



## Why you need a POS system

It's more than just a cash register. Ubiquitous in larger retail stores for many years, POS systems are now increasingly common in small and medium businesses due to the availability of robust, yet inexpensive Personal Computer based systems. It's now possible for your business to realize the same benefits the big guys have been enjoying for years.

### **For the shopper**

Point-of-sale systems improve the consumer shopping experience by speeding up transactions while increasing accuracy. Features such as bar code scanning, integrated charge card processing, and customer loyalty programs help to make visits to your store fun.

### **For the store owner**

In the back room is where POS systems really shine. Improved management of financials, better inventory tracking, and more flexible reporting all contribute to the success of the business. With a modern POS, surprises such as selling below cost and stock outs are reduced or eliminated while hidden costs like labor are more easily identified. Let's look at these benefits in more detail:

#### **Accounting system interface**

Odds are you are already using one of the popular accounting systems such as MAS 90 or Peachtree. Your new POS systems will automatically integrate with your existing accounting software to exchange information. Data on customers can be used to enforce credit limits, automate charges and capture purchase information. Accurate reports on financial status, selling trends, inventory, clerk activity and nearly anything else you can think of are available whenever needed.

#### **Inventory management**

Inventory levels are maintained automatically. Reordering is greatly simplified. Optimum order points are automatically determined. Case breakdown into smaller sales units can be automated. Receiving is as simple as scanning a bar code.

Taking physical inventory is as simple as walking through your store with a scanner. Inventory can be maintained in multiple locations, but it's all tracked on your computer. Multiple vendors are supported, as are substitute items. Inventory items can be combined into kits which have their own price. Seasonal variation in demand for products can be predicted. You can easily identify what products are not selling and take corrective action. Inventory is tracked by unit or by



weight. Labels for shelves and products can be printed automatically. Items can be priced in a variety of ways including quantity discounts, mix and match, unit, carton, and case.

### **Security**

Every transaction is associated with a clerk and can be traced. Your sales process (generally, Scan, Tally, Tender) is enforced. Restrictions such as selling hours or clerk age can be set by store and by product. Reports you receive identify any possible concerns.

### **Marketing**

Track customer purchase patterns. Generate customer specific mailings. Encourage repeat business with loyalty clubs. Sell gift cards. Create coupons. Automatically suggest companion items for those being purchased. Automatically apply discounts based upon customer type.

### **Future growth**

A recent development is the integration of brick-and-mortar stores with their online counterparts through the POS systems. Merchants with significant IT resources integrated robust accounting and POS systems with their Web stores early on. That ability is now available to small and mid-size businesses, as well. Benefits include greater understanding of customer behavior and the ability to promote slow-moving or overstocked items on websites with just a few clicks.

Each year, more and more people shop online. Amazon.com reported record sales for the last three months of 2008 despite the poor economy. Merchants need to be responsive to this trend. New POS systems give businesses a competitive advantage with both online and in-store customers.

### **In summary**

With payback periods of less than a year, it's hard to justify not having a modern Point of Sale system in your store. If funding is an issue, start small. Most systems are easily extensible.

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