutions they needed for many of their challenges.

Over the next two years, McGuckin Hardware worked closely with Orgill, Unilog and the marketing and design team from Tyndale Advisors to completely transform the way the operation interacts with its customers digitally.

This wide-ranging project included:

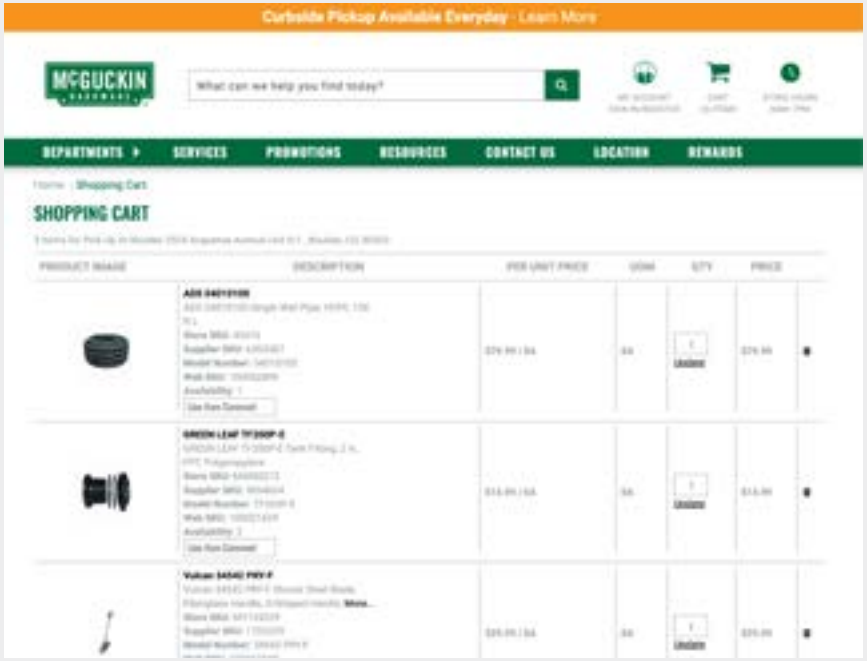
- Upgrading and enhancing McGuckin's eCommerce platform using the Orgill Integrated eCommerce program.
- Tapping into Orgill's Industry PIM, a product database that gives McGuckin's website access to enhanced product data and information on more than 1 million items.
- Rebuilding the McGuckin.com website and adding flexibility and functionality for customers.
- Implementing a new customer loyalty program to replace their legacy rewards program, where McGuckin did not "own" its customer data.

In early 2020, just as COVID-19 was beginning, McGuckin launched its new website simultaneously with a new customized loyalty program built using Orgill's FanBuilder® system.

The results were almost immediate. Within months, McGuckin's online web traffic doubled, increasing online sales by an impressive 1,300%.

The new eCommerce engine works in tandem with the store's Epicor Eagle POS system to allow for quicker and easier fulfillment of critical BOPIS and curbside pickup orders.

Today, after running the system for more than a year, McGuckin continues to work closely with teams from Orgill and Unilog to ensure its omnichannel offerings consistently provide a great experience, whether in-store or online.



"We had a website for years and it just wasn't clicking really well for us – both on the content side of things, as far as inventory, and on the internal integration side of things, as far as talking with our Epicor Eagle (POS) system."

Bill Harrison, McGuckin Hardware technical operations manager

01

BACKGROUND

The Boulder Market

Boulder, Colorado, is located in the Boulder Valley, where the foothills of the Rocky Mountains meet the Great Plains—near the Flatiron rock formations and about 25 miles northwest of Denver.

Known for its outdoor activities, vibrant downtown and the University of Colorado, Boulder has a population of about 105,000 residents. Key local industries include aerospace, bioscience, clean tech, IT and software, natural products and outdoor recreation. Area homes are a mix of older houses and new construction.

McGuckin's local competitors include a Home Depot and a handful of independent hardware stores.

Corporate History

In 1955, Llewellyn Commodore "Bill" McGuckin opened McGuckin Hardware to service the Boulder, Colorado, market. In these early years, McGuckin Hardware became well known in the community as a trusted resource for hardware and home improvement products. They offered products out of four different departments to meet the needs of local area homeowners.

Five years after opening the business, Bill was joined by his daughter Dee's husband, Dave Hight, as a partner in the operation. Together, they set out to expand the store to evolve with the growing community's needs. In 1966, following Bill's passing, Dave continued with their vision of broadening the operation and looking for innovative ways the store could better serve its customers.

Over the next several decades, McGuckin transformed from a small family-owned storefront into a 60,000+ sq. ft. retail location filled with an eclectic mix of product offerings. Although the store has changed locations several times during its existence, the store has remained in the same shopping center since it first opened its doors.

From its original offering across four departments, today McGuckin Hardware offers customers products across 18 different categories, including builders hardware, plumbing, electrical, tools, automotive, plants, paint, craft and hobby, pet supplies, lawn and garden, housewares and sporting goods. In total, the store offers 125,000 items in-store ranging from plumbing and HVAC products to camping equipment and home decor.

Today, the company employs about 250 people and is run by Dee and Dave's son, Barry. Dave Hight passed away in 2021 but left a lasting impact on the business and the Boulder community.

McGuckin Hardware has a long history of supporting the community with donations, fundraisers and events, and through crises such as major snowstorms, floods and strong winds. Events include weekend workshops, vendor events, barbecues and semi-annual tent sales.

