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ACCOUNTING

2010 Review of Point-of-Sale Systems for Retail Clients

Sep. 02, 2010

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

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

- Security
- Customization/dashboards
- Lookup fields
- Multi-Store Support
- Multiple Transaction Entries
- Multiple Pricing Levels
- Advanced Retail Mgmt functionality (warehouse mgmt., distribution center, allocation, ecommerce, mail order/catalog, web orders for sales, etc.)

- **Specialized Features/Services**

- 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
- Real-time Reporting/Updating
- Tracking of Inventory Movement
- Tracking of best/worst-selling products

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 items, permitting special deals for those best customers.

Where exactly does your client's retail business fit? Are they a small gift shop or a high-transaction retail shop? Do they maintain a web store or offer customers a mail order option? Do they have multiple locations throughout a city, or even the country?

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,

- Tracking of demographics
- Management Analysis Options
- Audit System
- **Integration/Import/Export**
 - Integration with vendor's suite
 - Integration with other programs (GL export, MS Office, etc.)
 - Integrated Shipping Options
 - Import/Export Options
 - Support for Hardware Peripherals
 - Timeclock Support
- **Help/Support**
 - Built-in Support Features
 - System Updates
 - Support Website/Documentation
 - Live Support/Phone Support)
- **Summary & Pricing**
- **Overall Rating**

we also considered areas such as scalability, reporting capabilities and options for those who do business in multiple locations.

Specialized Features/Services – Going one step above basic system functions, this category looks at touch-screen capability, e-commerce support, customer management capabilities, and loyalty and reward program support. Keep in mind that some retailers may have no need for these specialized functions, so the rating for this section may be of no consequence in such instances.

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 can help make the final decision to purchase a new POS system just a little easier.

[AddSum Business Software Inc.](#)

[– Advanced Accounting](#)

Advanced Accounting offers a complete accounting suite along with an inclusive POS module. Built to be scalable, Advanced Accounting is suitable for single-user boutiques as well as stores with hundreds of users.

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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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[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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[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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[ECR Software Corp. – Catapult](#)

Catapult from ECR Software Corp. is a customized point-of-sale product that offers a series of specialized solutions geared toward specific retail business entities. Several add-on options are also available, the system is a good fit for high-volume transaction processing businesses such as convenience stores, gas stations and grocery stores.

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[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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[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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[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](#)

[Retail Management Software](#)

CounterPoint SQL from Radiant Systems is a comprehensive retail management system designed for businesses of all sizes. Best suited for the small to mid-sized , multi-location retailer, this system is built on SQL technology..

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[Sage – DAC Easy by Sage 2011](#)

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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[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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[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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[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 to scale up to the next level.

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Related Articles

[AccuPOS Point of Sale Provides](#)

[POS Options](#)

AccuPOS Point of Sale is a stand-alone product designed to integrate with a variety of accounting programs including QuickBooks 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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[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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[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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2010 Review of Point-of-Sale Systems — Comparison Chart

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