



Pizza POS Buyer's Guide: What to Consider When Purchasing a Pizza Point of Sale Solution





Whether you're an independent, single store operator or a multi-unit franchise, you need a pizza point of sale (POS) system that is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of your business and help you streamline operations, boost profit margins, and optimize the customer experience.

Regular restaurant POS systems aren't equipped to handle the intricacies of running a pizzeria.

From complex orders that require customized ingredients to managing a team of delivery drivers, pizzerias require a POS system that has a feature set designed to deliver and perform in an elaborate and fast-paced environment. This buyer's guide will offer tips and advice on the process of selecting and evaluating a pizza POS solution provider as well as a detailed overview of critical POS features pizzerias need to thrive in today's competitive delivery and carryout space.

Why Invest in a Point of Sale Solution for Your Pizzeria

In competitive hospitality markets like quick service pizzeria, using an electronic cash register just doesn't cut it anymore. While electronic cash registers can track sales like a POS system, the impact it can have on your business is minimal, and in some cases, detrimental. When used well, a point of sale system touches every aspect of your operations. From order taking and check out, to menu, promotion, and kitchen and employee management, a point of sale system can streamline the day-to-day operational necessities of your pizzeria.

Pizzeria owners are also leveraging point of sale solutions to gain real-time access to critical business data in order to make better, more informed business decisions. Savvy pizzeria owners are collecting and analyzing valuable historical information on customers, sales, inventory, promotions, and labor, which empowers them to make smarter, more informed business decisions that lead to increased profitability and productivity and decreased costs.

Choosing the POS for Your Pizzeria

The process of evaluating and selecting a pizza POS solution can be challenging.

Follow these simple steps to ensure that you pick the right pizza POS solution provider.

► Identify your pizzeria's business goals

Determining what your business goals are can help you identify the functions you require from your pizza POS solution. Ask yourself these key questions to identify your pizzeria's business goals.

► Identify needs vs. wants

Your business needs a POS system that is designed to meet the unique operational efficiencies of your pizzeria. Develop a comprehensive list of features you would like to see in the POS systems being evaluated. Then determine which features are needs vs. wants. This simple exercise will enable you to quickly develop a short list of POS solution providers based on your critical business needs.

► Set a budget

You'll need to determine how much you're able to spend, and make sure your choice fits within your budget. However, don't look at just the upfront costs of purchasing a POS system when deciding on a POS solution provider. Take time to understand any additional costs related to upgrades, service, support and product warranties. It's also critical that you understand and analyze what rates, such as payment processing, and early termination fees you will be paying for. Evaluating the total cost of ownership over the life of the POS solution is the key to making a good long-term investment.

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- Do you operate a single store or multiple stores?
- Are you looking for a POS solution that optimizes delivery and/or carry out?
- Do you want to offer mobile & online ordering?
- Do you want to offer a loyalty and rewards program?
- Does your staff need mobility for line-busting or pay-at-the-table?
- How important is above store reporting?
- Do you need the ability to manage your business remotely?
- How important is it to have 24/7/365 customer support?

► Do your research

If the POS solution providers are focused on powering pizzerias, they should have plenty of customer references, so make sure you ask for them. A good business partner should have solid references that speak highly of their work.



- ☐ Have they successfully installed POS solutions for your size of business (single store, multiple stores, franchises, etc.)?
- ☐ How responsive are they with new installs, as well as ongoing support and service?
- ☐ How well do they understand your business?
- ☐ How have they handled similar problems or issues that your business faces?

► Must-have software features

Not sure which features you need in a pizza POS solution? The pizza space has evolved quite a bit over the last five years and technology is driving growth and managing costs. Here are some of the key features most owners utilize to effectively run operations in their pizzeria.



Delivery management and support—

look for integrated caller ID, a driver dispatch screen, integrated maps, order timing, and alerts.



Online ordering—put your menu online, give customers a seamless ordering experience, and maintain control of your customer data.



Loyalty and rewards—build better relationships with customers by rewarding them or providing customized offers for repeat business.



User interface—look for one that is brandable and able to be configured to your needs.



Order entry—to maximize productivity, order entry should be fast, easy, and intuitive.



Kitchen management—streamline incoming orders to the kitchen to ensure they are timely and accurate.



Menu management—easily change or add items at the store, regional or chain levels.



Labor management—efficiently create and manage schedules and forecast labor needs to meet budget.



Inventory management—track ingredient use and food waste to reduce cost.



Reporting and analytics—create a variety of automated reports that help you keep a pulse on what is happening in your business to make real-time, informed decisions that grow your business and improve margins.



CRM—understand what your customers are purchasing and gain useful insight on how to grow your customer base.



Pizzeria Point of Sale Hardware

While the capabilities and feature set of the POS software often drive the buying process, it is important to verify that the POS hardware is certified and integrates seamlessly with the software you select. Having a single provider assures you that the hardware and software are compatible, avoids any finger pointing issues among multiple vendors if a problem does arise, and should provide the greatest availability for customer support.

We recommend that owners consider the following questions when evaluating the POS hardware needed for their pizzeria:

- How many order entry stations do you need for servers/staff?
- Does your staff need tablets for order-at-the-table, pay-at-the-table, or line-busting support?
- Do you need a back office computer so that owners and management can run operations and view reports? Do you need a solution that allows you to do this from the cloud?
- Do you need a kitchen display system to expedite orders to the kitchen?
- Do you need digital signage or electronic menu boards to showcase your menu or promotions?
- What other technology solutions will you need to integrate into the POS?

What's Next?

You have built a short list of POS solution providers, set a budget, and determined what your POS hardware needs are. What's next?

