



POS TOOLKIT

A Guide to Choosing the **BEST POS**
for **YOUR** Retail Business

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POS Toolkit

by



Retailers have enough on their plate with customers, staff, general day to day store duties, dealing with suppliers, purchasing and receiving...the list goes on and on. It would be great if you could simplify some of these tasks so that you can spend more time on what is important - **growing your business!**

Do you know your **number one performing vendor**, or your **top 50 selling items**? Who are your most *reliable* suppliers? What are your *top 5-10 selling classes* by **GMROI** (Gross Margin Return On Investment)? What about your most **popular selling sizes by vendor**, and **best margin items**?

Have you ever thought about starting a **customer database** and keeping track of your BEST customers? What about implementing a **loyalty program** to have *greater shopping frequency* and *higher sales tickets*? Have you been intending to start a **custom tailored direct mailing campaign** to your clients?

If only there was a simple way to get at this type of information!

A *basic* POS program can make answering these questions (and many others) easy. But a **GREAT** POS program should also:

- provide you with the reports you need to plan for your growing business
- eliminate the time you spend sorting through the racks trying to figure out what is selling
- help you know what needs to be reordered and how items are performing.
- automate your physical inventory process allowing you to spend more time working on your business rather than in your business
- generate reports at the touch of a button instead of having to leaf through your filing cabinet, take manual stock counts or worse yet...guess?!

These are all things that a GREAT point of sale program can bring to your business! After all, POS should stand for **POINT OF SALE**, NOT something *else*.

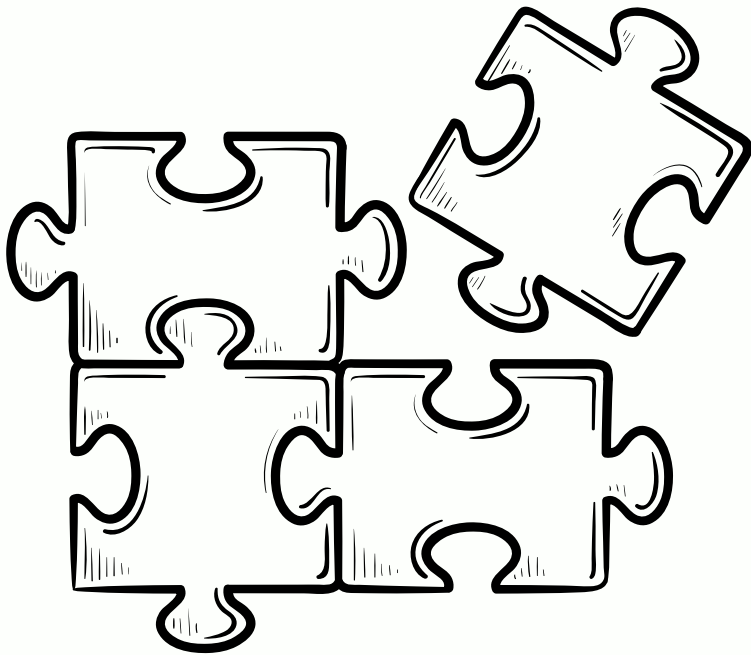
The challenge now is this - **there are THOUSANDS of point of sale programs available out there!** So...how do you choose and choose *smart* based on what YOUR business needs?

This guide will give you a starting point by highlighting some of the major concerns that retailers should have when deciding on their point of sale program and tips to help you avoid problems!

