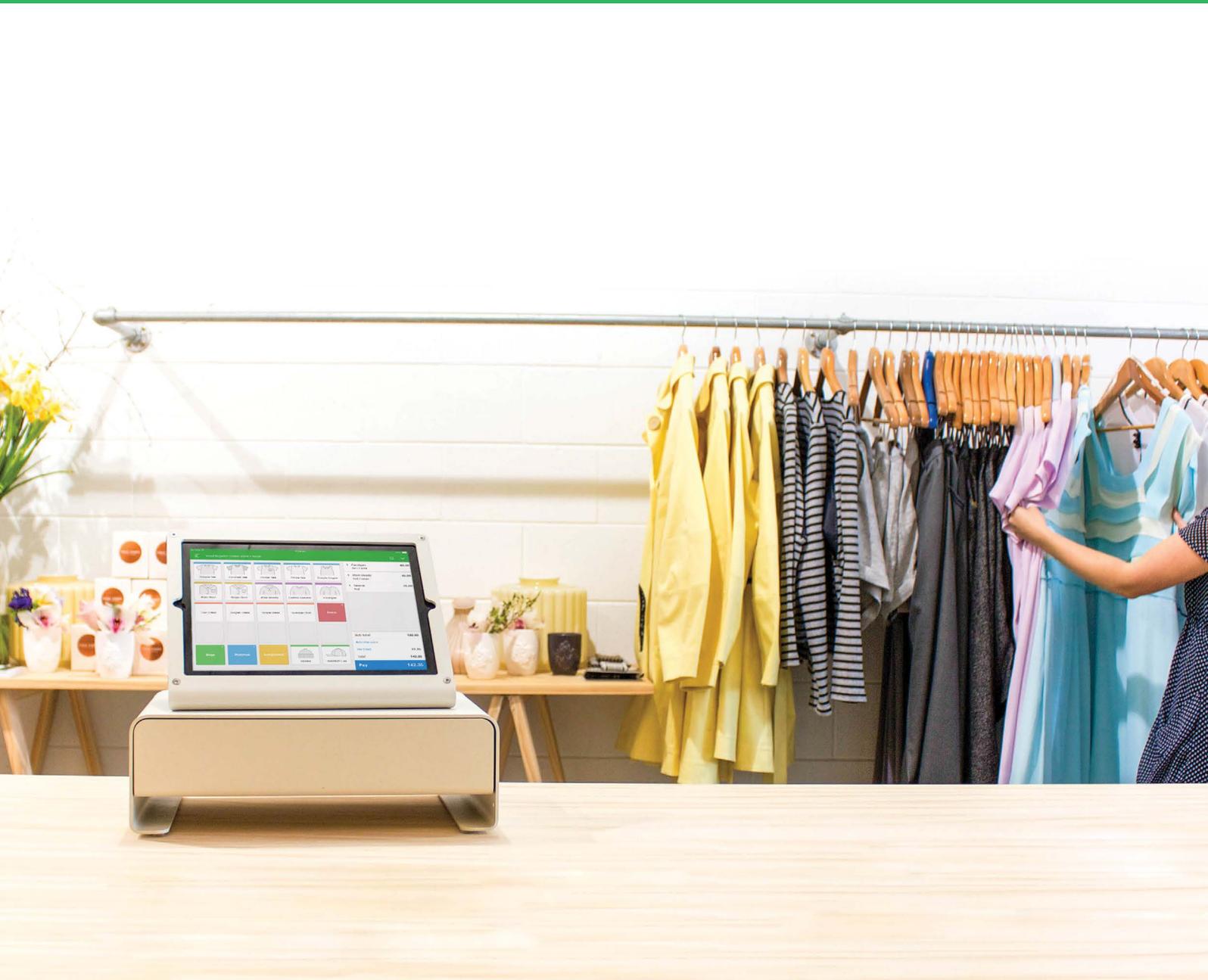




Vend point of sale buyers guide.

7 essential steps to choosing the right point of sale system in 2017.



Contents

Introduction	3
.....	
Step 1 - Figure out what you want and need	4
.....	
Step 2 - Take note of the required hardware	6
.....	
Step 3 - Determine your budget	8
.....	
Step 4 - Research, audit, and compare POS systems	10
.....	
Step 5 - See the POS in action	12
.....	
Step 6 - Get the set-up right for you	14
.....	
Step 7 - Get the most out of your POS system	16
.....	
Your Move	18
.....	
About Vend	19

Introduction.

A point-of-sale solution is one of the most important sidekicks a retailer can have. Aside from enabling you to accept and process payments, a POS system (a good one, anyway) lets you sync, track, and manage virtually every aspect of your business—from your inventory and sales to your customer data—all from one program.

