

An Introduction to Choosing POS and Retail Management Software -- And 9 Things You Need To Know Before Selecting A POS System

By Jeff Haefner –
www.PosSoftwareGuide.com

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About the Author

Jeff Haefner

Jeff's experience with retail technology began in 1993 when he started building computers and configuring network systems. Before he knew it, he was working as a Network Administrator helping retailers configure their computer systems. His other responsibilities included computer programming, telephone support, and website administration.

While working as a Network Administrator, Jeff earned his bachelor's degree in Computer Science from the University of Northern Iowa.

His next endeavor led into sales and marketing, where he spent some time selling point of sale software. This led to his next position as the General Manager at a successful computer software company.

While working in sales and marketing, Jeff realized that retailers had very little information to help them select retail management software. As a result, he decided to start providing retail technology consulting and write informational products.

This new venture turned into a great success.

Jeff is currently the author and creator of several publications, products, and services, including:

- **The POS Tips Newsletter** - a highly successful retail technology newsletter. Every month Jeff sends articles filled with tips, tricks, and techniques for getting the most from retail technology, boosting profits, and growing your business. This is a very popular and highly acclaimed product -- and best of all, it's free!
<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/newsletter.asp>
- **Retail Technology Discussion Forum** – a completely free discussion forum, where retailers can get their questions answered and receive inside information from industry experts. Jeff personally monitors this forum almost every day.
<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/forum/default.asp>
- **The POS Software Buyers Guide** – The first and best selling POS software buyers guide that has helped thousands of retailers avoid mistakes and find the best POS system for their business.
<http://www.possoftwareguide.com>
- **The POS Software Comparison Chart** – a new companion to the buyers guide. The comparison chart makes it much easier and faster for certain types of retailers to compare POS software. It includes a detailed 459 criteria comparison of 18 top point of sale systems in the “general retail” industry.
<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/new-chart.html>
- **Retail Technology Consulting and Software Selection Services** – Jeff's team has personally helped over 500 businesses choose and implement POS, ERP, CRM, accounting, and various software applications. All the consulting is completely unbiased because they do not have ties to any of the software vendors (unlike

most consulting services). They have provided services for businesses all the way from single store startups to fortune 100 companies.

<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/selectionservices.html>

In addition, Jeff is the author of dozens of articles that have been published in About.com, InStore Magazine, Dance Retailer News, EtailersDigest, New Age Retailer, and many more.

Jeff lives in Marion, Iowa (a quiet town in the Midwest). He enjoys water skiing, playing basketball, traveling, and working with computers.

To contact Jeff Haefner, please send him an email:

Email: jeff@possoftwareguide.com

Why Was This Report Created and Why is it So Important For You to Read It?

Good question. Here's the answer in a nutshell...

I, the author of this guide, have talked to countless retail owners and managers that need help selecting and implementing software for their business.

In particular, they need help selecting point of sale software. Or maybe you refer to it as retail management software... or inventory control software... or POS software.

Whatever you call it, too many retailers end up frustrated with the software that they paid hundreds or maybe thousands of dollars to purchase! Not to mention, they spent countless hours configuring computers, setting up printers, and training their employees in a desperate attempt to make the software work for their business.

And sometimes it's worse.

Not only do they regret their purchase, but they get **extremely frustrated** because the computer system is not reliable, and it doesn't work the way they had thought.

I wrote this guide because I knew that I could help retailers make better choices, avoid those **blood pressure raising** problems, and increase their return on investment!

Will This Work for Your Type of Business?

Many people don't realize that my information can help because they think it's only about POS software and general retail. So I'm going to help you quickly determine if this information will help you or not...

