

Is It Time to Assess and Refresh Your POS System and Restaurant Technologies?

It was not too long ago when your point of sale (POS) system was most likely the only technology you had in your restaurant. You bought it even though you thought it was too expensive, it made things more impersonal, it was too hard to program and too hard to learn. But you bought it, and soon, the benefits came. The system continued to translate to better profitability and security for the business, providing information needed to run your business more effectively. The return on investment for the POS became obvious, and it quickly reached the point where a restaurant rarely opened without that once-considered expensive, hard-to-program and hard-to-use technology.

Technology continually advances at a lightning-fast pace. New televisions, phones (did I mean devices?), cars, cable options, and so forth keep you on your toes and keep you spending more money on those technologies. We no longer fix things because they are broken, we now “upgrade” technology because upgrades provide more and better benefits. So, we replace the TV that has a very nice picture; your phone every two years because it keeps getting better; and your GPS in your car now reroutes you when there is an accident ahead. So, how about your POS? Not to mention, how about the other components in your restaurant that are not associated with technology? Is it time to “upgrade” things because they provide more and better benefits?

The focus of this month's article will be POS systems. You have a POS, which was quite pricey and may even been paid for outright. Maybe you pay an annual maintenance fee or for repairs as needed. Perhaps you pay for new upgrades so that it does more, or



maybe you just stick with what is working. Ultimately, however, you want to improve and know that new POS systems can do online ordering and can be used to bring in more business through geo-location of your guests and prospects. Moreover, new systems are compliant with ever-changing credit card regulations and can be portable so that orders can be taken at the table. It would be nice to upgrade — you may think — but your POS is fully paid.

Nevertheless, the Software as a Service (SaaS) model is how and why you can afford an upgraded POS system. There are very few upfront costs, payment can be made monthly, and upgrades are included. And, if the upgrades need new iPads, touchscreens, printers, or other hardware, these are typically included or added at a minimal increase. Aside from the upgrades, all of your programming, maintenance, and service are also included in that monthly fee. The latest and greatest, with all of the benefits, are available as long as you pay the monthly fee. Essentially, your four-workstation system — with two cash drawers, printers for receipts, and printers in the kitchen — which once cost you \$15,000-\$20,000, now equate to roughly \$500 a month. This includes upgrades and service. You can budget for it and reap the benefits.

What are the benefits? Stay tuned for next month's column. We will explore features and benefits that will make you want to upgrade, with specifics on how you can and should make guests happier, reduce labor and food costs, and provide analytics that you would otherwise have to pay a CPA to deduce. In other words, help you to make more money.

In subsequent articles, we will

discuss other areas of your restaurant where you can improve service, decrease labor and other operating costs, provide more consistent food quality to guests — ultimately providing great ROI with an ever-improving bottom line. It is a win-win if done carefully, methodically,

and as part of a plan of first assessing, then refreshing technology.

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