



Point-of-Sale... More Than Just a Cash Register

by Kate Dumas

If you are not taking advantage of the full benefits of today's point-of-sale (POS) systems, you may be overlooking an easy way to increase your revenues and dramatically improve the efficiency of your club. A well-written POS system can also assist you with revenue tracking and create more effective, targeted marketing campaigns.

EIGHT BASIC FEATURES

Today's POS systems are more than just cash registers. They provide a variety of important services for your club including sales tracking and reporting. Minimally, you would want a POS system that has these eight basic features:

1. Ease of Use: The single most important feature of your POS system should be its ease of use. Ask yourself these questions: Can you quickly train a new employee to use the system? Does the program allow you to easily locate all the features of the program? Does your software have touch-screen capabilities for quick entry?

2. Tracking Member Purchases: The ability to associate purchases with members provides useful information for tracking purposes and helps make future marketing efforts more targeted.

3. Inventory System: An inventory system integrated into your POS system allows your software to count down the products sold, freeing up your time for planning and coaching.

4. Credit Card Processing: A must-have for any busy front desk, café, juice bar, or pro shop working with a system that allows credit card processing to take place while ringing up the sale provides significant time savings.

5. EFT Billing for Purchases: A system that allows your members to add any purchases to their monthly EFT, encourages "impulse buying" and increases spontaneous purchases.

6. Gift Certificate Tracking: An integrated program that allows for the sale, redemption and tracking (sold vs. redeemed) of gift certificates will make your gift certificate program more efficient (not to mention getting rid of that messy gift certificate tracking book at the front desk).

7. Personal Training Sales Management: With personal training on the rise, you need a system that tracks the sale and redemption of visits. Outstanding liability is tracked via your software and the revenue is realized upon redemption. This eliminates the guesswork from payroll for commissions earned on appointments fulfilled.

8. Prorating Capabilities: Prorating of dues through POS reduces the time it takes to configure the dues owed by your new member. No more worries about who walked off with the calculator this time!

Now that basic features have been covered, let's look at how a good POS system can help you create more effective marketing campaigns and help track revenues.

MORE EFFECTIVE MARKETING

Whether you are producing a mailer, mail/email merge, printing labels, or placing phone calls, your POS system should be able to filter information to give you targeted marketing lists. The following are examples of how a good POS system can improve your marketing efforts.

Problem: Sales are lagging in a particular area.

Solution: Send a mailer or email to all members who have used this service in the past with a special offer. Remember to include an expiration date on the offer.

Problem: A revered massage therapist or trainer has delivered their two-week notice.

Solution: Retain members by sending an email/mailer to introduce members to the new hire. Include a bio offering a discount on their first session.

Problem: You have booked a renowned Yoga instructor for a specialty class and need to fill her class.

Solution: Contact any members who have purchased Yoga in the past. Flyers work well, but a direct phone call or an email is usually the most effective.

IMPROVED REVENUE TRACKING

From Gatorade® and smoothies to personal training sessions, a good POS system will help you fine-tune your club and have it running at optimal efficiency.

■ An integrated inventory program in a POS system shows you which items are big sellers and allows you to flag poor sellers for discontinuation. It should also be able to produce margin reports (what was my profit per item?), adjustment reports (what did I receive today?), and on-hand reports (current inventory).

■ POS systems can save time by easily compiling sales figures and commissions earned for commissioned employees such as pro shop managers, personal trainers, masseuse, etc.

■ POS systems can quickly identify top spenders, allowing you to market new programs and gift certificates more effectively.

Fully utilizing your POS system can have dramatic and immediate results on your club. It allows you to stay on top of your club revenues, provides you with invaluable marketing data, and gives you insight into your employees' performance. But this is only possible if you know how to take advantage of these types of features. If you're not proficient with your software, contact your software provider and learn how to get the most out of your POS system.

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