The website www.PosSoftwareGuide.com includes information about simple POS software packages and completely integrated business management solutions for some the following types of businesses:

- Agriculture (Tractor & Equipment)
- Antique
- Apparel / Shoes / Hats
- Appliance
- Art Gallery
- Art Supplies
- Auto Dealer
- Auto Parts
- Auto Repair
- Bakery
- Bar
- Barbeque
- Bicycle Store
- Boat Dealer
- Book Store
- Building Materials (Lumber, Hardware, Paint)
- Carpet / Flooring
- Casino
- Cellular / Wireless
- Clothing Retailer
- Collectibles (Antique, Coin, Comics)
- Computer Hardware & Service
- Consignment
- Construction
- Convenience Store
- Department Store
- Electronic (TV, Radio, etc)
- Firearms / Guns
- Fireplace & Stove
- Flooring & Carpet
- Florist
- Frame Shop
- Furniture
- Garden Center / Nursery
- Gas Stations
- General Merchandise / Retail
- Gift Shop
- Grocery
- Health Food Store
- Hardware Store
- Hearth & Home Furnishings
- Hotel
- Internet Retailer
- Jewelry
- Lawn & Garden
- Lighting Stores
- Liquor / Wine
- Lumber Yard
- Marine (Boat, PWC, Marina, etc)
- Motorcycle Dealer
- Music (CD's, Videos, Sheet Music, Instruments)
- Museum
- Office Supplies
- Outdoor Power Equipment (Lawn Mowers, Small Engine, etc)
- Pet Store
- Pharmacy
- Photography (Lab, Cameras, Portrait Studio)
- Pool & Spa
- Powersports (Motorcycle, ATV, PWC, Snowmobile)
- Recreational Vehicles
- Rental
- Restaurant
- Restaurant - Table Service
- Restaurant - Quick Service
- Salon
- Shoes
- Sporting Goods
- Thrift Store
- Toys
- Tractor Parts & Equipment Dealer
- Truck / Heavy Duty Auto
- Video Rental

Now I might have missed a couple industries because this is not an exhaustive list. But hopefully, at this point, you've figured out if you're in the right place or not. If you have a question about your specific type of business, just drop me an email: jeff@possoftwareguide.com

If you are a large retailer with complicated computer system needs, then this report will be a great start. But you'll probably need a professional consultant to help you select and implement the right computer system.

WARNING: If you get a computer consultant, be careful! All too often retailers get a computer expert that doesn't know a lot about their specific industry. And they end up making a really bad choice. Remember... computer consultants are usually very technical, but not many know about your industry, retail management, point of sale, and what you really need.

So find a consultant that knows more than just computers. You need someone that understands your business, your industry, and point of sale.

What is POS Software and Why is it Commonly Misunderstood?

POS (point of sale) software is used in millions of retail businesses throughout the world. And there are thousands of different POS software programs to choose from...

They range from very simple programs... to extremely advanced programs with thousands of different features designed to streamline operations and improve efficiency. In addition, there are about 30 different vertical markets that software companies have customized their POS software to handle.

The term "POS software" is a little deceptive because most of the POS programs handle MUCH more than just "point of sale" tasks. That's why the term "retail management software" is being used more and more often.

You might see websites and various sources (including my articles) refer to the same software package as:

- POS software
- Point of Sale Software
- Retail Management Software
- Business Management Software
- Dealer Management Software

But don't let this confuse you. They could all be referring to the same type of thing...

The term "POS software" is simply a phrase that software development companies came up with to describe their software.

The problem is that each POS software system can be VERY different! And the software you choose can have a huge impact on the productivity of your business. Before we get into those details, let's start by defining POS software in its simplest form...

POS software is utilized at the physical location at which goods are sold to customers. In other words, POS software takes the place of your cash register.

When using POS software, all sales and transactions are made through your computer. You tell the computer what you're selling, the selling price, and the quantity sold. Then it calculates the total, including tax, and tells you how much change is due. It also records every sale and tracks everything.

Since the computer remembers every sale, it can automate all kinds of tasks for you. For example, it will calculate your sales for the day, your sales tax totals, and tell you how many times you sell an item for a given time period.

This is an example of POS software in its simplest form, but there's a lot more to it...

