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Mary Girsch-Bock • Aug. 26, 2013

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A few months ago, I was in a specialty retail shop with my son. After about 30 minutes of shopping, we both approached the cash register, items in hand, only to be told by a rather embarrassed cashier that his point of sale system was down and he was unable to process any sales until it was operational.

We returned our products to their proper place and left as the employee continued to try and resolve the situation via telephone with company headquarters; all to no avail. Passing the store an hour later, it was closed. Apparently the employee was unable to resolve the situation. This situation very accurately pinpointed how vulnerable retailers are regarding their point of sale systems.

While many small retailers continue to use a cash register, many others have moved into more sophisticated payment systems; which can increase sale processing speed

by quickly scanning bar codes, and processing electronic payments quickly.

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traditional cash register.

This is especially important as the economy begins to stabilize and the retail sector begins to see some real improvement. Retailers must be able to find a way to become and remain competitive, and most importantly, remain in business. That means finding and using better tools when processing sales transactions.

Today, nobody wants to wait. If customers find themselves waiting in store lines too long, it's likely they won't return. That's why it's imperative that retailers look at the acquisition of a point of sale product as a business necessity.

Today, consumers have more choices than ever before. E-Commerce sales accounted for 5.5 percent of retail sales nationwide in the 1st quarter of 2013; which is why having a website has become even more important in the retail sector. Linking your website to your brick and mortar store is also important. And while many small retailers may shrug at the importance of customer loyalty programs, they are a great way to track customer buying habits and provide rewards to loyal customers, to keep them coming back.

You already know that each of your retail clients will have very specific needs. The small coffee shop owner will need a different system from the mattress retailer. A convenience store will need a different system than the computer store. As you explore each of your client's needs, remember that there's likely a system that will work great for them.

In this review, we looked at basic system functions which includes exploring just how easy (or difficult) the system is to use. We also looked at how customizable the system is, whether it can support multiple store locations, and if it offers advanced retail management functionality, which includes e-commerce integration.

Specialized features can also be important, so we looked at things such as touch-

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foreseeable future.

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