



# How-To Guide: Choosing a POS System

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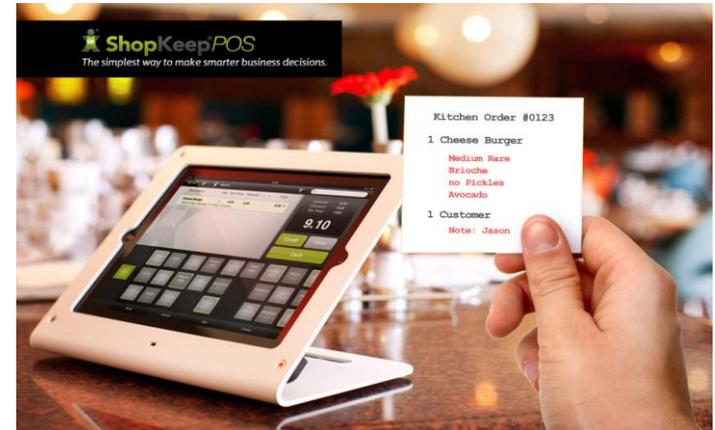
## What is a POS System?

- POS system stands for **point of sale system** and it refers to a system that manages the moment at which a retail transaction is completed and a customer pays a merchant in exchange for goods or services.
- So at its most basic level, we're essentially talking about a **cash register**. Modern POS systems, however, **do a whole lot more**, including accepting credit cards, managing inventory, tracking employee hours, and offering extensive sales reports.
- Additionally, many modern POS systems are flexible enough to integrate with other services to **make business management easier**, including alternative payment options and accounting solutions.
- There are hundreds of different POS systems currently available that offer a wide variety of features at different prices. The goal of this guide is to familiarize you with the **key factors that you should consider** when deciding which POS system, if any, you should invest in for your business.

# Choosing a POS System

## Why should you use a POS system?

- If **you don't have a POS system**, you probably don't know what you're selling, when you're selling it, and how much of it you're selling. You don't know your inventory counts. You can't check sales without being in the store. You don't know who's working and when. Basically, making smarter business decisions is more difficult for you to make.



### A POS System can...

Track every sale with detailed reporting

Inventory counts automatically update with sales

Employees clock in and out as part of the system

Data is always accurate and accessible

### Without A POS System, you...

Tally receipts at end of the day

Time-consuming weekly stock counts

Write down employee hours by hand

Errors and missing data are common

# Choosing a POS System

## Key Elements in Choosing a POS System

- When choosing a POS System, there are a **number of factors to consider**. In this guide, we will walk you through each of these **Key Elements** are most important:
  - Basic Features
  - Customer Support
  - Adaptability and Evolution
  - Simple Pricing
  - Robust Reporting
  - Data Accessibility
  - Data Security
  - Quality Hardware



## Basic Features

- Once you've chosen to use a POS system, it should be **easy to set up and simple to use**. You should be able to manage the process yourself and training cashiers and managers should take minutes, not hours. A system that's confusing to learn or complicated to use will decrease employee satisfaction and waste time that could be better spent elsewhere.
- Your POS system should offer an **intuitive interface** to process sales quickly and keep lines moving. A system that is difficult to use leads to longer lines and unhappy customers who are then less likely to be repeat customers.
- Managing inventory and employees should be straightforward and painless, allowing you to be able to **change things easily on the fly**.
- **Running reports should be simple** and the reports should be easy to understand so that you can get a snapshot of exactly what you are looking to learn about your business without having to ask too many questions.

## Customer Service

- Be sure to find out about customer care when considering a POS system. Though not common, from time to time your POS system may experience issues. Without the ability to call someone to fix the problem quickly, you could lose sales, so **make sure that your POS system provider offers comprehensive customer support.**
- In addition to dealing with problems, you may also want to learn more about existing features or how to add a new feature to your POS system. Whichever provider you use should have both **on-site documentation** and readily available **customer service representatives** to help walk you through either situation.
- In conclusion, friendly customer care should be available via **multiple channels** (phone, email, chat) every day for **no extra charge.**



## Adaptability and Evolution

- As technology continues to evolve at a breakneck pace, you need to make sure that the POS system you choose today won't become obsolete tomorrow. This makes it critical to research the top options and make sure that the one you select is active and regularly **updated with the latest features**.
- Two key trends in the POS space right now are **mobile payments** and **cloud-based software delivery and data storage**.
  - Mobile payments are predicted to overtake credit card payments in less than a decade and mobile loyalty programs are becoming commonplace in a variety of environments. POS systems that expect to be relevant in the years ahead must be built on a **flexible platform that can support integrations** with these mobile providers.
  - Meanwhile, cloud-based POS systems, like ShopKeep POS, eliminate the need for costly and time-consuming software upgrades, while also ensuring that your **data stays safe and always accessible only to you** in a secure location outside of your store.

