Chapter No. 4
"Simple Products"
In this package, you will find:
A Biography of the authors of the book
A preview chapter from the book, Chapter NO.4 "Simple Products"
A synopsis of the book’s content
Information on where to buy this book

About the Authors

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He has worked with Magento since its early releases in 2008 and has written a Dutch book about Magento.

Together with co-writer Robbert Ravensbergen, he's running an e-commerce blog at [http://www.boostingecommerce.com](http://www.boostingecommerce.com).

For More Information:
Magento Beginner's Guide
Second Edition

It was a few years ago, I think it was somewhere in 2008, when I first heard about Magento as the new "Top open source e-commerce solution". Actually, at that moment it wasn't yet that good, but I could see the potential of the software already. Especially thinking about other open source solutions such as osCommerce at that time, or VirtueMart running on Joomla. No, those were the days when the e-commerce market was still dominated by large-scale companies and expensive solutions, but things have rapidly changed since then.

During 2009, the first edition of this book was published by Packt, written by William Rice. And at that moment it was actually one of the very first books in the market giving readers the opportunity to learn to work with Magento. Also in that area, times have changed and various new versions of Magento have been released since then. So it's time for a completely updated and rewritten version of that first, popular Magento book. And here it is.

Since 2009 we've been working on several Magento projects and learned to get to know Magento the hard way, sometimes just by trying and failing every now and then. Everyone already experienced with Magento will know what I'm talking about. But don't worry, this book will give you a complete overview of what Magento is, how to install it, and how to use it. When you create an online store with Magento, you usually follow a defined series of steps. This book is arranged to support that process. Each chapter shows you how to get the most out of every step.

By the time you finish reading this book you'll have a basic, but complete online store built on Magento that is ready to start selling.

Robbert Ravensbergen
Sander Schoneville

Introducing Magento

Magento is an "open source" software, which basically means that you are allowed to view, edit, and contribute to the source code. A lot of people also think that "open source" means "free". Although it is certainly true that most open source solutions are available for free, it isn't a mandatory part of the open source principle. Looking at Magento we immediately recognize that, because Magento is available freely as well as in a paid for version. We'll cover more on the differences between those versions later on.

For More Information:
As we already mentioned in this Preface, Magento isn't the only open source e-commerce solution in the market. There are other ones as well. We'll name a few alternatives, without being complete:

- OpenCart
- PrestaShop
- osCommerce (more or less obsolete)
- Joomla with VirtueMart
- WordPress with e-commerce plugins like WooCommerce
- Zen Cart

The first two candidates in this list are the more serious options, whereas the other ones are generally used for smaller shops. But don't get me wrong, as I've already seen excellent shops based on something relatively simple, such as WordPress with WooCommerce as well.

Looking at the commercial/paid market, there are really lots of players and it's hard to make a choice if you're new to the business. Also in here, we'd like to name a few solutions, so that you could get an idea of what's available in the market:

- Shopify
- X-Cart
- Interspire
- Volusion

Moreover, we see solution providers offering an online solution that you can use straight out of the box, without having to do any installation. Magento is doing this as well and we'll tell you more on this possibility in our Magento version overview.

**The history of Magento**

It was way back in 2001 when Roy Rubin and Yoav Kutner founded a company named Varien. They did many e-commerce implementations during those years, especially using osCommerce. But they were never satisfied with the solution. The lack of stability and flexibility made them think that it could be done better. So they decided to start a new e-commerce project in 2007 and named it Magento. The very first beta version was released in August of that year and it took them until March 2008 to release Magento Version 1.0. From that moment on, things moved fast. The solution became incredibly popular within a couple of years and new versions were released once or twice per year. Starting from that first version in 2008, we've currently reached Version 1.7 at the beginning of 2013.

For More Information:

Meanwhile, a lot has changed in the Varien company. It is now called Magento Inc. and has been acquired completely by eBay during 2011. The Magento community is a bit worried about the plans that eBay has with Magento, especially now that one of the original founders, Yoav Kutner, has left the company. Even keeping possible scenarios in mind, Magento has currently grown to be by far the most popular e-commerce solutions available:

Especially knowing that older solutions such as osCommerce and VirtueMart are losing market shares and Magento is still growing makes this picture even more clear about the major role Magento is playing in the e-commerce market at this moment.

