



# Is Your Business Management System Growing With Your Business?

The retail industry has seen big changes in the past few years. More than 80% of shoppers adopted new buying habits as a result of the pandemic, reports McKinsey, and most expect to continue to exercise their newfound flexibility. For example, “buy online, pickup in-store,” or BOPIS, has proven to have ongoing appeal. To attract and keep these shoppers, retailers need to provide a cross-channel experience, where physical stores with great service are matched by an equally excellent online experience. Although online sales have spiked in the last few years, brick-and-mortar stores are still holding their own—new store openings far outpaced closings in 2021.

One big BOPIS benefit: Despite the ease and speed of online shopping, many customers still enjoy the in-person experience. This is especially true when they’re buying bedding, furniture, appliances and other home goods, as stores offer a more interactive, hands-on experience that cannot be replicated online. Retailers that can bring buyers to a store to browse or to pick up their online purchases can often realize additional sales.

Unfortunately, unifying the in-store and online channels remains a struggle for many retailers, especially those that still rely on standalone point of sale (POS) or retail management systems.

The right technology is pivotal to supporting business growth, but many are unsure where to start.

## POS vs. ERP: What’s Right for Me?

Let’s look at the two major categories of technology in use by most retailers, POS and ERP. Some may use the terms interchangeably, but the software is very different.

A [POS system](#) enables customers to pay for products or services at your store. At a basic level, it calculates the price of the product or service being purchased plus

relevant taxes and fees. Some POS software can also report on sales trends, track inventory levels, help with order fulfillment, and clock employee hours. However, its capabilities in these other areas are limited, especially compared to ERP.

An [ERP system](#) provides extensive financial, customer and inventory insights and controls. At the ERP’s core is a central database that collects inputs from departments including finance, manufacturing, inventory and order management, sales, marketing, human resources and more while delivering customer relationship management tools and insights. An ERP may include its own POS functionality and/or integrate with external POS systems, as required by the customer.

When deciding which is right for a new location or a technology update, retailers should think five years ahead. While a standalone POS solution might get the job done now, it could end up hindering growth as your business and customer demand evolve.

Key questions to ask: Will the system we’re considering provide the omnichannel retail experience both employees and customers now expect? For example, will it provide immediate access to accurate inventory and customer purchase history data? Will it provide order and fulfillment management across all channels and fulfillment options? Does the system provide scalable accounting capabilities, and can it make inventory and purchasing easier for our team? Will it handle employee payroll and supplier invoicing, thus bridging the gap between the customer experience and back-office operations?

Most important: Will it empower you to think big in a time when that can mean the difference between thriving or joining Blockbuster, Borders and Circuit City in the retail bone pile?

Forward-thinking retailers looking to create high-impact experiences that keep customers coming back for more—both offline and online—are moving away from standalone POS systems. They find that the more holistic capabilities provided by an ERP deliver both better service and more control over the business.

Whether customers are shopping online, in your store or over the phone, they expect a high level of service. An ERP provides that in a number of ways, including:

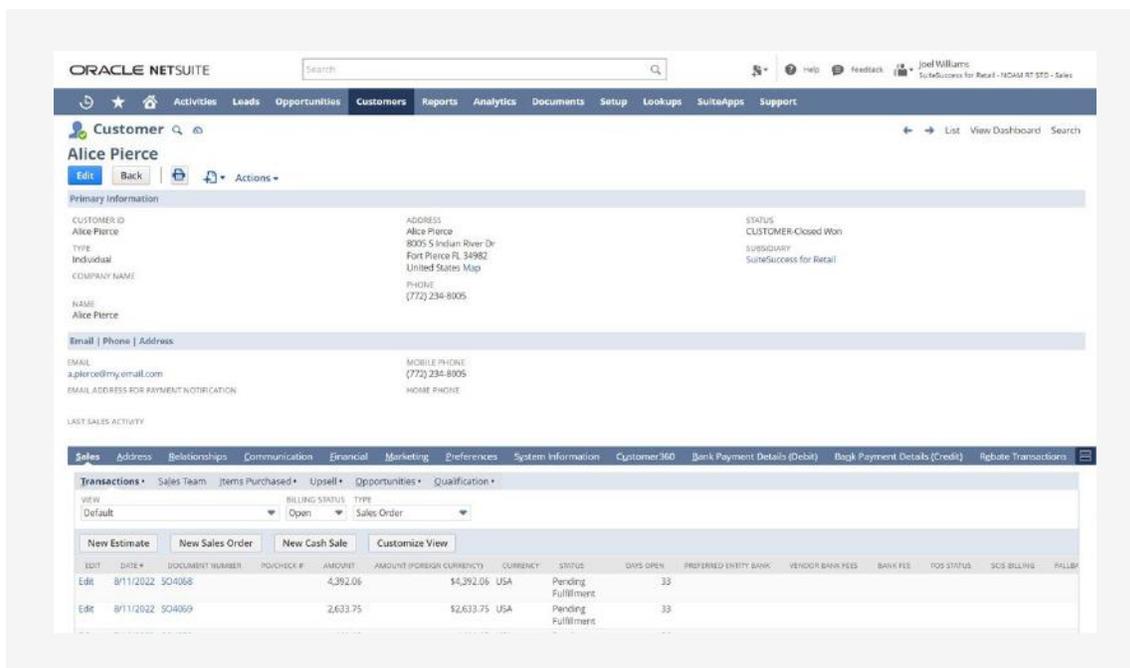
- **Customer engagement** via an integrated CRM that supports automated communication with your buyers.
- **Sales receipts** that are automatically sent via email when an order is placed.
- **Automated notifications** when an order is confirmed for delivery or delayed by the manufacturer.

