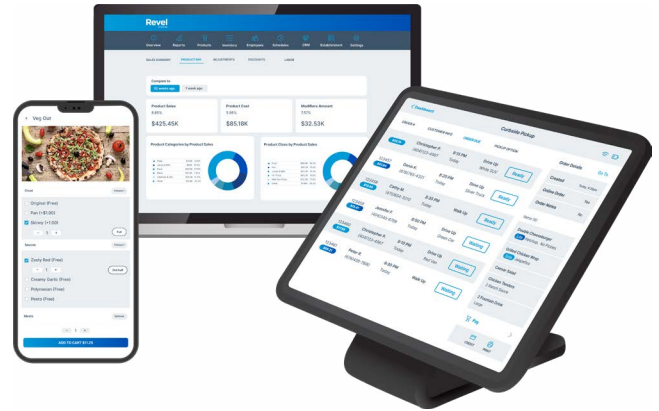


Best-of-Breed Tech Approach Unlocks Innovation Possibilities

As technology further solidifies its role in restaurant and retail operations, these industries are faced with a fundamental question on how to best proceed: what is the best approach to technology, a best-of-breed approach that utilizes a platform that can incorporate solutions for leading vendors, or an all-in-one vendor that provides most key capabilities?



This paper explores the opportunities and pitfalls of both approaches, and details the philosophy behind the approach Revel Systems prioritizes as the leading provider of a cloud order management platform.

The Current State of the Industry

Spiking Demand for Multiple Order Channels Means Today's Platforms Must Meet Higher Expectations for Order Input and Output

In 2010, point of sale companies were trying to be every solution to everyone, adding elements like loyalty and customer relationship management (CRM), labor management, and back office functionality to their offerings.

At that time, if you had those elements as an operator, you were all set. However, the new best-of-breed line of thinking has rapidly evolved since the pandemic.

For starters, demand surged for other major modules, as nearly every restaurant went to multiple ordering channels:

- Online ordering
- Kitchen display systems
- Drive thru
- Kiosks

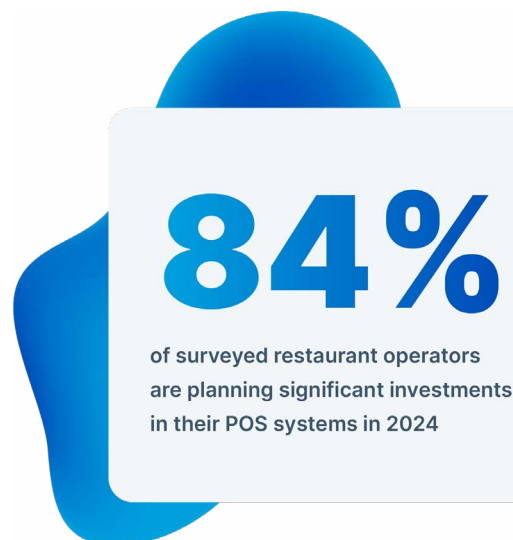
In addition, new creative and innovations are coming onto the scene constantly:

- Artificial intelligence (AI) to throttle ordering
- Computer vision to ensure food prep quality
- Customer data platform (CDP) modules that interact with transactions in real time

This list is merely a sample of the many ways customers needed and expected much more from their favorite brands, and there is no end in sight as technology is a requirement to drive the efficiency necessary to compete in the new high cost and complex restaurant world.

According to Hospitality Technology's 2023 POS Study, 84% of surveyed restaurant operators are planning significant investments in their POS systems in 2024, with a focus on adding features to and expanding the installation base of their existing POS software.

Of the same surveyed group of restaurant operators, 85% report integration with other systems as a top functionality driving 2024 POS purchases.



No Two Businesses Are the Same; Why Should Their Tech Stacks Be?

Advantages of a Best-of-Breed Technology Approach

At Revel, our philosophy is closely aligned with brands planning for growth, whether from opening day or through gradual addition of new offerings for their customers and employees.

