Convenient Payment Options—
It’s What Customers Want

Quality products and top-notch customer service are the cornerstones of a profitable marketing plan. A wider array of point-of-sales payment options is now becoming an important component of good customer service with many customers. These options include credit cards, debit cards, and NFC (near field communication: ApplePay, Google Wallet, etc.). Near field communication is the technology that allows smart phones and devices to establish communications with each other when they’re close together.

T.J McCue, a contributor to Forbes Magazine, states that according to a recent infographic from Community Merchant USA, 66 percent of all point-of-sale transactions are done with credit, debit, or gift cards. Only 27 percent of purchases are made with cash and they estimate that cash sales will drops to only 23 percent by 2017.

Taking credit cards used to be a big deal for small businesses. It involved setting up a merchants account, acquiring a credit card processing terminal, and then there were the monthly fees, deductions, and a long term contract. A number of companies have introduced very simple tools that just require a small plastic swiper for your smart phone or keying in credit card information on-line. Fees are lower and there is no long-term commitment. You may recognize some of these service company names: Square, Intuit GoPayment, PayPal, etc.

Business guru Peter Drucker stated, “The purpose of a business is to create customer.” Today, creating customers includes giving the convenient payment options. Here are several factors that reinforce why you should accept credit, debit, and gift cards in your business:

1. Most customers are choosing the convenience of credit and debit payments because they don’t carry much cash in their wallets.
2. The option to pay with “plastic” encourages buying in general and impulse buying in particular.
3. Accepting credit card and debit cards make the sales transactions faster. Shorter checkout times are possible since neither party is counting cash out or change back.

4. Accepting credit and debit cards may give you a competitive advantage.

5. Accepting credit and debit cards eliminates the risks of accepting a bad check.

With so many card processors available and with many ways businesses can accept credit cards, finding a “best fit” for your business can seem challenging.

Here are some criteria to use when COMPARING PROCESSOR SERVICES

- Transition/swipe rates
- Equipment, set-up, costs
- Easy of set-up and use
- Contract and service terms
- Type of payment accepted
- Processing time—How soon will your deposits get to your account?
- Refund procedures
- Reporting and analytics
- Customer service

At the end of the day, if you’re not accepting credit, debit, or gift cards in your business, then you’re losing sales.