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PART ONE

10 Things to Consider
BEFORE You Begin Your
POS Search

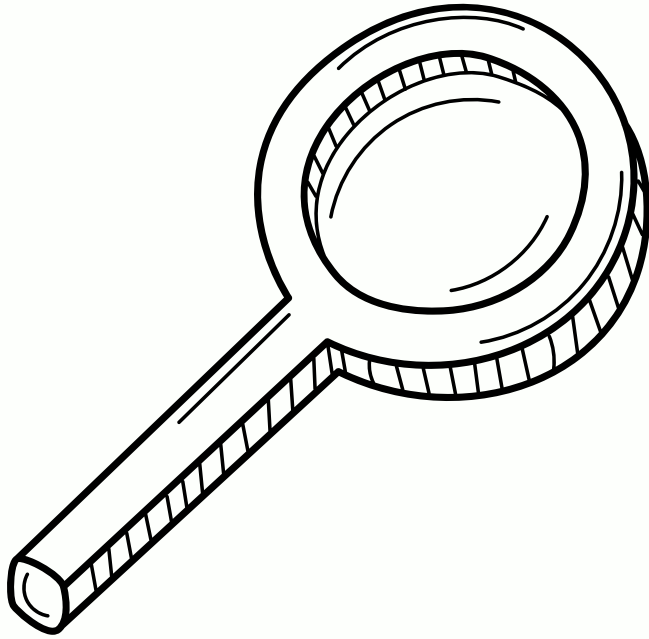


Choose Based on Functionality, Not Just Price

Ever heard the adage - “you get what you pay for”? Well it is very true in the area of point of sale solutions. Although price will be a factor, as you will have to work within the confines of your budget, it should not be the primary deciding factor. The most important factor that you should be considering is **FUNCTIONALITY!**

Does the system you are evaluating have the functions that you will require for your day to day processes today? How flexible is the system to adapt to your business? Will this system grow with you as your needs become more demanding? Is the system easy to use?

Your Point of Sale system is a very powerful tool in your business that should not be looked upon as an expense solely – it is an investment tool to help you in your business. Make sure that it has all the features and functions to help you take your business to the next level!



DO YOUR RESEARCH

Do Your Research

Talking to other retailers about the system they are using is a great place to start **BUT** it's important to keep in mind that *every* retailer runs their store differently. What functionality is great for one store may not be the right solution for another – even if they sell *exactly* the same products!

It is really important that you use the resources available to you while you are researching your point of sale program. Remember your point of sale program will become one of your **most powerful tools** to take your business to the next level. You will be making a substantial investment and you really want to ensure that you will get a strong return on that investment.

Your neighbors can be a great resource to let you in on the inside scoop on the POS and the company supplying it. Just avoid letting them do the research for you!

Start googling, talk to retail consultants, talk to different retail associations – they will often have resources for you.

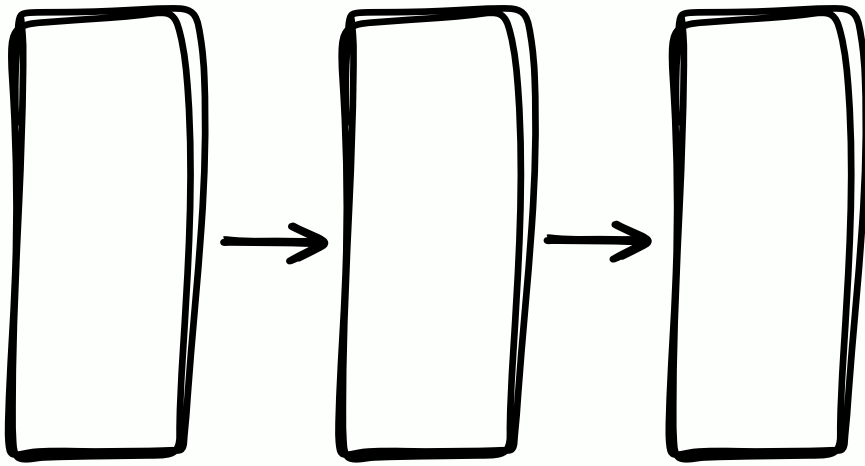


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Get to Know the Company Supplying the POS

It is important that you investigate the POS itself, but it is almost *more* important to investigate the **company that is supplying you the program**. Remember you are entering into a **PARTNERSHIP** with this company. You will be reliant on them to ensure that your system is kept up to date, and especially reliant on them for technical support! Find out:

- How long have they been in business?
- Do they have the resources to maintain your system and keep things up to date?
- How does their support structure work – retail is a 7 day a week business – do they offer technical support on weekends? Holidays? Evenings?
- If something were to happen to your POS provider – how would you receive POS support?
- Who are their clients? Can you talk to some of them as references?
- Are they focused specifically on retail or just a technology or accounting company?



