From the September 2010 Issue

The cash register, a staple in the retail industry for years, has increasingly disappeared from the counters of stores nationwide. In its place, you'll frequently find a variety of tools that resemble a cash register but offer a much wider array of features, such as a touch-screen terminal, product scanners for quick product processing, and a card reader to swipe debit and credit cards. For many of these systems, the most identifiable remaining item is the cash drawer. Unlike the mechanical calculators of previous generations, modern point-of-sale systems provide store associates with quick access to a comprehensive list of products in inventory.

Retail Point-of-Sale Systems: 2010 Review Sections

- **Basic System Functions**
  - General Navigation/Ease-of-Use
  - Scalability/Module Selection
  - User roles
  - Security
  - Customization/dashboards
  - Lookup fields
  - Multi-Store Support
  - Multiple Transaction Entries

With a simple touch or click, they can now access detailed customer information and retain that information for future targeted marketing efforts. Gift certificates are rapidly being replaced with gift cards, changing in the last 10 years from simple paper certificates to something resembling a private credit card loaded with money and processed electronically. We also see more retailers offering loyalty and/or member rewards cards, where customers presenting the cards earn points towards future purchases or are given targeted special pricing on sale

- Multiple Pricing Levels

  - Touch-Screen Support
  - e-Commerce Support
  - Multiple options/forms of payment
  - Customer mgmt/historical data
  - Layaways/on-holds/sales orders
  - Niche markets/services (gift cards, coupons, promos, registeries, food stamps, etc.)
  - Marketing Tools/Data Mining
  - Loyalty/Rewards Programs
- **Tracking/Reporting**
  - Reporting Options
  - Realt-time Reporting/Updating
  - Tracking of Inventory Movement
  - Tracking of best/worst-selling products
  - Tracking of demographics
  - Management Analysis Options
  - Audit System
- **Integration/Import/Export**

items, permitting special deals for those best

These are a few of the things you'll need to determine prior to advising a client on the purchase of a point-of-sale system. The good news is that even the smaller retailer or single-store owner can now have access to many of the features previously found only in more expensive programs.

In this review, we've looked at the following categories, keying in on specific features within each:

Basic System Functions – This section is perhaps the most important area to evaluate prior to the purchase of a POS system. If it's not easy to use ..., if users have to spend valuable time training employees ..., if it's inflexible and does not contain simple customization capabilities, a business will soon be looking for another system. In this category, we also considered areas such as scalability, reporting capabilities and options for those who do business in multiple locations.

Specialized Features/Services – Going one

Tracking/Reporting – Reporting options can often be overlooked in POS systems in deference to other features, but reporting capabilities are essential for retail business owners. Everyone needs to know how their business is operating. To that end, in this section, we looked at available reporting options, real-time reporting, inventory tracking and customer demographics, and if an audit system is available.

Integration/Import/Export – This category evaluates full system integration with a vendor's own suite of product as well as with third-party systems, the availability of integrated shipping options, hardware integration, and time clock support.

Help/Support – Another area that is sometimes given lesser consideration, support options can be particularly important to the retail business owner who often works outside normal business hours. Will support be readily available if there's a problem? This section also evaluates support plan options, system updates, and what support or documentation is available on the product's website.

Clearly, this review cannot cover all areas that may be important to retail business owners. A visit to the various product websites is always vital, as additional information, downloads and system demos are frequently available. Reading these reviews, visiting the respective websites, spending some time

talking to the vendors and asking for references for those on your short list

Accounting is suitable for single-user boutiques as well as stores with hundreds of users.

Read Full
Review

CAM Commerce – Retail STAR

Retail STAR from CAM Commerce is a solid all-in-one POS product designed for single- or multi-location retail businesses with a strong web presence. Modular in design, the system allows retailers to choose the modules they need now and add the rest when necessary.

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Review

Celerant Technology Corp. – Command Retail

Celerant Command Retail from Celerant Technology is a fully integrated retail management system. Designed for small to mid-size retailers with multiple locations, this system offers a series of integrated modules designed to help retail stores run more efficiently.

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Review

Cougar Mountain Software – CMS Professional

Cougar Mountain Software (CMS) continues to be a staple for the small business owner. The Point-of-Sale module inside of CMS Professional 2011 POS software package is designed to not only work in tandem with the core accounting suite, but can function as a standalone POS software package (including Inventory).

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Review

InfoTouch Corp. – Sote Keeper POS

Store Keeper POS from InfoTouch Corporation is a POS system designed for single-store retailers. For retailers with more than one location, InfoTouch offers Store Manager ES, a more robust version that easily handles multiple locations. Both versions offer pre-defined templates for specialty retail markets.

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Review

Intuit, Inc. – QuickBooks Point of Sale

Like all QuickBooks products, QuickBooks POS provides small business owners a solid product for a reasonable price. QuickBooks POS offers many of the features found in more sophisticated programs, along with solid reporting.

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Review

POSitive Software Co. – POSitive Retail Manager

POSitive Retail Manager from POSitive Software Company is a sophisticated POS product designed for larger retailers that manage multiple sites.

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Review

Radiant Systems – CounterPoint

DacEasy by Sage is a completely integrated accounting product with a solid POS module. Designed to be used either as a stand-alone product or as a completely integrated front/back office solution, the system is best suited for small to mid-sized retailers.
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Review

SmartWerks Inc. – SmartwerksUSA

SmartwerksUSA is POS/accounting product designed for retailers with single or multiple users and locations. Hosted on the Web, Smartwerks offers retailers a flexible product that can work in a multitude of environments.
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Review

Specialized Business Solutions – Keystroke Advanced POS

Keystroke Advanced POS is an advanced version of the popular Keystroke POS product used in stores nationwide. Designed for businesses with specific automation needs, Keystroke Advanced POS works well with retail/wholesale distributors and multi-location chain stores.
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Review

Wasp Barcode Technologies – Wasp QuickStore POS Software

Wasp QuickStore POS is a scalable point-of-sale product available in three versions: Standard, Pro and Enterprise. Each

product builds on the features contained in the others, making it easy

Pro, Premier and Enterprise; Sage Peachtree Complete, Premium and Quantum; Sage Simply Accounting; Sage BusinessWorks; and Sage MAS 90 and MAS 200.
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Review

NetSuite OnSite Gives Solution for Multi-Location Retailers

OnSite POS for NetSuite, from OnSite Software, offers a comprehensive retail solution for current NetSuite users. Designed specifically for NetSuite, OnSite POS offers real-time integration with other NetSuite modules, eliminating time-consuming
duplicate transaction entry and reporting lags.
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Review

PDG Software Offers eShopping Cart Integration for QuickBooks

Users of QuickBooks who are in the market for a robust e-commerce shopping cart interface may want to take a look at PDG Software, the makers of shopping cart and e-commerce software designed to integrate with QuickBooks products.
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Review

2010 Review of Point-of-Sale Systems — Comparison Chart

Technology

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