

FINDING YOUR POS MATCH

How to Link Cash Drawer and Connectivity Options To Business Goals

Introduction

Now that point of sale (POS) solutions no longer have to depend on PCs to operate, businesses have a wide range of options to set up their systems. Retailers, restaurateurs and hospitality operators can take advantage of standalone IP-enabled components to choose whatever configuration best suits their business objectives and customer needs.

A new, lighter POS approach is emerging that, depending on the setting, leverages thin clients, including tablets and smartphones, to improve flexibility and convenience. The model frees shopping counters, hotel check-ins and restaurants from the restrictions of PC-centric systems. This opens significant opportunities for POS dealers to add value by guiding customers through the process of selecting system components and configurations.

The new POS model is a game changer that allows businesses to emulate the comfort and convenience of Internet shopping. However, before deciding how to set up a new POS system, businesses must address a list of considerations regarding cash drawers and connectivity options. There are many cash drawers from which to choose, as well as multiple options for how to connect them to other components — whether wirelessly or through USB. Dealers must be proficient in all available alternatives so they can help customers choose the best solutions for their needs.



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Emerging Model

For about two decades, the PC has been at the center of the POS solution, acting as a computerized cash register and controlling various peripherals, such as printers, cash drawers and card readers. Though popular, this setup is costly, especially for smaller retail shops, and often requires a fair amount of configuration.

A new model that combines thin client, mobile and cloud-based technologies is emerging. Called "Thin-bility," it provides businesses with a more affordable,



flexible and manageable approach to POS while significantly improving the end customer's shopping experience. The model allows a sales associate to initiate a transaction at the point of purchase, where the customer decides what to buy. The sale can be completed with cash or credit at a strategically placed cash drawer. Using a tablet, the associate can complete the transaction and then print or email the receipt. Shoppers seeking convenience and speed leave the store happier and are more likely to return.

This level of service approximates the experience of Internet shopping — an experience that consumers are bound to seek when deciding which retail outlets to patronize. It explains why a recent Boston

Retail Partners study found retailers view mobility as a priority, with 52 percent planning to implement a mobile POS solution within two years. Another 19 percent said they plan to deploy mobile solutions in two years or more.

Cash Drawer Considerations

Whether they opt for a Thin-bility solution, a traditional POS system or a hybrid, business owners might not realize just how many cash drawer options are available to them as they decide on a POS solution. Busy with decisions on other components, such as workstations, printers and card readers, owners might figure that a drawer is just a drawer. But that would be a mistake.



With guidance from their POS dealers, businesses should be exposed to the multitude of cash drawer options available to them. Their decisions should be influenced by a number of factors, including store traffic, types of payment accepted, security, aesthetics and store layout, as well as budget considerations. To make the right decision on the cash drawer that best suits a business' needs, here are 10 considerations dealers should discuss with clients:

Cash Storage

How many and what type of compartments should a cash drawer's tray have?

In most settings, tills are configured with a particular currency in mind that includes coin cups for various denominations and compartments for bills with hold-down mechanisms for safe storage. Owners must decide how many of which they need, and whether to have compartments for larger-sized foreign currency bills.

Non-cash Storage

What about storage for non-cash and media payments? Businesses that accept checks, gift cards, coupons and tickets need space for them in the cash drawer. Options include storage under the till or in slip slots on the tray.



Currency Presentation

Depending on counter setup and storage layout, owners must decide on cash drawer presentation. Be it a lay-flat drawer that slides open at the front, an inclined till or a vertical till with a flip-up top, which model to choose depends on physical space needs and aesthetics.

Currency Reconciliation

Businesses that transact in high cash volumes may benefit from drawers with weighable cups designed for rapid coin reconciliation. At the close of business, those can be removed and placed on purpose-built, calibrated currency counting devices to figure out how much was collected in pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters.

Currency Protection

Taking into consideration how many employees access the drawers and whether the units are ever left unattended, owners must make some security decisions, including whether they need lockable lids, locking tills and hidden compartments for loss prevention.



Actuation

Options for opening cash drawers vary depending on a POS system's configuration. IP-enabled drawers can be activated from stationary or mobile POS stations, while USB-connected units can be controlled through a host PC. Alternatively, drawers can be configured to open manually with the push of a button.