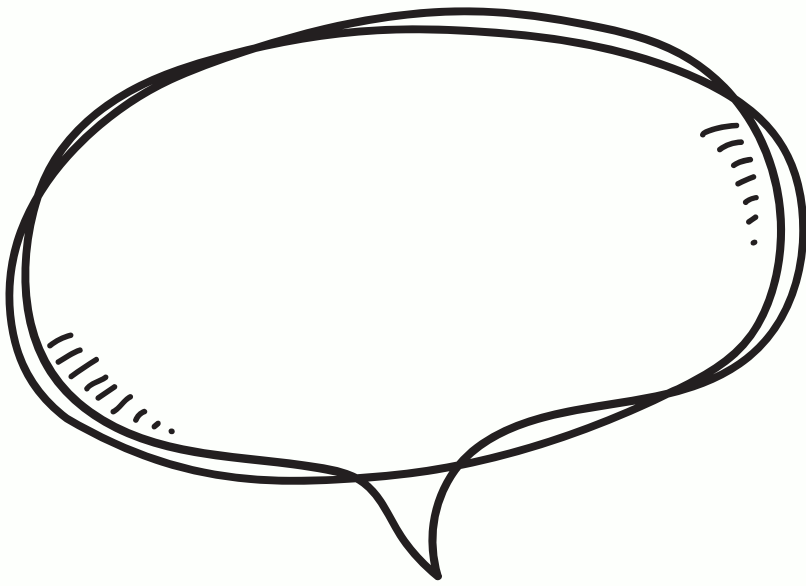
FOR

Get Involved in the Process

Not everyone is computer savvy. It's easy to rely on the knowledge of others in this area. That is one of the main reasons why many retailers will put the point of sale solution search into the hands of an employee, accountant or friend and simply trust their judgment. This can be a BIG mistake. This is not to say that their input is not important, it just means that you **should not relinquish the process completely to them.**

No other person knows your business better than you.

You are the one with the vision of where you would like your business to go. Your choice in POS can play a big role in giving you the tools to get there. Enlist the help of others that you trust **BUT** make sure you are still involved in the process **every step of the way!**



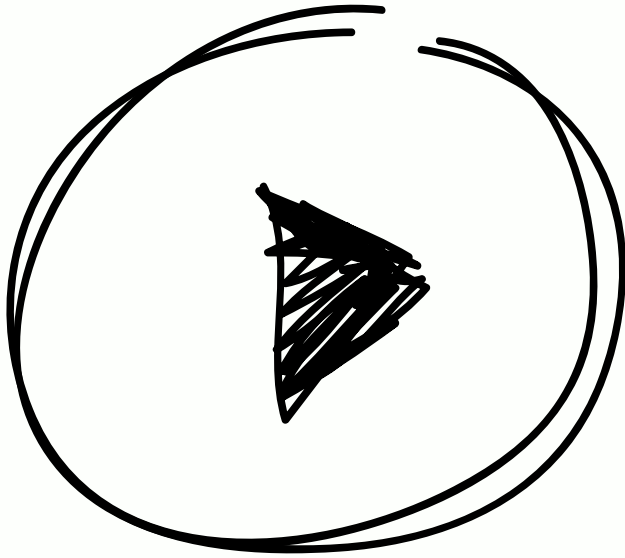
Speak to Existing Users of the POS You're Evaluating

Everything is great in theory or looks fantastic in a demo – but how does the program perform in a **live environment**?

The sales representative of the POS you are evaluating should be able to provide you with some references of similar retailers who are using the product. Contact or visit them, if you can.

Prepare a list of question for these referrals so that you can really see how they feel about the program in action.