Our company takes a best-of-breed approach to integrations so that brands have the freedom to evolve in the ways they desire, allowing them to choose from specialists and industry leaders in niche solutions. No one company, even through acquisitions, can provide all the varied and changing functionality restaurants need.

In fact, it is our stance that POS platform providers need to focus on offering their core functionality extremely well, and not get distracted trying to be experts at too many other things. Ultimately, this approach gives operators more flexibility to adapt with marketplace shifts.

Before COVID, off-premises dining accounted for 61% of all restaurant traffic, per the National Restaurant Association. During the pandemic, it was around 90%, and today it's 74% — good news for takeout-heavy establishments.

Brands outfitted with open, cloud platforms had the built-in flexibility they needed to respond to pandemic conditions, and to keep strong new revenue streams in place as business reopened traditional transactional channels.

"Innovation breeds innovation, so starting on that path will often accelerate it for a brand," says Lybeer.

For fast-casual teppanyaki brand Pepper Lunch, innovation was a key driver in the brand's selection of a POS platform.



"We all talk about AI and data, how we can understand our business better so that we can redefine, fine tune, innovate, and grow," says Troy Hooper, CEO of the North America division for Pepper Lunch. *"Most restaurants in history and many restaurants still today operate in the blind. They really don't know their numbers, which means they don't know that, when they make a decision, what all of the cascading effects of those decisions are."*

Hooper and his team have prioritized technology designed to support their testing-forward approach to innovation. Their team already has integrations in the works for reputation management and customer sentiment management, as well as a digital secret shopper that provides insights on areas for operational improvement.

The Case for An All-in-One Approach

We'll be the first to acknowledge there are advantages to all-in-one solutions. There are fewer decisions to make with a single, closed system.

This approach is cost effective for simple operations and smaller brands. And there's no question that an all-in-one system has less complexity to manage. For very small chains without dedicated information technology (IT) teams, a best-of-breed approach probably isn't an operational fit.



"A best-of-breed approach isn't right for everyone. One to two-site locations usually can't take on the cost, and won't realize the benefits to offset that cost; the ROI won't make sense," Lybeer says.

As operators review their tech solutions and weigh the merits of all-in-one vs. best-of-breed, it's important to first understand available resources to support the approach and then to clearly rank priorities for tech-driven offerings.

Strong Partnerships Are More Important Than Ever

In the instances where a best-of-breed approach emerges as the victor in technology selection, brands must then vet different tech providers not just on the features and functionalities of their digital solutions, but also their ability to be a lasting partner.

“A long list of features and functions isn’t really why you should choose a POS platform,” says Chris Lybeer, chief strategy officer at Revel Systems. “As a POS platform provider, we can’t build everything an operator is going to need, but you’ve got to be able to connect our systems together so they work seamlessly.”

In fact, Revel’s platform has direct evidence of this new demand for integrated solutions. API calls to Revel’s cloud order management platform have increased by more than 300% since 2014.

With that said, many merchants would rank tech adoption and administration somewhat low on the reason they were drawn to the hospitality industry. As demand for technology solutions grows, tech providers have a real opportunity to simplify it enough that operators can focus on their areas of expertise—namely, providing quality service to their customers.

The concept of partnership is key here. In order for technology to truly service hospitality brands, operators should prioritize software providers truly committed to partnering with them throughout their growth journey.

Final Thoughts

If you ask 10 businesses about the technology that drives the most value for their brand, you’ll likely get 10 different answers. That’s the beauty of a best-of-breed approach; it allows 10 different answers to yield 10 different success stories.

There is timeless wisdom in the adage, *“Jack of all trades, master of none.”* Technology is no exception to the rule, which is why at Revel Systems, our team has embraced the idea of focusing on our core competency—an open, cloud order management platform for restaurants and retailers—so we can devote our time, attention and enhancements to masterful execution of it.



300%

API calls to Revel’s cloud order management platform have increased by more than 300% since 2014.

If you’re looking for a flexible cloud order management platform that allows you to build your tech stack with best-of-breed solutions, [contact Revel Systems today.](#)