The right solution can simplify how you run your business, make information easier to find, and minimize mistakes. It also enables you to better serve customers and enhance their shopping experience, thus building loyalty in the process.

A POS system, in short, can be a whole lot of awesome. That's why you need to take some time finding and vetting the right one for you. And this guide will help you do that. It covers all the essentials in the POS selection process and walks you through what you need to know to get set up.

So let's get started and find the right POS for you.



01

Figure out what you want and need.

Just like when you're looking for a partner, your search for a suitable POS system becomes immensely easier if you know what you want. That's why the first step in your POS-hunting journey is to identify all the features, functions, and services that you use to run your business, and put them on paper so you can reference to your list when you're comparing different solutions.

That's what the team at fashion and gift store [Rethreaded](#) did when they were looking for a new point-of-sale system.

"We built a spreadsheet, and in it we listed all the things we needed in a POS system, such as inventory features, customer relationship management capabilities, Quickbooks Online integration, the ability to manage multiple stores, and more,"

Kristin Keen, Founder at Rethreaded

Doing so enabled the Rethreaded team to easily evaluate different solutions and allowed them to quickly zero in on the ones that they could use in their business.

Action Steps

- ✓ Write down the features, functions and services required in the following aspects:



PAYMENTS

Accepting and processing cash, credit, debit, checks, etc.



CUSTOMERS

How customer information is stored, managed, and updated.



INVENTORY

How product information is added, monitored, and updated.

- ✓ Write down any special needs that your business may have now and in the future, including:



SEVERAL LOCATION



COUPONS



E-COMMERCE SITE



REWARDS PROGRAMS



MOBILE

- ✓ Take note of problems or missing features that you have with your existing system and find solutions that can address them.
- ✓ Talk to your employees and ask for recommendations.

02

Take note of the required hardware.

You need to work out what you need to make your POS work. Some systems require you to buy hardware, others operate on your existing equipment, others just need an iPad or laptop.

✓	—	14
✓	—	834
✗	—	30
✓	—	108
✗	—	306

Itemize the equipment that you need in your store. Be sure to include the number of units required for each piece of hardware. Consult the checklist in this guide to get a rundown of the equipment and tick off the ones that apply to your business.

Already have existing hardware and equipment in place? Write down each item's brand and model for future reference when looking up various POS systems to see if they're compatible.

Hardware was a huge factor when [Muscle Worx](#), one of Australia's leading and fastest growing sports nutrition outlets, was looking for a new POS system.

“The last thing we wanted was to have to buy a new computer system,” shares General Manager Nina Silic. “We have PCs in all our stores, and the fact that Vend worked with Google Chrome was fantastic, because we didn’t have to change any of our hardware.”

Nina Silic, General Manager

On the flip side, you may also want to consider the equipment that you can do without. For example, some retailers choose to send receipts via email instead of issuing physical copies, eliminating the need for a receipt printer, while others are trading in their computers for iPads or laptops.

Consider Gregory, a New Zealand-based fashion brand that switched to Vend's POS system partly because they wanted to get rid of unwieldy equipment. According to Ron Tenenbaum, Gregory's IT Manager, they wanted a system that would "operate in an agnostic OS environment and also retire a lot of bulky hardware."

They came across Vend, saw that it met their hardware needs (among other things), and took it from there.

Action Steps

- ✓ Take some time to think about the hardware you need in your store, then take note of their brand and model. Itemize them and refer to this list when checking for POS system compatibility. Some of the things you can add to your list include:

Terminal (PC / Mac / Mobile)	<u>Apple iPad</u> BRAND / MODEL	<u>10</u> NO. UNITS
Receipt Printer	_____ BRAND / MODEL	_____ NO. UNITS
Cash Drawer	_____ BRAND / MODEL	_____ NO. UNITS
MSR/Payment Terminal	_____ BRAND / MODEL	_____ NO. UNITS
Barcode Scanner	_____ BRAND / MODEL	_____ NO. UNITS

03

Determine your budget.

How much should you spend on your new POS system? That depends on the size of your business and the capabilities you require. Generally speaking though, you're better off spending your money on a cloud-based POS software-as-a-service (SAAS) solution, rather than traditional cash registers or legacy systems.

Prices for modern POS solutions start anywhere from free, to hundreds of dollars a month, making them less expensive than traditional point-of-sale systems, which can cost several thousands of dollars.

[Shoes Feet Gear](#), a running shoes store in Australia, for instance, used to have a ten thousand dollar system prior to switching to a cloud-based POS.