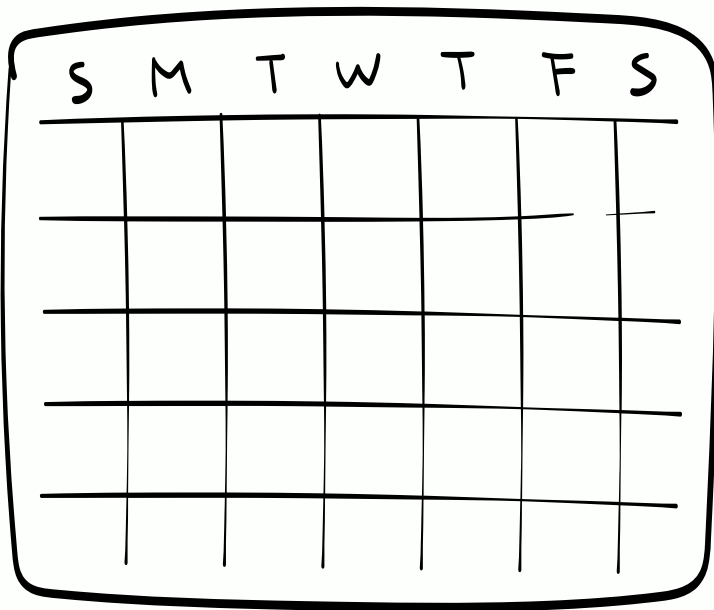
- How do they like the system?
- How is easy is the POS company to work with?
- How is their technical support?
- What is their response time?
- What do they like most about the system?
- What do they like least about the system?
- Would they recommend this system? Why or why not?



Get a Demo from the Sales Representative

Anything can be made to look good in marketing material and a verbal description of functions can only go so far. How does the system feel? What is the workflow like? Will the system be easy to use? Does it have a nice interface? Most importantly – **will it do the functions that you NEED for YOUR business? Is it ADAPTABLE to the way YOU want YOUR store(s) to run?**

The only way to truly see how the system will work in your environment is to see it in action! Ask the sales representative questions about how the system will handle special functions that are required for your store. Walk through all the different areas of the program so that you can see the workflow. This will eliminate any surprises during your installation.



REMEMBER

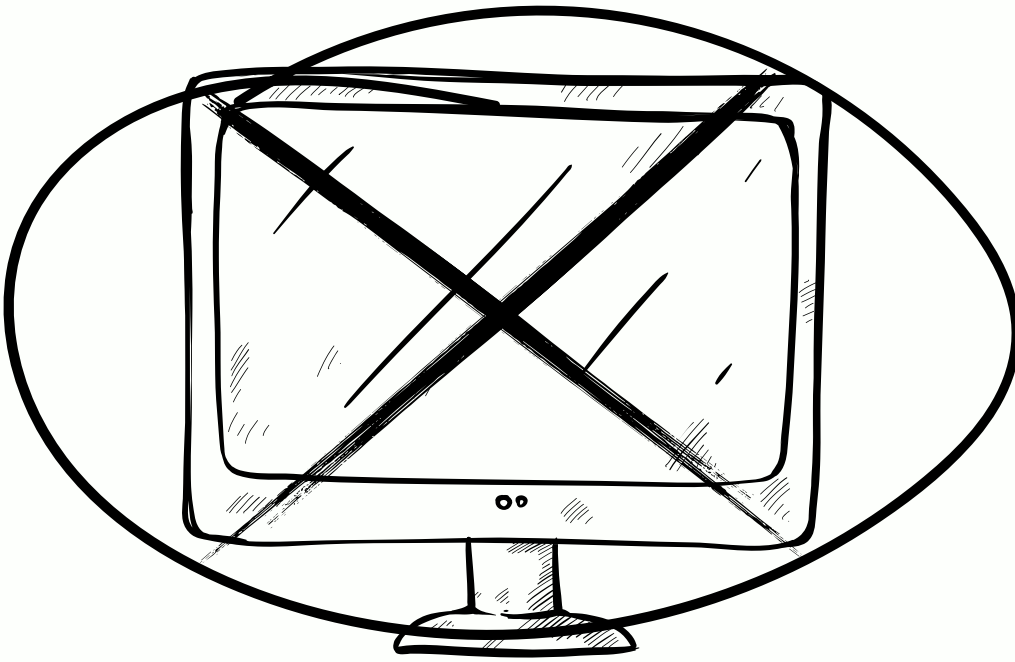
Allow Enough Time to Go Through the Process

Quite often retailers will leave researching and selecting their POS to the last minute – not realizing the amount of time that is necessary to go through the process.

Researching the different POS options out there (there are hundreds, maybe thousands), getting demonstrations and narrowing down your choices **takes time**. Another thing that retailers tend to forget is that once a decision is made, there are many things that need to happen before your installation can occur. Hardware and software will have to be ordered and delivered and your installation will have to fit into the company's tech schedule. This can sometimes mean lead times of **four weeks or more**, depending on the time of year.

