POS HARDWARE LEADERBOARD 07

READERS' TOP PICKS

RESELLERS VOTE ON THE TOP POS HARDWARE BRANDS

VOTE

The results of *VSR's* 2nd Annual POS Hardware Leaderboard are in! Over 100 hardware brands were considered and 38 made our final list with some appearing in several different categories. The rankings are based on the opinions of *VSR* readers — value-added resellers (VARs), systems integrators (SIs), and other solution providers — and represent the only rating of its kind for point-of-sale (POS) hardware technology within the reseller industry. Eight different categories of hardware were considered this year. They include: receipt printers, touchscreens/monitors, integrated POS systems, hand-held/mobile devices, cash drawers, scanners, keyboards and pole displays.

Methodology

Rather than evaluate vendors as was done last year, this year's study focused more on the hardware brand than the vendor. The reason for this change was to eliminate any potential confusion for resellers who may or may not be aware of original equipment manufacturer (OEM) relationships among vendors. The evaluation criteria include some questions which are product related (features, innovation, reliability) and others more focused on non-product issues (service & support and pricing).

Each vendor was evaluated on five key criteria: product features and functionality; innovation; reliability; the vendor's support and service offerings; and competitive pricing. A maximum of five points could be awarded by survey respondents for each of the criteria. The POS Hardware Leaderboard chart shown on this page is a listing of brands based on those average scores. For each of the eight hardware categories, a criteria breakdown chart is included on the following pages. These charts detail how the top brands scored on each of the five evaluation criteria.

VSR readers were asked, via a secure Web site, to evaluate only those brands whose products they had sold or implemented within the last 12 months, helping to ensure that the results are based not only on current reseller impressions and experiences, but also that only those resellers who have knowledge of a company's products evaluate that brand. In all, *VSR* received 1,513 valid votes from 319 qualified respondents (many VARs cast evaluations for multiple brands across hardware categories.)

In the interest of full disclosure, it is important to note that *VSR* applied a mathematical weighting scale to the results across all vendors, product categories and criteria based upon the number of evaluations a brand received, to take into account the size of a company's footprint in the industry. Weighting for the number of cast votes is a standard practice in such evaluations and helps ensure that results are not skewed toward companies with far fewer or far more votes than the average.

Finally, *VSR* accepted no vendor sponsorships for the POS Hardware Leaderboard — therefore no vendor brand is included or left out for sponsorship or lack thereof. This ranking is a true head-to-head comparison based upon the opinions of *VSR* readers.

READER'S CHOICE
POS HARDWARE LEADERBOARD

RECEIPT PRINTERS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Epson	4.49
2	Bixolon-Samsung	4.27
3	Ithaca/Transact	3.85
4	Star Micronics	3.82
5	IBM	3.76
6	Zebra	3.36
7	Citizen	3.32
8	NCR	3.19
9	TPG/Axiohm	3.14
10	Casio	2.79

INTEGRATED POS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Micros	4.59
2	Touch Dynamic	4.09
3	Posiflex	4.05
4	IBM	4.00
5	Radiant	3.98
6	CRS	3.92
7	J2	3.80
8	NCR	3.74
9	Hewlett Packard	3.68
10	Sharp	3.39

HANDHELD/MOBILE DEVICES

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Micros	4.32
2	Motorola/Symbol	4.25
3	PSC/Datalogic	4.05
4	Hand Held	3.75
5	Unitech	3.67
6	Intermec	3.25
7	Datalogic Mobile	3.17

POLE DISPLAYS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Logic Controls	4.07
2	Radiant	3.93
3	Posiflex	3.74
4	PartnerTech	3.36
5	IEE	3.32

TOUCHSCREENS/MONITORS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Elo Touch	4.36
2	Micros	4.23
3	Radiant	3.93
4	Dynamic	3.79
5	IBM	3.76
6	3M	3.70
7	G-Vision	3.69
8	ViewSonic	3.69
9	Pioneer POS	3.66
10	Hewlett Packard	3.48

KEYBOARDS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Cherry	4.14
2	Hewlett Packard	4.02
3	Logic Controls	3.72
4	Preh	3.68
5	IBM	3.65

SCANNERS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	Metrologic	4.38
2	Motorola/Symbol	4.18
3	PSC/Datalogic	4.02
4	Hand Held	3.76
5	NCR	3.50

CASH DRAWERS

Rank	Brand	Average Score
1	APG Cash Drawer	4.33
2	MMF Cash Drawer	4.25
3	M-S Cash Drawer	4.17
4	IBM	3.87
5	NCR	3.65
6	Logic Controls	3.55
7	Posiflex	3.45

Readers scored brands on a scale of 1 to 5 for five unique criteria. Average scores across all criteria are presented here.

