

# Will You Make These Mistakes When You Buy Retail Point of Sale Software?

By Jeff Haefner

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POS Software Guide <http://www.possoftwareguide.com>

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If you're like most retailers, you're worried about making a mistake when you choose point of sale (POS) software. I don't blame you. Buying POS software is a big investment. Not to mention, POS software can have huge impact on the efficiency and success of your retail business!

What's more, there are around 1,000 different POS systems to choose from. And they're all different. All these choices can be overwhelming and confusing.

The truth is... choosing POS software is very difficult. And too many retailers end up with the wrong system. In fact, it's common for retailers to go through 2, 3 or even 4 different POS systems before they find one they're happy with. Those mistakes probably cost at least \$10,000 - \$100,000.

Here are a few mistakes that I see retailers making over and over again.

They Buy Hardware First

I can't tell you how many times I've heard a retailer say,

"I just bought new computers, printers and I have everything ready to go. Now I need to find POS software."

As soon as I hear that, I think to myself, "This guy could have saved himself a lot of time and money if he selected his POS software first!"

Why?

First of all, your POS software will have hardware and operating system requirements. For example, the software will require a certain version of Windows, Unix or Linux. (Unless it's an "open architecture" system like ASP) In addition, each program will only function with certain types of printers, scanners, cash drawers and card readers.

Second, and more importantly, not all POS systems are the same. And the system that you choose is very important. It will have a huge impact on the efficiency of your business! If you install your computer system first, you will limit your POS software choices. The perfect fit for your "unique" business might run on UNIX but you already bought a Windows 2003 Server! You might also find that the printers and scanners you just bought aren't compatible either.

You can avoid frustration and save money if you choose the POS software first. Then you can ask the software company about their recommended hardware and operating systems.

They Ask the Wrong People

All too often retailers ask a local computer consultant for suggestions about POS software. Most computer consultants have good intentions but they tend to give poor advice when it comes to choosing POS software.

Computer consultants are great sources for information about computers, hardware, and networking. However they don't usually understand the intricacies of POS software and retail management. Nor do they realize that there are almost 1,000 different POS systems to choose from and it's VERY easy to choose the wrong one.

Every retail business is different and has different needs. If you get poor advice and select the wrong type of system, your business will lose money.

They Don't Place Enough Focus on the Character of the Software Company

When you invest in point of sale software, you're buying a

relationship, not just a product. In fact, the "quality" of the software company is usually just as important as the product.

Why is the software company so important?

Well...

After you purchase the software, you will rely on the software company to supply updates, training, technical support, and possibly hardware.

Let me ask you a few questions to help you understand why the company is so important...

- What if the software company went out of business? (Dozens of POS software companies come and go every year!)

- What if they don't give you software updates when you need them?

- What if it takes 2 days to get your technical questions answered?

- What if the software has a bug and they don't fix it?

- What if they didn't give you sufficient training? And as a result, your sales reports are showing the wrong totals!

- What if you can't print and it takes 6 hours to get help from a support technician?

The truth is, the level of service and the financial stability of the software company is very important. It's critical to evaluate the software company; otherwise you could run into some frustrating and expensive problems.

They Pass The Buck

Too many owners give the responsibility of choosing a POS system to an employee or a computer consultant that is not familiar with your industry. This is a huge mistake!

Top management and other key personnel must be involved in the selection and implementation process. You should never rely solely on a consultant's recommendation or input.

The person that evaluates the software must have in-depth knowledge about your business!

POS software is complicated. Not to mention it can make a huge difference in your businesses productivity. POS

software is too important to pass the evaluation process to someone else!

I see owners and managers make this mistake all the time. Don't make the same one!

### They Overlook Important Features

Unless you are a retail POS expert, it's difficult to sort through countless POS systems and figure out what you need. What's more, it's difficult to understand the "true" potential of your POS system. As a result, many retailers get confused and they overlook important features that would save them a lot of time and money.

Most people don't realize that every POS system is VERY different. Some are designed for large ticket items like tractors. And others are designed to work in fast moving retail environments like a grocery store.

As a result, it's common for retailers to end up with POS software that isn't really designed for them. That's why it's important to properly analyze the needs of your business (even if you're a small retailer). Then you can create a list of features that are important. That list will help you compare and choose the right system.

This might seem complicated, but with a little guidance, you can quickly find the right POS system. You just need to know which mistakes to avoid, where to look, and the right formula.

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Jeff Haefner is the author of "The Point of Sale Software Buyers Guide -- How to Choose POS Software and Avoid Problems." It will teach you the secrets to choosing POS software for ANY retail business. If you'd like to learn how to avoid problems, save time, and boost efficiency then check out = <http://www.possoftwareguide.com>  
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