Manual Access

Some owners may decide to forgo manual access altogether, opting for electronic control in all cases. But key locks are available for those who need them, as are hidden emergency access points in case of a power or network outage.

Usage and Durability

Factors to consider in deciding between standard- and heavy-duty drawers include traffic, projected number of operations and budget. In lower-use settings, standard-duty models offer durability and reliability at a lower cost, while high-traffic businesses may require the fatigue-resistant latches and industrial-grade steel ball bearing slides of a heavy-duty unit.

Drawer Location

Space requirements and human factors deserve consideration when deciding



on cash drawer location. Placing drawers on counters works in some settings, but if counter space is limited, placing them under the counter may be better. Human factors such as average height and whether checkout clerks sit or stand should be taken into account as well.

Cash Wrap Installation

Typically cash drawers sit at the checkout counter, though Thin-bility is changing the practice. Still, consideration must be given to the cash wrap not only for aesthetics but also to ensure proper cable management and, when needed, hardware support.

Connectivity Options

A key step in planning a POS solution deployment involves studying and making decisions on how to connect the various components. In PC-centric solutions, everything is either run from a PC or a server, but the Thin-bility model offers multiple connectivity possibilities. There is no industry standard or obvious connectivity preference; how the POS stations, printers, card readers and cash drawers are connected hinges on the specific requirements of each business.

Factors to consider include technology capabilities, budget, store layout, number of cash drawers, and drawer control. In a pure Thin-bility setup, all POS components operate independently, without a PC or server controlling the system. IP-enabled drawers linked wirelessly to tablets, printers



and card readers can be operated from the tablets. IP drawers especially make sense when the POS workstation is a thin-client device, such as a tablet, with no ports for peripherals or where such a physical connection limits the truly mobile transaction.

Under this model, businesses can achieve maximum flexibility, completing transactions at the point of purchase, rather than making shoppers queue up at checkout counters. In some cases, businesses might eschew printers altogether, opting instead to email or text receipts to customers.



Budget-conscious businesses, however, may opt for lower-priced cash drawers that connect through USB to a printer that controls the cash drawers. USB-connected drawers make sense for businesses that use PCs as POS workstations and don't want to rely on the printer interface to control the drawers. In this more traditional setup, there may be a server in the background running the whole system.

Trusted Advisor

As POS choices increase, thanks to the Thin-bility model, business owners need information about those choices and how they best suit their particular needs. POS dealers have a significant opportunity to help clients weigh options and make decisions. In doing so, dealers stand to benefit in multiple ways:

- Serve as trusted advisors, becoming the go-to provider whenever the client needs services
- Improve customer satisfaction, and as a result, strengthen loyalty
- Jump into an emerging market early, edging out the competition
- Increase opportunities for adding value
- Find new revenue streams and, ultimately, improve the bottom line

APG Cash Drawers

APG Cash Drawer LLC leads the industry in IP-enabled cash drawer innovation, offering multiple cash drawer configurations and connectivity options. Clients can choose between standard and heavy-duty models, and a wide range of till configurations, currency storage, and drawer formats, such as lay-flat, flip-top, vertical or inclined.

Whether clients prefer the traditional

PC-centric approach or the Thin-bility model, APG has a full complement of USB-connected and IP-enabled cash drawers for their requirements. APG's fully customizable cash drawers offer programmable features that provide convenience and flexibility to clients, and service and value-add opportunities for POS dealers.

Conclusion

With every emerging technology, clients hear about it but don't necessarily know how it can help them. Such is the case with Thin-bility, which offers unprecedented levels of flexibility, manageability and affordability to retailers, restaurateurs and hospitality operations. Clients need help from their POS dealers. Those who are ready to help clients select the right cash drawers and connectivity setups stand to benefit by strengthening their relationships for the long term.



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About APG Cash Drawer, LLC

APG manufactures a broad range of high-quality cash drawers and other related products for thousands of customers throughout the world. During its 35+ year history, APG has built a reputation as the supplier of choice for highly durable and dependable cash drawers. To learn more about APG products, visit <http://www.cashdrawer.com> or call 763-571-5000.