

Choosing the right POS (point of sale) system is part of your entrepreneurial business and decision making. Selecting the right point of sale can catapult your business to the next level. You can save time and money with the right system.

Top of the line POS software has unique tools for cannabis retailers. Whether it's [advanced inventory management](#) and analytics for large stores with multiple locations, or customer loyalty club integrations, you have the luxury of finding a perfect fit for your business.

Let's break down your choices so you can make the best decision for your business.

## Your Hardware Options

Today's hardware choices are more advanced.

The basic setup is a computer that runs your POS software through a browser or an app. Ensure your computer choice is compatible with the software you want to run.

Many retailers have a **stationary desktop** at each checkout line. These are best for retailers who want a clearly defined checkout area. Desktops take up space and are difficult to move, but they provide a more powerful solution with added versatility. Typically, they run transactions quickly and offer a more pleasing experience for both your customers and budtenders.

Many small businesses prefer **tablets** or other mobile devices (mPOS). Tablets are usually less expensive and allow transactions from anywhere in the store. They also enable retailers to easily add another "lane" during busy times. Though less powerful, the tablet is a great option for retailers who have fewer transactions and one or two checkouts.

Many businesses now seek a combination of the two. A busy store might have several desktops for most transactions and use tablets for rushes or for associates who float the retail floor.

## More POS Hardware

Your desktops or tablets constitute the majority of your hardware costs. A few other items that most retail stores need to buy are.

- **Receipt printers** –used less these days in lieu of email or text receipts, but still offer paper receipts. You can attach QR codes or other coupons to encourage return customer visits. A standard receipt printer is \$100-200.
- **Scanners** – aid in transaction accuracy and can be used to take inventory. Scanning barcodes directly into your inventory saves time and ensures that your counts are correct. They also speed up the POS check-out process by quickly bringing up product information and price. Scanners can be hardwired to the POS or connected via Bluetooth. Scanners can range from \$25 to several hundred.

- **Cannabis pre-orders from online menus** are on the rise. They allow customers to browse products from their devices and place a pre-order for in-store pickup. The order must be completed at the POS. Adding online pre-order menus attracts customers who are looking for a convenient shopping experience.

## **Software-as-a-Service or Software License Purchase**

After you decide the best hardware for your store, next consider the software. It's important to decide between buying the POS software outright or subscribing to the software as a service, or **SaaS** before you get feature and tool specifics.

In the past, you could typically buy the software outright. While it's great to invest in products for your business, buying software has risk. Technology changes and improves constantly, so a purchase for several thousand dollars might be outdated within a year.

Retailers are more frequently looking at monthly subscription-based POS software services. Update or changes occur automatically occur in your system and ensure that you always have the best software available. This type of solution starts at around \$120/month.

## **Cloud-Based Solutions**

A more recent advance in the POS field is data storage. Prior to **cloud-based solutions**, retailers had to rely on **legacy software**. This type of solution meant that all data was stored in a server on location. That data could only be accessed from a central computer at the store itself.

Cloud-based technology has changed this. Now, all good POS solutions store retailer data in a secure, remote cloud server. Owners and managers can access important inventory, sales, and more from anywhere with internet access. Any changes are adjusted and reported in real-time. This ensures that all stock numbers and quantities are accurate and current.

Legacy systems are prone to potential catastrophic problems. Internet outages prevent credit cards processing. If something happens to the server on location, all data can be lost or compromised. If you haven't made the switch to the cloud, it's worth doing so as soon as possible.

## **Connection to State Traceability Systems**

A cannabis retail system should connect to the state traceability system. Manifest data, state plant/product ID's, and tax information are just a few of the things that you need report to stay compliant and keep your license. Look for a system that doesn't require you or your staff to work in the POS *and* the state system. Quality software should integrate with METRC, BioTrackTHC and MJ Freeway to send and receive the required information automatically.

## Terms and Conditions

Once you find a great cloud-based subscription service, look at the details and fine print. This is an important step.

- First, is there a **contract**, and if so, what are the details. There are often POS deals that seem too good to be true. That's because they always are. Free hardware or no monthly subscription fees mean that the company will lock you into a long-term contract with high credit card processing fees.

Find a solution that offers a simple and straightforward product. Find a monthly at-will subscription that you can leave at any time. If a system isn't working for you, you want to be able to switch systems.

- Second, look at **support details**. A new system will require quality assistance in the beginning. It's important that technical issues, installation, and manager training are included in your solution. POS companies frequently charge extra fees for every phone call or chat support issue. Initially you may have advanced POS system questions. They should be answered for free.

## Niche Retail Features

You've decided the big questions, now it's time to think about exactly what tools and features benefit your store. This varies from retailer to retailer, and you have countless options with advanced POS companies. For the sake of this post, we'll look at a few broad options:

- **Inventory Management** - Depending on the number of products in your store, you'll need to think about what kind of inventory management system will be best. Most cannabis retailers generally carry a vast number of products and therefore need a more robust inventory management. Inventory management can also include order automation by setting stock levels.
- **Advanced Analytics** - The best POS solutions also may provide useful analytics. These can be used to provide actionable advice on product performance. It's impossible for any owner or manager to know the performance of each product, so tools like [ABC retail analysis](#) have been developed to make this easier. In this case, your point of sale analyzes the past performance of every single product and gives them a ranking based on their value to your store.
- **User Experience** - Look for tools that add convenience and comfortability for both the cashier and the customer. You want the cashier to be able to modify and send orders quickly, as well as troubleshoot small problems. It's also optimal to provide each

customer with a seamless experience to add to their convenience and to keep your lines moving quickly. Customer facing screens that show their purchase items increase customers satisfaction and upsell opportunities.

## Software Integrations

To provide a more complete experience, many point of sale solutions integrate with various third-party tools. Again, there are many different options for types of integrations, so here are a handful of examples:

- **Loyalty Programs** - For many businesses, punch cards aren't going to be enough to cover their loyalty program needs. Customer Points for Dollars Spent are popular with cannabis shops and customers. Customers can choose which products or brands they want up be informed on and retailers can customize promotions for different customer groups based on the selected preferences. For these needs, look for loyalty integration, like [springbig](#).
- **Accounting Tools** - Integrating your accounting into your POS can help with your payroll and employee management. There are many types of accounting software that integrate with various POS systems. **QuickBooks** is an example of one of the more popular choices.
- **Online Menus** – Many customers want to review products, strain information and potency before they head to a store to shop. Using an online menu like [Fynd](#), [IHeartJane](#), or [Leafly](#), provides convenient product information for your customers.

## Conclusion

You have the benefit of having more point of sale options than ever before! Take your time shopping for the best solution for your retail store. Considering these factors beforehand will make the process faster and easier.