**Magento versions**

Magento being the number one choice at this moment is great, but what does that mean for the company delivering the solution? How are they making money to continue to support the platform? This is where the various Magento versions come in. During the first few years of Magento, only the free 'Community Edition' was available. Actually, this free Community Edition is the one we'll be covering in this book since most users will start using that version. Magento currently offers two other possibilities:

**Enterprise Edition**

The Enterprise Edition is Magento's flagship solution, made for large-scale online stores. The Enterprise Edition has functionality on board that the Community Edition is missing and we currently often see that new features are first released in this Enterprise Edition. For companies using this version, the important fact is that Magento offers support on it. The Enterprise Edition has its own version numbers that do not have anything to do with the version number of the Community Edition. Magento Enterprise Edition is currently at Version 1.12 and is currently priced at over $14,000 annually. If you'd like to read more on the Enterprise Edition and its features please browse to:


Formerly, Magento also offered a "Professional Edition", which was priced in between the Community and Enterprise Editions. It was discontinued, forcing its customers to the more expensive Enterprise Edition.

**Magento Go**

Seeing more and more competitors like, for instance, Shopify and Volusion offering online e-commerce solutions, Magento has decided to offer such a service as well. Magento Go is an online Magento platform, that you can simply rent by paying a monthly fee. The good thing is that you do not have to worry about hosting, installation, and maintenance. Magento will do it for you. The downside however, is that Magento Go isn't yet suitable for every market and you cannot expand its functionality like you can in running your own installation. If you are interested, please pay special attention to anything that is required for your local market, payment service providers being the most important one. Pricing of Magento Go currently starts at $15 per month for a single store in one language.

**For More Information:**

More information on Magento Go can be found at:

Why choose Magento?
We've already mentioned that Magento is currently the most popular e-commerce solution, but why would you choose Magento? There are plenty of alternatives, so what makes Magento so popular? Since you're reading this book you have probably already made your choice. Still it is good to look at a few pros and cons of Magento, to make sure that you made the right decision for your business.
Magento pros

♦ **Multi site:** One of the strongest pros of Magento is that it's relatively easy to set up multiple stores in multiple languages offering different (or the same) products. You are in control.

♦ **Product catalog management:** Magento offers extended possibilities to set up and manage your online product catalog. From simple products to complete sets including options and customer variables anything seems to be possible. Magento also supports selling digital (downloadable) products.

♦ **Theming:** If you want to change the look and feel of your store, you have to change your Magento theme or install a completely different one. The number of themes available is huge nowadays, and of course it is also possible to use a custom design for your store. Generally speaking a good Magento theme isn't free. The Marketplace Themeforest (http://themeforest.net) is one of the possibilities to search for and buy a standard Magento theme:

For More Information:

­ Extensions: Magento is already pretty complete out of the box. But there's always room for improvement or maybe you need to change the functionality because of local requirements. The Magento Community offers a lot of extensions that you can install and use to change the behavior of your store. There are free as well as paid for solutions available and there are (commercial) companies that completely focus on delivering one or multiple Magento extensions.

­ Scalability: The Magento solution is not only versatile, it is very scalable as well. You do not need a very large budget to start and once your company is growing, Magento still offers you lots of possibilities. Magento can therefore be a very good choice for small companies with high ambition levels.

­ Support: Although we already mentioned that official Magento support is available for the Enterprise edition, you do not have to worry. There are lots of companies throughout the whole world available to support you and help you achieve your goals. These companies will not work for free, but it's good to know that there's a fallback if you have to go further than this book and information available online have to offer.

Magento cons

A book about Magento describing the downside of the software? Yes, we feel that it is important to tell you the whole story. We are indeed Magento fans, but there are downsides to every solution. And Magento has them as well. Let's take a quick look at them:

- Magento is consumer oriented: Do you need to run a "Business to business" store? Magento wasn't designed for that originally. Of course it is possible to use Magento that way, but sometimes it doesn't fit so nicely. Recently we've noticed that Magento is adding functionality to better support this customer group.

- Magento is slow: Haven't you heard this one before? The code of Magento is very well structured but therefore requires more resources than an average website. More on this topic in the next chapter, but remember that if you want to run Magento, you do not go for the cheapest hosting solution.

- Magento is difficult: Well, it certainly isn't the easiest solution, because of the large number of features and possibilities. But also if you need to do coding yourself, you need a lot of knowledge about the product. This isn't a programmer's book though, and we feel that learning Magento itself isn't too complicated. This book will help you getting the job done.