“We had a \$10,000 software package and needed to integrate stock control with our point-of-sale and online store,” shares owner Peter Charles. According to him, getting the system to work with their ecommerce storefront was difficult and was going to cost around \$5,000. This prodded him to search for a less expensive solution.

“We then discovered Vend, and we were able to integrate it with our online store and input all our products, and just spend about a hundred dollars a month.”

Peter Charles, Owner

Ready to start shopping for a modern POS system? You'll need to take count of a few things. Cloud-based solutions usually implement tiered pricing models, wherein the costs will vary depending on factors like the number of stores, customers, products, registers, and more. You'll need to account for these things when calculating your costs to accurately budget for the software.

For example, Vend's Starter plan costs \$59 a month and includes one free register. Additional registers can be added at a cost of \$35 per register, per month. So if a retail store has two registers, their cost breakdown will be:

Base fee	\$59
1 additional register	\$35
<hr/>	
Total monthly cost:	\$94

Action Steps

- ✓ Take note of the following components in your store, then consult this list when calculating your POS costs:

Products	<u>120</u> NO. UNITS
Customers	<u>80</u> NO. UNITS
Stores	<u>6</u> NO. UNITS
Users	<u>68</u> NO. UNITS

04 Research, audit, and compare POS systems.

If POS shopping were a game show, this is the part where you would phone a friend or ask the audience.

While Google can certainly be a great starting point when looking up POS solutions, don't rely on it alone. Head to LinkedIn and start discussions on relevant groups to get feedback and recommendations.

Talk to fellow merchants about their POS system and ask how it's working for them. Many retailers have discovered great solutions for their businesses simply by looking at what other stores are using.



Check out the story of Luminosa, a beauty retailer who switched from a manual pen-and-paper system to Vend. According to owner Ellie Burgoyne, she first came across the software at a coffee shop. "I noticed that they put the transaction through an iPad and I thought that was really cool. So I asked them about it, and that's when I started doing my research," she recalls.

You may also want to get help from your staff or colleagues when searching for POS options. Take Rethreaded, for example. According to Kristin, they had a team of people looking at various systems and they used several research methods to find potential solutions. Some of the steps they took included doing online searches, looking at print publications and ads, and seeking advice from their professional network.

Regardless of how you do your research, be sure to take note of all potential POS solutions you come across. Bookmark their site for easy reference, write them down on your feature list or spreadsheet, then set up a process to easily compare your options.

Action Steps

- ✓ **Go into research mode and find potential POS solutions for your store. Be sure to tap into the following sources:**
 - Google
 - Social media (LinkedIn Groups in particular)
 - Online and print publications
 - Other retailers

- ✓ **Visit vendor websites and give them a call to inquire about their features and services. Be sure to obtain the following information:**
 - Features and functionality of their solution
 - Location
 - Areas of expertise
 - Business hours
 - Customer support method and hours (i.e. web, email, phone, etc.)
 - Warranty information

- ✓ **Remember all the features you listed in step 1? Put all that info in a spreadsheet along with the POS systems that you're considering, then evaluate your choices accordingly.**

05

See the POS in action.

You know what the POS systems are all about on paper, now it's time to see them in action.

To do this, you can request for local references from the POS vendors you're considering and ask those retailers if you can see how their system works first hand. Can't get in touch with other businesses? Go the DIY route and ask for a free trial. Most POS vendors let customers try their software for free, so they can see it in action.

Keep an eye out for speed, functionality, and user-friendliness for each POS solution. Can you see it getting along with you, your employees, and your customers? Also think about how you will transition to the new POS. How does the process of transferring data about customers, products, suppliers, etc. work?

Note that you don't have to do all the testing yourself. Consider other people who'll be using the software (cashiers, managers, bookkeepers) and let them take it for a spin as well.

Rethreaded did just that when they were testing POS systems. After evaluating various solutions on paper, they narrowed down their options to two point-of-sale programs (one of which was Vend), and had their bookkeeper trial both of them.

"Ultimately we chose Vend because we saw that it was easy to use, integrated well with our accounting software, and did a great job in keeping up with us at Rethreaded."

Kristin Keen, Founder at Rethreaded

Action Steps

- ✓ Request potential POS vendors for local references,
- ✓ Get in touch with these businesses, then ask if you can swing by their stores to see the software in action.
- ✓ Trial the solutions yourself. Observe the following:

		<i>Company A</i>	<i>Company B</i>
Speed	✓	✓	✗
User - Friendliness	✓	✗	✗
Interface	✓	✓	✓
Functionality	✓	✓	✓
Intergrations	✓	✗	✓

06

Get the set up right for you.

