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SMALL BUSINESS

2019 Review of Point-of-Sale Systems

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Mary Girsch-Bock • Jul. 15, 2019



In 1883, a saloon owner in Dayton, Ohio, received a patent for inventing the cash register. Over the next 50 years, the cash register was typically made out of cast-iron, wood, silver and gold plate, though the most elegant was the brass-encased cash register, a variety only found in old westerns and antiques stores today. As the first

point of sale system, the cash register allowed business owners to finally get a literal handle on cash flow, while also making it a lot harder for employees to steal from the till.

Today's point of sale systems have evolved immensely from those original cash registers, with touch screen monitors, scanning devices, and the ability to seamlessly accept debit and credit card anywhere now the norm. And as retailers continue to face immense competition, it's important that they make the sales process as streamlined as possible.

Whether retailers run a small shop out of their home or own a large retail business with multiple locations, the following features and functions are necessary:

- The ability to process sales quickly
- The availability of a back-up system
- The ability to manage inventory in conjunction with a POS system
- The ability to process refunds and credits quickly
- The ability to create accurate sales and product reports

But that's not all. Many retailers also want to track their customers effectively, market effectively to repeat customers, track customer sales history, and if selling online, integrate with a shopping cart platform.

To their credit, point of sale vendors have responded admirably, adding numerous features to their product each year, as the retail industry has continued to shift, particularly in favor of online sales. But there's another component that may perhaps be the most important of all. Support.

I can't tell you how many stores and restaurants I've been in, watching, as staff scramble to access product support personnel when their POS system goes down. I've seen customers turned away at the door. I've seen doors locked at retail establishments during key sales times because their POS system is down. I've seen restaurants give away free meals to customers because they can't print their tickets. A retailer has to ensure that good customer service is available when needed.

Of course, point of sale systems vary in features and functionality, with some systems well suited for small retailers, while others are designed for large retail businesses with multiple locations. Online sellers have their own set of requirements when looking for a point of sale application. Pricing is also a factor, with smaller businesses with limited budgets looking for a more affordable application.

The products reviewed in this issue vary in size and scope as well. They include:

- [AccuPOS](#)
- [AddSum Advanced](#)
- [Celerant Stratus](#)
- [Cumulus Retail](#)
- [Denali Point of Sale](#)
- [Keystroke Advanced POS](#)
- [QuickBooks POS](#)
- [Vend](#)

We also looked at a [few specialty apps](#) that offer basic functions for invoicing and time tracking.

While the retail industry continues its evolution, point of sale applications will likely respond with changes of their own. Will 2019 be the year you finally retire your cash register and move to a point of sale system? You won't be sorry.

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