

FINDING YOUR POS MATCH

Addressing Security and Connectivity with Cash Drawer Configuration Options

Introduction

As a new, lighter point of sale (POS) approach emerges, POS solutions no longer require PCs to operate. Depending on a system's configuration, the new POS model can leverage thin clients such as tablets, handhelds, and IP-enabled cash drawers to bring flexibility and convenience to in-store transactions.

The new model frees shopping counters, hotel check-ins, and restaurants from the restrictions of PC-centric systems, while allowing businesses to emulate the comfort and convenience of Internet shopping. Retail customers, for instance, can pay for purchases at the point of decision, rather than having to wait for a cashier.

For ISVs, the model opens significant opportunities to design affordable, flexible systems with wireless components. However, because of a

multitude of variations and options, ISVs, when designing the systems, must take into consideration business requirements, connectivity options, and security concerns. An important component of any POS system is the cash drawer, and when clients opt for an IP-enabled model, they want assurances the drawer adheres to wireless security protocols and standards to prevent the exposure of private data. ISVs must be ready to address client concerns when matching their needs with the right cash drawers.



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Emerging Model

For about two decades, the PC has been at the center of the POS solution, acting as a computerized cash register and controlling various peripherals such as printers, cash drawers, and card readers. Though popular, this setup is costly, especially for smaller retail shops, and often requires a fair amount of configuration.

A new model that combines thin client, mobile, and cloud-based technologies is emerging. Called "Thin-bility," it provides a more affordable, flexible, and manageable approach to POS while significantly improving the end customer's shopping experience. The model allows a sales associate to initiate a transaction at the point of purchase, where the customer decides what to buy. The sale can be completed with cash or credit at a strategically-placed cash drawer. Using a tablet, an associate can complete the transaction and then print or email the receipt. Shoppers seeking

convenience and speed are more likely to return for further purchases.

This level of service approximates the experience of Internet shopping with an added human touch – an experience that consumers are bound to seek when deciding which retail outlets to

patronize. It explains why a recent Boston Retail Partners study found retailers view mobility as a priority, with 52 percent planning to implement a mobile POS solution within two years. Another 19 percent said they plan to deploy mobile solutions in two years or more.



Cash Drawer Considerations

Business owners who opt for a Thin-bility solution might not realize just how many cash drawer options are available to them. ISVs, working directly with customers or through dealer partners, should be prepared to step in to help with cash drawer decisions. ISVs, therefore, should familiarize themselves with the various available drawer configurations, as well as connectivity options and potential security issues.

A number of factors can affect a cash drawer selection, including store traffic, types of payment accepted, security, store layout, and budget. Here are some important considerations to help guide ISVs in matching a cash drawer to client needs:

Cash Storage



Tills typically are configured with coin cups and paper bill compartments for a specific currency. Different currencies have various sizes and numbers of bills and coins, which affects the number and size of compartments in a drawer.

Non-cash Storage

Businesses that accept checks, gift cards, coupons, and tickets need space for them in the cash drawer. Options include storage under the till or in bill compartments on the tray.

Currency Presentation

Counter setup and storage layout affect cash drawer presentation. Be it a lay-flat drawer that slides open at the front, an inclined till, or a vertical till with a flip-up top, which model to choose depends on physical space needs, ergonomics, and aesthetics.



Currency Reconciliation

Businesses that transact in high cash volumes may need drawers with weighable cups designed for rapid coin reconciliation at the close of business. Cups can be removed and placed on purpose-built, currency counting devices to calculate how much was collected in coins.

Actuation

Options for opening cash drawers vary depending on a POS system's configuration. IP-enabled drawers can be activated from stationary or mobile



POS stations. In addition, drawers can be configured to open manually with the push of a button.

Manual Access

Electronic control is available for businesses that don't want manual access. Drawers can still have key/locks or hidden emergency access points in case of a power or network outage.

Usage and Durability

Standard- and heavy-duty drawer options are available. In low-use settings, standard-duty models offer durability and reliability at a lower cost, while high-traffic businesses may require the fatigue-resistant latches and industrial-grade steel ball bearing slides of a heavy-duty unit to provide long life.

Drawer Location

Space requirements and human factors must be considered. Placing drawers on counters works in some settings, but if counter space is limited, under-the-counter placement may be better. Human factors such as whether checkout clerks sit or stand should be taken into account as well.

Connectivity Options

A key step in planning a POS deployment

is deciding how to connect the various components. In PC-centric solutions, everything is either run from a PC or a server, but the Thin-bility model offers multiple connectivity possibilities. There is no industry standard or obvious connectivity preference; how the POS stations, printers, card readers, and cash drawers are connected hinges on specific business requirements.

