



Six Must-Have Software Features for Grocers and Farm-to-Market Businesses

If you own a small wholesale or specialty grocery or farm-to-market business, you might be thinking about upgrading from your old-school cash register to a point of sale (POS) system for greater functionality and improved efficiency. Your business has specific and unique needs, so finding the right fit in a POS system is important. Here are some “must-have” features that will be most beneficial to the growth of your business.

1 Scanner and Scale Integration

One feature that specialty grocers and farm-to-market business owners should look for in a POS system is its ability to integrate smoothly with other necessary equipment. A barcode scanner is a key element in speeding up the checkout process. Faster transaction times mean shorter lines and happier customers. And if you're selling goods based on weight — whether it's fresh produce, deli meats and cheeses, or items in bulk such as rice or coffee — you'll need a scale that is certified by the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) as “legal for trade.” Your POS should be able to read weight-embedded barcodes, obtain exact measurements, and display scale weights on-screen.

Goods sold in specialty and farm-to-market stores, especially organic products, tend to be more expensive than regular groceries. So it's even more critical to reduce shrinkage when ringing up sales, by working with scanners and scales.

2 Inventory Management

Scanners and scales for accurate measurements also help with another vital business element: inventory control. If your organic produce or other expensive items are spoiling in the bins, you're losing money. Conversely, if you can't maintain adequate quantities of customer favorites, you're losing money. You need a POS that can track your inventory in real time, with each sale, even items sold by weight. Save yourself the time and labor of manual inventory checks, and get alerts when quantities run low (or even place reorders automatically as needed).

3 Vendor Management

An important aspect related to inventory management is vendor management. You're most likely working with smaller suppliers than the big chains do, which can be more expensive, which means less margin for error. Your POS should monitor your stock levels and allow you to place reorders directly from the inventory control program. You'll also want the ability to manage your orders and arrange delivery times with local suppliers. Good communication is key for building long-term partnerships with reliable vendors when you find them, which will save you time and money in the long run.

4 E-Commerce: Click and Collect

Larger chains such as Wal-Mart and Walgreen's are growing their sales by implementing BOPIS (buy online, pick-up in store) and other e-commerce channels. It's important for smaller wholesale grocers and farm-to-market businesses to be able to leverage the same advantages. Today's on-the-go customers appreciate (and even expect) the convenience of "click and collect" shopping methods. A website, a mobile ordering app, and a team to fill such orders as they come in are crucial for staying competitive.

5 Coupons

Grocery stores and markets that aren't leveraging coupons are missing out on a prime opportunity for boosting sales and increasing customer loyalty. The grocery industry all but invented the paper coupon, however with digital couponing on the rise, there's no longer as large of a market for "clip coupons" from a newspaper. With a solution like SalesVu, you can send customers customized coupons straight to their email.

6 Loyalty Programs

Offer your customers the opportunity to join an exclusive loyalty program and earn discounts on specific items. A loyal customer is a return customer and saving money for them right now means making money for you over the long haul.

*In addition to providing a range of POS apps, SalesVu offers cloud-based services including inventory and vendor management, and can assist you in building your own website and branded mobile app. Customer support is available at any time, every day. **Contact SalesVu** for more information on all the ways we can help you grow your small grocer or farm-to-market business today.*