

How to Choose the Right Restaurant POS Software: *Get the Most Value for Your POS Investment*

When shopping for a new point of sale (POS) system for your restaurant, it can be difficult to know where to start. Once you start exploring your options, it's easy to get overwhelmed by the wide range of POS software available and to discern which system is the best for your business.

You understand that your new restaurant POS system needs to do more than send orders to the kitchen and settle checks, but it may not be clear which additional functions are most important to your business.

This buyer's guide takes you through the steps of making a smart, informed POS buying decision that will result in a POS system that's a good fit for your business, your employees, and your budget.

What Should a POS System Do?

The functions a POS system can perform only have value to you if you will use them to support your business. The first step on a POS buyer's journey is to clearly define what you need the new POS system to do. Even in the early stages of planning for this investment, it can be helpful to seek the guidance of a knowledgeable restaurant POS provider who

can help evaluate your current operations and recommend technology that could automate processes, increase efficiency and even lead to greater profitability.

Here are some common challenges and how specific features of a POS system can help you overcome them:

Challenge: A complicated system is slowing down training and operations.

POS Feature: Intuitive interface

A complicated POS system that requires a lot of clicks between screens or multiple steps to place orders can be a source of frustration and errors for your staff, especially during peak times when every minute counts. Moreover, if your restaurant experiences high employee turnover, a complicated system will be harder for new employees to learn — and it will mean managers will spend more time on training. Look for POS software with a user interface that's simple to learn and easy to use. It is also beneficial if the software allows you to arrange screens to optimize workflows.

Challenge: Staff doesn't meet goals for table turn.

POS Feature: Mobile POS

If your restaurant is looking for ways to serve more customers faster, mobile POS can be the answer. Mobile POS allows servers to take orders tableside and then send them directly to the kitchen, eliminating the extra steps it takes to write orders and then enter them in at a terminal. Mobile POS can also cut down on the number of transcription mistakes that can occur during that process — saving the time it takes to remake orders. In addition, mobile POS enables paying at the table, shaving minutes off the process of settling the check. The time savings mobile POS provides can mean your staff can seat and serve more guests during a shift.

Challenge: POS doesn't work when the network is down.

POS Feature: Offline capabilities

Losing your network connection can mean major disruption and loss of business — unless your POS system has offline capabilities. Look for a POS system with multiple connectivity options or a system that allows you to operate offline and sync data when the connection is restored.

Challenge: Restaurant is unable to efficiently issue gift cards that work at all locations.

POS Feature: Gift card integration

People love buying gift cards for teachers, coworkers and friends. These desirable gifts are easy to purchase, wrap and use. According to giftcards.com, more than \$100 billion is spent on gift cards every year. Make sure that your POS system allows your staff to quickly and accurately issue gift cards that can be accepted at all of your locations.

Don't Forget to Invest in New Capabilities for Operators and Managers

Evaluate how a new POS system can automate some of your managers' tasks to free them up to attend to other areas of the business. POS features that can benefit your restaurant managers include:

Multistore: If your business has multiple locations — or if you own one location right now but may expand in the future — consider a restaurant POS system that allows you to update menus, change pricing, and manage all locations from one computer, saving travel time and increasing your visibility into the business.

Inventory: A POS system with robust inventory management can ensure you never run out of ingredients. You can set inventory levels that trigger alerts or generating purchase orders. Similarly, the POS system can also safeguard against overbuying ingredients, which leads to waste and loss.

Reporting: Choose a POS software package that presents data in easy-to-read reports and charts. Many solutions generate sales and inventory information and reports in real time by the shift, hour, day, week, month or year. POS analytics that are concisely presented will be easier for you to use to create better dining experiences — and more profitable operations.

Employee scheduling: POS systems with labor schedulers help you appropriately staff your restaurant. Your POS system will suggest employees by job code to ensure the right employees are performing the right tasks, at the right time, at the right location.

Payroll integration: An integrated payroll platform gathers information directly from the point of sale database. The POS system's clock in/out function accurately tracks attendance, hours worked and paid/unpaid breaks. At the end of a pay period, owners and managers can review and upload this information directly from the POS system to the payroll processor.



