

THE SUPPORT MYTH

For many years now, the "conventional" wisdom regarding support or maintenance agreements on equipment purchases has been that it is just another way for the seller to pad his profits. A perception, I believe, that has its origins in the appliance and consumer electronics fields. However, to suggest that there is any correlation between consumer electronics and the retail point-of-sale systems ignores the human intervention aspect entirely. At CRS, customer support is not an option, it is a necessity.

The perception that hardware and software agreements support agreements are unnecessary "profit padding" by CRS (or for that matter, any other information systems integrator) is a myth. In fact, these agreements provide extreme value to our customers while typically generating losses year in and year out -no profit padding. There is no alternative for CRS - we must provide support. To day's POS solutions are sophisticated information systems that are always closely integrated with the provided hardware. Without someone available to answer questions and resolve problems, you would simply never realize the return on your investment.



Why an agreement? Why not just pay for the answers or problem resolution as needed? That is an option that is akin to our company hiring someone to provide an answer AFTER the problem surfaces. We would have to educate the person, and then provide the person with the tools and experience to get the answer which is both expensive and time-consuming. Obviously, a better solution for CRS and our customers is to have a support structure in place when a problem surfaces. Customers who effect support agreements with our company allow for that response capability to already exist when it is needed.

It is imperative that customers understand the significance to ANY solutions provider in ongoing support agreements. Without the revenue, there would be fewer trained technicians, fewer answers and slower response. In short, the support agreement should be a critical component of your investment decision. Consider the price to be a very inexpensive way to obtain the very best results from your new system. Your support dollars help CRS pay for all of the tools necessary to enable our staff including laptops, cell phones, vehicles, back-up systems, lab systems, parts, loaner equipment, manuals, and continuing education. Of course, the building space, telephone network and data connection, utilities, and accompanying infrastructure also soak up these support dollars. Most significantly, however, is the dedicated people we employ and encourage with above average benefits and compensation packages. Our staff is continually educated and updated on the products we sell so that we can help you when you need it.

In summary, there should be little question that professional support of your system is not an option, it is a necessity. It is indeed a myth, therefore, that support agreements are unnecessary. Hopefully, you will easily see the cost effectiveness in the following pages and discussion.

