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From the Sept. 2009 Issue

My first job in high school was as a cashier at Woolworth's. I loved working the cash register, pushing the buttons, watching the register door spring open, counting back change and interacting with the customers.

A lot has changed since then. The cash register, a staple for the retailer for decades, has slowly disappeared from the retail establishment, replaced by cash drawers and touch-screen monitors that often feature colorful buttons representing best-selling inventory items. As well, high-volume transaction retailers will often use barcode scanning devices to simplify and speed sales. But the latest POS products do more than just ring up sales. They can monitor and track your inventory, work in conjunction with a web store, track customer spending habits, keep a handle on your product movement, and easily track best- and worst-selling products. They keep audit logs that enable managers to view any and all transactions that have been made in the system and allow for quick and easy cash outs for changing shifts.

Like many other product genres, POS products vary widely in functionality, price and learning curve. I believe the products reviewed here accurately represent the scope of products that are available to today's retail establishments, large and small. When looking to purchase or recommend POS software, it's important to take note of the business' requirements prior to beginning the search. If your client owns a popular gift shop and processes hundreds of transactions a day, they will need an entirely different product than what the neighborhood computer store uses. To further complicate matters, if that computer store also offers services, it may need an entirely different product.

For this review, we looked at several vital areas that may simplify the search for a POS

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important to smaller re-tailers who wish to purchase a basic product immediately with the option to upgrade to a more powerful version with added functionality at a later date.

FEATURES/FUNCTIONALITY – This section covers the features that add to the value of the product. Does the product work on the desktop as easily as on a touch-screen monitor? Is it easily customizable to speed transaction processing? Are there lookup fields available throughout the product, and are the entry screens easily navigated?

INTEGRATION – Can the POS module work as a stand-alone product or will users be required to purchase an entire suite? Can data be easily imported and exported? Does it utilize third-party applications? Does the product work with all of the necessary hardware peripherals?

TRACKING/REPORTING – This is where we look at reporting options as well as the product's capability to track vital information such as inventory movement, best-selling products and customer demographics. Some products contain an extensive array of features designed to provide owners and managers with sophisticated marketing tools, while others do not.

RELATIVE VALUE – As always, this is a tough part of the evaluation. The relative value is so dependant on the value the product offers to a particular business ... and every business is different. A product's price cannot be the determining factor in such a specialized vertical market where the functionality needs vary so widely. We provide basic product pricing here, but I urge businesses to explore the vendor's websites, product materials and demos to make as informed a choice as possible.

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STAR.

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[CAP Software- CAP Retail Manager](#)

CAP Software has been designing point-of-sale (POS) software since 1978. Billing itself as the original retail POS and Inventory Control system, CAP Retail Manager is an easy-to-use POS product, suitable for just about any retail environment but ideally suited to businesses with multiple locations.

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[Celerant Technology Corp. – Celerant Command Retail](#)

Celerant Command Retail is a sophisticated, fully integrated real-time retail management system. More than just a point-of-sale (POS) product, Celerant offers users a series of integrated modules designed to make larger retail stores run smoothly.

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[Cougar Mountain Software – CMS Professional 2010 POS](#)

Sold as a stand-alone product or as part of a front/back office suite, CMS Professional 2010 POS is ideally suited to smaller retailers that do not process high-volume transactions. Although fully functional as a stand-alone, the front/back office integration provides CMS users with a higher level of functionality.

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[InfoTouch – Store Keeper POS](#)

InfoTouch Corporation offers two versions of its POS Software: Store Keeper POS and Store Manager POS. Store Keeper POS is reviewed here and offers retailers pre-defined templates for various vertical markets, and is value priced for affordability.

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available in two editions: Express, (an entry-level product designed for a one-user up to a three-user, single-store environment) and Enterprise (designed for retailers of any size).

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[Sage Software North America- DacEasy by Sage](#)

DacEasy offers smaller retailers a solid entry-level product that can be used as a stand-alone product or integrated with the DacEasy Accounting products for a complete front/back office financial solution.

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[Specialized Business Systems – Keystroke Point of Sale](#)

Keystroke Point of Sale from Specialized Business Solutions is a solid POS product well suited for specialty shops and smaller retailers.

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[HighTower Inc. – Point of Sale Professional](#)

Users of Sage MAS 90 and MAS 200, take note. If you're looking for a reliable POS product that integrates with your inventory management, GL, bank reconciliation, sales order, AR, and credit card processing modules, be sure to take a look at Point of Sale Professional by HighTower.

[Read Full Review](#)

[NetSuite – Multi-Channel Retail Management Suite with OnSite POS](#)

Billed as the first on-demand software to integrate the entire retail business from web store to financials, retailers can easily manage all aspects of their business from online store inventory to stock levels at each brick-and-mortar location.

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