RECEIPT PRINTERS

The past several years have seen a number of innovations on the receipt printer front. From four-color to two-sided to sticky receipts, the push is on from vendors to create products that do more for the end user and do it more reliably.

Competition on our Leaderboard was fierce this year and ten brands qualified for the list. Four brands received individual scores of more than 4.00 and two had average scores above 4.00.

The top spot, however, goes to Epson for the second year in a row. Epson not only received the highest number of votes of any brand across all hardware categories, it also won top honors for four of the five criteria — features, innovation, reliability, and support & service, with some of the highest scores received by any brand in any category.

Bixolon-Samsung remains a tough competitor in the receipt printer market. The brand finished in second place overall and posted a commanding win on the 'pricing' criterion with a 4.38.

Ithaca/Transact won the third spot with an impressive performance of 4.14 on product features.

Star Micronics took fourth place coming in a mere three-hundredths of

From four-color receipts to two-sided receipts to sticky receipts, the push is on from vendors to create products that do more for the end user and do it reliably. End user marketing and brand promotion have become as important as printer speed and reliability.

a point behind Ithaca/Transact.

Overall, the race was closest in the features category with four brands scoring 4.00 or better. While speeding transactions and reducing maintenance costs were once the key drivers for receipt printer replacement, today features that support marketing and brand promotion for the end user are what's

making the difference in the market.

VARs are finding the most opportunity and the best margins selling new features such as spot or four-color printers which can be used to present promo-

tions, discounts and coupons as well as provide proof-of-purchase. Sticky receipts are another feature which offer a convenient way to label a product (such as a take-out food) and provide a receipt.

Despite the push for innovation and new features, our results show that reliability remains as important as ever for resellers.

RECEIPT PRINTERS CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Epson	4.77	4.53	4.83	4.33	3.98	4.49
Bixolon-Samsung	4.38	4.16	4.38	4.04	4.38	4.27
Ithaca/Transact	4.14	3.87	3.72	3.83	3.68	3.85
Star Micronics	4.00	3.88	3.93	3.63	3.68	3.82
IBM	3.88	3.66	3.99	3.88	3.40	3.76
Zebra	3.36	3.41	3.69	3.19	3.13	3.36
Citizen	3.48	3.29	3.22	3.22	3.37	3.32
NCR	3.32	3.24	3.32	3.24	2.85	3.19
TPG/Axiohm	3.45	3.06	3.28	2.95	2.95	3.14
Casio	2.88	2.52	2.79	2.70	3.06	2.79

Scores rounded to the nearest one-hundredth. Shading indicates criteria winners, out of 5 possible points.

TOUCHSCREEN/MONITORS

As touchscreens become more and more pervasive, the companies that manufacture and market them must drive harder to win over and maintain their reseller base.

With customer acceptance of touchscreens on the rise, this market continues to remain red hot. Vendors must constantly innovate and develop new advances in order to stay ahead of the pack. New touch technologies such as Elo's acoustic pulse recognition (APR), for example, or more impact-resistant screens all contribute to continued growth in the field.

Declining equipment prices are also fueling demand, particularly in the retail vertical and small businesses can now afford to incorporate this technology into their shops and stores.

At the same time, a burgeoning number of touchscreen software applications is also contributing to continued growth in this market.

VSR readers scored over twenty brands in this year's survey and ten made our final list. Topping the chart

again is last year's winner, Elo TouchSystems with an average score of 4.36. Elo won four of the five criteria — features, innovation, reliability, and support & service — and was edged out only in the pricing criteria to sec-

The market continues to remain hot however, and advances in touchscreen technology as well as declining equipment prices and a burgeoning number of touchscreen applications are all contributing to healthy competition among vendors.

ond place finisher, Micros.

Micros also received impressive scores topping 4.00 in all five categories and an average score of 4.23.

Third place finisher Radiant and fourth place Touch Dynamic performed well with average scores of 3.93 and 3.79 respectively.

Rounding out the top five was IBM with a strong 3.76 overall — just three-hundredths of a point behind Touch Dynamic.

