

The Independent Pharmacy Software Buyers Guide:

The Do's and Don'ts of Choosing the Perfect Software Vendor for Your Independent Pharmacy.



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Choosing a software solution for your pharmacy is hard - there are so many systems, and so many questions that need to be answered. Making the wrong decision can end up costing you a lot of money in the long run, both operationally, and when you are finally fed up and need to invest in a conversion away from the bad decision. This Buyer's Guide will help you select the best partner for your pharmacy by focusing on the most important factors to consider for a long term relationship.

By now you should have completed various software demonstrations and saw some of the features offered in different systems. Hopefully your demonstrations were informative and gave you the opportunity to ask questions.

A company that takes the time to complete a one-on-one demo, allowing you a personal experience where you get to know the company and products intimately is important. Many demonstrations are now being done in a large group, leaving many questions unanswered, due to either a lack of time or the inability to ask questions in a group setting. By following this simple guide, you will be able to make the most informed decision and truly pick a partner to cultivate success in your pharmacy.



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1. Do Your Research

Understand who owns the company, how long have they been in business and how many clients they service?

As an Independently Owned Pharmacy it's important to work with a vendor who understands your needs. Unfortunately, many software vendors have sold off and are now owned by large private equity firms or wholesalers. Just like working with a chain pharmacy, the larger the company, the larger the client base, the more you wait. Wait for service. Wait for problem resolution. And wait to have your ideas heard, while less likely to ever have them implemented into the software. Your patients are choosing your pharmacy because of the unique and specialized way you service their needs – as a small business owner you need the same support. Large corporate-owned vendors often struggle to provide their customers with the level of service and support they need. Your software provider and your wholesaler are two of your most important relationships that can make or break your business model.



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2. Do Get Detailed Pricing

Get a breakdown of ALL the upfront and monthly costs associated with the platform including any hidden fees or add-ons.

Among all of the things to consider, pricing is at the top of the list for many independent pharmacy owners, and NOT simple to compare one vendor to the next because everyone prices out the software and features differently. Some vendors charge for services that others include. Some show a lower switch rate but higher e-prescribe rate and then keep all revenue sharing credits available vs sharing them with the customers. What may appear to be more expensive can sometimes be a much better deal if you read between the lines. Consider the features and technology being packaged into the deal you're looking at. To truly understand the best deal you need to do a side-by-side analysis of your quotes – and any vendor should be happy to help you decipher pricing and go line by line to make sure you completely understand the deals you're presented with.



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3. Do Examine Reviews & Their Sources

Customer reviews speak volumes about a company. Read the good, the bad, and how long they have been customers.

Have you read customer reviews on trusted sites? There are many review sites on the internet, and unfortunately not all of them are honest. Take a look at who owns the review site, make sure it's unbiased, and read through both the positive AND negative reviews. Be wary of vendors with many 5 star ratings but no written review to accompany it. Be especially wary of vendors without any constructive criticism or pain points from customers – because let's face it: no one is perfect. Real customers are honest and want to share their experience with the vendor. Some information on pharmacy software review sites:



www.Capterra.com is independent of the industry and can help you find real reviews for software from any industry.

****** Beware that the companies at the top pay for this position, it's not based on who is rated best. So read the reviews, but pay no attention to placement.***



www.Softwareadvice.com is independent and is the same as Capterra.

****** Once again, pay no attention to how high on the page the company appears and you'll find honest reviews because the website is not biased at all, and they do this for all industries***



www.pharmacysoftwarereviews.com is OWNED by Pioneer RX, a pharmacy software vendor.

****** Look out! It is fully run by them to make their own company look superior to all other vendors. They have been caught deleting negative reviews about themselves, and always keep themselves on top.***

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CrowdReviews

Buyers Guide Based On Your Reviews

www.crowdreviews.com is a non-biased site, but not very established in the way they operate.

***** You can find real reviews here, but the "crowdscore" varies and companies are only considered "verified" if they pay to be.**

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.

www.facebook.com is very popular and if you look up a company here, you can find honest reviews, see who is doing the review, and the company being reviewed cannot just remove negative reviews – so it's a more honest source.