In fact, POS software can serve as a completely integrated retail management system that will automate all areas of your business. The software might include:

- Point of Sale
- Inventory Control
- Automatic Purchase Order Creation
- Automatic Price Updates
- Bar Code Scanning
- Accounts Receivable
- Accounts Payable
- General Ledger
- Payroll
- Customer Tracking and Follow-Up
- eCommerce / Website Shopping Cart Integration
- Shop Management
- EDI (Electronic Ordering)
- And much, much more!

Many people think that POS software simply tracks your inventory, tracks your books and all POS systems do basically the same thing. **This is a common misconception!** Every POS system has different features, strengths, weaknesses, and intended uses.

These differences can have a huge impact on your business. As you start the evaluation process, you will see these distinct differences.

How Will POS Software Help You?

POS software can give you a massive boost in profits! For example, it can:

- Reduce pricing errors.
- Control “price points” for maximum profits.
- Keep your inventory costs low by reducing dead inventory, and maximizing turns.
- Reduce employee theft.
- Provide instant financial reports that show you exactly where you’re making or losing money.
- Provide critical information so you can make adjustments and maximize profits!

POS software could electrify your marketing!

The single most powerful (and most overlooked) marketing tool is the customer list stored in your POS software! You can get very high response rates by sending your existing customers promotions or sales letters.

In fact, a properly implemented customer follow-up program can be extremely powerful.

- You can send sales letters or promotions to your existing customers.
- You can set up automated mailings to promote customer loyalty. (Drip or nurture marketing is a powerful technique.)
- You can automatically send thank-you letters after large purchases.
- You can view reports and monitor the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. After a recent newspaper ad, did your sales go up? After a special promotion, did your sales go up?

POS software can simplify inventory management. And reduce inventory costs! For example, it can:

- Instantly show you which items are not moving.
- Show your top 20 sellers.
- Track special orders and layaways automatically.

- Show you how often you sell an item by year or month.
- Automatically create purchase orders based on sales history or re-order points.
- Show you precisely where you are overstocked and where you are understocked at any given time.

POS software can dramatically reduce bookkeeping and accounting work!

It can:

- Calculate your monthly sales tax in a few seconds.
- Print monthly statements in minutes.
- Automatically enter sales transactions into your accounts receivables.
- Instantly show you who owes you money.
- Instantly show what you owe and when it's due, so you can control your cash flow.
- Automatically post receipts to the journals and produce monthly financial statements.
- Save hours by letting the computer system enter daily "close-outs" for you.
- Maintain a clear audit trail to ease end of year accounting and reconciliation.
- Automatically post transactions into your general ledger software.

POS software can help you serve your customers fast! And make them happier! You can...

- Speed up check outs and make your customers shopping experience more enjoyable.
- Instantly view past customer purchases.
- Track discounts for individual customers.
- Deliver orders fast by tracking all special orders and layaways.
- Produce clean, crisp and professional invoices or receipts.
- Instantly check your customer's order status on the computer!

- Provide in-house credit to select customers or business accounts. This provides excellent customer service with a proper audit trail.

I could go on forever about all the benefits of POS software, but that's not what this report is about. I simply want you to realize how drastically POS software can increase your profits, save time, and improve your business.

An Introduction to Choosing Retail POS Software

Before you even think about purchasing a POS system you need to stop, read this, and think about what you're doing...

Whether you're replacing your old POS software or starting fresh... why do you want to get a POS system?

Really. Why are you doing this? What is your reasoning?

You certainly should NOT be buying technology just to buy it or because everyone else is doing it. You need to have some VERY good reasons to do the work and effort needed to implement a POS system!

Well...

I hope your answer to the question is...

I'm going to purchase a POS system because I want to make more money!

Or I'm going to purchase a POS system because I want to save time!

That's what this is all about -- making money, saving time, and getting more out of life.

I know this is obvious, but this is what should drive your **entire** evaluation process.

It's not about the technology that the software uses, how it looks, or some crazy formula. It's all about choosing a POS system that will make you the MOST money and save the MOST time possible.

