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**Mary Girsch-Bock • Jul. 15, 2019**



Not every retail business is looking for a complete front office/back office point of sale application. Smaller businesses, as well as online sellers are frequently looking for an application that allows payment acceptance from anywhere, whether it be the corner store, a farmer's market, or a craft show.

The applications summarized here can also prove to be useful for businesses that occasionally need to process payments outside their regular place of business; after all no one carries cash anymore, and offering quick and easy payment acceptance

makes it easier for the business owner and the customer, who doesn't have to hunt

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Square bills itself as a payment acceptance application, but also offers a variety of retail applications, including Square Point of Sale, which offers complete in-store and online integration. The Square dashboard allows users to view business status at any time, easily create and track invoices, manage customer profiles and employees, and manage inventory from one central location. Square also offers a variety of integrated hardware that can be used to create an all-in-one point of sale and payment acceptance application.

The most popular method of getting paid using Square is by using the credit swipe device, which Square will mail its users upon account signup. The swipe device can be used with iPhones, iPads, and Android smartphones and tablets, and allows users to capture customer information as a sale is being processed, by sending payment receipts via email. The swipe device also allows users to process credit card payments even when internet service is unavailable, with the payments later processing once connectivity has been restored. Along with the standard swipe device that can be connected to a smart phone, Square also offers the Square Reader, for processing chip cards, and the Square Terminal, which is an all-in-one device that accepts a variety of payment types, including Apple Pay, Google Pay, along with standard debit and credit cards as well as chip cards.

Square also prepares invoices that can be sent directly to recipients via email, with invoice customization available. For those that are interested in selling online, the Square Online Store is available, which offers complete order fulfillment, shipping, sales tax processing, and payment acceptance. Those with both online and brick and mortar stores can easily integrate sales from into a single system for more accurate reporting. Square support is centered around a variety of help articles and a user forum, though users can sign into the application for expedited support.

Square is free to use, with retailers only paying a per transaction fee for each payment

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Lightspeed Retail POS offers both point of sale and eCommerce products. Designed to work on any device, in-store or online, Lightspeed Retail also offers mobile checkout capability, along with mobile reporting.

The retail desktop system offers an easily navigated sales processing interface, with all features displayed in the vertical menu to the left of the screen. On screen, a series of buttons are available which include Item Search, New Item, Import Item, Print Label, New Order, Vendor Return, Special Order, and Inventory Counts. Users can customize the interface to display the functions they wish to see, and an app is available that allows users to access the account from any mobile device. The product also accepts a variety of payment types, with users able to process a sale from any location.

Lightspeed Retail offers solid customer management, with users able to add customers to the system at any time. Customer quotes, layaways, or special orders can be easily processed for customers, and special discounts can be added to their account at any time. The product supports loyalty accounts through various third-party partners, and users can even create custom product suggestions for customers based on their purchasing history.

Lightspeed Retail offers excellent inventory management capability, supporting multiple price levels, as well as other pricing strategies such as discounts, coupons and promotions, bulk pricing, and giveaways. Users can set product reorder levels, and create custom categories for products. Lightspeed Retail supports a single store, but users can add multi-store capability if desired. An eCommerce plan is also available for those that sell online, integrating the entire sales process. Reporting options are also good in the application, with product, sales history, and category and vendor sales reports available. A reporting dashboard is also available that provides a summary of sales data for all stores in real time. Lightspeed Accounting is

a plug-in that will connect Lightspeed Retail with current accounting software

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## Shopify POS

[www.shopify.com](http://www.shopify.com)

Originally designed strictly for those selling online, Shopify POS now includes a retail store option. Shopify is available in three versions, with users able to scale up to a more powerful version if necessary.

Processing a sale in Shopify is easy, with the system designed to work on a variety of devices including smart phones and tablets for anytime/anywhere selling. Users can accept a variety of payment types, including debit and credit cards, gift cards, cash, and store credit, and can split tenders, accept partial payments and even create custom payment types as desired. Users have the option to print or email all transaction receipts, and even create a custom sale based on custom line items and custom pricing. Customer profiles can be quickly created with any new order processed, making it easy to track customer preferences and purchasing history. An email marketing option is available using the included email marketing apps. Users can enter in order notes at the time of the sale, and print or email receipts to customers.

Inventory management is solid in Shopify POS, with the product supporting multi-location inventory tracking. Users can organize products into categories, types, and even seasons, and offer variations of each product. Barcodes are supported in Shopify POS, with the ability to assign a barcode to a product or create a new barcode. A variety of apps are available with Shopify POS as well, including BOGO sales, various loyalty programs and wholesale pricing.

Shopify POS offers a summary dashboard that includes an overview of sales, orders, and web traffic. A variety of product reports are also available in the application, including product best and worst sellers. Retail reports such as sales by staff

members, location, and time are also available. Shopify support is available 24/7,

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