A 2018 case study of 1,000 customers revealed high praise for McGuckin's customer service. Customers' top reasons for shopping at McGuckin include its wide array of products, knowledgeable employees and friendly team members.

McGuckin Hardware is so popular among local consumers that it has even earned the moniker of “Boulder’s Favorite Everything Store,” which it uses in advertising and branding. In fact, the employees’ green vests say: “If we don’t have it, you don’t need it!”

Part of McGuckin’s staying power and growth is because of its website and social media presence. For nearly a decade, the retailer has offered customers online shopping and maintained a robust loyalty program.

McGuckin's desire to expand and refine its online presence, make shopping more intuitive for its customers, enhance its loyalty program and help streamline back-end operations motivated the McGuckin Hardware team to begin working with Orgill for solutions.

"They have some incredibly talented people. Once we got everything in place and everyone was happy, they were well equipped to continue producing and updating their efforts with these resources."

Mary Richardson, Tyndale Advisors creative services director

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BUSINESS TRANSITION

Project Scope

Since its inception, McGuckin Hardware has been well known as a strong provider of home improvement products for the community it serves. Service has always been a hallmark of the organization throughout its 40+ year history.

Through the years, maintaining this reputation has required the McGuckin team to consistently look for ways to improve. That's why McGuckin was an early adopter of eCommerce, and why this single-store operation carries more than 125,000 products.

In an effort to provide greater convenience, McGuckin had offered a shoppable website to its customers for over a decade (mcguckin.com). While this website allowed customers to access information about the business and engage in eCommerce, it also had some major challenges, according to Bill Harrison, McGuckin Hardware's technical operations manager.

Committed to Customer Loyalty

Adding to the challenges of limited flexibility with the website and the difficulty maintaining product data internally, McGuckin was also severely limited in its ability to integrate any of its customer loyalty program features into the online environment.

With its extremely loyal customer base, the McGuckin team felt hemmed in by the functionality of its legacy loyalty program.

"There's really no other way to put it, but our existing loyalty program was just not working out the way we needed it to," Harrison says. "The data was owned by another vendor, and we couldn't access data when we wanted to or needed to. This meant we couldn't do everything we wanted. Prior to using the last vendor's loyalty program, we had maintained our own loyalty program, and while it was more time-consuming, our customers liked it better. We decided we wanted to go back to something that met our needs—not our vendor's needs."

Harrison and the rest of the McGuckin team had a clear understanding of the challenges they were facing. Their biggest concern was finding a solution that would meet their needs and be affordable and scalable as they moved forward.

"We wanted to give our customers a tool to be able to shop us and bring them into the store," Harrison says. "Ultimately, any business's goal is to increase sales through technology, and that's where we were as well. Any advantage we could give ourselves to bring customers into the door or retain that customer, that was our ultimate goal."

McGuckin wanted:

- A more flexible and easily customizable customer-facing website that was reflective of their brand.
- The ability to offer customers more products online with richer, more complete product information and data.
- An online assortment that more accurately reflected product availability.
- A product data management solution to integrate their Epicor Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)/Point of Sale (POS) system.
- A more flexible and robust loyalty program to give customers a seamless experience in-store or online.

An Orgill distribution partner since 2006, the McGuckin team began exploring how Orgill and its vendor partners could solve its eCommerce and loyalty-program needs.

Finding the Right Fit

"We had a website for years and it just wasn't clicking really well for us," Harrison says. "Both on the content side of things, as far as inventory, and on the internal integration side of things, as far as talking with our Epicor Eagle POS system."

McGuckin has been an Ace Hardware Cooperative member for years, and used a website and eCommerce solution provided through Epicor.

This legacy system made it very complicated to do any website customization, Harrison said. Additionally, McGuckin was using an internal solution for data integration and management, meaning McGuckin could only offer a fraction of their assortment online.

"Maintaining this vast number of SKUs was just a never-ending project," Harrison says. "We would get through a few thousand items only to realize that there were changes within those items, and we would have to go back and start over again. It was really limiting for us and a tax on our resources. We were asking people to do this, but it wasn't really anyone's job to maintain it."

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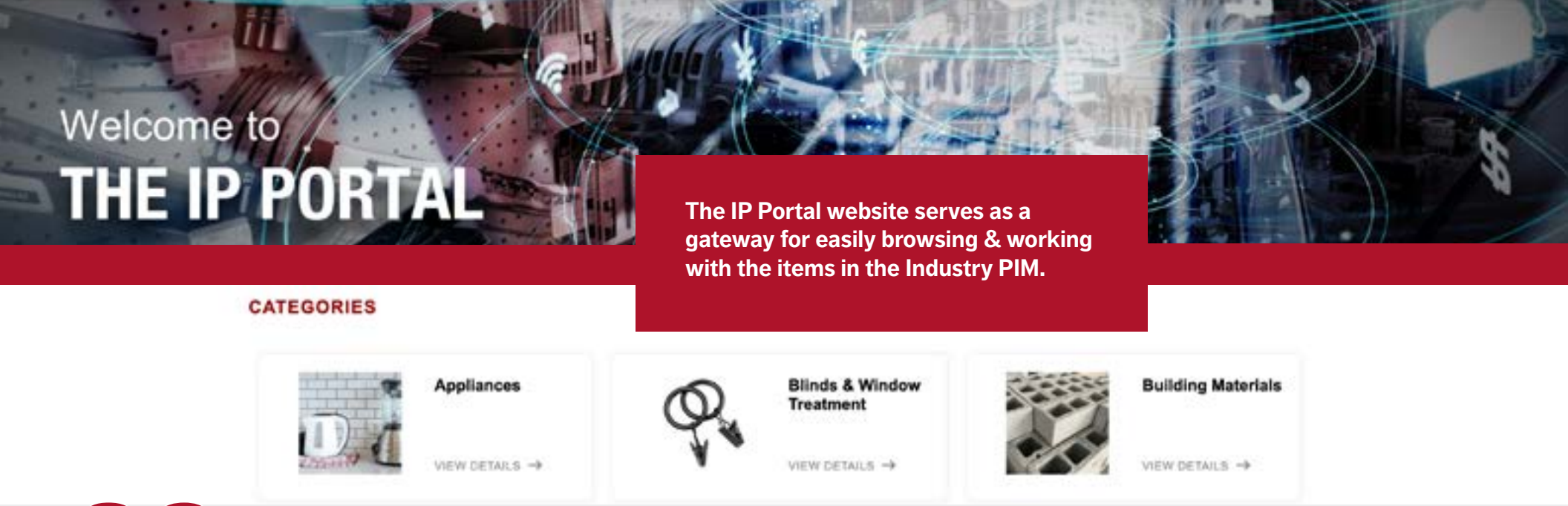