Request a Demo

Once you have narrowed down your options, the next step is to schedule a demo with prospective POS solution providers. A POS solution may look great online, but until you see how it functions during a live demonstration, you may find that its usefulness is not as advantageous as you thought. Remember what POS features are most important to your business so that you can accurately assess whether the solution in question will meet your unique business needs.

A demo is the best way to truly see the value of the POS solution before you purchase it.

How to Buy?

The market has evolved and there are multiple options when it comes to purchasing a POS system. Some POS solution providers only sell their solution upfront or provide third party leasing solutions. If you're trying to get your pizzeria off the ground, these heavy upfront costs can be burdensome. In this scenario, solving IT issues can also be tricky as you'll either need an onsite IT professional or to pay for outsourced IT support.

Other POS providers follow the software-as-a-service (SaaS) model. You purchase the entire solution for little to no upfront cost and reap the benefits of a low, fixed monthly payment. Software upgrades are free. Customer service and support options are more flexible, and usually built into the SaaS agreement with your POS solution provider.



A growing trend is for some providers to offer a free POS system. However, as most savvy pizzeria owners understand, nothing in life is free. These providers are often locking customers into a payment processing contract that charges high fees in order to recoup their investment in the free POS system, or the “free” solution has minimal features and you must upgrade to a paid version to get the functionality you need. Take the time to understand and analyze the processing rates, fees and cancellation policies for these type of POS solution providers while making sure you are getting the functionality you require to run (and grow) your business.

There is no right or wrong way to buy a POS solution. The purchasing options available are often determined by what is offered by the POS solution provider and what you can qualify for from a financing standpoint.

Evaluate Your Purchasing Options



► Purchase

Pros: No long term, monthly payments. You own the POS system.

Cons: Substantial upfront capital needed to buy the POS system. This capital is better served investing in other parts of your business than the technology. Most of the time, you need to pay more to get access to software upgrades. The expiration of POS system warranties makes IT service costly. This also locks you into your solution with less flexibility.

► Subscription Service

Pros: Low or no upfront capital needed. Access to free software upgrades. Low, monthly fixed cost. Hardware maintained during the term of service.

Cons: Many subscription-based programs will include leasing rates that can increase your fees by hundreds of dollars a month per location. Although subscription costs may appear higher at first glance, the minimal to zero upfront cost and the ongoing hardware warranty increases the value of the monthly fee.

► Free POS

Pros: You receive a POS system with no upfront cost.

Cons: You are not really getting a POS system for free. Typically, customers are locked into a multi-year contract where they often charge high payment processing fees that can be increased if you do not meet certain processing thresholds. Additionally, the feature set may not be what you need.



Pick the Right Payment Processing Plan

There are a variety of payment processing plans out there. Educate yourself on the types of payment processing plans your selected vendors provide so you know what you're signing up for. Some vendors will bundle merchant/payment services into the POS deal for you. Ideally, you want to find a POS solution provider who can offer you all the technology you need to effectively run your pizzeria as well as provide a low, fixed payment processing rate and fee per credit card transaction. That way, you only have to deal with one vendor vs. managing multiple vendors.

Some providers will advertise a lower percentage rate, but charge a relatively higher fee per every credit card transaction resulting in you paying more than you should. In some situations, you will see plans that start off with a low rate, and then the rate will rise dramatically over time. This can add up to hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in monthly fees, resulting in lower income to you.

While this method may be cheaper initially, it can cost more in the long term. You want to partner with someone who will agree to review and match rates if they become more competitive. Make sure you understand all the costs associated with the plan and that you have an experienced provider available to help when you have issues like chargebacks, batching issues, deposit delays or delays in overall responsiveness.

Installation/Service/Support Plans

Installation, service, and support are the last pieces of the puzzle and are as important as feature functionality. When you are evaluating solutions providers, make sure you're investing not only in the POS system, but also in a partner that values, and is committed to, delivering exceptional customer support. Technology is not infallible, and downtime can occur, so make sure you choose a POS provider that offers service, training, and support plans to get you back up and running when this happens.

The support offered must be available 24/7/365. You can't count on issues only arising during standard business hours, and for businesses that handle a large volume of transactions, such as pizzerias, any extended downtime can cost you significantly. It's best to have a support team that is knowledgeable in the product, able to help you when you call instead of calling you back later, and that understands the nuances of, and is proficient in, your business. Some providers are outsourcing their support to third parties who do not know the product well, are not able to help you in real-time, and, in some cases, a language barrier presents an additional challenge.



Support and Service Checklist

Make a checklist of what you find most important when it comes to support and service, and make sure that your POS provider checks all the boxes. A few important ones to include are:

- ☐ Do you offer true 24/7/365 customer support?
- ☐ What is the average hold time?
- ☐ Can I speak with a live person who has industry knowledge?
- ☐ Is your customer support outsourced?
- ☐ What if you cannot solve my problem quickly? What are the next steps in the process?
- ☐ What type of support models do you offer? Is it all inclusive or do you have to purchase additional support?



Position yourself to play effectively in this highly competitive market and to get the largest return on your POS technology investment. Follow these steps and you will be prepared to choose a point of sale system that possesses all the tools you need to boost your profit, increase order size and volume, streamline operations, make better business decisions and improve customer experience.

If you are interested in learning more about a POS solution designed for pizzerias and available at no upfront cost, contact the pizza POS experts at HungerRush at **sales@hungerrush.com**

REQUEST A DEMO

About HungerRush

HungerRush is leading innovation for the hospitality industry with its advanced restaurant management system (RMS) which gives restaurants and chains the ability to drive revenue growth by acquiring deep knowledge of their customers, and to achieve operational excellence through end-to-end integration.

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