



4 Reasons That It Matters Where You Buy Your POS System



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First-time buyers are faced with a myriad of options when they are purchasing a point of sale (POS) system. You can choose from a variety of POS software options with a wide range of features and functionality. In addition, POS hardware options range from traditional, stationary terminals with peripheral cash drawers and monitors to all-in-one models or tablet POS.

Of all the choices you will make when you purchase your business' first POS system, there is one that will have a significant and lasting impact on how much value the new technology will bring to your business. That choice is whether or not to buy the POS system from a dealer.

Why a Dealer?

Purchasing a POS system from a dealer will ensure you have:

- The right system for your business
- Low total cost of ownership (TCO)
- Maximum ROI
- The service and support you need

Here are *four reasons* dealers are best suited to deliver on these objectives.



Reason #1: Locality

POS dealers have established businesses with location in mind, some with multiple regional locations, so they can best serve their clients. Face-to-face appointments are common, and when you are evaluating POS systems, a local POS dealer's technical sales reps can visit in person to discuss your options, answer the many questions that arise during the decision-making process, and guide you through demonstrations.

In addition, dealers, also known as VARS or *value-added resellers*, do more than just sell hardware and software. They work to ensure your new solution will be an asset to your business with services such as onsite training, support, and service. With a local dealer, you know when you pick up the phone, you can arrange to have someone onsite if needed, to get your system up and running with minimal downtime.

If your business doesn't have its own IT department, having a dealer you can rely on to be onsite when needed for technical support and service is critical. A recent estimate of POS downtime puts the cost to a large retailer at \$4,700 per minute. The loss, of course, would be less for small to midsize businesses, but crippling, nonetheless, if downtime is excessive.

Reason #2: Integration Experts

An experienced POS dealer can help you avoid a common costly error: buying POS hardware online (maybe at a discounted price) and expecting to be able to use it with any POS software. Not all POS software, however, runs on all POS hardware — this includes peripherals like receipt printers. That cheap hardware online may also not have consistent internal components — so software may run on some of it, but not all of it — and fixing the problem could total big service costs.

A POS dealer will take you through the logical steps of purchasing a new POS system:

- Assessing business needs and objectives
- Evaluating and selecting POS software that meets those needs
- Choosing POS hardware and peripherals compatible with the software

A POS dealer will take your other business systems into consideration and advise you on whether your new POS system will integrate with them. Your POS dealer may already have hardware and software bundles that suit your business' needs. These turnkey solutions have been tested and certified, to eliminate integration guesswork. An advantage to purchasing all POS hardware and software from one source eliminates finger pointing when you need to track a problem back to a supplier of just one system component.

Reason #3: Industry Expertise

POS dealers are experienced working with businesses like yours. They are not only POS solutions experts, but they are also experts in your industry and what businesses like yours need from POS systems. They understand the pain points and challenges of your industry and can tailor a solution that addresses them in the most effective way possible.

One example is choosing POS software. There are plenty of general POS software solutions available — especially from online companies — but they are not tailored to a particular type of business or niche. What a bar or nightclub needs from a POS system to efficiently operate — such as running a tab, age verification, and inventory records for regulatory compliance — is quite different from what a thrift store needs from POS. There are POS solutions that specifically address the distinctive needs of those businesses, as well as the needs of, for example, cafeterias, restaurants, and retail stores.

Your POS dealer can point you toward the right options for you, saving you the time it would take to research and find the best options. Your POS dealer will also take your unique challenges and goals into account to help you find not only a good fit for your industry, but for your specific business, giving you the best ROI possible.

Reason #4: Develop Technology Infrastructure

Your relationship with a well-versed, experienced POS dealer can extend far beyond buying a POS terminal and software. A POS dealer partner will be able to develop your POS system into a complete business management system, helping you plan for and deploy technology including payment processing and online ordering/e-commerce options compatible with your POS system and surveillance video cameras and other security infrastructure. They can ensure your wireless network and other infrastructure meets Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS), as well as keep you informed of industry or regulatory changes on the horizon and new technology that you will need to stay in compliance.

A POS dealer can become a trusted advisor that not only helps stage, deploy, integrate, service, and maintain technology solutions, but also helps you plan and budget for new solutions. They will advise you on strategies that result in low total cost of ownership (TCO) over the lifetime of solutions, while helping your business run more efficiently and give you a competitive edge.

How to Choose the Right Dealer

To gain maximum benefits of working with a POS dealer to purchase your first POS system, it's important to make sure you are partnering with the right company. Here are important questions to ask to help determine whether a POS dealer has the particular expertise you need.

Is the dealer familiar with your industry?

Some POS dealers specialize in hospitality, others in retail or niche POS markets. Find one with expertise in your market or industry.

How long has the dealer been in business?

Experienced, established dealers are more likely to have more reliable support and service processes in place, in addition to having greater industry expertise.

Can the dealer provide references?

Dealers should be willing to provide names and contact information of clients they have worked with. Speak to those with businesses similar to yours.

What does their support contract look like?

Thoroughly understand the support and service levels the POS dealer will provide.

How much training will they provide?

Ask about the training the POS dealer provides, as well as the training format, whether in person at your business, at a seminar or workshop, or online.

Do they automatically update or backup the system?

Updates ensure you are using the most current version of your software, with the most updated security, and data backup provides assurance that data can be restored in event of a catastrophic loss. Ensure the POS dealer can arrange to handle these services.

One More Question

There is one more thing you need to ask when choosing the right POS dealer before making a POS system purchase.

Does the dealer specialize in more than one product?

POS dealers who are solutions providers/consultants can provide you with total solutions that are customized for your business. They are distinctly different from salesman peddling just one product, and they are better suited to helping you find the right POS system that will provide the most value to your business.

Deciding to purchase your POS system from a POS dealer that you have carefully vetted to be the right partner for your business will ensure you deploy state-of-the-art technology that addresses your business challenges and goals and that you also have ongoing support and services to help you get the most out of your investment.