For More Information:  
What This Book Covers

Chapter 1, Installation, explains all you need to know about setting up your own local installation of Magento, or installing Magento at a hosting provider using Installatron.

Chapter 2, General Configuration, talks about Magento as a very versatile but complex product. Before adding your products, you first need to take a closer look at setting up your online store. In this chapter, you'll also learn to set up tax calculations.

Chapter 3, Categories and Attributes, explains that one of Magento's strengths is the way it can handle almost every product type. In this chapter you'll learn to work with Product Categories, Product Attributes, and Attribute Sets.

Chapter 4, Simple Products, talks about adding your first product in your store. During this chapter, you'll learn how to properly set up your products and which fields are important to pay attention to.

Chapter 5, Beyond Adding Simple Products, explains that now that you have added your first product, it's time to explore the other possibilities Magento offers to set up your product catalog. You'll learn to work with downloadable and configurable products.

Chapter 6, Customer Relationships, talks about looking at the other areas, starting with the possibilities Magento offers for setting up and maintaining your customer databases.

Chapter 7, Accepting Payments, explains that before being able to start selling, you'll need to set up payment systems, so that you'll be able to receive a payment from your customer. In this chapter we'll show you how to use Magento's common payment methods and how to add your own using a Payment Service Provider.

Chapter 8, Configuring Shipping, will teach you to work with the built-in Shipping Methods of Magento. We also included instructions to work with different kinds of shipping rates.

Chapter 9, Customizing Your Store's Appearance, explains what is often one of the first things you would like to do: changing the look and feel of your online store. However, now that you learned to work with Magento, it's the right time to work in this area and change the way your online store will look.

Chapter 10, Fulfilling Orders. Everything is set up now to start receiving your first orders. But once you do, how do you take control of the order process? In this chapter you will learn you how to work with orders, shipping, invoices, and credit notes.

Chapter 11, Maintaining and Administering Your Store, explains that once your store has been set up you're not finished yet. Maintaining your online store is an ongoing process and you have just started it. In this chapter you'll learn which areas you should pay attention to. Besides that we added a checklist that you may use before bringing your store live.

For More Information:
All preparations for our product catalog have been done. We have made the settings we needed, created attributes and attribute sets and we created a tree structure of categories. Finally, we’ll be able to add our very first products.

In this chapter we will learn:

- Creating simple products, the easiest and most used product type
- Understanding all product attributes that you'll need to create simple products the right way

Within Magento you may use various types of products. You'll need them depending on what your store is going to offer. The more complex product types will be discussed in Chapter 5, Beyond Adding Simple Products. In this chapter we'll only discuss the simplest type: Simple Products. A typical example of a Simple Product is one that does not have any options for the buyer. This could be our TV from the previous chapter, a phone, bag, office supplies, and so on. The Simple Product is the most used product type in Magento, especially because other types use the Simple Product to create a new one.

Adding a Simple Product

Adding a Simple Product requires several steps. We are going to use the TV example for these steps.
Simple Products

Step 1 – creating a product and assigning an attribute set

Navigate in the top menu to Catalog | Manage Products and the following dialog will open:

If you’re in a Magento instance including the demo content, a list of already existing products will be shown here. In our case we started empty, so we have a completely empty product catalog.

In the top-right corner, click on the Add Product button.

The first thing you need to do know is to select the Product Type and Attribute Set that this product will belong to. So, leave the default value of Simple Product and select the Attribute Set field for your product as shown in the following screenshot. You cannot change that later on!

Lastly, click on Continue.

Step 2 – the General tab

Next, the product maintenance screen appears, starting with an empty page. This is the first tab on the left of the screen, named General. In total there should be 13(1) tabs, giving you a lot of opportunities to do what you need for your product. But, in our situation, we see one additional tab, which isn’t there by default, named Custom. This tab exists because we defined it that way in our attribute set for TVs and monitors in the previous chapter. So, the number of available tabs will not always be the same; it depends on the attribute set. We’ll not discuss every single tab and field here, but focus on the things that we’ll absolutely need to know to be able to create our products.