An all-in-one, unified business management platform enables this customer-centric approach.

Selecting the right business management solution not only frees your staff from repetitive, manual tasks, but provides insights that ensure your business stays competitive. Retailers typically see more efficient operations, reduced costs, increased productivity, and an improved overall customer experience.

Let's look at an example. Henry Bear's Park is a chain of neighborhood toy stores that has catered to kids of all ages in Greater Boston for more than 45 years. As the number of stores grew, purchasing became a struggle—it often took two hours to write one purchase order. To gauge sales performance, the team dug into POS data, while profitability insights came from a separate accounting system. And if staff uncovered errors, finding the source of the discrepancy took time and effort.

After Henry Bear's Park [implemented an ERP system](#), the store was able to automatically assign online orders to a store based on available inventory and the customer's location. Using predefined reorder points and preferred stock levels, the system automatically detects when items



NetSuite ERP provides a full view of customer activity including sales history, upsell opportunities, contact information, automated communication, marketing preferences, and more.

are running low. It generates a purchase order—rounding up to the vendor’s minimum order quantity if needed—and sends it to the purchasing manager for execution. Customers can get what they want, quickly, while the store’s buyers are freed up to discover new products.

## How Your Current System May Be Hurting Your Business

The problem for many companies that use solely standalone POS systems or outdated retail management solutions is that they’re unable to manage omnichannel operations. Many of these systems have outdated user interfaces with no easy way to track performance metrics, much less dashboards that provide an overview of business performance and highlight problems. There’s no way to provide visualizations of data within the system, and employees often find it less-than-intuitive, which increases training time and costs.

Other pain points include:

- Data accessibility issues resulting from disparate systems, batch processes and manual workarounds.
- Limited or few out-of-the-box integrations with complementary systems.
- No ability to configure the system to your specific needs or create custom reports without writing code.
- Lack of visibility into customers’ purchase histories and preferences.
- Limited insight into the location and amount of inventory across all stores and warehouses.
- Limited technical support and a small network of third-party providers for upgrades and add-ons.

Outdated POS point solutions also lack the operational agility to respond to changing consumer trends. While this was not as important even five or 10 years ago, when ecommerce still had a small piece of the overall pie, today’s retailers can no longer ignore the need for a unified

business management platform that incorporates inventory management, order management, warehouse management, CRM, sales, financials and the other functions crucial to running a successful retail business.

A brand looking to grow not only needs a flexible platform but also a technology partner that understands their needs and business.

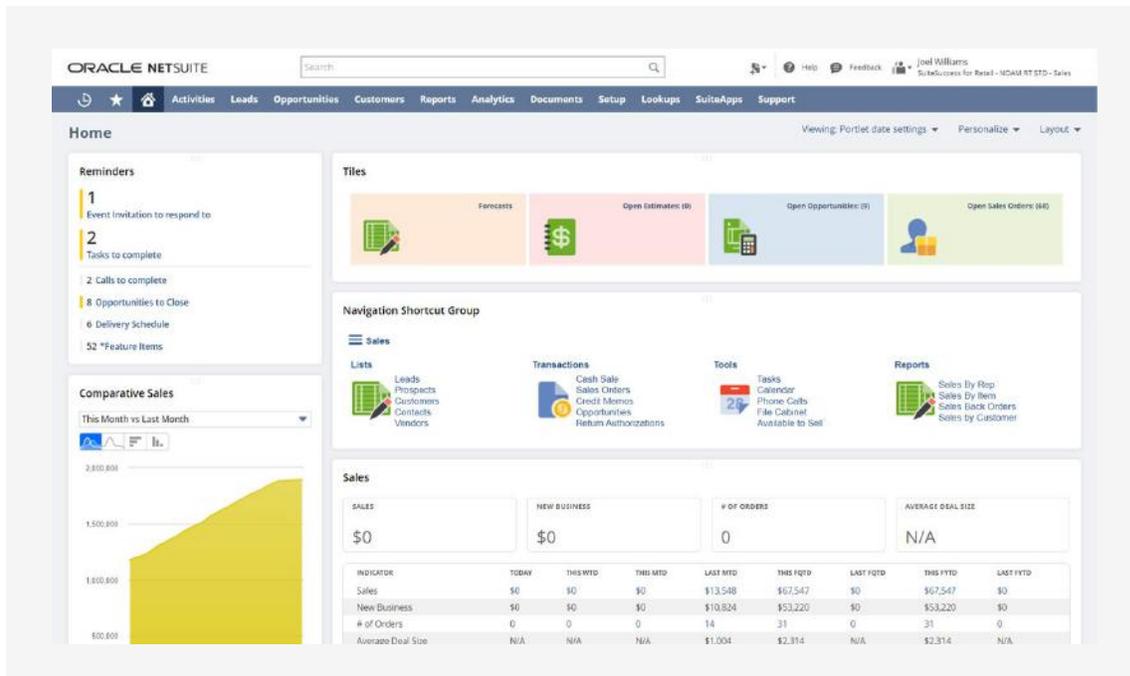
Take the furniture industry. These businesses need systems that can support custom orders (including configure, price and quote), discounts and bundling options, and merchandising. Buyers and sales teams want to customize dashboards and reports, while business analysts, developers and administrators need more flexibility in creating custom reports, forms, fields, codes and workflows.