It should be noted that our survey respondents were evenly split among both the retail and hospitality markets and the results reflect that split.

When asked which verticals they serve, 40 percent indicated that they focus on the retail market and 40 percent on the hospitality market. Another 20 percent responded that they sell about equally into both markets.

TOUCHSCREEN/MONITORS CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Elo Touch	4.59	4.47	4.51	4.24	4.01	4.36
Micros	4.23	4.34	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.23
Radiant	4.06	4.06	4.00	4.13	3.38	3.93
Touch Dynamic	3.98	3.75	3.68	3.90	3.62	3.79
IBM	4.01	4.01	4.01	3.60	3.19	3.76
3M	3.88	3.75	3.88	3.56	3.44	3.70
G-Vision	3.75	3.65	3.60	3.60	3.85	3.69
ViewSonic	3.81	3.63	3.69	3.69	3.63	3.69
Pioneer POS	3.79	3.70	3.79	3.34	3.70	3.66
Hewlett Packard	3.52	3.43	3.88	3.34	3.25	3.48

Scores rounded to the nearest one-hundredth. Shading indicates criteria winners, out of 5 possible points.

INTEGRATED POS

Integrated POS systems are those all-in-one systems that offer a processor, a touchscreen/monitor and options for various peripherals including cash drawers, pole displays, magnetic stripe readers, etc. These systems have become very popular among resellers for their convenience and ease of installation and support. This has become a very competitive segment of the market and many touchscreen vendors, among others, are adding integrated POS systems to their linecards.

There are a whole host of manufacturers offering integrated POS systems for both the retail and hospitality markets. For this year's study, more than 200 *VSR* readers provided feedback on over 25 different brands. Ten of those made our Leaderboard and they represent the cream of the crop in this growing category.

Resellers ranked Micros at the top of the Leaderboard with an average score of 4.59, the highest overall score any brand received in any category this year — a very impressive performance.

Micros also swept all five of its criteria taking top honors across the board — a marked improvement over last year's second place finish.

Last year's winner, Touch Dynamic took the number two spot this year with an average score of 4.09. Touch Dynamic product rated well again this year with scores over 4.00 on four of the five criteria rated by resellers.

Close behind in the number three and four positions are Posiflex with an average 4.05 and IBM with an average score of 4.00.

Notable among our other top ten performers are Radiant with a score of 3.98 and a scores of 4.00 or more in three of five criteria and CRS with an impressive 4.16 on both pricing and support & service criteria — some-thing that is becoming more and more critical to resellers.

The remaining top ten finishers include J2, appearing on our charts for the first time this year with an average 3.80; NCR with a 3.74; Hewlett Packard with a 3.68; and Sharp Electronics with a 3.39.

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INTEGRATED POS CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Micros	4.83	4.73	4.61	4.54	4.26	4.59
Touch Dynamic	4.20	4.27	3.70	4.20	4.10	4.09
Posiflex	4.24	4.10	4.01	3.91	3.97	4.05
IBM	4.35	4.25	4.33	3.80	3.25	4.00
Radiant	4.05	4.20	3.86	4.10	3.67	3.98
CRS	3.80	3.73	3.73	4.16	4.16	3.92
J2	3.72	3.94	3.73	3.73	3.87	3.80
NCR	4.00	3.80	3.75	3.80	3.35	3.74
Hewlett Packard	3.89	3.73	3.89	3.73	3.15	3.68
Sharp Electronics	3.47	3.23	3.94	3.30	3.01	3.39

Scores rounded to the nearest one-hundredth. Shading indicates criteria winners, out of 5 possible points.

HANDHELD/MOBILE DEVICES

Mobility is siren song of retail, hospitality and countless other verticals. Offering the ability for end user employees to move around freely, unencumbered, while increasing productivity and improving customer service, these devices offer tremendous opportunity for vendors and VARs alike.

Seven brands made our final cut this year. Topping the list and making a dramatic rise in the rankings is last year's third place finisher, Micros. This is Micros' second category win and this brand won two (support & service; pricing) of the five criteria, and tied with Motorola for top honors on another criterion, reliability.

Close behind in the number two spot is Motorola (including the Symbol brand), last year's winner. Motorola won two of the five criteria (features; innovation).