***** Be weary of company employees writing great reviews, but not identifying as an employee, thus trying to trick you into believing they are a customer.**

The G2 Crowd logo, featuring a stylized "G2" in a dark blue circle followed by the word "CROWD" in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font.

www.g2crowd.com is full of honest reviews, and the company is non-bias. However, they have many companies in the category that do not even offer pharmacy software. After speaking to G2 Crowd to understand the order of companies listed, we understood it has to do with the size of the company and web presence – which does not properly rank in any order. Size doesn't make a company better.

***** Be mindful that they seem to associate larger size of company with higher quality. But that's like saying chain pharmacies are better than independents – so clearly the ranking here as well should not be taken into consideration.**

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4. Don't Feel Pressured

Salespeople are always 'nice' when they are earning a commission. Look past that and ask yourself how are you treated BEFORE you are a paying customer?

- **How responsive is the company** – how long did it take for them to respond to your inquiry about their software?
- **When you did a demonstration of the software**, were you herded like cattle into an online demo with 10 or more people where you could barely ask a question? Were you given a link to a prerecorded demo? Or did they take the time to make you a priority and spend time with you one-on-one?
- **Pressure** – once the demonstration is complete, are they already sending you the pricing and asking you to sign immediately? Are they giving you offers with a short time limit on them, as if to pressure you into making the decision quickly?
- **Contract terms** – is the vendor trying to lock you into multiyear commitments, without offering any concessions for doing so? The average length of a contract in the industry is 1 year. Anyone asking for longer should be offering something up in exchange for it.



How you are treated before you're a customer is a good gauge for how things will go once you're locked into a contract. You are a person, not a number – a small business working hard to thrive in a industry filled with large corporations. Take this into serious consideration before you sign anything.

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5. Don't Fall For "Snake Oil"

Make sure you are getting all the features you need, not a product built on smoke and mirrors.

- **What more can the system do for you aside from day-to-day prescription filling?**
- **Your competition, both chains and independents,** are offering their patients many conveniences like texting, mobile applications, auto refill, medication synchronization, and more! Not all vendors include options like these, and many that do are charging for them.
- **If someone shows you a feature that sounds amazing, ask around.** Talk to your peers, and ask other vendors that you're considering if they have it and get some feedback. Many times there are features being touted by a particular vendor that are simply smoke and mirrors, and will prove useless to you in the future, so do your research. If you have not heard of it being offered from other vendors, there may be a reason.
- **You may not want the technology now, but if competitors are offering it,** your patients may want it later on. Is it available, and do you have to pay more monthly for it?



Did you see a feature on another demo that maybe you didn't see in another system you liked? Talk to your sales reps and ask questions! Many systems are full of so many exciting options it's impossible to cover them all during a demo.

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6. Don't Associate Presence with Quality

Some pharmacy software companies seem like they're EVERYWHERE, with wide-reaching marketing.

Their visibility in the marketplace does not make them better. After all, CVS and Walgreens are everywhere – down the block, around the corner, on TV – but it doesn't mean they are better for their patients than you are! The same rings true for pharmacy software vendors.

- **Trade Shows & Marketing:** Maybe their ads are everywhere and they have a tremendous booth at a trade show. People are swarming around them – but are they just employees of the company? Or existing customers looking to speak with someone? And because they have a big booth, and maybe they even have their President speak on stage (at an astronomical cost to them) does that mean they are the preferred software vendor of the independent pharmacy community? Or does it simply mean the huge corporation that owns them outspent the other players?
- **Lots of local pharmacies use them:** If it feels like most of your peers are using a particular vendor, it may mean they are a great vendor. Or it may mean they simply outspent the competition and had aggressive sales tactics in that area. But every independent pharmacy is different and needs to choose the best option for themselves.
- **Think about the marketing tactics** you are familiar with that are designed to make large chain pharmacies seem like a good choice for consumers, and apply that when searching for the right software vendor for your business. Just because the chain is on every other corner, just because they market to you every night on TV saying they care more, doesn't make them a better choice than your local family owned pharmacy! Make sure the vendor you choose checks off all of the things that are important to you such as ownership, longevity, how they treat you before the sale, pricing, and how they are reviewed by long-term customers that you can find all over the internet, not just on one site.