Factors to consider include technology capabilities, budget, store layout, number of cash drawers, and drawer control. In a pure Thin-bility setup, all POS components operate independently, without a PC or server controlling the system. IP-enabled drawers linked wirelessly to tablets, printers and card readers can be operated from the tablets. IP drawers are especially suited to systems with thin clients as POS workstations — with no ports for peripherals or where a physical connection limits the truly mobile transaction.

Under this model, businesses can achieve maximum flexibility, completing transactions at the point of purchase, rather than making shoppers queue up at checkout counters. In some cases, businesses might eschew printers altogether, opting instead to email or text receipts to customers.



APG Cash Drawer, LLC is a strong supporter of the Thin-bility model and leads the industry in IP-enabled cash drawer innovation, offering multiple cash drawer configurations and connectivity options.

Clients can choose between standard and heavy-duty models, along with a wide range of till configurations, currency storage, and drawer formats such as lay-flat, flip-top, vertical, or inclined.

In addition to innovation and durability, APG also delivers peace of mind by addressing physical and network security. On the physical side, APG builds its cash drawers with integrated physical security features such as electronic control and biometric scanners. On the network side, APG follows wireless security protocols to ensure IP-enabled drawers can be operated safely in wireless networks.



Security Matters

The need for physical security is well understood by all stakeholders in a POS system – ISVs, dealers and business owners. Depending on how many employees access cash drawers and whether the units are ever left unattended, physical security is assured through lockable lids, locking tills, hidden compartments and electronic controls. Sophisticated models offer barcode-based controls, and even biometric fingerprint scanners, requiring that a sales associate be close enough to the drawer before it can be opened electronically.

With Thin-bility solutions, where components communicate through



wireless connections, business owners often also voice concerns about network security.

to communicating with other POS-related components, a cash drawer can interact with non-POS, IP-enabled devices on a retailer's network such as IP cameras.

Retailers have good reason for wanting to secure their wireless POS systems, considering the number of high-profile data breaches that have occurred over the years. One of the worst took place during the 2013 holiday season at Target stores, when cyber criminals stole the credit card information of about 70 million customers, including names, phone numbers, and mailing addresses. Preventing such disasters is a serious responsibility for any business using POS technology. When handling cash, the potential for credit card-related mischief is nonexistent, but that doesn't mean business owners don't fret about it, especially when cash drawers are IP-connected. In addition

It's important that ISVs understand the drawer itself poses no added risk to the network's integrity. ISVs must be able to explain to clients that introducing an IP-enabled cash drawer onto the subnet produces no adverse impact on network security. APG's IP-enabled drawers support any of a number of strategies a network professional deploys to enhance network performance, device stability, and cash handling practices. ISVs, therefore, can assure their clients their security needs are being addressed. It's one of the ways they can add value when developing Thin-client solutions with IP-enabled cash drawers.



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Service Opportunities

The Thin-bility model is opening significant service opportunities for ISVs. Built-in functions in the cash drawers can be turned into new revenue-generating services for clients. Functions include monitoring and remote control capabilities that enable exception management by alerting managers about unusual events. If a clerk opens a drawer manually, when it is supposed to be opened remotely from a workstation, the system captures the unusual activity and notifies a manager.

Data also is generated when a drawer is unplugged, moved, or opened by someone who is assigned to a different drawer. When used for reporting and analysis, the data can help improve operations and correct bad habits. ISVs looking for recurring revenue can build services around these functions by taking data and delivering it as reports to clients periodically to help them run the business. There are opportunities to offer periodic system checkups, reviews of the data, and recommendations for business improvements.

Cash drawers also can benefit ISVs in the following ways:

- Help them serve as trusted advisors, becoming the go-to provider when clients need services
- Improve customer satisfaction and strengthen loyalty
- Edge out the competition in an emerging market
- Increase value-add opportunities
- Find new revenue streams and improve the bottom line.

Conclusion

As the Thin-bility model emerges, providing businesses with new levels of POS affordability and flexibility, ISVs have new opportunities to work closely with clients to design systems that best suit their business goals and requirements. A key part of that is to walk clients through the various available cash drawer choices, including functionality and connectivity options, and to put them at ease regarding any security concerns clients might have.

About APG Cash Drawer, LLC

APG manufactures a broad range of high-quality cash drawers and other related products for thousands of customers throughout the world. During its 35+ year history, APG has built a reputation as the supplier of choice for highly durable and dependable cash drawers. To learn more about APG products, visit www.cashdrawer.com or call (763) 571-5000.