



A Core Restaurant Tech Platform That's Built to Last: 3 Key Points to Consider When Choosing a POS

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Business leaders routinely refer to a so-called secret sauce that makes their companies successful. Oftentimes, that secret really is more of an investment in technology that brings about operational efficiencies and effectiveness.

For restaurants, the key to success increasingly centers around a versatile point-of-sale system. POS systems aren't just standard POS systems anymore. The technology has evolved considerably in recent years, from simple order processors to strategic hubs that help leaders quickly track the restaurant's past and present activities and give them the tools to devise the way ahead.

The POS has become the foundational piece of the restaurant's tech infrastructure, serving as the central core for all transaction-related data that drives all of the business needs and activities of the modern restaurant.

“Given the complexity of the industry, with labor, supply chain and guest experience, there's a lot of need for the right platform that will accommodate successful management of all of those areas,” said Andy Simon, product marketing manager for leading technology solutions provider NCR. “It's more than just ringing up items; rather, restaurant operators today need an extensible solution that best sets them up for success in addressing what's happening in the market.”

Effective POS systems in today's industry maintain their vitality through scalability, flexibility, ease of use and quality of data. Here are three key areas where point-of-sale systems can be a difference-maker.

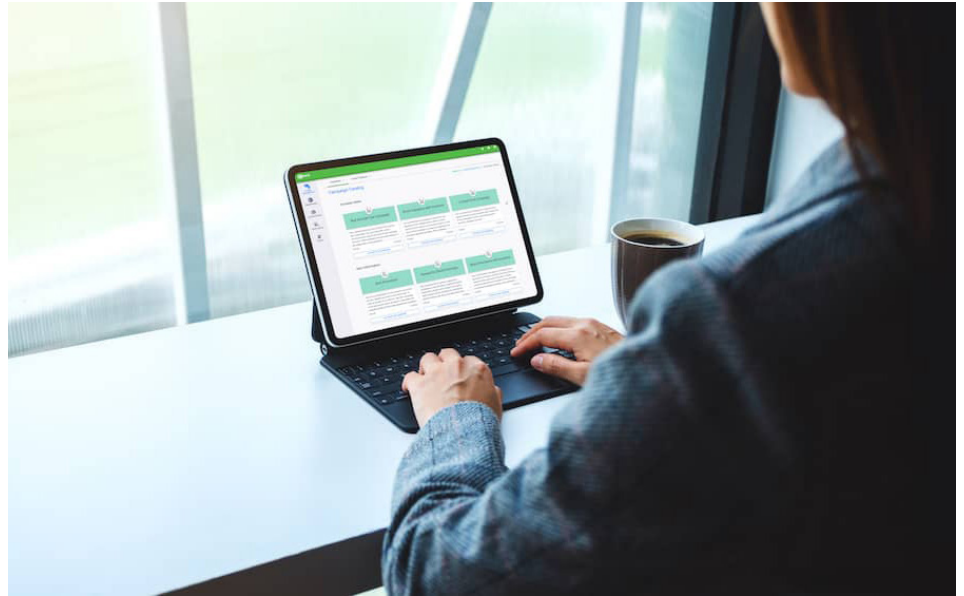
Data and reporting

Technology makes vast amounts of information easily accessible to restaurant owners and managers. What they use and how they use it enables them to achieve results in a hotly competitive field.

A POS system can produce comparative reports that leverage consistent historical data, including those that detail performance time-over-time and store-to-store. Advanced analytics expand those capabilities further with predefined reports that feature sales breakdowns, discounts, product mix, productivity and other shift details.

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Data isn't merely a collection of gray blocks of numbers, but rather actionable intelligence that can be disseminated in easy-to-digest graphs and sortable tables that allow for access to the information and interpretation of results.

Most importantly, restaurants not only need to be able to react to change, they also need to anticipate it. Data is available in real time, positioning decision makers to respond immediately, when necessary, to bolster sales and drive other operational improvements. And it's delivered either upon request or proactively on multiple platforms, including a mobile device.

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From a consumer marketing standpoint, for instance, data contributes to increasing revenue by optimizing a restaurant's marketing campaigns using experiential and transactional data. Those insights play key roles in protecting profit margins by identifying and rewarding high-value customers while deprioritizing marketing spend on customers with lower interaction. Going further, strategies can divvy up spend and non-spend figures to generate deeper insight into what guests value so restaurants can focus marketing efforts on driving repeat visits.

