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with some geared for smaller markets looking to automate for the first time, while others are designed for larger retail businesses that process thousands of transactions each day.

**Mary Girsch-Bock** • Mar. 13, 2014

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As of the end of 2013, there were over 5 million retail and food services businesses operating in the U.S. And while all of them are not in the market for a point-of-sale (POS) system, many are looking to upgrade their current system, or perhaps migrate from their cash register system to a POS system. The fact is that even small retailers can reap the benefits of a POS system, which not only processes sales, but also tracks inventory, tracks employee time, and produces excellent sales reports.

Most large retailers already utilize a completely integrated POS system. Go into a large chain drugstore, and the pharmacy can access your prescription whether you're in Chicago or Los Angeles. But in 2014, many small to mid-sized retailers are looking to move beyond their reliable cash register system and don't know where to begin.

So where does a retailer start when looking for a point of sale system? Just like there

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## Point of Sale Systems

*CPA Practice Advisor* reviewed three point-of-sale systems for retailers and restaurants. See how they compared:

- [CAM Commerce – Retail Star](#)
- [Cougar Mountain – Denali Point of Sale](#)
- [Intuit – QuickBooks Point of Sale](#)

Some are best suited for single-location retailers or food service businesses; others can easily handle multiple locations and multiple inventory warehouses. Some are designed specifically for brick and mortar retailers exclusively, while others easily integrate those same stores with an e-commerce solution; a necessity as more retailers begin to expand their online presence. More retailers are looking at offering customer loyalty cards as well, which would necessitate purchasing a system that supports that option.

Of course the needs of your retail clients will differ; perhaps a little, perhaps a lot. Either way, you're likely to find the following reviews helpful as you sort through all of the available options to find a POS product that will suit their business.

In the POS review, we look at key software features. In basic system functions, we take a long look at product functionality and the availability of features.

- Is the product easy to use?
- Can it be up and running fairly quickly?
- Can cashiers customize the POS user interface?
- Are there additional modules you can purchase, or is it an all-in-one-system.

We also look at specialized features such as:

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whether there is a good audit trail system in place. Integration issues such as whether the product integrates with key modules or other third party software is looked at as is whether there are integrated shipping options; a must for those with a vibrant mail order business.

Finally, we look at one of the most important aspects of a POS system, and that is Help and Support functions such as whether there are built in support functions, automatic systems updates, and perhaps most importantly, live product support options – which are key if your system locks up during the busiest part of the day.

While the products we are looking at in this Point-of-Sale review offer a wide range of features and functionality, the final decision rests between you and your client. But looking at the reviews is a great place to start.

Small Business

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