HANDHELD/MOBILE DEVICES CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Micros	4.46	4.42	4.38	4.30	4.02	4.32
Motorola/Symbol	4.62	4.56	4.39	4.00	3.70	4.25
PSC/Datalogic	4.19	4.10	4.33	4.01	3.60	4.05
Hand Held	4.00	3.75	4.00	3.68	3.32	3.75
Unitech	3.70	3.62	3.78	3.45	3.78	3.67
Intermec	3.52	3.25	3.80	3.1	2.6	3.25
Datalogic Mobile	3.43	3.06	3.34	2.9	3.06	3.17

CASHDRAWERS

Cash Drawers may not have the flash of some of the sexier hardware categories such as mobile POS or touchscreens, yet they are an absolutely essential part of any point-of-sale solution. This year, 243 resellers — the most to participate any single category — evaluated 13 brands. Seven made the Leaderboard and are listed below.

Top honors go to APG Cash Drawer with an average score of 4.33 and a win in four of the five criteria. Not far behind with a 4.25 is MMF Cash Drawer and an impressive list of scores topping 4.00 in every criteria. Third place goes to M-S Cash Drawer with and average of 4.17 and a criterion-topping score of 4.05 in the pricing category.

CASHDRAWERS CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
APG Cash Drawer	4.64	4.13	4.71	4.25	3.92	4.33
MMF Cash Drawer	4.55	4.08	4.48	4.15	4.00	4.25
M-S Cash Drawer	4.40	3.92	4.39	4.10	4.05	4.17
IBM	4.28	4.01	4.28	3.61	3.19	3.87
NCR	3.87	3.76	3.98	3.64	2.98	3.65
Logic Controls	3.7	3.49	3.7	3.46	3.41	3.55
Posiflex	3.53	3.19	3.49	3.49	3.54	3.45

Scores rounded to the nearest one-hundredth. Shading indicates criteria winners, out of 5 possible points.

SCANNERS

SCANNER DEVICES CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Metrologic	4.50	4.39	4.47	4.30	4.25	4.38
Motorola/Symbol	4.38	4.34	4.38	3.92	3.88	4.18
PSC/Datalogic	3.98	4.16	4.22	4.04	3.71	4.02
Hand Held	4.00	3.84	3.96	3.54	3.46	3.76
NCR	3.53	3.55	3.47	3.55	3.39	3.50

The world of scanners is very similar to that of its POS cousins, the receipt printer. Product features are paramount to a brand's success as is its reputation for reliability. VARs are looking for products that fit in with end user demands — feature-rich products at a value price.

Metrologic topped our list again this year sweeping all five criteria and edging out its close competitor, Motorola. Motorola (including the Symbol brand) offered a close race in the key criteria of features, innovation and reliability.

POLE DISPLAYS

POLE DISPLAYS CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Logic Controls	4.25	3.98	4.28	3.96	3.86	4.07
Radiant	4.07	4.00	3.93	3.93	3.73	3.93
Posiflex	3.78	3.74	3.82	3.73	3.62	3.74
PartnerTech	3.61	3.26	3.40	3.11	3.40	3.36
IEE	3.30	3.10	3.70	3.30	3.20	3.32

Pole and customer displays are indispensable, yet often taken for granted as part of the POS hardware package. Reliability is the key criterion here — VARs and their end users expect their products to stand the test of time.

This year's winner, Logic Controls, took top honors in four of the five criteria — features, reliability, support & service and pricing — and achieved an average score of 4.07 out of a possible 5.00. Second place went to Radiant with a win on the criterion of reliability and an average score of 3.93.

KEYBOARDS

KEYBOARDS DEVICES CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

Brand	Features	Innovation	Reliability	Support & Service	Pricing	Average Score
Cherry	4.47	4.21	4.44	3.94	3.66	4.14
Hewlett Packard	4.14	3.91	4.17	4.06	3.84	4.02
Logic Controls	3.91	3.64	4.01	3.48	3.54	3.72
Preh	3.90	3.78	3.94	3.58	3.22	3.68
IBM	3.91	3.54	4.04	3.58	3.17	3.65

One-hundred and fifty-six VARs voted in the keyboard category and they ranked eleven brands, five of which made our final cut.

Cherry took the top spot this year with wins on three key criteria — features, innovation and reliability. In second place Hewlett-Packard gave them a run for their money and won the two remaining criteria, support & service and pricing. Rounding out the top five were Logic Controls, Preh and IBM. **V**

Scores rounded to the nearest one-hundredth. Shading indicates criteria winners, out of 5 possible points.