If you are opening a brand new store, also keep in mind that you will have to input **ALL** of your new inventory and price all your items before you can open your doors!

Every step of the process takes time – **allow yourself a minimum of four months from the beginning of your research until the dates you are hoping for an installation**. This will streamline the process and help to remove some of the stress.



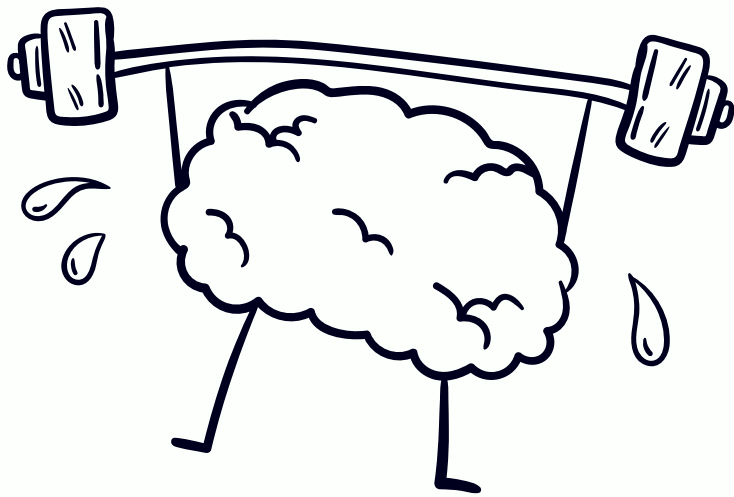
BEFORE

Do NOT Buy Hardware First!

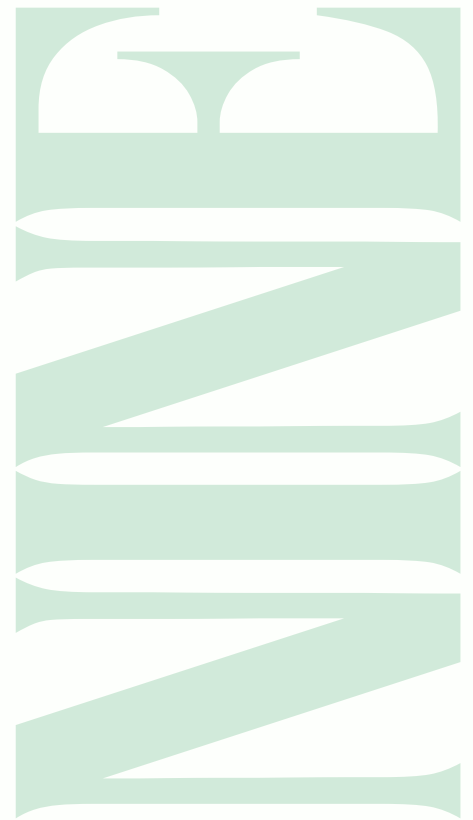
A common mistake that a retailer makes is purchasing hardware (computers, printers, scanners, etc.) **BEFORE** they decide on the POS program itself. This can really cause difficulties by **limiting the options** that will work with that hardware. It can also cost you more in the long run if you have to upgrade or replace hardware to fit the POS you choose.

Every POS will have a set of hardware requirements that will ensure that it runs at its optimum level. This is also true for the peripherals (cash drawers, receipt printers, scanners, label printers, etc). They are not all created equal, and compatibility between software programs AND every piece of hardware is **critical!!**

Many point of sale companies will offer a total package solution which includes all the necessary hardware you would require. This is the ultimate solution as it will save you time trying to source out the different components and you'll have only one phone number to call for any situation!