This is a very important realization for you to come to. Whether you have one employee or 1000 employees -- you need to keep this concept in your conscious mind as you're considering every software feature, every aspect of the software company, and every part of the computer system.

Now you have to take what I'm saying with a grain of salt. You don't want to spend a million dollars and put yourself into bankruptcy before you can get going. But I think you get the idea.

So now that you completed the critical step of "beginning with the end (or the goal) in mind", here's the million-dollar question...

How do you find and choose a POS system that will truly make you the most money, save you the most time, and give you the highest return on investment?

I wish the answer were simple. It's not. But I will take you through a proven process and make it as simple as humanly possible.

To get started, you need to ask yourself a question...

How will a POS system help me and my business?

Since you made the effort to read this report, you probably already have some ideas of how a POS system can help. So get those ideas on paper, now! Start building yourself a wish list.

You absolutely must have a thorough wish list to choose the right system.

Because ultimately you'll use this wish list to compare and select a POS system that will give you the highest return on investment.

For example, you might have identified that *the ability to create mailing lists based on type products sold* will be a critical feature to make you more money.

Get those critical features written down. There are MANY, MANY ways a POS system can make you money, but you need to start now and get them all written down and prioritized.

What I mean by prioritized is that you need to prioritize your wish list based on the features that will make you the most money (or save the most time). We'll talk about exactly how to do this later. But for now, I hope you realize that...

Going by your gut simply doesn't cut it. It's impossible to remember and comprehend every feature that you see. You need to make this a logical and systematic decision because the success of your business depends on it!

Now I'm going to give you some tips to help you create a killer wish list in a little bit, but for now I want to point out a few things you need to consider in order to select a POS system that will give you the highest return on investment...

This may seem like a no-brainer, but you'd be amazed by how many retailers make this mistake!

In order to get your biggest ROI, you need a POS system that is reliable!

You can't afford to be messing with a POS system that crashes, loses information, or locks up. Or just as bad, you don't want a POS system that will give incorrect sales totals, reports, and information!

And remember, just because your buddy down the street doesn't have problems with his POS system, that doesn't mean you won't run into problems. Trust me. I've seen this happen countless times. I'm not going to bore you with all the technical reasons right now, but as you go through this you'll start to understand why this happens.

So how do you know if you're getting a truly reliable POS system?

I'm not going to give everything away. But here are a few really important tips:

Your POS software absolutely MUST use a reliable database.

What is a database? To put it simply, a database is the program that stores all the information you accumulate on a daily basis. This information includes sales orders,

customer names and addresses, inventory information, configuration information, and much, much more.

The database is really the heart of the software program. Now what you might not realize is that VERY few POS software developers create their own database.

When software developers start creating POS software, they usually choose a database that is created by someone else. For example, Microsoft, Oracle and Borland all create databases that they offer to software developers.

There are hundreds of different databases used by various POS software programs. So I can't make a list of them all, but I will give you the fundamental information you need in order to get a good database.

First of all, databases can be divided into two categories -- desktop databases and server databases. And it's important for you to understand the differences.

Desktop Databases

Desktop databases are generally inexpensive solutions used in single user and small network environments.

They earn their name by virtue of the fact that they are designed to run on "desktop" (or personal) computers. You're probably familiar with a few of these products already - Microsoft Access, FoxPro, FileMaker Pro, Paradox and Lotus Approach are the major players.

The biggest limitation (that you should be concerned about) is desktop databases generally only allow one concurrent user to open the database.

Attempting to use a desktop database in a multi-user environment can sometimes lead to problems - like data corruptions and errors. Generally speaking, if more than one person will be modifying the data, you might have problems that require maintenance.

Now this doesn't mean you shouldn't use a desktop database. If you have a single user or small network and it will stay that way, you might be better off with some of the more affordable POS systems using desktop databases. You'll probably never know the difference.

In fact, over the last several years, desktop databases have become more powerful and better at handling networks. And if the POS software developer did a good job of writing their code, certain desktop databases can be very reliable.