The IP Portal website serves as a gateway for easily browsing & working with the items in the Industry PIM.

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Developing a Strategy

STRATEGY

Knowing the challenges they were facing, and growing increasingly frustrated with off-the-shelf options available to them, McGuckin reached out to Pennsylvania-based Unilog for insight into a product management solution. (Unilog is a global technology company specializing in eCommerce solutions.)

According to Harrison, they were considering Unilog as a potential solution for their product data management needs. While impressed with their capabilities, Harrison was concerned the Unilog offering might have proven cost prohibitive for them in the long run.

While McGuckin had been utilizing Orgill as a supplier for a number of years, they weren't as familiar with the other offerings the distributor had available to retailers. After starting the relationship as a means of meeting its supply needs, the McGuckin team quickly realized that Orgill had a lot more to offer than simply being a reliable source of supply. In fact, after another conversation with his contacts at Unilog, Harrison learned that Unilog and Orgill were partnering together to create a product data solution for the industry.

These two organizations were collaborating to offer a cloud-based eCommerce solution and an industry-wide product information management (PIM) system. This immediately caught Harrison's attention.

"We were originally interested in what Orgill and Unilog were doing with the PIM side of things, but then we learned about the website design side, and we were interested in that as well," he says.

Early Adopters

Confident that Unilog and Orgill might be able to offer a singular solution for McGuckin's needs, Harrison and his team started working closely with the companies to develop a specific go-forward strategy.

"When we first began our discussions with McGuckin, we immediately knew they were going to be a great partner," says Greg Stine, Orgill executive vice president of marketing and communications, who was then overseeing Orgill's eCommerce efforts.

"[McGuckin was] willing to work with us and be collaborative in finding solutions," Stine says. "We knew that many of the things they were looking to achieve were right in line with the programs we developed. We never thought the project was going to be easy, but we were all excited to find solutions to help McGuckin get to where it wanted to be."

The McGuckin project crossed over into several different areas where Orgill could help:

- Product data and management
- Website design, customer interface and branding
- eCommerce optimization
- Customer loyalty

"We just had to work through each of these areas and develop a specific strategy for McGuckin, but this was really about the ability to leverage Orgill and Unilog's scale in a way that could accommodate an individual customer's needs," Stine says.

"We also knew that the team at McGuckin was willing to be involved in the process, and that they wanted to learn what we were doing so they could manage a certain degree of the ongoing maintenance moving forward."

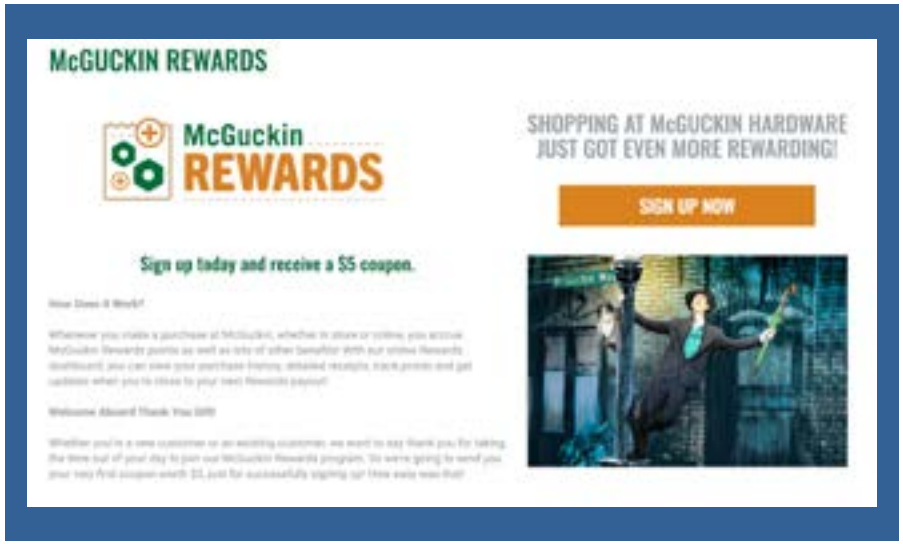
A Multi-Faceted Solution

Stine was also aware that all of the areas McGuckin wanted to address were interconnected, and in order to achieve the retailer's desired outcomes, each one would have to be addressed.