Get the **RIGHT** Amount of Training

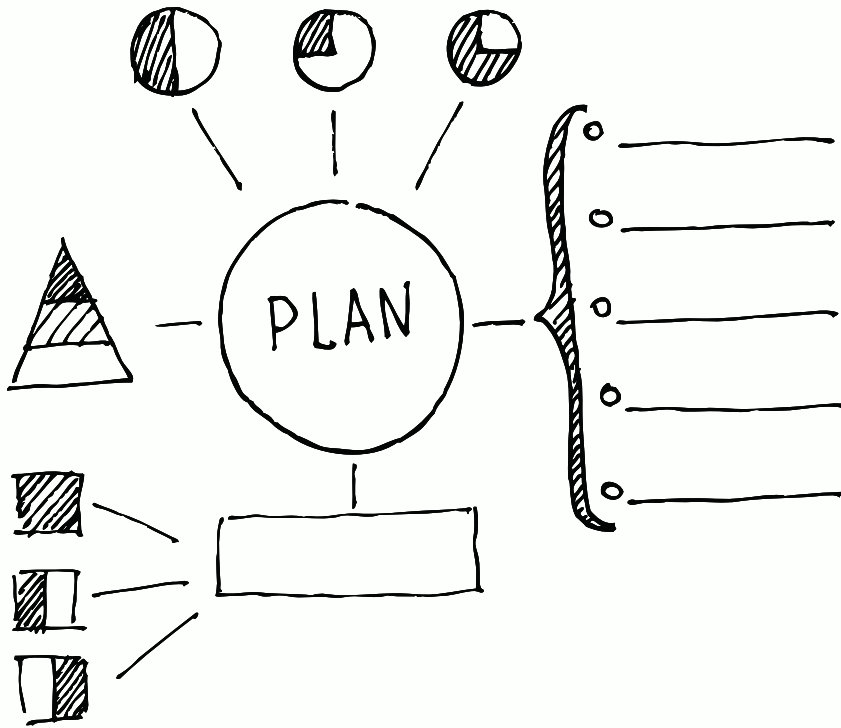


Some retailers decide that a good way to save money is to attempt to teach themselves how to use and set up their new POS. This is the biggest, most tragic mistake! Your new POS is not as simple as an out of the box piece of software. There is much more involved in the setup to make it **meet your unique store policies and procedures**. There are many shortcuts or workflows that may not be found in the manual. What is your time worth? Trying to learn from the manual could take you *hundreds* of hours – hours that you do not have as a retailer!

POS technicians and trainers should be certified and experienced in the program. This means that they can custom tailor their training and your POS to meet the needs of your store!

Another common mistake for most retailers is that they do not get **ENOUGH** training. They received the initial training session and they leave it at that! You will **never get your ROI this way**. How can you learn every single function available in the program in your *first* session? Generally, you will only be shown the basics in order to get you up and running. There will still be a world of additional features to learn that will **simplify your processes**. This includes learning the reports feature using your very own data.

TRAINING SHOULD BE A CONSTANT! Your business will ALWAYS be growing and evolving. You will need to have follow-up training to allow your POS to grow and evolve with you. **NEVER. STOP. LEARNING.**



Plan for the Future of Your Business

When you are evaluating POS solutions, it is important to think about the future. Do you have plans for **expansion**? Are you thinking about adding an **online store** at any point in time?

The functionality you are looking for right now may seem pretty basic but you should always think about the **future** – what will you need then? Once you get more comfortable with the system your view on what functions are vital to your business will evolve – will the system you are looking at grow with you?

This is also true for the company supplying you with your point of sale solution – what are *their* future plans? What are the future plans for the *development* of the POS software?

Think about what features are available to meet your needs now, but also what features are available to you in the future.

PART TWO

6 Tips on What To Do
for a **Successful POS**
Search

TIPS ON WHAT TO DO FOR A SUCCESSFUL POS SEARCH

01

Start your research EARLY & take your time

Use the tools that are readily available to you - Google, other retailers, trade magazines, retail consultants and retail associates.

02

Start gathering info on the POS systems you're interested in

Go to their websites, call directly, request a demo, talk to their users and learn more about the company.

03

Create a list of must-have functions for YOUR store

What are the possible transaction types, customer functions, and back office functions YOU need?

04

Prepare for demos

Create a list of standard questions to ask the sales reps and bring your list of required functions. Check off the functions that each POS include.

05

Narrow down to 2-3 vendors & LEARN MORE

Call existing users, discuss tech support, ask about installation and training - evaluate both the company AND the POS developers. Are they financially stable? How much do they know about retail? What other services do they offer?

06

Make an INFORMED decision

Give yourself the proper time to make an informed decision and prepare for your installation!

