

R.J. Calio Consulting, LLC.

Retail Systems Consultant

The questions you should ask yourself before investing in a new POS system

I frequently get calls from potential clients who are considering replacing their POS system. My initial reaction is to determine their motivation for wanting to make the change. These are the questions I typically ask and can be used as a guide for anyone contemplating an investment in a new system.

1. **What is compelling you to make this considerable investment and change in your business?**
2. **What features are lacking in your current system that are impeding your ability to effectively manage your business?**
3. **Are you contemplating or need any of the following which can't be implemented with your current system:**
 - **Opening new a new store(s)**
 - **An integrated e-commerce site**
 - **A customer marketing and loyalty program**
 - **Better access to information and analytics**
 - **Business intelligence and dashboards**
 - **Integration to social and mobile media**
 - **Having a consolidated view of all your customer activity rather than "silos" of information**
 - **Create a more efficient customer experience at the check out counter**
4. **Are you willing to commit yourself and your key people to the changes required to implement a new system?**
5. **Have you made a list of the features and reports in your current system that you want to preserve moving forward, "must have features"?**
6. **Have you thoroughly evaluated your current system to see if there are workarounds or minor customizations that can be made to address these needs?**
7. **Are there any third party programs that can be integrated to your current system that will give you the features and functionality you're missing?**

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8. Are you going to be able to convert your existing data, inventory, customers and vendor and inventory and customer history?
9. Have you established a budget for the project including training, installation, data conversion and annual support and software upgrades.
10. Are you willing to put in the time and effort to thoroughly evaluate new systems and put together a detailed plan for the process you will follow?

In the final analysis don't invest in any new technology until you can clearly identify the problem you want to solve and can articulate a strategy for getting a return on your investment.

To quote Seth Godin for the Purple Cow, "Instead of trying to use your technology and expertise to make a better product for your user's standard behavior, experiment with inviting the users to change their behavior to make the product work dramatically better."

Whether you invest in a new system or decide to better utilize your current system its' great opportunity evaluate and improve all your internal practices and procedures. The new tread mill won't make you any fitter than your old tread mill, if you don't use it.

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