"You have to have rich, clean data that is consistently maintained to give customers a reliable eCommerce experience," Stine says. "You must have a functional, easy-to-navigate website for your retail customers to interact with—and then your loyalty program is what ties it all together and needs to be seamless for customers, no matter how they are shopping your store. That's what we needed to address for McGuckin. We needed to address all these areas, but we also knew that they all worked together."

In addition to addressing all these concerns, McGuckin wanted to launch its new eCommerce platform, website and loyalty program simultaneously.

"We knew this was going to be a major undertaking, but we also knew that doing this all was very important for McGuckin, so we dove in and started creating a plan to get it done," Stine says.



Creating Scale

Lee points out that this kind of dedication of resources to item data management and maintenance would simply not be realistic for an individual retail operation to maintain.

“Unilog has a team of dedicated associates working full time enriching data,” she says. “We are enriching about 40,000 items a month. It would take an independent hardware retailer like McGuckin and an army of people years to do this. In addition to that, we are putting more tech resources behind it to increase the automation of some of our processes, which is going to allow us to be even more efficient and cost-effective.”

Lee notes that the items available through the Industry PIM go well beyond items stocked in Orgill’s warehouse. In fact, they include thousands of items from across the industry, including products not sold by Orgill from vendors such as Benjamin Moore and STIHL.

“This is an important distinction, because we know that our goal is to service retailers as broadly as possible, and that means going beyond the assortment of Orgill’s stocked products,” Lee says.

For McGuckin, this was also important as they wanted the ability to augment Orgill's vast selection of industry product information with their own assortments, including items that were only sold regionally or from local vendors—an important part of their store’s local character and brand.

Currently, McGuckin offers a selection of approximately 80,000 items to customers through its eCommerce website, a vast improvement over its previous offering. Because of these kinds of needs, McGuckin, Orgill and Unilog continue to work hand-in-hand maintaining their unique set of data.

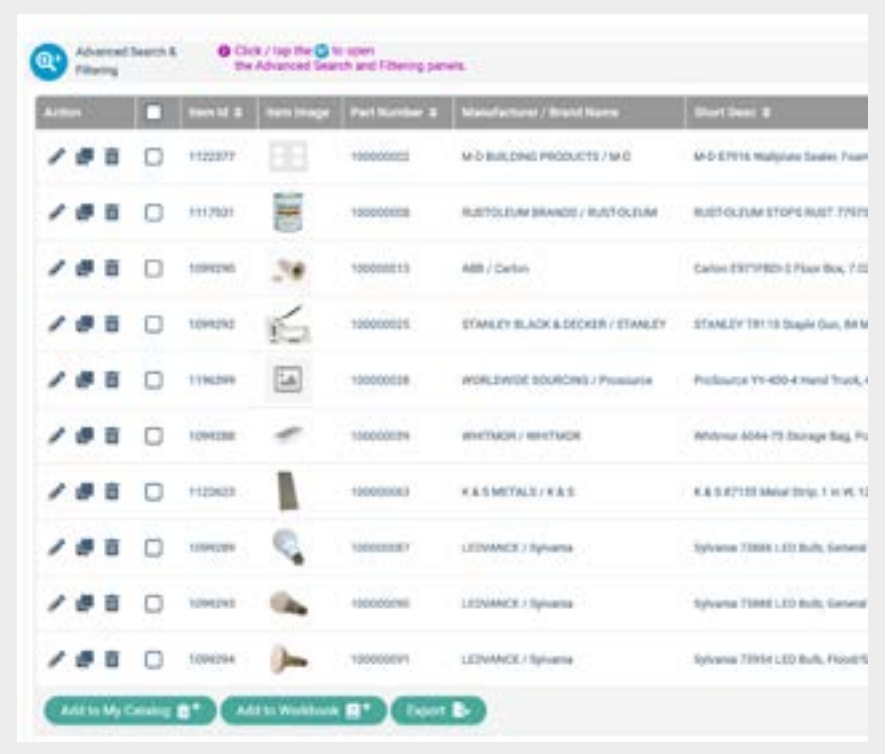
“They are constantly making item submissions and keeping their site refreshed, so they are really a model for online assortment management,” Lee says. “This helped us learn best practices to help other dealers better understand how to manage their digital assortments.”

According to Lee, of all the things the Orgill and McGuckin teams learned during the product data integration process, the most important may have been that the process of maintaining a website/eCommerce platform and the data it fuels isn’t a one-time thing.

“It is a living and breathing thing that needs maintenance, care and refreshing, and I think that is also where Orgill, Unilog and McGuckin have worked so well in this process together,” she says.

Today, McGuckin’s internal team, which includes about five individuals dedicated to inventory, marketing and managing the website, works closely with the Orgill and Unilog teams to ensure smooth operations.

“That’s the nice thing about Orgill—they are a large company, but they kind of act like a smaller company, in a sense that I can talk to anyone at the company and get things done,” Harrison says. “I have never had a problem approaching anyone at Orgill. I had an inventory issue a while back, and 15 minutes later there were five other people working on it. I don’t think you get that from a lot of other companies, and that speaks volumes about what Orgill is like as a company.”



Product Data & Management

McGuckin's first eCommerce venture was a cumbersome process, and the store could only offer about one-third of its in-store products to its online customers. Maintenance was an ongoing headache, as the McGuckin team was handling this process internally.

When any retailer is starting down the road of offering their customers a robust eCommerce solution, one of the most important considerations is the product data they have at their disposal.

For McGuckin, this was one of the first areas where Orgill and its vendor partner Unilog could provide a working solution.

McGuckin's other main challenge was finding a product management platform with data flexibility that would operate with its existing Epicor Eagle POS system.

