



Pharmacy Point of Sale Buyer's Guide

The Answers to 5 Questions You Should be Asking
Before Purchasing Your POS Software

Today's retail pharmacies face a variety of business challenges. Consumers are increasingly growing accustomed to easy and convenient retail experiences and expect the same at your pharmacy. Concerns over data security and regulatory compliance continue to grow, and competition is increasing — even from department stores and e-commerce sites — driving margins down.

One valuable asset that can help you navigate the changing independent pharmacy landscape is an industry-specific point of sale (POS) system. POS designed for retail pharmacies can enhance customer experiences with fast, accurate and efficient service, helping to build customer loyalty. Beyond its benefits to customer-facing activities, pharmacy POS software is also a time-saving management tool that can accurately update records in real time with each purchase.

It can be a challenge, however, to sort through all of your POS system options to find the best choice for your business — today and in the future. Here are five questions to ask that will help you narrow your choices and invest in a POS system that will provide your business with the functionality and ROI you need.

QUESTION 1:

Is this POS software designed specifically for retail pharmacies?

Many POS software companies claim to offer a solution that can be used in any industry, but pharmacies have unique point of sale requirements. Purchasing a one-size-fits-all solution will not provide your business with industry-specific features such as online ordering and inventory management capabilities that result from integration with wholesalers or distributors like McKesson or Kohl & Frisch. POS software designed specifically for pharmacies can save countless hours ensuring inventory is properly stocked and prices are accurately updated.

U.S. pharmacies also need software that supports regulatory compliance including controlled substance tracking, and a variety of payment options, including FSA card approval.

Also choose software that is easy for your employees to use and that offers the functionality your business needs such as:

- Generating signs and labels
- Mobile POS
- Loyalty and gift cards
- Charge Account Management
- Rx Reporting

QUESTION 2:

Will this POS software integrate with my pharmacy management system (PMS)?

POS integration with your PMS software, such as Kroll or McKesson PharmaClik Rx, means faster service for customers. Scanning a barcode on a prescription means information is automatically transferred to the transaction, saving time and eliminating the chance for errors. Customers can complete purchases more quickly and without having to wait while your staff enters data on multiple screens.

POS-PMS integration also means deeper visibility into your business, with data that provides a total view of your operation and allows you to make better decisions.

QUESTION 3:

Does this POS software have the right security features for pharmacies?

In addition to unique functionalities, pharmacy POS systems also need to have iron-clad security features. Not only does it need to comply with Payment Application Data Security Standards (PA-DSS) to protect payment card data, but it also must be designed to protect patient health information.

A data breach that occurs at a pharmacy can result in loss of critical data or access to sensitive information that can have catastrophic implications to your business. Ensure your POS software will protect your customers' data — and your business.

Ask the software vendor if they are listed on the PCI Standards Council website at:

www.pcisecuritystandards.org/security_standards/vpa/

If they are not, consider a provider that has been fully audited.

QUESTION 4:

Can this POS software scale with my business?

It's wise to invest in a point of sale system that meets your needs today and can scale to meet your needs in the future. Selecting a system that limits your options to grow or add functionality could mean significant expenses when your needs change.

Look for POS software that is flexible and can grow with your business. Software that is modular based can make it easy to add new features as business requirements change. Also, consider a system that can support multiple locations and communicate product, pricing and promotional updates from store to store. The solution should have options that allow you to implement customer loyalty or charging programs across multiple sites, or offer flexible web-based reporting to mobile devices.

QUESTION 5:

What value does the POS software provider offer my business?

A smart POS system purchasing decision looks beyond the technology itself to also evaluate the provider. Learn as much as you can about the POS software vendor such as whether they provide installation, training, upgrades and ongoing support.

Request references or case studies that provide insights into the vendor's experience and success providing POS software to independent pharmacy. Ask how often the vendor updates or provides product enhancements to keep up with industry demands.

Ensure you have a thorough understanding of all fees involved with the software. Some systems have low upfront costs, but charge for on-site training and upgrades or have higher fees than their competitors for support, integration, or credit card processing. "FREE" POS Solutions often come with surprise cancellation fees and hidden costs that add up quickly.

The time spent vetting pharmacy POS software options will provide return in the form of greater operational efficiencies, accuracy and profits. Make sure you ask these questions for a clearer picture of the options on the market and the choices that are right for your business.

The team at Auto-Star, with decades of experience working with independent pharmacies, is ready to answer your questions and discuss your POS software options.