Today’s top retailers are also choosing to swap on-premises or hosted cloud software for more capable vendor-managed cloud systems with endless room to support growth.

Retailers running on a cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution don’t have to worry about being several versions behind, as they do with traditional systems. Outdated software can bring support and security problems and cost more in the long run. Cloud-based systems mean customers are always on the latest version, and money is not wasted keeping an outdated solution up and running.

Furthermore, in the face of increasing competition from big-box stores, retailers need business management software that delivers deeper customer insights and superior service, no matter how buyers choose to shop.

There’s a relevant term, “clienteling,” that refers to using customer data to deliver personalized experiences, whether a buyer is in store or online. When customers recognize that sales associates understand their needs, preferences and past purchases, the result is profitable, long-term relationships.



NetSuite's pre-configured dashboards provide a focused view of current reminders, performance metrics and access to frequently used programs. All data is presented in real time.

With an ERP, transactional data collected from in-store shoppers will automatically sync across all relevant systems. In-store associates or customer service reps can pull up a returning customer's profile data and view past shopping behavior. This information can aid cross-channel customer marketing efforts and help drive customer loyalty and satisfaction, whether in-store or online.

It's time to rethink your technology strategy and move to an ERP system that helps you implement a winning multichannel strategy and improve the in-store experience by connecting all channels.

### How NetSuite Sets Up Your Business for Future Growth

NetSuite connects and records every interaction with a customer across all channels. For example, if a customer is shopping in store and wants to buy a mattress that is currently out of stock at that location, an associate can use

NetSuite to quickly find the closest location that has the mattress and get it delivered to the customer's doorstep. This unified view of inventory and the capability to fulfill orders is critical in an era where ecommerce leaders are delivering goods to customers' front doors in a day or two.

NetSuite supports retailers at every stage of growth with a unified cloud-based platform that provides real-time data from across the business, including inventory, order and customer information. Customizable fields and role-based dashboards make the system adaptable to any business and any role.

Accurate and efficient back-office operations—inventory, order management, financials—enable retailers to break the POS mold and start reducing stockouts, increasing sales, and boosting employee productivity.

Other key gains include the ability to:

- Deliver a seamless, customer-friendly in-store and online experience with a full view of your buyer, including where they are in the lifecycle, and inventory.
- Provide real-time insights and analytics through role-based dashboards tailored to different positions and individuals.
- Eliminate problems that arise from managing multiple disparate systems; these include manual data transfers, batch processing, integration/synchronization issues, and the limitations of legacy software.
- Improve inventory accuracy and visibility across all locations and channels, and gain the ability to manage the status of inbound shipping containers with multiple purchase orders.
- Offer customers the ability to buy from anywhere and fulfill from anywhere, also called an “endless aisle.”
- Give employees real-time visibility into business operations and performance anywhere, anytime from any device with an internet connection.
- Improve top- and bottom-line performance through AP and AR automation and ease the complexity of tax management.

- Receive automatic, biannual upgrades to take advantage of all the latest features.
- Support for multiple locations, channels and brands from a single platform.

### **What Are You Waiting For?**

Many retailers are taking advantage of new technologies to keep up with consumer demands, but only those that are agile enough to keep pace with shifting customer expectations will succeed in this challenging environment. Consumers are now able to buy goods with just a few clicks, and retailers can't afford to wait months or years to react to industry shifts. If a retailer patches a problem by finding a way to make its in-store POS or retail management system handle a new function, for example, but then ignores other back-end systems, it does nothing to address the deeper issues that come with managing multiple systems.

In the meantime, customers will look elsewhere for a shopping experience that satisfies them.

Using NetSuite, retailers can prepare their businesses for growth and run their end-to-end operations on a seamless, unified cloud platform.

This not only supports the frictionless and enjoyable experience that all customers want, but also enables business growth at a time when creating an impactful and engaging environment is crucial.