At the heart of the solution that Orgill and Unilog could offer was a wide-ranging Industry PIM resource that is constantly being enhanced, updated and maintained. Having access to this provided McGuckin with a solid foundation from which to grow its eCommerce offering.

Bringing the Data Together

For Stephanie Lee, product data manager at Orgill, the McGuckin project was one of the first ones she and her team tackled—and was in many ways responsible for the continued evolution of Orgill's offering.

"McGuckin was definitely one of those pioneering companies that we worked with on the product data side," Lee says. "We learned a lot from them and about what they needed because they were one of the first customers that came to us that already had their own more developed data management process."

Orgill's product data team works with vendors like Unilog to maintain product information and data, which is used on Orgill.com and on other Orgill-produced eCommerce initiatives.

Orgill's product data team works with Unilog to:

- Source product data from thousands of vendors
- Organize data into a usable, consistent format
- Enrich data with images, specs, descriptions and details
- Keep data uniform and readable
- Consistently update data
- Help our users upload data into their internal systems

"The Industry PIM currently has more than 9,000 vendors and more than 1 million enriched products, and our product data team works closely with the team at Unilog," Lee says.

eCommerce Platform

Having access to a broad range of enhanced product data is a major benefit for any retailer. At McGuckin, however, accessing that data was only part of the challenge. To create a seamless online shopping experience, McGuckin's product data would need to interact with its POS system and integrate with a shoppable website.

For McGuckin, this was another example of Orgill and its vendor partners providing a complete set of integrated eCommerce solutions to its customers. Highly customizable and feature-rich, Orgill's eCommerce solutions work within a retailer's website framework to provide today's customers with the online buying experience they're accustomed to.

“Again, this is another example of how Orgill can offer solutions to its customers that would be very hard to come by if they were working to get there individually,” Stine says. “For McGuckin, they were looking for all of the features and benefits that large online competitors would offer through their websites—and we could offer that similar experience with our integrated e-comm.”

An Integrated Opportunity

Along with the major benefit of being directly connected to the Orgill Industry PIM, this integrated eCommerce system also offers:

- A built-in content management system for efficient editing
- The ability to manage product data, content and taxonomies
- Powerful product search capabilities
- The ability to cross-sell and upsell products
- The ability to communicate with a dealer’s in-house ERP/POS system

Another of McGuckin's goals was to give their customers the same level of service online as they do in-store: a true omnichannel experience.

In addition to basic eCommerce functionality, they also wanted to give customers a variety of purchase-fulfillment methods, including curbside pickup, ship to home, and buy online, pickup in-store (BOPIS).

Overcoming Obstacles

At the projects' outset, teams set a go-live date for early 2020. Little did they know a coming pandemic would make this project even more critical.

When COVID-19 hit, the ability to better manage functions like BOPIS and curbside pickup became even more vital.

"COVID-19 was something that really kicked all of our plans on this project into high gear," Stine recalls. "We knew we had to get this done, and the leadership at McGuckin wanted and needed to get this done. We both went into this together and knew that there would be some missteps and challenges along the way, but they chose to lead from the front and get this done. They had a lot of faith in us, and we had a lot of faith in them that we would get there together."

In the end, Orgill worked with the McGuckin team to implement a system that used Unilog's integrated eCommerce system, Orgill's Industry PIM and the store's POS system to give McGuckin the interactive omnichannel it wanted.

"This was an example of a lot of systems working together," Stine says. "It wasn't just one thing that you plugged in and you were done. You had one thing, tied to another thing, tied to another thing and then the last element was McGuckin's internal protocols and systems that ensured customers would be able to get their products no matter how they ordered them."

The Orgill and Unilog teams were able to add the curbside pickup option and functionality to the system and, in the end, the enhancements only delayed the overall site launch by one week.

Today, McGuckin's eCommerce system gives customers buying options like BOPIS, curbside pickup and home delivery. Additionally, Unilog integrated a unique online service called Avalara into the McGuckin eCommerce system that allows online shoppers to quickly and easily see their local taxes on an order's total before they place it.

"This was an example of a lot of systems working together together: ensuring customers would be able to get their products no matter how they ordered them."

Greg Stine, Orgill executive vice president

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04

Rebranding & Website Redesign

STRATEGY

While plans were in the works for addressing the backend product data issues and eCommerce engine, McGuckin was also looking to redesign its customer-facing web presence to both refresh the look of its site but also integrate the new capabilities it would offer.

Again, McGuckin turned to Orgill and its partners to help in the website redesign process. Overhauling the company's product data, eCommerce engine and website all at the same time was a tall order.

"It was a lot to bite off at once, but we knew we wanted to get it done and needed to get it done," Harrison recalls. "We were confident with our partners that we would be able to do it, but like all projects, you uncover even more and more details you need to address the deeper you get into it."

This learn-as-you-go process was something Orgill's experienced team was familiar and comfortable with because of the experience they could bring to bear on a project like this, according to Stine. "With a project like this, there are so many things you learn live and in the field ... the unexpected happens and things pop up. There is a certain level of 'the unexpected' that has to happen, so you learn from it," Stine says.

"You have to remember that companies like McGuckin aren't tech companies, they are retailers, so this kind of project isn't necessarily in their area of expertise. They knew all of the things they wanted to accomplish were important, but didn't know every step of how to get there," Stine adds.

McGuckin now features a refreshed, easy-to-navigate, and overall more functional website created by Tyndale Advisors marketing.

"While we were focused on building them a responsive, interactive and brand-focused website, we also wanted to ensure that this same kind of message and feel came through in areas like their social media, printed circulars and all those touch points they would have with their customers."

