

The Point of Sale Features that Improve Retail Customer Experiences

Historically successful brick-and-mortar stores are facing stiff competition — online retailers with rock bottom pricing, disruptive technology, and evolving consumer behaviors have transformed the way people shop and compare products. Add news reports on retail mainstays shuttering stores and downsizing their workforces, and it's enough to make any business owner worry.

The path to a retail purchase is no longer a straightforward trip to the store because “the store” now encompasses a retailer’s physical location, website, smartphone app and multiple other ways a shopper can engage with a brand. It’s not enough for retailers to conduct business as usual — you have to work harder to provide customer experiences that draw foot traffic and build loyalty. People want to have comfortable, personalized experiences that combine the ease of online shopping with the perks of an in-store experience.

With retailers looking for ways to meet today’s consumer demands, make sure you don’t overlook the features of a point of sale (POS) system that can help you create shopping experiences that will help you build shopper loyalty.

6 Ways the Right POS System Can Improve In-Store Customer Experiences

1 Short lines, fewer mistakes

A POS system that processes transactions quickly helps prevent lines from becoming too long and unmanageable. Intuitive touchscreen POS can also make the checkout process quicker and ensure accuracy. A complicated system that requires a lot of clicks between screens, multiple steps to complete a sale or too many peripherals means extra time spent on each transaction and more potential for mistakes. When you evaluate POS systems for your business, choose a solution that allows employees to complete a sale or assist customers in as few steps as possible.

2 Access to more information

Inventory counts change with each transaction, so it's important to have access to real-time data. A POS system's inventory management function can also be an invaluable tool when a customer is looking for a specific item to purchase. By scanning a barcode shelf label or looking up the SKU in the computer, you can see whether the item is in stock — without having to leave the customer's side to rummage around in the stockroom or to search the sales floor. A multistore chain can use its POS system's inventory management capabilities to determine which stores have the item available and arrange for shipping.

A POS system can also help sales associates to upsell and help you make effective offers. By accessing customer histories, your staff can have insight into customer's buying habits and make personalized suggestions for additional purchases.

Shoppers are more apt to respond to relevant offers, so look for a POS system with an integrated CRM module. This technology can help you collect data that allows you to segment your marketing list and send offers based on shopping frequency as well as what customers bought or ordered. You can make recommendations based on their past purchases or send them coupons and incentives to come into the store if they haven't visited within a certain timeframe.

3 In-aisle — or anywhere in the store — assistance

It's frustrating for customers to finish their shopping trip, only to be faced with a long line that doesn't seem to move. Mobile POS gives you a practical, long-term line busting solution that empowers employees to quickly set up an additional checkout during sales, holiday shopping time and other high-volume periods — or process transactions anywhere in the store. Mobile POS systems are used effectively in many major retailers like Nordstrom and Tiffany & Co., where staffers carry mobile devices to process purchases on the sales floor.

Mobile POS also means you can establish more engaging shopping experiences. Retailers may remove some of their traditional cash wraps and rearrange their sales floors to showcase new products, must-have items, or seasonal offers. Mobile POS can also become a part of the sales process, equipping sales associates with all the tools they need to guide a customer through the buying process and then finalize the sale right at the point of decision.

4 Secure payment

When you are upgrading your retail POS system, make sure you provide your customers with the flexibility to pay how they want. Beyond traditional payment methods, future-proof your POS system with technologies such as near field communication (NFC) so you can accept payments from mobile wallets like Apple Pay, Android Pay, and Samsung Pay. Also ensure you can easily issue and process gift cards and securely manage cash. Also make sure your new system is EMV-compliant. With the U.S. migration to EMV technology well underway, your customers are more likely to have chip cards and expect your business to accept them. Meet their expectations while protecting your business: If your stores cannot process chip cards, your businesses can be held liable for the amount of transactions at the point of sale made with fraudulent cards.

5 E-Commerce integration

To efficiently run your omnichannel business you need a system that integrates both in-store and online operations. Integration helps you provide consistent customer experiences, regardless of how shoppers engage with you. It also allows you to collect and analyze data from all channels for greater visibility into your business and deeper insights into customer behaviors. The e-commerce interface should include a variety of tools that sync inventory levels, customer and shipping information and sales reports for the online and retail stores.

Customers appreciate an omnichannel approach that allows them to use multiple channels for a purchase such as buy online pickup in store. Integrated systems also make it possible for employees and shoppers to see inventory updates in real time — so they always have the most accurate information on where items are available.

6 Loyalty Management

Rewards programs are a smart strategy to build customer loyalty. Your POS system can track customers' buying habits and enable you to issue coupons or loyalty points. An integrated CRM and loyalty program is a goldmine of data about shoppers' buying habits, frequency of their visits or loyalty to certain brands or products. Customer loyalty can be hard to earn and even harder to hang on to, so gathering this information will help you create more meaningful marketing campaigns based on buying activity and reward repeat customers automatically. Customers are more likely to return to your store if they feel they are being rewarded for buying items they need anyway, even if they can get it online or at another store for less.

Upgrading Your POS? Don't Skimp on Customer Experience Capabilities

Thinking about a new POS system or upgrading what you already have? Make a clear list of needs and wants including the number of terminals, payment types, and which peripherals are necessary for your business. Don't compromise on the features you need to be competitive in today's retail landscape in exchange for a less expensive system. Choose a POS system that fits your needs today as well as gives you flexibility to meet future goals.

Reviews other retailers have given the system can be helpful as you evaluate your options. Also request a demo so you and members of your staff can try the system and assess how it could play a role in your customer-centric retail strategy.

Insist on Excellent Customer Service

You deserve the same high level of customer service you give your own customers. A part of your buying decision should be evaluating the POS solution provider you will work with. Choose a provider with retail experience that you can turn to for advice throughout the process of POS system selection, installation, training and ongoing support. Partner with a POS solution provider that is knowledgeable and responsive so you can rest assured your system will perform as expected and provide you with maximum uptime so you can, in turn, provide excellent experiences for your customers.

In a customer-centric retail world, every decision you make should take into account how it will impact the customer experiences your brand provides. Deciding on a POS system should be no different. Make sure the POS system you choose supports your retail strategy and provides you with the

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ability to craft the types of experiences your customers demand.

A POS dealer with retail industry expertise can guide you through the buying process and recommend a system that helps create high-quality customer experiences while providing the tools needed to manage a profitable, competitive business.

Heartland Commerce has solutions for your retail location. Contact us to learn more about how a POS investment can help make your store a top shopping destination.



About Heartland

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