You've chosen a POS vendor and you already have all the necessary software and equipment in front of you. Now it's time to set up your new system and get everything up and running.

You don't want to go in blind. Before diving into the procedure, you may want to check your vendor's help page or manual and learn about the process from start to finish so you know what to expect, what materials, equipment, and info to prepare, and how much time to set aside for the task.

Or better yet, have a talk with the support team and ask if they can give you a demo of the process. This will enable you and your POS solution to get off on the right foot.

Just ask Ellie at Luminosa, who received some POS set-up lessons prior to getting started. "When I initially signed up, someone contacted me and we did a training session over the phone. They walked me through everything and showed me how to do tasks using a virtual store," she says. That training proved to be helpful and enabled Ellie set-up her POS system properly.

Another option is to have someone set up your system for you. Established POS vendors usually have networks of IT consultants and SMEs that can help customers implement their new solution. Find someone in your area and ask them to give you a hand.

Muscle Worx chose this route when they set up their POS system. They sought help from a local Vend partner and together, they got everything up and running. "I worked with one of their team members and we did it store by store," recalls Nina. "We came in and set everything up, then we made sure that hardware was working, the receipts printed, and the processes were set up with how we run our business."

Action Steps

- ✓ Get in touch with your POS vendor and see if they can teach and demonstrate the set-up process.

- ✓ From there figure how much time to set aside and prepare the equipment and information you need for the process. These could include:
 - Necessary hardware and software
 - CSV files of your inventory and customer information

- ✓ Plug in the hardware and install the necessary software

- ✓ If you need further assistance, get in touch with a certified IT or technology partner

07

Get the most out of your POS system.

After you get your POS solution up and running (give yourself a pat on the back for that, by the way) you can move on to the next step, which is to supercharge your point-of-sale system.

While POS systems are mainly used for sales and inventory, most modern solutions enable you to do so much more. Your job is to figure out those capabilities and use them to your advantage. Look into extra features, add-ons, or hardware that can enhance your POS and make your life easier. Are you making full use of the system? Re-evaluate and see if there are capabilities that can help you save time, do more, and better understand your business.

Consider Ellie at Luminosa, who not only uses Vend as a POS, but also takes advantage of the software's reporting and loyalty features.

"I love that I can view income and product reports. I also like how it calculates my taxes and everything, because I didn't have that ability before," she adds.

"I also love the reports on customer spend because they enable me to identify my best clients so I can show my appreciation. I set up a loyalty program using Vend, where customers get \$1 for every \$50 they spend."

Ellie Burgoyne, Owner

Ellie also implements a tiered (i.e. Bronze, Silver, Gold) program. Since she can view reports on customer spend, she's able to offer rewards based on how much people have spent with her.

Take a leaf out of Ellie's playbook and see how you can make the most out of your POS system.

You should also work on building a great relationship with your provider. Don't just contact them to seek technical help. Inquire about any free resources that they have for their customers. Do they conduct trainings or seminars? Perhaps they can send you free whitepapers or online courses. The knowledge that you stand to gain by availing of your vendor's resources can go a long way in your business

Action Steps

- ✓ Evaluate and see if you are making full use of your POS system's features
- ✓ Talk to your employees and see how they like it
- ✓ Talk to your customers and get their feedback
- ✓ Check out possible apps or hardware that can improve your POS
- ✓ Speak to your vendor and talk to them about possible enhancements to your system
- ✓ Ask your vendor about training programs, seminars, publications, and other resources

Your move.

Although this may seem a lot to take in, the benefits of getting the right POS for you are more than worth it. A good POS will save you time, money, and will let you know more about how your business is doing so you can make better decisions. And all this of course allows you to spend more time looking after your customers and growing your bottom line.

There you have it! By now you should have a solid idea of what it takes to choose the right point of sale system. If you're looking for a solution that can help you grow your retail business, [sign up for a free 30-day trial](#) of Vend and see how it can help you future-proof your store.

Good luck!

About Vend.

Vend is a cloud-based retail software platform that enables retailers to accept payments, manage their inventories, reward customer loyalty and garner insights into their business in real time. Vend is simple to set up, works with a wide range of point-of-sale devices and operates on any web-capable device with a browser.

Whether it's simplifying the inventory process, cutting 30 minutes from their end-of-day bookkeeping or making it simpler for them to sell their products on multiple channels, Vend's mission is to make retailers' lives easier.

With Vend, retailers are able to focus less on transaction and inventory concerns and more on creating that relationship with their customers. Vend aims to empower merchants by putting the right data and tools into retailers' hands and enabling them to do things themselves – and succeed.



Run the worlds best retail
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