Mary Richardson, creative services director at Tyndale Advisors

A Network of Resources

When it came time to design a refreshed, easy-to-navigate and overall more functional website for McGuckin, Orgill turned to its wholly-owned subsidiary, Tyndale Advisors marketing.

Based in Eugene, Ore., Tyndale Advisors is a management services and consulting company specializing in hardware retailing. They employ a complete team of marketing, design, branding and content professionals to help retailers remove obstacles to their growth.

With its vast experience working with Orgill's retail customers and vendor partners including Unilog, the Tyndale team knew how to maximize the design and functionality of the Orgill Industry PIM and integrated eCommerce platform.

“This is really another example of how we can bring a team of experts together to help a retailer with a project that gives them access to a certain scale they might not otherwise have,” Stine says.

A Holistic Approach

The retailer’s new website and eCommerce interface was mission-critical to convey brand messaging in an omnichannel environment. For everything to work in harmony, McGuckin's brand messaging needed to be integrated throughout its marketing touch points.

“We all knew that you couldn’t just look at things in a vacuum,” Tyndale creative services director Mary Richardson said. “While we were focused on building them a responsive, interactive and brand-focused website, we also wanted to ensure that this same kind of message and feel came through in areas like their social media, printed circulars and all those touch points they would have with their customers.”

Tyndale wanted to work closely with McGuckin's team so they would be able to manage a majority of its ongoing marketing and branding maintenance.

“We wanted to give them the autonomy to manage their customer-facing products on their own,” Richardson said. “We knew they had a great internal team who wanted that kind of flexibility.”

A new website was the lynchpin that would allow McGuckin's team to manage day-to-day marketing and branding. Tyndale, Orgill and McGuckin worked together to achieve this.

Prior to the redesign, McGuckin used a templated website offered by Epicor. McGuckin's new website had to deviate from the templated design, feature its new eCommerce platform and transition its legacy Ace Rewards customer data to its new site.

“Prior to the McGuckin project, we'd worked closely with a number of clients using Unilog's platform, so we were experienced in how the system worked,” Richardson said. “The key was developing a customer-friendly website using McGuckin's well-known brand elements,” she said. “Then, we made sure these elements were supported within marketing and customer-facing communications.”

Working as a Team

Tyndale listened to McGuckin's website and marketing vision, and developed a plan from there.

“We really wanted to get immersed and familiar with what they had and what they wanted,” she says. “We looked at the analytics and developed a plan to get them where they wanted to be. They had good ideas, and we took them and figured out how to make them work.”

The Tyndale team worked to incorporate McGuckin's deeply embedded branding elements into its new website.

These elements included McGuckin's well-known slogans like “Ask the Green Vest” and “The Everything Store,” both reflections of its long-standing commitment to customer service.

Tyndale's team developed a plan that incorporated McGuckin Hardware's vision, retained its character and incorporated its core values for a consistent customer experience, no matter the channel.

This meant creating a consistent look and feel to all of McGuckin's customer touch-points, from its website to social media, circulars, radio ads, in-store events and its loyalty program.

“McGuckin has a lot of sales—tent sales, college move-in sales and so on—and its website needed to figure into those,” Richardson says. “We did this in parallel to choosing font choices, colors, photos and so on, to support McGuckin's rich brand.”

To achieve a uniform omnichannel look and feel, Tyndale worked with McGuckin to develop a brand definition and style guide.

The style guide and brand definition allowed the McGuckin team to create in-house marketing materials that aligned with its website.

Redesigning McGuckin circulars was another item on the punch list. Tyndale created a template and then brought in Circulars Unlimited, a partner company, so McGuckin could design its custom circulars with flexibility and ease.

Tyndale also updated McGuckin's email marketing program with the help of Campaign Monitor, another of Tyndale's vendors. Together, they created customizable email templates and established Google Ads to maximize McGuckin's online campaigns.

“McGuckin has some incredibly talented people internally,” Richardson says. “Once we got everything in place and everyone was happy, they were well equipped to continue producing and updating with those resources.”

A Major Project

Richardson admits that simultaneously handling all three projects—a website redesign, eCommerce platform and loyalty system—was somewhat challenging.

"This was unique in that it was a lot in a very short amount of time," she says. "It was important to them to get everything done at once. The retailer had given notice to their previous loyalty program provider that they were moving on, so there was a definite deadline. We didn't want to lose anything they had for assets and functionality, and we didn't. After everything launched, we spent another few months working with them, dialing everything in."

