of intense competition, many retailers have resorted to offering loyalty or discount cards to reward customers with special pricing and targeted sales offers.

Mary Girsch-Bock • Mar. 02, 2015

When I was still in high school, I worked at Woolworth's as a cashier. I remember

quest to grab the attention of retailers.

I'm always surprised when I frequent a business and find they are still using the cash register system I learned years ago. But even a very small retail business would benefit from using modern point of sale software, which can process sales, track inventory levels, record employee time, and easily track sales activity, all of which take up a retail business owner's valuable time.

So where to begin? Like any other software, there are varying levels of functionality with any point of sale product. It's unlikely that the neighborhood coffee shop would use the same point of sale system that the big box retailer does. The good news is that it's easy for first time retailers or those who still use a cash register to automate for the first time. Fortunately, many point of sale systems take these differing needs into account and offer a product that has been designed specifically for that particular industry.

—— **2015 Reviews of Point-of-Sale Systems** ——
Read the reviews below to see how they compared.

- CAM Commerce Retail Star/Retail Ice
- Celerant Command Retail
- Cougar Mountain Denali
- Keystroke Advanced POS
- QuickBooks Point-of-Sale

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Another reason the cash register is becoming obsolete is that the frequency of

point of sale software. These areas include:

Basic System Functions – We looked at basic system functionality such as ease of use, customization capabilities, and set up options. It also looks at available modules that integrate with the point of sale system.

Specialized Features/Services – This area covers everything from the availability of touch screen technology, e-commerce support options, multiple tender options, tracking and monitoring of customer data, and whether the product contains the ability to setup and maintain loyalty and rewards programs.

Tracking/Reporting – We reviewed the varying levels of reports that area available, including what reporting options are available with the system. It also looks at the whether the system tracks things such as inventory levels, best and worst selling products, managing customer demographics, and whether there is an audit trail system available with the product.

Integration/Import/Export – This area looks at the capability of the system to integrate with related products or third party applications. It also looks at point of sale specific features such as integrated shipping options, various import and export capabilities, and what hardware peripherals the product works with.

Help/Support – While help and support is an important area for any niche software, perhaps it's most important for point of sale products. After all, if a store can't make a sale, they may as well close their doors. In this area we look at help and support options available, and what kind of help features are built into the system.

All of the systems we looked contained some level of back office functionality. We also completed a brief write-up on a product that offers strictly point of sale

functionality, leaving the accounting and back end functionality to other

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