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BONUS

PART THREE

Software Needs Analysis
Guide

POS Functionality	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
Touch Screen				
Built In Customization				
Ability to Change Headers				
Integrated Debit/Credit				
Mobile POS Capability				
PLU#/SKU# Lookup				
Detailed Product Descriptions				
Inter-Store Inventory Lookup				
Quick Item Lookup				
Able to Hold Transactions				
Create Invoices & Receipts				
Email/SMS Receipts				
Returns and Exchanges				
Access to Original Receipt				
Create and Track Layaways				
Create and Track Special Orders				
Create and Track Gift Registry				
Create and Track Store Credit				
Non-Inventory/Services Sold				
Multiple Currencies				
Personalized Receipt Messages				
Package and/or Kit Pricing				
Track Inter-Store Gift Certificates				

	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
Predefined Discounts (ie: Employee)				
Salesperson Tracking				
Multiple Sales People on 1 Sale				
Multiple Sales People Per Line Item				
Commission Structure				
Time Clock Employee Tracking				
Z-Total Details				
Recent History Lookup				
Quick Item Lookup				
View Customer Purchase History				
View Customer Profile				
"Practice Mode" for Training				
Voided Receipt Reporting				
Cash Open/Close Reporting				
Back Office/Admin	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
Price Updates to Existing Products				
Able to Plan Markdowns				
Managed Database/Auto Back-Up				
Employee Access Levels				
Search by Vendor and/or Style				
Search by Size and/or Color				
Detailed Item Descriptions				
UPC/PLU/SKU Support				

	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
Department/Category Structure				
Data Collector Uploads				
Inventory Pre-Distribution				
Inter-Store Transfers				
Low Stock Alerts				
Auto PO Generation				
Suggested Inv. Replenishment				
Inventory Management	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
User-Defined Custom Fields				
Product Substitution Assignment				
Alternative Look-Up Field				
Item Messages Appear at POS				
Create Matrix Items in Grid Style				
Item Images for Verification at POS				
User-Designed Barcode Tags				
Able to Link Items with Online Store				
Audit Trail for Inventory Changes				
User Friendly PI Module				
Purchase Orders/Receiving	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
User-Designed PO/Receiving Screens				
Create New Items/Departments/ Vendors within the PO/Receipt				
Receive Items Not on PO				
Manage Partial Shipments on PO				

	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
Auto-Update PO When Received				
Specify Order/Delivery/Cancellation Date				
Maintain Max/Min Stock Levels				
Auto Generate POs Based on Max/Min Levels				
Generate Barcode Labels for Received Items				
Customer Management	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
View Detailed Customer History				
Customer Reports Based on History				
Customer Reports Based on User-Defined Data				
Generate Emails Based on History				
Generate Emails Based on User-Defined Data				
View Customer Info on POS Screen				
Special Discount Assignments				
Reporting	REQUIRED	WOULD LIKE	NOT NEEDED	NOTES
Merchandise Sales & Profit				
Dept./Category Sales & Profit				
Style Ranking				
Vendor Performance				
Store Performance				
Salesperson Performance				
Commission				
Receiving Shortages & Overages				
Layaway Payment Tracking				

PART FOUR

Get Started!

We Can Help!

You're an expert in your field...so you should be focused on the things that matter most to your retail business! As experts in OUR field, we make it easy for you to decide which POS and related technologies are best for YOUR business.

Our team of certified consultants and technicians can help by:

Completing a Software Needs Analysis

Identify essential functions for both immediate success and the future growth of your business, allowing us to narrow down your search based on the functionality you'll need

Determining the BEST Software Options for YOUR Retail Business

With more than 30 years experience in the industry, we can help guide your decision making towards reliable and practical solutions that will be sure to boost the efficiency of your business operations

Providing Customized Implementation, Training & Ongoing Support

Tailor the process to your budget and business needs with our variety of implementation and support packages available that provide personal assistance and training from our support team and retail experts

Providing Additional Services

Point of Sale and POS support are just scratching the surface of the different technology solutions our team can provide for your retail business - payment processing solutions, ecommerce guidance and integrations, data security and monitoring, merchandise planning and consulting services (just to name a few)

We exist to make retailers *better!*

Get Started

with a **FREE** Consultation
and Retail Audit



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