For More Information:
But let's first focus on our **General** tab and fill that one with the necessary data. In the following example screenshot, we have already filled in some data to make clear what the fields are used for:

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**Time for action – filling the General tab**

1. The fields **Name**, **Description**, and **Short Description** are all very important. They are used to introduce the product to your visitors, but they are also important for the search engines.

   Note that the **Short Description** field is used before the **Description** field on your product page! Somehow Magento decided to switch the sort order here in the **General** tab.

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For More Information:
2. Let's have a look at where we'll see these fields in the frontend of your store:

Often in software programs or websites, the mandatory fields are all marked with an asterisk (*). These fields are required. If you leave one of them empty, you will not be able to save your product. If you try to save the page, the tabs on the left of the screen turn red indicating that there are one or multiple mandatory fields that have not been set.

Looking at the example screenshot, it's clear that we still need to set fields such as images and pricing, but that's something we'll do in a minute. For now, take a look at where the Name, Description and Short Description values are used.

For More Information:
Let's go back to our product in Magento and we'll fill those fields with our data:

- Start with filling your **Description** and **Short Description** fields. Note that below these fields, there's a **WYSIWYG** (What You See Is What You Get) button. Click on it to open an editor that gives a way to create a better looking text using, for instance, bullet points, bold or italic text, and so on. It's even possible to add images here, but we recommend that you don't use those in your description fields. Magento offers a better way to work with images on your product page, and having an image in your description fields might not be the best choice.

**SEO Tip**

Do not just copy and paste description and titles that you received from your vendor(s). Create your own unique content; search engines will reward you for it!

For More Information:

Simple Products

- Fill the SKU field. SKU stands for Stock Keeping Unit, also often referred to as an "item or article number". The SKU field must be unique in your Magento installation.

  Although there's a lot that can be said about using these codes, concerning whether or not to use a meaningful code, we don't do it and just use a number value for the field. However, using alphanumeric values is also possible and you could even decide to keep the exact code as your vendor does.

- The Weight field is mandatory as well and can only contain a numeric value. The strange thing is that it is unknown whether this is in lbs or kg. On the other hand, that's good, so you can decide for yourself.

  But be aware to use it consistently throughout your shop, because the weight of a product can be used to calculate shipping prices. Therefore, it makes sense to enter a weight including packaging material and not only the weight of the bare product.

- The Set Product as New From Date and Set Product as New To Date fields can be used to mark a product as New! in your shop, just to emphasize it. You could also use this function to show a list of new products in your store.

  The way it looks for your visitors completely depends on your theme. Because it makes sense to do this only for a limited time period we recommend to immediately fill the End Date field if you want to use this function.

- Set the Status field to Enabled to make sure your product is visible to your audience. A disabled product will never be visible in your store.

- The URL Key field can be set automatically when you save your product, but it is possible to set it manually as well. Just make sure that you do not use any spaces or capitals, and use your most important keywords for this product in it!

  The URL Key value is used by Magento to create the link to this particular product page. It's better to keep the URL Key field unique as well, but Magento doesn't warn you if you don't.

- The Visibility field is mandatory, but it is set by default. For regular simple products, you do not have to change it. We'll see later on in the next chapter why it might sometimes be necessary to use a different value.

- The Country of Manufacture field is optional and is sometimes needed by companies for mandatory reporting.

For More Information:
Step 3 – the Prices tab

Magento offers extended possibilities to work with sales prices for your products. There are two mandatory fields in this tab, so we always have to visit this tab when creating our products.

Time for action – filling the Prices tab

1. The Price field is mandatory and contains your regular sales prices. If nothing fancy is needed and you just want to quickly set one sales price only, use this field for it. The extended currency is filled automatically based on the settings you made earlier in Chapter 2, General Configuration.

2. The Group Price field can be used if your store is servicing different customer groups that need different sales prices. As an example, you could think of a shop with members, where the members receive better prices than a casual visitor.

More on working with customer groups will follow in Chapter 6, Customer Relationships. We do not use the group price in our example, but if you want to, just click on the Add Group Price button, select your customer group and enter the sales price. The Prices tab would look something like the following screenshot:

3. The Special Price field can be used to offer a special (usually lower) price. In the frontend of your store, you’ll see both the prices, where the current, lower price is emphasized. The exact way that it is shown depends on your theme. This field is often used together with the Special Price From Date and Special Price To Date fields, so that the temporary price will only be valid for a limited time period.