There are plenty of businesses that push their desktop database limits on 5, 10, or sometimes even 30-plus user networks. They just learn to live with the occasional database corruptions, which can almost always be fixed by running a maintenance utility.

However, in a perfect world, everyone using a multi-user network would use a server-based database.

Server Databases

If you have a multi-user network, server databases can provide many benefits.

Now I could easily write an entire book about database technologies, but I'm going to make this simple and focus on the things that will be important to you...

The number one most important reason for you to consider a server database is reliability.

Server databases are very reliable because all the database transactions are verified and completed by the server. For example, if you're in the middle of an order and your POS workstation loses power or gets accidentally turned off, you won't corrupt the data. With a desktop database, there's a good chance you'll have a data corruption.

In addition to reliability, these databases are very efficient and scalable - meaning they can quickly process a large number of transactions. So if your business grows, your database will probably be able to handle it.

Now you might be wondering why everyone doesn't use this technology. The answer is usually (but not always) price.

Some server databases can be expensive. However in recent years new (and more affordable) server databases have become available for you. In fact, some of them are free!

The other problem with server databases is that some require tuning. So you need to find out if you have to do any work to maintain the database.

Examples of server databases include Oracle, Microsoft SQL, Firebird, MySQL, IBM's DB2, Postgres, Ingres and Sybase systems.

I know this technical stuff is boring, but you need to be informed to make good decisions. Hang in there! ☺

Here are just a few more quick tips to help you choose a reliable database:

- **Get some proof.** To get an idea if a database is reliable you should talk to other people using the software. You need to find people that: have used the software for at least 1 year (the longer the better), have multiple computers networked, and process lots of transactions at the same time.

Once you find a good reference to talk with ask them, "Have you had any problems? Do you ever get data corruptions? Do you have to run database maintenance?"

- **Self tuning & maintaining databases are good.** Some of the server databases (like Firebird) are self tuning and maintaining - meaning you get reliability without having to do any work.

- **ODBC compliance is a nice thing.** If you're computer savvy, this allows you to connect to the database and pull out the information. So you can create your own reports, sort data in Excel, and more.
- **Ask me!** If you're not sure about a particular database, drop me an email at jeff@possoftwareguide.com I don't know about every database in the world. But if I know anything about the one you're looking at, I'll tell you the good and the bad.

I know this technical part is not much fun. Just hang with me - it gets more interesting. And remember your goal -- which is to save time and make as much money as possible.

5 Tips for Choosing the Right POS Software

Now before we get too deep into this process, I want to give you a few tips:

Tip #1 - Choose Software First

I can't tell you how many times I've heard a retailer say, "I just bought new computers and printers and I have everything ready to go. Now I need to find POS software."

These retailers could have saved a lot of time and money by selecting POS software first!

Why?

- **Your POS software will have hardware and operating system requirements.** For example, most software will require a certain version of Windows, Unix, Linux or MAC. In addition, each program may only function with certain types of printers, scanners, cash drawers and card readers.
- **If you install your computer system first, you will limit your POS software choices.** The POS system that you choose is very important. It will have the huge impact on the efficiency of your business! The perfect fit for your 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.

Tip #2 - Buy From One Source

If you buy hardware and software from different companies you could run into some frustrating situations.

For example, when you have a problem and call for support, the "blame game" could begin. The software company will blame the hardware company, the hardware company will blame the computer company, and the computer company will blame the software company.

I've seen this happen too many times. It's usually best to buy your hardware and software from one source. You might pay a little more overall, but it's worth it if you have a problem. Plus they can pre-configure the computer system and save you time!

Tip #3 - Look for Industry Specific Software

If you learn one thing from this report, I hope you learn how important it is to look

for software that's tailored for your industry...

Why is this **SO** important?

Every retailer has very different needs. For example...