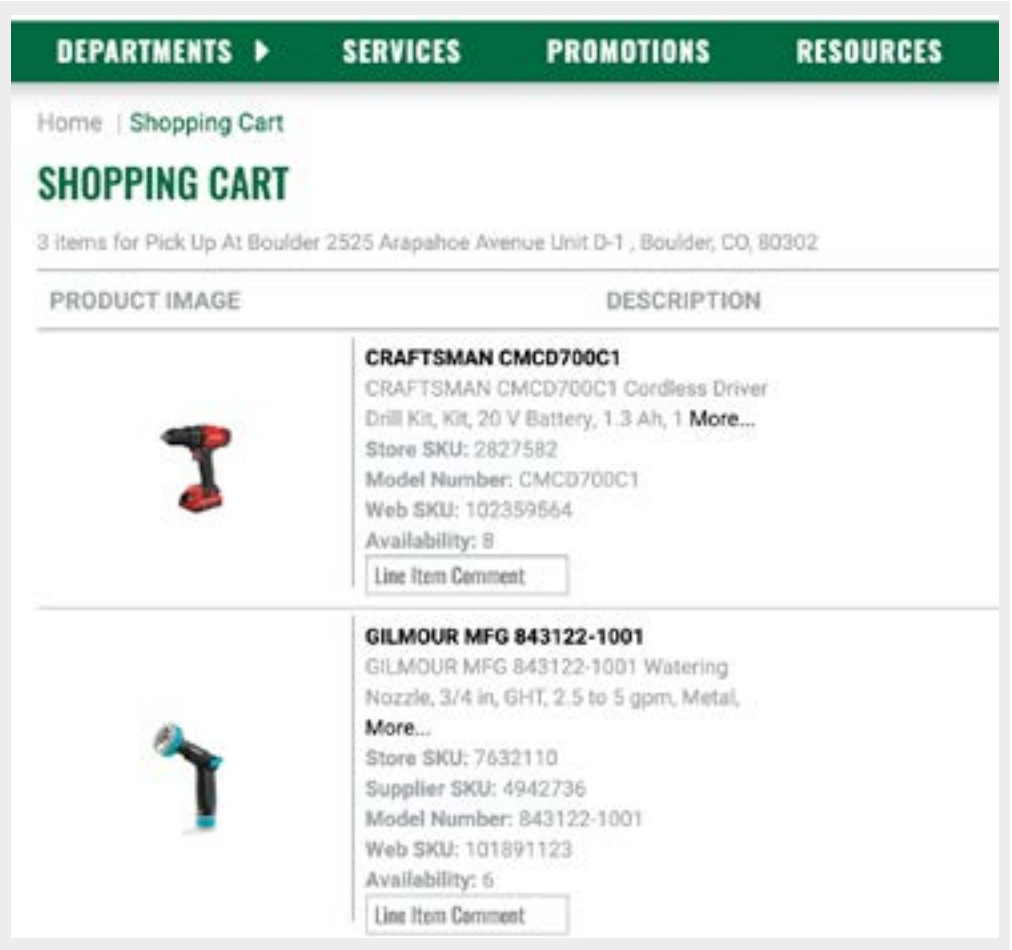
At the core of McGuckin's updated website was its new, more-powerful eCommerce platform, which featured capabilities that were previously unattainable.

These additional capabilities include:

- Increasing online availability of in-store items to 85%
- Viewing in-stock product quantities online
- Accurate, up-to-date item pricing
- Intuitive, online product-search features
- A "customers also bought" feature that suggests add-on products
- Clear buying options for in-store, curbside or ship-to-home orders
- Simplifying the loyalty program's login and interface
- Creating a website area dedicated to features and promotions
- Customer product ratings
- An "Ask the Green Vest" section for in-store services

After the website launch, Tyndale and McGuckin regularly communicated with one another to troubleshoot issues and provide course corrections, as needed. To facilitate this, weekly meetings were established and a Google Chat was set up, allowing teams to work together in real-time.

"When we were in the heat of things, we were having meetings a few times a week, and now we meet once a month, unless we have something bigger like a new release," McGuckin's Harrison said. "We still have almost daily emails, and our communication lines are very open and responsive. This has been a big help addressing any issues that have arisen."



One issue McGuckin faced early on was a problem between its POS and website data. This was resolved by Tyndale, Unilog and Orgill teams.

"We tried to be more advisory where we could and work together with them so they aren't just reliant on us," Richardson says. "They wanted that autonomy because it gives them freedom to build on what we all created and to do what's right for their market with those tools."

Customer Loyalty

With solutions coming into focus for eCommerce, product data, website design and cross-functional branding, the remaining objective was to transition McGuckin's customer loyalty program from the legacy system to its new platform.

McGuckin wanted its new loyalty platform to feature:

- The ability to own and access their customers' loyalty data to create flexible, customized marketing communications
- The ability to provide customers the same experience, whether online or in-store
- Streamlined customer access to their loyalty account: Points balances, profile, password changes, etc.

A "Fan"-Based Solution

While accommodating these requests was a tall order, Orgill's FanBuilder® loyalty program provided the resource for building out what McGuckin needed.

"I had actually seen a presentation about FanBuilder at one of the Orgill markets and I asked Greg [Stine], 'I know this program is newer, but we want to beta this and make this part of our project.' And so we made the decision to wrap this all together because we saw the potential in what they were doing with it," Harrison says.

FanBuilder is an enhanced customer engagement system that integrates with Epicor Eagle. Additional POS systems will be able to integrate in 2022.

FanBuilder lets retailers completely customize a loyalty program with their own retail brand, including promotions, messaging, rewards and more.

"The real key to why FanBuilder was such a good fit for McGuckin was the flexibility of the entire program," Stine says. "The team at McGuckin can control every aspect of it, and from the customers' point of view, all of the communication, all the rewards, all of the messaging and branding are coming to them from McGuckin Hardware."

Designed for ease-of-use, FanBuilder provided the McGuckin team with all the tools needed to generate loyalty program messages and promotions.

And FanBuilder's integration with McGuckin's POS means salesfloor associates can easily access information about a customer's loyalty account.

McGuckin Rewards, its new loyalty program, also provided customers an online dashboard to view their points, coupons, purchase history and more.

The retailer promoted this new program across all channels—email, social media, in-store and online. Today, McGuckin has more than 80,000 customers enrolled in the program and full access to the data generated by loyalty purchases.

"Our old program was just too restrictive, and this provides us with such a greater degree of flexibility with how we use it, what we can do with the data and how we build our marketing and promotional efforts," Harrison says.