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Labor represents a significant portion of a restaurant's expenses. Statistics help to prevent excessive staffing costs with hour-to-hour sales vs. labor cost reports, helping optimize staffing by reallocating employees to specific priorities based on present and long-term campaigns and activity.

Integrations

In the past, one of the biggest frustrations associated with POS systems used to be that the market was monopolized by manufacturers whose networks were closed designs. That meant they weren't easily compatible with third-party hardware or software that could help a restaurant expand a network and transform its system into more economical engine. But times change, and so has the ease of integration.

POS systems that accommodate third-party applications have become commonplace and have even made the incorporation process rather simple, giving restaurants much-needed flexibility to choose what they consider “best of breed” capabilities to generate more core operational data.

The addition of scheduling apps to a POS system helps managers keep tighter reins on labor that, if not controlled properly, can quickly chew into a restaurant's profit margin. An integrated third-party app can convert a POS



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into a labor management hub, producing and delivering schedules (either via print or electronically) to staff members and even helping stores enforce those schedules to prevent unnecessary overtime or additional hours.

The use of common cloud technologies facilitates easy access, monitoring and control from varied platforms. Open access also allows for future partnerships with app providers, strengthening and future-proofing the POS investment.

Payments

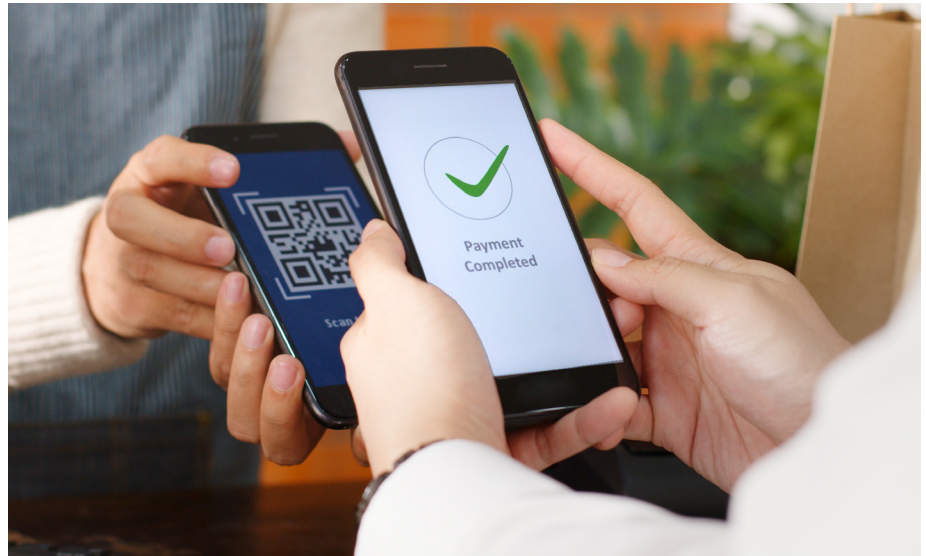
Consumer expectations are changing, and guests’ preferences for the way they pay for their meals are no exception. Options beyond paying with cash or handing over a card can provide more ease for both the restaurant and customer if restaurants are considering offering additional payment methods. But electronic transaction capabilities like credit, debit, or gift cards are standard, and secure transactions such as EMV or mobile wallets (i.e. Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, and Google Pay) became more widely available over the years.

Many systems now support payments through handheld devices, suitable for curbside pickup customers. Restaurant staff can utilize pin pads or tablets to allow customers to pay for their order without having to go inside the



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establishment. But flexible payment methods don't end there. More and more customers are preferring contactless payment methods due to its limited human-to-human contact and greater flexibility, and many POS systems have capabilities that let customers to pay for their orders using their own smartphone device. Contactless options like text-to-pay allow restaurants to send customers a text message containing a link to pay for their orders, or they can pay directly through the restaurant's online ordering app or a third-party one on their own devices.

Conclusion

A restaurant's technology platform is the foundation of the business, and data and reporting, integrations and payments are key areas to consider when investing in a POS system. With the right POS system in place, restaurants can trust their technology to drive the needs and activities in today's industry.

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NCR works with more than 100,000 restaurants to make simple possible and reduce the complexities of running a restaurant from end-to-end. From the front of house to the back and everything in between, NCR helps brands embrace digital transformation, drive on- and off-premise revenue, optimize their technology and exceed guest expectations.