## Simple and Affordable Pricing

- The cost of a POS system has historically been very high and continues to be in many cases, preventing smaller and mid-size businesses from replacing their cash registers. These **expensive POS systems** usually require an initial investment of several thousand dollars, with some **solutions costing well over \$10,000!**
- Today's **software as a service (SaaS) subscription model** makes getting a POS system much more affordable, as cloud-based systems can be run from an iPad and/or any computer. For example, startup costs at ShopKeep POS are only about \$1,000.
- However, extra costs are sometimes hidden in the details, so make sure that your POS system has **simple, pay-as-you-go monthly pricing** without long-term agreements or cancellation fees.
- Be aware that some POS vendors may mask subscription costs by forcing you to use a certain credit card processor, so make sure to read the fine print and focus on providers with the **most transparent pricing and open platform.**

# Choosing a POS System

## Robust Reporting

- While all POS systems give you sales data to some degree, the **capabilities and clarity of a system's reporting platform are not all created equally.**
- Your POS system should be able to **generate detailed sales reports** that not only identify your best selling items and returns, but record margins and measure the effectiveness of your pricing. **Inventory tracking** is a feature you should definitely make sure to have as well.
- Your POS system needs to **track sales by department, item, and hour** so you can adjust staffing accordingly and allocate floor space more efficiently. Additionally, a **built-in employee time clock feature** will make keeping track of employee hours a much smoother process.
- While **detailed exportable reports** will be useful for accounting purposes and more in-depth analysis, it's important to be able to see **on-screen reports and charts** with easy-to-grasp snapshot views as well to get information faster.

Item	Cost	Price
Drip Coffee Blend	\$0.00	\$2.76
Caffe Latte	\$1.05	\$4.00
Annex Muffins	\$1.32	\$3.50
Almond Croissants	\$1.45	\$2.75
Macchiato	\$0.65	\$3.22

Opening Amount:	500.00
Cash Sales:	0.00
Drops/Payouts:	0.00
Expected Drawer:	500.00
Actual Drawer:	0.00
Over/Short:	0.00



# Choosing a POS System

## Data Accessibility

- While recording sales and inventory data is basically a given when using a POS system, having that **information accessible wherever and whenever** you want it is a real game changer.
- Traditional POS systems that require reports to be run from an in-store terminal aren't useful when you're at home, traveling, or simply anywhere outside of your store. The advent of cloud-based POS systems means that **your back office operations can now be accessible from any web browser**, even if you're halfway around the world on vacation.
- The most convenient and **tech-savvy POS systems also offer smartphone apps** that allow business owners to see real-time sales data in the palm of their hand.



## Data Security

- **Data safety and security should be among the most important factors** you think about in the choice of your POS system. So when considering your options, you need to make sure to **investigate the security of your data in every system**, particularly around transactions. And with a number of recent high-profile hacking incidents, this issue is more relevant than ever.
- In order to stay safe on the transaction level, **your POS system should never store customer credit card numbers** and all transactions should be fully encrypted. For example, ShopKeep POS encrypts credit card information right when you swipe and works with a unique swiper key, meaning it cannot be used by any other service.
- It's also important to note that while traditional POS systems running on PC-based computers are vulnerable to viruses and malware, a **cloud-based iPad system is virtually impenetrable**, allowing you to rest assured that your customers' data won't be compromised.

## Quality Hardware

- The hardware that accompanies your POS system should be functional, durable, and stylish.
- **Some POS vendors pair their software with second-rate hardware** and peripherals in order to piece together the cheapest package. As a small business owner, the last thing you want to do is waste time struggling with a constantly jammed printer or a flimsy stand that doesn't withstand the daily grind at your counter.
- **Quality hardware will pay for itself in short order** and save you time and patience in the long run. This goes not only for the most commonly used items like a cash drawer and receipt printer, but also for your POS system stand. Having an ergonomically and elegantly designed stand that matches the décor of your shop will make transactions more enjoyable for cashiers and customers alike.



# Choosing a POS System

## About ShopKeep POS

- **The simplest way to make smarter business decisions**, NYC-based ShopKeep POS is the affordable, complete platform for running a shop from an iPad with real-time reporting on the web or from your smartphone.
- Backed by **award-winning customer care**, the ShopKeep POS iPad app rings sales, processes credit cards and mobile payments, prints and emails receipts, and prints orders remotely to the kitchen.
- Founded by a fellow business owner, every aspect of ShopKeep POS is designed to enable merchants of all kinds, from coffee shops to boutiques and much more to be successful. It is **used by 5000+ merchants** throughout the US and Canada, including 300+ in NYC.
- Interested in signing up for a 30-day free trial? Simply **visit <http://www.shopkeep.com>** or call a POS Specialist at 800-820-9814!



**ShopKeep<sup>®</sup>POS**

*The simplest way to make smarter business decisions.*

## About

**NYC Business Solutions** is a set of services offered by the Department of Small Business Services to help businesses start, operate, and expand in New York City.

Our services are provided at no cost, regardless of the size or stage of the business. For more, go to: [www.nyc.gov/nycbusiness](http://www.nyc.gov/nycbusiness).



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