For More Information:
Simple Products

4. The Tier Price field is interesting, because you can use this to calculate a lower price, depending on the number of products a customer buys. Tier pricing is especially useful in cases where you want to do a "Buy 5, pay for 4" promotion or anything similar. In our TV example, we do not need it of course, but if you want to use it, click on the Add Tier button, select a customer group, minimum quantity, and special price.

5. The last really important field of this tab is Tax Class. Remember that we discussed Tax Class earlier in Chapter 2, General Configuration. This is the field to connect Tax Class to your product. Often, all of your products will be in the same tax class, but if you need to calculate various tax rates, which depend on the product, this is the place to set it.

Step 4 – the Meta Information tab

We have already slightly touched the topic of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in this book, but in this tab things become important. The Meta Information tab holds a couple of fields that will become visible in the search engines directly.

Time for action – filling the Meta Information tab

There are three fields in this tab, of which only two are important:

- The Meta Title field will be used by search engines to display our product. Use your most important keywords at the beginning. This title will be used by the search engines as the heading of your product listing. Create an informative title that describes your product and do not use more than 70 characters.

- The Meta Keywords field was important for search engines in the past. The more keywords you put in, the better it was. But almost all search engines are ignoring this field nowadays and you may just as well leave it empty.

- The Meta Description is important, because this will appear in the results of the search engines again. Keep it short and attractive though! Unfortunately, Magento doesn’t assist you here, but generally you could say that the search engines will only show the first 160 characters. The Meta Information tab looks like the following screenshot:
Step 5 – the Images tab

Not only is an image worth a thousand words, images (together with reviews) are the most important part of your product page. Without good images you’re very likely to fail in the process of selling your products. Working with images is not always simple for beginners though. Especially when you have to create your own images, it’s not always easy to create good results. When you’re not used to tools such as Photoshop, PaintShop Pro, Gimp, or any other photo editor, you should definitely spend the time learning it. Believe me, it’s worth it.

Magento works with different image sizes, named **Base Image**, **Small Image**, and **Thumbnail**. Let’s first go through what these different images are used for:

- **Base Image**: This will be the main product image in the highest quality. It is used on the product page and you should give your audience the possibility to zoom in. There are no real fixed rules for sizing this image type, but generally we could say that anything with a width of around 800 pixels could be suitable. Smaller image sizes will be accepted and will work, but your visitors will not be able to zoom your images when the width is lower than about 300 pixels. Whether or not the 800 pixels are enough depends on the product you are selling.

- **Small Image**: The Small Image is used on the product grid and list pages, where multiple products per page will be shown. The needed size depends a bit on your theme (how many image images will be displayed next to each other), but on average we could say that an image between 150 and 300 pixels width should be OK.
Simple Products

- **Thumbnail:** This is really a tiny image, only used to display your products on the cart of your store, or in a list view such as "New Products" or "Most Popular Products". Generally, an image width of around 80 pixels should be more than enough.

You will use these three image types usually with the same image, just using different sizes! Besides these three images, it's also possible to add additional images to your product, to show different angles or a really detailed photo, for example. The three images are needed, but you are not limited to those.

The file size of your images is very important. The larger your image files, the slower your website will respond. Verify in your favorite image editor how to obtain the smallest images sizes, without delivering too low quality images. You may also use online tools such as SmushIt (http://smushit.com) that can help reducing the file size of your images.

**Time for action – filling the Images tab**

1. Opening the **Images** tab shows an empty screen for a new product. Click on the **Browse Files**… button to start selecting your images:

![Product Information](image)

2. Select the first file you'd like to add using your operating system and open it. Click on the **Upload Files** button to add your image to Magento. When you're just starting, we recommend you do this image by image. Once you're familiar with this function, you may just as well upload multiple images at once. Magento allows you to do so.

![Product Information](image)

For More Information:
3. Now that your image has been uploaded, you can see it on the left of the table by hovering over it with your mouse cursor. You should set the correct radio button for your image type. In this example, I just added our largest image, so I select the Base Image radio button. Technically it’s possible to also switch on the other two buttons and only use one image file. However, we recommend that you create separate images for every type, to keep the file size and quality of the images as good as possible.

4. Fill the Label field of your image since it will be used as the image’s Alt attribute. And that’s another field that is important for the search engines. Do not underestimate the power of this field and always enter those labels.

