



# Accurate accounting

EPoS solutions like PointOne's provide a host of valuable information at your fingertips

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**W**ith the VAT increase just round the corner, it's important to update your EPoS systems in order that your reports are accurate. The last thing you want to happen is to be slapped with an additional 2.5% of VAT bill that you haven't prepared for.

Kevin Coetzee, managing director at TISSL, says the first point of call should be your system's manual. "The majority of modern systems, developed for the UK market, will have a customisable VAT field. For older or foreign systems, you'll have to contact your supplier directly, as the VAT may be hardcoded."

#### Multiple sites

If you have more than one site, taking care of the VAT change still shouldn't be too difficult, although it will depend on the configuration of your outlets. "You may have a centralised enterprise system, which means you'll be able to set the VAT rate at your head office and then your sites will update automatically," continues Kevin. "Otherwise, you'll have to ensure that your site

managers are updating them for you or if you have a remote dial-in system, such as LogMeln, you can log-in to each outlet and update the system manually."

And, remember, there will be other things you'll need to update with the VAT change as well as the terminals themselves such as the receipts and any accounting software that your EPoS ties in to. If you're lucky, the EPoS system will have a single field that will do all of this for you.

If you're currently using a straightforward cash register, but thinking of investing in an EPoS system then now could be the ideal time to upgrade. Not only will you start the New Year afresh with the current rate of VAT correct, but you'll also save the 2.5% VAT increase yourself.

[REDACTED] of PointOne, comments: "A cash register is as it states, simply that. It is extremely limiting and has no functionality beyond recording payments in and out of the till. Of course, many fish friers operate this type of system but they are definitely making lives difficult for themselves in terms of managing

information and customer service. Failing to upgrade your shop to EPoS technology can seriously restrict growth, as you will be relying on paper based accounting methods which are often inaccurate and difficult to assimilate."

#### New breed

The new breed of EPoS systems have a host of features that give fish and chip shop owners more control over their business, with better access to financial information, speedier customer service and improved productivity to boost sales.

PointOne's new loyalty feature, for example, enables fish and chip shops to offer discounts to customers by issuing them with a privilege card. Regular visitors can then accumulate points on every purchase which can be redeemed at a later date for food or drink items, helping to encourage loyalty and repeat custom.

Also, should the fish and chip shop have a seating facility, serving staff, using a new hand-held wireless device, can order food remotely, directly from the table to the kitchen, thus

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**TISSL's EPoS give access to critical information in real time**

improving the overall efficiency of the customer service.

TISSL, meanwhile, has launched a new digital signage and handheld combo. Linked into the EPoS, it can display menus live, updating automatically when there is a tariff change, happy hour or manager change, as well as rotate around advertising of special offers such as meal deals or takeaway nights that you can make yourself or download from the internet. It can also display videos and web pages, making it almost indispensable for a busy fast food establishment.

**Marketing updated**

Another area in which EPoS proves invaluable is in keeping your marketing updated and fresh, something that is simple to achieve with Integer's inTouch system. Geoff Whittle comments: "The simplest level of marketing is the messages that can be printed on the customer receipt. They should be updated regularly to tell customers about things like special offers, new dishes and to encourage ordering on-line, for example."

And since inTouch holds a shop's customer database, it's an extremely important asset that must be used says Geoff: "Event-based marketing by text message is highly effective, for example sending messages to customers an hour before a televised England game or even before Strictly and X Factor on a Saturday. Any text marketing that coincides with a large TV audience produces great results."

Integer has recently introduced a new touch screen terminal, which means it can now offer a complete EPoS system for less than £1500. The company is also very close to releasing an application for iPhones and other smart phones for mobile on-line ordering, so watch this space.

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**PointOne** 0845 862 0005  
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**Important aspects**

As well as being user friendly and reliable, an EPoS solution should contain some of the following elements:

- Real time web-based reporting for staying in touch remotely
- Reporting and stock control analysis
- Integration with other technologies such as popular accounting packages
- Same day telephone and onsite support for system back-up

**Benefits of EPoS**

- Every item sold can be recorded by date and type, creating a sales history and giving vital information should a dispute arise over a food order or cost of purchase
- Products can be located quickly by the user, by type or description, and special offers can be automatically updated
- Alerts can be set where stock levels and perishables can be monitored
- Food items can be priced in advance and altered in real time to allow for promotions or discounts
- Friers have absolute control over their business whilst offsite, as terminal audit trails can be set up to record every sale, return or voided transaction
- Sales history can be recorded indefinitely helping you understand and plan your business more intelligently



When award winning chippy Atlantic Fast Food first opened in Coatbridge, Scotland, it installed a single screen inTouch system from Integer to handle its delivery business only. "Within 3 weeks we went from 10 to 30 deliveries on a Saturday night with no marketing - just because of the system," says owner Giovanni Fionda.

The benefits are many; caller recognition - customer details appear instantly on screen alongside the shop menu when the phone rings - postcode look-up where new customers are added quickly and accurately, and fast touch screen ordering with (optional) selling prompts. In addition, meal deals, offers and delivery charges are calculated automatically.

Two months later, Atlantic Fast Food added a second screen to its inTouch system to handle the increase in its delivery business. Then six months after opening, the busy shop added three Flexpos All-in-One touch screen terminals to the system. "The inTouch system

allows me to run three businesses in one - takeaway, delivery and collection," Giovanni adds. "Everything is co-ordinated. Delivery is now 40% of the business and growing. Collection orders are increasing too but not at the expense of my takeaway business. Collection orders are bagged and waiting at the front when customers arrive - staff just need to touch a button on screen. It means we can have a separate and fast moving collection queue. The whole process is much smoother for us and for our customers."

InTouch has also become an invaluable tool for customer relationship management. Every time that a new customer is added to the system or a customer orders again, the customer database is updated. Giovanni adds: "The system makes it easy for us to send special offers and coupons to our customers. I monitor the results and we have had a 65% return on mailing - that's unheard of in direct marketing."