Form a Smart Partnership

When you look for a POS solution provider to assist you with your buying decision, make sure you are partnering with a company that has expertise providing technology to businesses in the restaurant industry. Choose a company that understands your restaurant and its experiences in providing solutions for your type of business.

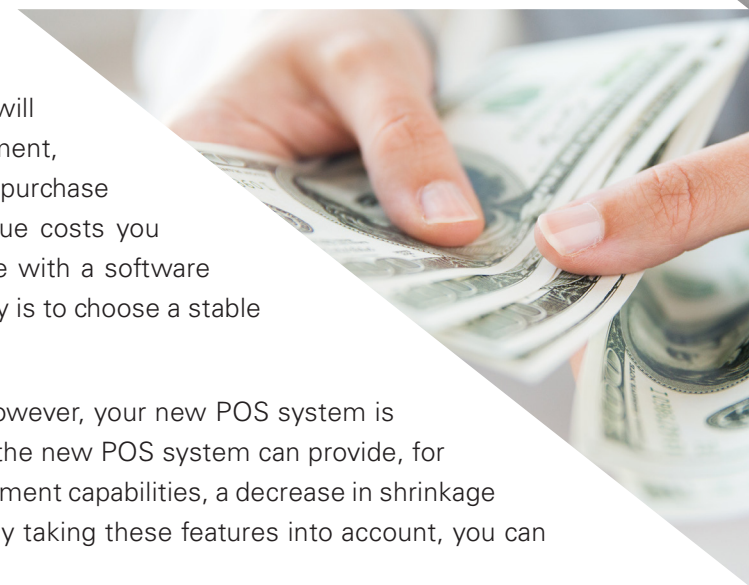
Consider it a red flag if the solution provider is “modifying” a system for use in a restaurant. Look for a system that is designed from the ground up to support restaurants and has the features and functionality that restaurants need built-in.

Also evaluate reviews and references to ensure the provider has the expertise and resources to provide the service and support you will need to get the greatest benefit from the system. Most reputable solution providers offer training and ongoing support to make sure your staff is well-versed in how to use the POS system. You should also consider the support contracts the solutions provider offers to make sure you will have access to support in a timely manner and keep your POS system updated.

Money Matters

When you are preparing to make an investment, it's natural to want the most for your money, and you will probably perform price comparisons. Be advised that a POS system, however, is not a one-time investment, and it's more prudent to calculate the total cost of ownership (TCO) rather than to just compare initial purchase prices. Consider the costs of upgrades, service, and credit card processing fees to understand the true costs you will experience over time. Opting for a “free” POS system — for example, getting free POS hardware with a software subscription — may cost more in the long run from hidden charges and processing fees. The best strategy is to choose a stable vendor with a good business record.

Depending on the POS system you choose, the investment you are about to make can be significant. However, your new POS system is designed to save you money over the course of its life. When budgeting, consider potential cost savings the new POS system can provide, for example labor forecasting to help saving on labor costs, food costs savings through new inventory management capabilities, a decrease in shrinkage with new access control functionality and deeper visibility into your business with advanced reporting. By taking these features into account, you can develop a truer estimate of the actual impact on your budget.



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Take the Next Step on the Buyer's Journey

Investing in a POS system is a big decision and one not one to be taken lightly. Look for the functionality your business needs now and in the future, and also look for a system that will provide a quick and healthy return on investment.

Heartland Commerce offers proven solutions, backed by years of experience, designed for all types of restaurants. Contact us to learn more about what your POS investment can mean to your business.



About Heartland

Don't Forget to Invest in New Capabilities for Heartland delivers fast, secure omnichannel payment processing and business solutions to more than 400,000 business locations nationwide. Product offerings include payments, payroll, point of sale, customer engagement and lending. Heartland pioneered the Merchant Bill of Rights, a public advocacy initiative to educate merchants about fair payment processing practices. Heartland Payment Systems is a Global Payments company (NYSE: GPN). heartland.us



925-626-3930

sales@posspecialists.com

www.posspecialists.com