5. Add the two other images as well (for the Small Image and Thumbnail) and set the radio buttons accordingly. Next, click on the Exclude checkbox for these two images; otherwise they will be used on the product page as well. If you do not exclude them, you would see three similar images on the product page, but in different quality. Look at the result of our example to see how your fields should be set:

6. If you made a mistake with one of your images and added the wrong one, you can remove it again by clicking on the Remove checkbox. Your image will not be deleted immediately; this will happen once you save your product.

7. If you have them available, add additional images as well. Normally, these additional images will appear on your product page under the main image. It makes sense to use a higher resolution (preferably 800 pixels of width or more) for these images, so that these can also be used for zooming by the user.

Note that there should always be a balance between picture detail and image size. For these additional images, you do not click on any radio button or checkbox.

For More Information:
The final result could look something like the following screenshot:

Once our product has been saved, the result in the frontend looks good. Note that the default Magento zoom function will not win any prizes. This is something that can be improved by your theme or by using an extension.

For More Information:
What just happened?

You took the very first steps in creating a product in Magento. You created descriptions, price information, and meta tags for the search engines and images. But we aren't there yet, there are a couple of additional tabs that you should fill before your product will be visible.

For a beginner's guide, the Recurring Profile, Design, and Gift Options tabs are out of scope, but we would still like to mention them briefly, so that you know what they could be used for:

- **Recurring Profile**: This is a function that can be used to handle recurring payments, for instance, if you're selling a subscription service, where your customers have to pay a monthly fee. The Recurring Profile function gives the possibility to do that, but it's currently only working in combination with the payment method PayPal Express checkout.

- **Design**: This tab can be used to give the product page for this product a different design compared to the one that is used by default in your theme. This could be useful when you need to create a landing page or special promotion. However, using this technique is not so easy, because you need deeper knowledge about XML and the way Magento themes are built.

- **Gift Options**: This tab holds only one field, which you can enable to let your customers add a special text to the product. For instance, when they are ordering the product as a gift for someone else. Just set the field to Yes if you want to use it.

Step 6 – the Custom tab

The Custom tab will or will not be there, depending on the steps you take when creating your own attribute sets. We've defined a special group named Custom in our attribute set, and it appears here in our product creation page. It even holds a mandatory field, because we defined it to be mandatory, so we cannot ignore it here. But be aware that by default this tab does not exist in Magento.

For More Information:
Time for action – filling the Custom tab

1. There are only two fields in our example attribute set as shown in the following screenshot, but yours could have much more, or it might not even exist. In here, we have two fields that we need to set: Screensize and Manufacturer. The values that are available have been set during the maintenance of our attributes:

Note that it is even possible here to create additional instant attributes with the top-right button named Create New Attribute. If you do so, the attribute maintenance form will pop up, giving you the possibility to create additional fields on the fly. However, although this is possible, we do not really recommend it. You should think about your attributes and attribute sets thoroughly before starting to add products.

Note that we've now filled all mandatory fields. This means you may now save the product. Do that, to prevent any loss of data. It has already happened a lot to me that when I was creating items in Magento, the phone rang; I had to do something else and was logged out of the system after a while. Don't let that happen and regularly save your work!

Use the Save and Continue button to save and stay on the same page. If you click on the Save button, your work will be stored as well, but you'll leave the current page and return to the product overview page. Of course, you can always come back to your product and add any missing data.

Step 7 – the Inventory tab

The next tab we'll need to look at is the Inventory tab. Do you need to keep track of stock levels in Magento? And if yes, how? What will happen if an item is no longer in stock; can we still sell it and take a backorder or should we prevent the user from buying such an article?

Having a clear inventory status of your products is not only important for you, but your visitors will appreciate it as well if it is completely clear for them whether an item is available on stock or not.

For More Information:
Time for action – filling the Inventory tab

1. First of all, you will see that a lot of fields in the Inventory tab have been defaulted to the configuration settings. This means that, by default, Magento will use the settings you made as the default value for these fields.

   If it is more convenient for you to change the defaults, go to System | Configuration | CATALOG | Inventory. Since we did not discuss these default settings in Chapter 2, General Configuration, we'll do it here. Just remember that if you're changing the fields below very often, it might be easier to change the defaults for your situation.

   To be able to change the contents of the fields on the item level, first deselect the Use Config Settings checkbox and then change the value of your field of choice.