- An apparel store needs a special "matrixing" feature so they can track various colors and sizes. Not all POS systems have this feature and it saves an unbelievable amount of time. This is a MUST have feature for clothing stores.
- A motorcycle parts & service retailer needs in depth work order features, integration to Parts Catalog systems and much more. These industry specific features can literally save 1 to 50 hours a day, depending on the size of business.
- Some retailers have specific eCommerce / website needs. This can be a big time saver.
- A building materials retailer needs to receive inventory by the "board foot". Their POS could not run efficiently without this.
- And the list goes on and on...

Another problem is that some POS software companies claim to work for almost any business. They're probably right. The software will work. But you'll probably miss out on a lot of "time saving" and "profit generating" features.

The trick is to find POS systems that are actually designed for your vertical market.

It's also very important to find a POS system that is used by other retailers like you. So if there's a special new feature that you need for your industry, the POS developer is more likely to make the change (because hundreds of other users will benefit from the same feature).

If you're part of a small group, they probably won't listen to your requests!

Don't over look this concept! Tip #3 is one of the most important steps to avoiding mistakes and getting your highest return on investment. If you skipped over the info above, then go back and read it again.

So how do you find software packages that target your industry?

You can start by looking at trade shows, trade magazines and the internet. Or if you'd like to save time, you can use a tool that I created called the *POS Quick Search*. It includes a list of over 290 top POS systems that can be searched for by industry, features supported, and more...

Take a look and see how it works by clicking here:

<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/demo-pos-software-search.asp>

Tip #4 - Buy Name Brand

Many computers will have a 1 - 3 year warranty and possibly on-site service. Your POS hardware (receipt printers, cash drawers, etc) typically have a 1 year warranty.

To avoid issues with your warranty, it's best to buy everything name brand. If the company you bought from goes out of business, you still have full support from the manufacturers.

Tip #5 - Don't Forget the Miscellaneous Items

When you're reviewing and comparing price quotes you need to consider the miscellaneous items. They can quickly add up! Some POS companies will include everything and others will leave certain items out of their quote.

Here's a checklist of items that you'll need to consider:

- Training fees
- Support fees
- Software update / maintenance fees
- Data conversion fees
- Receipt printers
- Barcode scanners
- Reports printers
- Cash drawers
- Surge protectors
- Battery backups (UPS)
- Tape backup system
- Cables for printers, computers, and your network
- Network hubs
- Internet access routers for shared internet access
- Paper - Thermal paper, pre-preprinted invoices, plain paper, etc.

4 Common Mistakes to Avoid

Just as helpful, it's important for you to learn about some common mistakes before you get too far. Here are few mistakes that I see retailers making over and over again:

Mistake #1 - Asking the Wrong People

Retailers often ask a local computer consultant for suggestions about POS software. Computer consultants are great sources for information about computers, hardware, and networking, but 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.

Mistake #2 - Not Focusing on the Character of the Software Company

This part is extremely important! Read this entire section.

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'll rely on the software company to supply updates, training, technical support, and possibly hardware.

Consider these all too common scenarios...

- What if the software company went out of business? (Dozens of POS software companies come and go every year!)
- What if you can't print and it takes six hours to get help from a support technician?
- What if they don't give you software updates when you need them?
- What if the software has a bug and they don't fix it?
- What if it takes 2 days to get your technical questions answered?
- What if they didn't give you sufficient training? And as a result, your sales reports are showing the wrong totals!

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.

Just remember... if you want to get a high return on your POS software investment, you need to choose a company that can give you fast and reliable service and support!

Mistake #3 - Passing The Buck

Too many owners give the responsibility of choosing a POS system to an employee or a computer consultant that's not familiar with your industry. The person who evaluates the software must have in-depth knowledge about your business.

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.

POS software is complicated. And it can make a huge difference in the productivity of your business. POS software is too important to pass the evaluation process to someone else!

Mistake #4 - Overlook Important Features That Would Boost Your Profits

Unless you're 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 overlook important features that would save them a lot of time and money!

If you want to avoid this common mistake, it's important for you to create a thorough features wish list.

As I mentioned earlier... it's absolutely critical for you to create a features check-list (or wish list) to figure out which POS system will give you the highest return on investment (even if you're a small retailer).

