



Point-Of-Sale Systems

Selecting Point-Of-Sale Software Based on Functionality

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Selecting Point-of-Sale Software Based on Functionality

Identifying the best point-of-sale (POS) software for your establishment can be very confusing and frustrating at best in many cases. Individuals who are responsible for purchasing POS software need to take into account two primary factors before they even begin their software search. First, there are many different types of establishments within the hospitality/restaurant industry including quick service such as fast food, family dining, fine dining, delivery dependant locations, full service bars, bars and then nightclubs. Each type of establishment has its own unique needs in regards to POS software. For example, a pizza establishment may be almost totally dependent on delivery whereas a fine dining restaurant may not have delivery at all. However, a buyer must take into account the fact that the business model of the establishment may change and thereby alter the needs of the POS system. For example, a pizza place based solely on delivery may decide to expand and offer table service. This will completely change the needs of the POS system.

Second, buyers must remember that some POS software specializes in certain types of establishments while others attempt to provide a full spectrum of functions. There are pro's and con's to both types of software. Specialty software may be cheaper initially and provide stronger functionality in certain areas. However, even a minor change to the business model may require a complete change in software. On the other hand, more complex systems can handle almost any situation but they may be more expensive, harder to use and more difficult to maintain.

With these two issues in mind it is important that buyers first identify what functions they will need their software to perform. They must be careful to take into account any potential changes in the business model. For example, a pizza place is not going to become fine dining but it may offer table service in the future. A fine dining restaurant is not going to become 90% dependant on delivery but they may offer limited delivery at some point. These potential changes must be taken into account when selecting software.

The primary functions offered by different POS software which should be considered are:

Customer Reports - the ability of the software to allow the user to design customized reports and queries as needed. Does the software allow for customized reports or only pre-formatted and designed reports?

Database Type - what database type is the software using. Is it using a database with easy import and export functions or is it written on a proprietary database that will require technical support every time an import or export of data is needed?

Delivery - the ability of the software to process delivery orders. Basic functions should include tracking orders by customer, last order recall for the last five order minimum, caller I.D and the ability to set deliveries for pre-set times.

Dispatch - the ability of the software to assign delivery orders to drivers, check the driver out, time the delivers and check the driver back in and cash them out. Additional functions may include the mapping of the most efficient delivery route for the driver.

Dynamic GUI Interface - the ability to design and build the front-of-house interface in a customized way including the color coding of buttons, sizing of buttons, shape of buttons and location of all major portions of the screen. Does the program allow for the end-user (the manger) to make the majority of these changes without the need to call technical support?

Gift Cards - the ability of the software to issue, track and accept internal gift cards. The overall ability of the software to process and maintain a gift card program for multiple sites without a third party vendor involved.

House Accounts - the ability of the software to track, accept and maintain house accounts including enforcing credit limits and printing statements.

Human Resources - the ability of the software to maintain all basic human resource information so that duplicate entry is not being done with another accounting program. The software's ability to integrate with the accounting and/or payroll software should also be considered. Can the human resource module track job requirements and ensure employees meet these requirements prior to working in that job? For example, if drivers are required to have drivers licenses will the software track the license and expiration data and ensure employees have these prior to letting them be assigned as a driver.

Inventory - the ability of the software to maintain a general inventory of items, track vendors and generate purchase orders.

Inventory/Liquor Inventory (Detailed) - the ability of the software to provide a far more detailed inventory system including the tracking of ingredients and full liquor inventory.

Menus - the ability to setup and alter menus with ease. The ability to have multiple menus in affect at one time, and on designated days and times should be considered. Can prices be easily changed?

Modifier Groups - the ability to setup and alter modifier groups with ease including items, prices and how many modifiers are allowed for free.

On-line Ordering - the ability of the software to have a fully integrated system to allow customers to order on line and for this order to be transferred automatically into the POS as if the order was placed on site.

Scheduling - the ability of the software to maintain a comprehensive schedule for all employee shifts by department and job. The ability of the software to limit employee log in, log out and time clock functions based on this schedule. The ability to track and enforce meal breaks as needed and allow for both paid and unpaid meal breaks.

Table Reservations - the ability of the software to take and maintain table reservations.

Table Service - the ability of the software to provide a table service interface, the ability to customize this interface and the ability to place and track all orders by table and seat. There are many other functions associated with overall table service such as the ability to split checks by seat, delay orders by seat or item and the associated reports.

Time Clock - the ability of the software to clock all employees in and out of shifts, total hours and compute overtime hours based on federal and local laws. The ability of the software to allow edit, additions and deletions but to also maintain a tracking record of such for Department of Labor purposes if needed.

Front of House Operational Functions: The front of the house operating screens needs to be able to handle the following functions based on the establishments needs.

- Split Checks
- Merge Checks
- Split Items
- Merge Items
- Voids
- Comps
- Discounts
- Last order re-order
- Hold order
- Fire order
- Track discount, void and comp reasons

Once the buyer has a comprehensive list of functionality needed, then they can move onto the research, testing, evaluation, comparison and actual purchase of a POS system.