2. The Manage Stock field is pretty clear: do you want to keep track of stock levels for this product, Yes or No? If you set it to No, a lot of other fields will disappear, because they are no longer relevant in that case. The Inventory tab looks like the following screenshot:

3. If managing stock levels, you must enter a starting stock value in the Qty field.

   Remember that this value is in the unit of measure you're selling your products in. As an example, if you have 900 pairs of socks in stock, but sell them only in packages of three pairs, you would enter 300 here.

4. The Qty for Item's Status to Become Out of Stock field is a minimum value that you can use to have some control levels in your stock. By default this is set to zero, assuming that you can sell every single piece you have available.

For More Information:
5. **Minimum Qty Allowed in Shopping Cart** is clear: if there's a minimum number of products your customer should buy, enter it here. Please note that this is on the product level, it has nothing to do with a minimum order value.

6. **Maximum Qty Allowed in Shopping Cart** will block any customer from buying more items in one order than the value in this field.

7. **Qty Uses Decimals** will be needed if, for instance, you're selling something by weight or length. Do you allow the customer to buy 5.5 meters of loudspeaker cable? If yes, set this value to *Yes*.

8. The **Can be Divided into Multiple Boxes for Shipping** field is a new field in Magento 1.7 and can be used for more complex shipping solutions, where it is important to know how to handle the product at shipping. You may leave the default for now.

9. The **Backorders** field is important to set the behavior of Magento when you're running out of stock. You may decide to not accept backorders, accept backorders, or accept backorders including a notification to the customer that the products are actually no longer in stock.

10. The **Notify for Quantity Below** field holds the threshold value for the aforementioned field. A customer will only be notified if the stock value drops below the value of this field.

11. The **Enable Qty Increments** field is used in special circumstances. Set it to *Yes* if you're, for instance, selling wine in boxes of six. If you set this field to *Yes*, another field will appear, which you can use to set **Quantity Increments**:

    ![Image of Notify for Quantity Below and Enable Qty Increments fields]

    By setting this to 6, for example, Magento will let your visitors know that they have to buy six or a multiple-of-six items. Trying to order something else will fail and Magento will warn the visitor, explaining that they must order the correct quantity.

    Note that if you're selling in boxes of six, and you have six boxes on stock, the **Qty** field should still be set to 36 if you are using this functionality. Of course, we'll not use this function for our TV example, but there are a lot of products where this function comes in handy.

For More Information:

12. Don’t forget to set the last field, **Stock availability**, to **In Stock**, otherwise your product might not be visible in the frontend of your store! As soon as you’re running out of stock, Magento will automatically change the value of this field. So, remember that whenever you’re adding a new stock in Magento in the **Qty** field, you must also check if the **Stock Availability** field has the correct value. Just changing the **Qty** field isn’t enough.

Depending on the configuration of your Magento environment, you may have an additional tab between **Inventory** and **Categories**, named **Websites**. This tab is only visible if you define multiple websites, and this gives you the opportunity to assign the same product on multiple sites.

**Step 8 – the Categories tab**

If you have already set up your categories before starting to add products, this is an easy step. Just assign the correct categories to your products. It’s possible to select multiple categories. If you do not select any category at all, your product will not be visible for visitors through the regular site navigation.

**Time for action – filling the Categories tab**

1. Just one step here. Open your category tree by clicking on the category folders and select one or multiple categories within it. Magento will show the number of products in a certain category, but will only update that number if you save your product.

Note that it is also possible to add an item to a category from the **Category Maintenance** page. This is especially helpful if you need to assign a lot of items to one specific category. Instead of opening every single item one by one, you can go to the **Categories** function and add them all at once.

For More Information:

What just happened?

And that completes the final mandatory tab that we had to go through, to create our product. If you did everything correctly, your product should now be visible at the frontend of your store, seen as something like the following screenshot:

![Image of a product in a Magento storefront](image)

However, we haven't seen all the tabs yet and there are still some interesting functions that we will discuss in the remainder of this chapter.

Before we do so, consider, what if the product you created did not become visible in your store? There can be a number of reasons for this and sometimes it can be frustrating when you’re just starting and cannot find the reason. The following are some tips that should help you out:

- First check if your product’s **Status** field, within the **General** tab, is set to **Enabled**.
- Just below that, check if the **Visibility** field has the value **Catalog, Search**.
- On the **Inventory** tab, check whether you set the **Manage Stock** field to **Yes**. If you did, make sure you have a **Qty** value more than zero and you set the **Stock Availability** field to **In Stock**.
- Check if you assigned your product to a category in the **Categories** tab.