"It has been a big win for us. It was not without its challenges, but we are happy with where it got us and where we can go with it."

One of McGuckin's loyalty-program challenges was getting its data clean before it could be transferred to the new system. Harrison recommended that other retailers should take the time to get that data clean.

"It makes the transition so much easier if you do this prior to launch," Harrison said. "That's where most customer complaints were coming from—we just didn't have the cleanest data going in. But we are still so much further down the road than we ever were before."

FanBuilder®
ENHANCED CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Orgill's vision with FanBuilder® is to allow dealers to individually target and market to consumers, through a POS-connected loyalty program that gives customers personalized, value-added information.

"The FanBuilder program's flexibility is why it was such a good fit for McGuckin. Their team can control every aspect of it."

Greg Stine, Orgill executive vice president

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RESULTS

The Results

After working on multiple phases of McGuckin Hardware's website redesign, data organization, eCommerce and customer loyalty project simultaneously, the entirely new systems went live in early 2020.

Since then, McGuckin's metrics reveal the projects' impacts. Marked increases and anecdotal feedback from customers continue to indicate the retailer is achieving its initial goals.

Post-launch takeaways:

- Rich product descriptions, photos and images of these products to help shoppers navigate their purchases.
- Over 85% of in-store products are now shoppable online
- Web traffic increased twofold within the first month
- Online sales increased 1,300% year-over-year in the first month
- One year after launch, online sales increased by more than 1,000%
- McGuckin's average in-store order value (AOV) increased 23%, despite a decline in foot traffic
- Online AOV went up 34%.

According to Harrison, some of the most tangible evidence of the success of their new strategic rollout comes with face-to-face customer interactions.

"We have customers coming into the store holding their phone and showing our associate things they were looking at on our website and they will complete the purchase in store," he says. "It is a great marriage of our online and in-store experience, which is exactly what we were hoping to achieve."

Harrison also points out that, while launching the entire program at the start of the pandemic crisis certainly created additional challenges, he feels the pain points were worth the flexibility the online shopping options gave McGuckin customers.

"As far as our web sales go, during the pandemic there was really no way to compare apples to apples with the sales we were generating versus what we generated with our old site and system prior to COVID," Harrison says. "You could almost take just the first month with our new site and the sales we generated through it and compare it to an entire year's worth of previous sales. But I know we couldn't have done business without the functionality the new site afforded us, and this was huge for our store, but it was also huge for our customers to be able to have that option."

Harrison says the McGuckin team continues to work with Orgill, Tyndale and Unilog in an ongoing way to maintain, improve and tweak its systems. Now, McGuckin is interested in using the raft of information and data they now have as a result of the changes they made.

"The next big thing on our radar right now is digging into data and learning where we need to be," Harrison says.

"We want to start looking at things like what our customers are searching for and whether we have it or not—finding those gaps. But this gives us that kind of insight we didn't have before. This is really just the beginning. It is going well now, but we want to continue to make things better."

"It is a great marriage of our online and in-store experience, which is exactly what we were hoping to achieve."

Bill Harrison, McGuckin Hardware technical operations manager

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Project Insights

INCREASE SALES

"Ultimately, any business's goal is to increase sales through technology, and that's where we were at as well. Any advantage we could give ourselves to bring customers into the door or attain that customer, that was our ultimate goal."

Bill Harrison
McGuckin Hardware

WORKING WITH ORGILL

"This is really another example of how we can bring a team of experts together to help a retailer with a project that gives them access to a certain scale they might not otherwise have."

Greg Stine
Orgill

CUSTOMIZATION

"For McGuckin, they were looking for all of the features and benefits that large online competitors would offer through their websites—and we could offer that similar experience with our Integrated eCommerce program."

Greg Stine
Orgill

WORKING WITH ORGILL

"That's the nice thing about Orgill—they are a large company, but they kind of act like a smaller company, in a sense that I can talk to anyone at the company and get things done."

Bill Harrison
McGuckin Hardware

PARTNERSHIP

"McGuckin was definitely one of those pioneering companies that we worked with on the product data side. We learned a lot from them and about what they needed because they were one of the first customers that came to us that already had their own more developed data management process."

Stepanie Lee
Orgill

SUCCESS

"There's really no other way to put it, but our existing loyalty program was just not working out the way we needed it to.

The data was owned by another vendor, and we couldn't access data when we wanted to or needed to. This meant we couldn't do everything we wanted to do.

Prior to using our previous vendor's loyalty program, we had maintained our own program, and while it was more time-consuming, our customers liked it better.

We decided we wanted to go back to something that met our needs—not our vendor's needs."

Bill Harrison
McGuckin Hardware

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About Us

About Tyndale Advisors:

With offices in Eugene, Ore., and Collierville, Tenn., Tyndale Advisors is a wholly owned subsidiary of Orgill, Inc. Tyndale works closely with CNRG brands as well as many independent hardware-industry retailers who do business with Orgill.

Tyndale embodies its slogan, to "help remove obstacles to growth," by supporting independent home-improvement retailers with a complete suite of retail-management tools across four core areas:

Business Advisory Services – Guidance and insight for operational improvements, strategic planning, accounting and finance, acquisition strategies and more.

Human Resources – Policy reviews, compliance practices, and audit services as well as employee programs including engagement, development and retention.

Marketing – A complete range of branding and marketing support, from brand-strategy consulting and website design to media buys, in-store experience consultations and a complete array of creative services.

Technology – Total retail-technology solutions, from tech consultations and analytics to infrastructure, eCommerce and software solutions.

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