So How Do You Create a Thorough Wish List?

- 1) The first thing you need to do is just start writing down all the features that are important to you.
- 2) The next thing I suggest is to choose a couple popular POS systems designed for your business. Then get demonstrations from the sales reps. As they're showing what the software can do, write down all the features that you think are important.

3) Then you need to organize all the features in one single document and prioritize them. To figure out which features are important, just ask yourself: How much time and money will this feature save me?

4) Once you have the list complete and prioritized, you can use the wish list to compare each top POS system that you're evaluating.

Here's another (much easier) way to create your wish list and compare POS systems...

Actually, the easiest way to learn how to create a wish list is by looking at one that I created. Or even better yet, use the same one that I do:

First, you can look at our *POS Quick Search* tool. This tool includes 68 key differentiating software features. We strategically chose those 68 features to make it easy for almost any retailer quickly narrow down their choices. Take a look at the key features to see if any of them are important to you:

<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/demo-pos-software-search.asp>

Second, for a bigger list of features and more ideas, browse through our *POS Comparison Template and Feature Checklist*. This Excel template (with 459 categorized features) is included with our [buyers guide](#), but you can see how it works here:

<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/pos-comparison-chart3.html>

Putting it All Together with an Overview of the Selection Process

Now this report includes some great information to get you started and it's extremely valuable in itself. If this report alone saves you from making some critical mistakes then I'm extremely happy about that!

But the fact of the matter is that I specifically created *The POS Software Buyers Guide* to take you through the entire selection process. It includes everything you need to find and choose the best POS software for your business...

Just to give you an idea, here's a basic overview of your selection process and some of the tools included with the *buyers guide*:

Step/Component #1: Start by reading my *e-book* (included with the [buyers guide](#)) that shows you step-by-step exactly what you need to do to avoid mistakes and find the best POS system for your business.

Step/Component #2: Use the [POS Quick Search](#) to easily create a "short list" of the top POS systems designed specifically for your type of retail business. The database includes over 290 POS and Retail Management Systems for you to search through.

You can literally sort through hundreds of software choices and narrow things down to just handful in just a few minutes. This tool will save you an enormous amount of time!

You can search for POS software by their:

- o Type of business targeted
- o Size of business targeted
- o 68 key differentiating software features
- o Operating system supported
- o Database supported
- o Geographic location supported (U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe, etc)

Step/Component #3: After you narrow down to your top 3 to 5 software choices you can use the side-by-side comparison tool built into the [POS Quick Search](#). You can also plug features into the more in-depth *POS Comparison Template* to do a more thorough comparison -- so you don't miss anything important and you can figure out which software system will give you the highest return on investment!

Step/Component #4: Read about each software program in the *POS Software Reviews* section. This allows you to read stories from real and unbiased retailers that tell you about their POS software experiences (both good and bad). This helps you avoid mistakes, determine the reliability of the software, and learn about the type of service and support that you will receive. There are over 340 reviews from a variety of different businesses in this section.

Step/Component #5: Once you choose your POS system it's time to get your hardware and computer system in order. With the *Insiders Guide to POS Hardware*

and *Retail Computer Systems* you'll learn how to choose POS hardware and get a reliable computer system up and running.

Step/Component #6: If you need more help, you can get FREE email consulting from me. You can get the inside scoop and get your difficult questions answered.

Step/Component #7: Access to our retail subscriber community. Not only can you post questions in our free forum but many of the *POS Software Reviews* include private messaging links where you can ask other retailers specific questions about their software experiences before you make your choice.

Well, that's a quick summary of what's included in *The POS Software Buyers Guide*. If you're interested, you can learn more here:

<http://www.possoftwareguide.com>

More Questions and a Great Free Resource...

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to drop me an email or post your question on our **FREE Retail Community Forum**:

<http://www.possoftwareguide.com/forum>

To Your Success!

Jeff Haefner

jeff@possoftwareguide.com