For More Information:

If you’re running multiple websites, you will also see a Websites tab. Make sure that your product is assigned to the website, as you need your product to appear in it.

Does everything seem to be correct, but your product is still not showing? Sometimes, it is necessary to rebuild your indexes or flush the Magento cache. Visit System | Index Management or System | Cache Management to rebuild or flush, if the aforementioned steps do not deliver the desired result. More information on using the index and cache management functions can be found in Chapter 11, Maintaining and Administering Your Store.

Related products, up-selling, and cross-selling

Before looking at the way you can set up related products, and up- and cross-sells, let’s first take a closer look at what these actually are and how you can use them in your store to sell more items or products with better revenue.

Related products are—as the name already states—related to another product. To give a few examples: a mouse could be related to a keyboard, video cables could be related to a TV, and ink cartridges could be related to a printer. Related products can also be used to show alternative products within the same product range, although often the up-sell function is used for that purpose.

Generally, in Magento, related products are shown on the product page in a sidebar at the right of the screen. However, the exact position of related products may vary depending on your store’s theme.
**Simple Products**

**Up-sell products** are used to show your visitor alternative products, generally in a higher price range. The goal is to let the customer view alternatives as well. Generally speaking, a higher sales price means more revenue for the seller. Often, the more expensive products are combined with one cheaper product, to get a more balanced product overview, still pointing your visitor in the direction of buying a product with a higher sales price. Take a look at the products in the following example:

Up-sell products are shown on the product pages, in most cases under the product that you selected. A text such as "Other visitors also bought..." or "These items could be interesting for you..." will help to encourage the visitor to click on those items as well.

**Cross-sell products** aren't shown on the product page directly, but are shown in the cart or just before checkout. This is the moment when it's possible to sell some additional accessories to your customer, by giving them the possibility to easily add them to their cart. So, where the up-sell tries to sell a similar product, but a different one, the cross-sell tries to add last-minute additions to your cart. For an instance, when you're in the supermarket and see some nice cookies offered just when you're waiting in line to check out your groceries.

The following example shows a Magento store that is holding the demo data. Although the shown cross-sell products are not the ones you would expect here when buying a camera, the idea is clear: let the user quickly add additional items just before starting the checkout:

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For More Information:
These ideas aren’t new and they work online just as well as in real stores. Magento offers the possibility to use them. Whether or not to use them all or just a few depends very much on the product range you are offering.

**Adding related products in Magento**

The principle of adding related products, up-sell and cross-sell products is the same. Therefore, it’s sufficient to show you the procedure for related products.

Adding up-sell products and cross-sell products works exactly the same. You just need to do it on a different tab of your product maintenance page.

Whether or not related and up-sell items will be shown depends on the Magento theme your store is using. In the default theme, they will be there, but for other themes it completely depends on the creator of the theme if they will be shown.

For More Information:
Let’s return to our TV example, which we created in this chapter. If needed navigate back to it using the menu: Catalog | Manage Products and open your product. On the product page, select the Related Products tab as shown in the following screenshot:

By default there’s an active filter, showing products that have already been set as a related product for this one. Since we haven’t set a related product yet, we’ll see an empty screen. The easiest way to solve this is to click on the Reset Filter button on the right-hand side of the screen. After that, all the products in your store will be visible again:

Now it’s easy to add a product as related, just click on the checkbox in front of that particular product as shown in the preceding screenshot. It’s possible to add multiple products at once. If you already have a lot of products available in your store, you may filter your list by entering a part of the description, for example, and click on the Search button. Don’t forget to save your product once you’re done, otherwise your changes would be lost.

Adding up-sell products and cross-sell products is just as simple as repeating these steps on the other tabs of your product.
Summary

In this chapter you've added your very first products in Magento, congratulations! Having to go through a complete chapter just to add one simple product seems a lot of information and an ineffective process. However, you'll soon learn to quickly create products by just repeating these steps for a couple of products.

In the next chapter we'll go one step further. Magento offers other product types as well, which enables you to sell more complicated products. However, a good knowledge of the simple products is mandatory to be able to follow along.

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