

A Jumpstart for your Point-of-Sale

How many times has this happened to you? A customer calls the store to place an order; maybe it's a regular customer who has enjoyed your past selections. She asks for suggestions and stays with you as you describe the wines you have in mind. Nothing seems to quite meet her needs, or she has tried the most interesting options already, where do you look for more ideas? Often you will be tied to the phone in front of a register, beyond visual range of the selection your customer wants. This is where a cordless phone would go a long way, or the ability to browse your inventory by region and/or grape variety.

Most stores use categories or departments to organize their sales reports, but these categories are rarely specific enough to browse. Even if your point-of-sale (POS) system allows for browsing by self-defined fields, how much time will it take to categorize your inventory consistently by region and grape?

Issues like this often come up in the context of choosing a new POS system. Whether you are shopping for your first system, or upgrading to something more flexible, the opportunity with a new POS system is to leverage information about product availability, pricing, and customer sales histories. Any plans for a website will need to take into account the accessibility of the inventory on your POS. Also, how will your new system remain compatible with any new technologies or data standards that are looming over the horizon?

The Gartner Group predicts that almost all major retailers are considering an upgrade in their POS system in the next few years to raise efficiency and revenue. Consider the efficiency from browsing the pricing information in this Journal from within your POS. The Beverage Network makes the

wholesaler pricing for your market available in electronic form. Some POS systems can import this data for display alongside your products.

For customers of the market data, The Beverage Network also provides eOrders software which allows you to build and place orders electronically. eOrders runs on the store's computer and reads the sales history from your POS. This information is used to suggest reorder quantities and orders are delivered to the wholesaler without sensitive information leaving your building. A completed purchase order can then be exported from eOrders into your inventory system for receiving goods, which eliminates a common source of data entry errors.

To ease the installation of a new POS system, The Beverage Network provides market data subscribers the current month's pricing with UPC codes. Looking up products from this Journal by UPC code or by text search saves the labor and stress of typing each entry manually. Just scan items from your shelf, enter a count and price. Your SKU will be preloaded with product description, vendor and current market pricing.

Finally, we can offer a one-time upload of regional and grape classification for stores that want to build a browsing feature for their salespeople. Now, imagine a call from your loyal customer that is supported by a POS that allows you to browse Mosel Rieslings or GSM from South Australia. Not only can you sound better informed to your customers, you now have the means to collect detailed profile information on your customers for personalized marketing.

To learn more about how the Beverage Network can help with the above services, visit Bevnetwork.com for presentations on eOrders, eStage and Website Development. You can contact Ian Griffith at ian@bevmedia.com or (212) 571-3232.