



## **Menu Selling Software: Integrated or non-integrated; Which way should you go?**

by **Mike Martin**

Dealerships currently evaluating menu selling software solutions should examine the pros and cons of integrated (DMS applications) vs. standalone software.

### **Integrated Solutions**

While an integrated menu solution may seem like the way to go, longer waiting periods to accomplish integration and the huge costs associated with such an initiative may convince you otherwise. And while less expensive standalone menu systems may seem more appropriate given current economic conditions, the time involved recreating a deal that's already in your DMS and often combined with inaccurate payment calculations, prohibits that solution as a viable solution as well. Let's examine key issues related to integrated and non-integrated menu solutions that you should be aware of before making the leap into any menu selling software solution for your dealership.

The concept of Dealer Management Systems (DMS's) integrated with menu software is simple enough; the menu software imports customer and deal information directly from the DMS. The business manager creates a menu and presents it to the customer. Information on the purchased products is automatically exported to the DMS. It does sound simple and might even work "**if**" the customer purchased products as they were originally presented in the menu. In reality, the original menu that's presented to a customer is only a starting point. Questions come up, needs are uncovered and menus are always changed. This is the nature of what really happens.

For an integrated menu selling solution to work seamlessly and without delays, the Menu and DMS software have to be completely integrated, so when a business manager wants to make changes in the middle of a presentation, he or she won't have to wait while the software goes back to the DMS for a price or product update. This is not an insignificant problem; we've heard of delays taking two or three minutes while an integrated menu is updated from the DMS; this is not an "optimal" situation to say the least.

Another issue surrounding integrated menu systems is the additional costs related to integrate them to your DMS. Integrators, the companies that specialize in connecting menu software developed by third parties to DMS systems like Reynolds & Reynolds and ADP Web Suite, work with both companies to ensure link stability between the products. That assurance comes with costs: for setup, as well as the ongoing monthly fees. These costs are passed on to the dealership. Our research with one integrator revealed that a one-time integration implementation cost between \$200 to \$300, as well as monthly charges of \$100. So if you're paying \$1000 for setup and \$250 per month for your integrated menu system, a significant portion of that is likely for integration. You need to decide if the benefit of a few less keystrokes is worth the added expense.

### **Standalone Solutions**

So what about standalone software? We know from experience that double entry is a task loathed by most Business Managers - the negative experience is compounded when the menu calculation fails to balance with the DMS payment calculation.

Take a moment to think about what's behind a deal. There are taxes specific to the products you sell, bank registration fees that are specific to each lender, other fees like license and documentation, levies for batteries, tires and other fees specific to your jurisdiction. Stated simply, to calculate a payment, deals require significant entries with many precise settings using complex mathematics and rounding off procedures. All of these calculations are done in the background (mostly) inside your DMS. For your standalone menu software to balance with your DMS, the settings and mathematical equations in both programs must mirror each other. Usually it doesn't.

### **Next Steps**

Business Managers or Dealers that are interested in integrated menu selling software should ask the vendor to demonstrate in real-time how the integration works. Ask to see the menu setup process as well as what's required to change products and groups in a menu as if you were in a real-life turn-over situation with changes that you will need to make when you're working with a customer.

If you're considering standalone solutions, ask to see how much redundant information needs to be entered to setup a menu for a customer; obviously, less is better. In addition to checking its flexibility and speed, you should also ask how close the payment balances to the DMS calculation. There are some solutions such as Q-Menus software that doesn't rely on mirroring to balance a cash, lease or

finance payment with your DMS. Quantech utilizes a powerful deal engine that balances to your DMS with absolute minimal entry. Quantech calls it the “**Deal-O-Matic Menu Engine.**” Whatever solution you go with, your menu software should be fast, accurate and cost effective.

**For more information on Quantech’s entire menu selling solutions, go to [www.quantechsoftware.com](http://www.quantechsoftware.com) or contact Mike Martin, General Manager at 1.877.611.0622 to setup a demonstration.**