

POS stands for Point Of Sale. This is a rather broad definition that can include merchandising aids, displays and the methods used to enable transactions. In our case, we're talking about the hardware and software that runs both the front counter and back office operations of a business.

For a small gift store, a basic POS system would consist of a computer, cash drawer, barcode scanner, receipt printer and the appropriate POS software. A service organization, like a lawn care company, wouldn't need a cash drawer or a receipt printer. But they might want a laser printer for their service invoices. Again, you have the flexibility to easily customize a POS system for your particular business.

The heart of any POS system is the computer (or computers) that runs the POS software. We understand the temptation to use an older computer or maybe one of the really low cost models available through the "superstores". But remember, once up and running, your business will be depending on this equipment, so a good quality computer is important. For example, all of our custom built-systems use high quality, name brand parts and will work reliably for years. The same advice goes for all the other components. A basic cash drawer will get the job done, but the heavy duty models really are built better and will last longer. CCD barcode scanners are more reliable than the old pencil type wands, but they're still designed to work with flat, easy to read barcodes. Laser scanners not only have a greater range, but the laser can wrap around bottles, bags or follow irregular shapes much better than the CCD models. Printer technology is also improving. The workhorse of the industry used to be dot-matrix printers, and they're still fairly popular, but thermal technology is faster, quieter and reasonably priced. Uninterruptible power supplies (UPS's), or battery back-ups, are affordably priced and will keep you up and running during power glitches or short outages. Remember, your business will be depending on this equipment. If you're going to be using it a lot, spend the extra money and get the heavy duty models and UPS's.

POS system not only gives you control over your transactions, it also puts a wealth of information at your finger tips. Imagine being able to compare year to date and month to date sales with just a few keystrokes. A database of your customers can be a powerful marketing tool. A POS system can also track your inventory, automatically creating order lists as needed, even adjusting quantities for seasonal demand. In short, a POS system helps you keep a constant eye on your bottom line.

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