Module 11 – Technical Troubleshooting for Restaurant Managers

Overview

This module is about troubleshooting at an introductory level and to help you gain confidence and knowledge to problem-solve Pilot POS system errors. Should you need to log a support call, the knowledge gained from this module will help you to clearly communicate with the Pilot Software Support Staff so that you can get your system back to efficient operations as quickly as possible.

The learning objectives for this module:

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Recognise where within the Pilot POS system problems could potentially occur
- Distinguish between a system error, equipment failure or an operator error
- Review the typical types of problems that are logged by users
- Perform some basic POS and related equipment maintenance tasks
- Perform some basic networking and connectivity tests.

Knowing where in the System Problems Do Potentially Occur

Let us set the record straight:

Problems on site are not going to go away.

There are just too many factors that influence a business's POS system. A business and its POS system is made up of people, policies, procedures, data, software and hardware. So where do we start? The objective is to give you some basic knowledge to try and solve a problem by yourself first, before committing time and resources to asking the Pilot Software Call Centre to send out a support specialist.

Think and Do!

Distinguishing Between a System Error, Equipment Failure or an Operator Error

You will be the first person that employees and cashiers will speak to should they experience problems with the system. Or for that matter, when they think they are experiencing problems with the system. Your business owner will also more than likely refer to you to solve problems or maintain the system. Your initial step should be to ask a set of questions which may allow you to find the cause or root of the problem that is being experienced, which you could rectify yourself, or indicate to you that you need to escalate the problem to the Pilot Software Support Centre.

The Importance of Good Troubleshooting Skills

There are two important characteristics in a good troubleshooting process.
Firstly, it needs to lead to establishing what the cause of the problem is and solve it. Secondly, this process needs to be quick and efficient.

When a problem occurs, your staff may not always explain the problem clearly. They will more than likely explain the problem that they are experiencing, but not the cause. For example, a staff member may not be able to print a bill from the Pilot POS Touch workstation.

If you cannot solve the problem, your reputation as a professional and competent Supervisor, Manager or Site Operator is obviously put under pressure. In order to ensure that the process goes as quickly as possible, it is important to use a tested approach to troubleshooting and problem solving. If you take too long your system will still be inefficient at best, non-operational at worst, your staff will get frustrated and your customers will get impatient.

As you gain more experience on the Pilot POS system you will gain a better understanding of what can go wrong and will be able to intuitively solve simple errors and problems on your own. You must keep in mind that no two problems are exactly the same and jumping to conclusions may lead to prolonging the actual troubleshooting process or unnecessary replacement of hardware. Both are extra costs in the end and need to be prevented. You will do this by eliminating a set of basic causes. The process that you will follow is called troubleshooting, a systematic step-by-step approach to solving a problem.

Think and Do!

Step 1: Gather information
Step 2: Verify the issue
Step 3: Try quick fixes from experience
Step 4: Escalate the problem
Step 5: Follow up on the solution

Step 1: Gather information	Start with the question: What is the problem? Encourage your staff to provide you with as much information as possible.
Step 2: Verify the issue	Make sure you correctly understand the problem that your staff may be experiencing. Summarise what they have told you, then ask as many questions as you can to eliminate potential causes. This starts from the basics such as: Is the power cable of the computer and printer plugged in? Is there paper in the printer? Did you enter your login details correctly? Are you still logged in on another workstation?
Step 3: Try quick fixes from experience	Try the quick solutions that you know from experience to have worked before. These could be: checking that the printer is switched on, that the printer is installed correctly, that the right printer is selected as a default, that the printer cable is plugged in, and so on.
Step 4: Escalate the problem 08610 – PILOT	If you have tried everything and you cannot work out the cause of the problem, you will need to escalate the problem to the Pilot Software Call Centre. They will either help you online or refer your problem to a Pilot Software Support Specialist. **Important** Have your business and registration details nearby, and formulate a clear description of the problem in your mind.
Step 5: Follow up on the solution www.pilot.co.za Customer Login	Regardless of whether the Pilot Software Call Centre gives you an immediate solution over the phone, or you need to wait for a Support Specialist, you still need to follow up on the solution. • **Following up with your staff** When a solution has been implemented, you need to follow up with your staff a few hours or a few days later to confirm that the solution is firmly in place and that there is no risk of the problem coming back. • **Following up with the Pilot Software Call Centre** Use the online system to keep track of answers and solutions. If necessary, follow up with the call centre regularly to make sure that your problem is being worked on. When the solution does arrive, be sure to update your staff as soon as possible.

Typical User or Operator Errors

The following questions and problems will give you an idea of how often we can make simple errors when working with software. By avoiding these simple errors we can avoid logging support and call out routines.

Problem	Troubleshooting steps	
1. What should I do if I have staff who repeatedly struggle to log on to Pilot POS?	Confirm the details of the staff member on the system and then double-check that they are following the appropriate logon procedures. It may be necessary to start a new shift or register the finger print again.	**Extra Notes**
2. The system does not accept the operator password.	Make sure that the password is correct and has been entered correctly. Make sure that the NUM LOCK key is in an ON position, or register the finger print again.	**Extra Notes**
3. Operator forgot their password	The site operator needs to create a new password. Never use someone else's password or allow staff to share passwords. As a site operator it is important to change your password regularly, at least once a month. If you are afraid you'll forget your password, write it down and keep it in a safe place.	**Extra Notes**
4. What should I do if someone finds out my username and password?	Change your password immediately. Revisit the business processes and rules around password control with managers and business owners.	**Extra Notes**
5. What should I do if a staff member does not correctly manage the printing of bills?	Revisit the business procedures and rules around the managing and printing of bills. Confirm that staff members clearly understand who is responsible for settling outstanding bills.	**Extra Notes**
6. What should I do if a staff member is short after cash up, they have logged out and they are blaming "the system"?	Notify the business owner. You will probably need to work through your standard cash up routines from the beginning.	**Extra Notes**

Pilot POS System or Software Related Problems

Work through the following questions and problems to gain a better understanding of where to start troubleshooting your Pilot POS software.

Problem	Troubleshooting steps	Extra Notes
1. The modem is working but there are connectivity problems.	This is a problem that either Pilot Software or the service providers are responsible for. If the problem continues for long periods of time, contact the Pilot Software Call Centre.	
2. The cellular network service provider is down.	Unfortunately for your business, there is nothing that Pilot Software can do about this problem. If this does occur when you have customers waiting, mention to them that the service provider is down. Honest communication can go along way to reducing tempers and frustration.	
3. Networking problems.	Make sure that you understand the concepts and procedures around installing network drivers.	

Extra Notes!

Recommended System Settings to Ensure Faster Performance

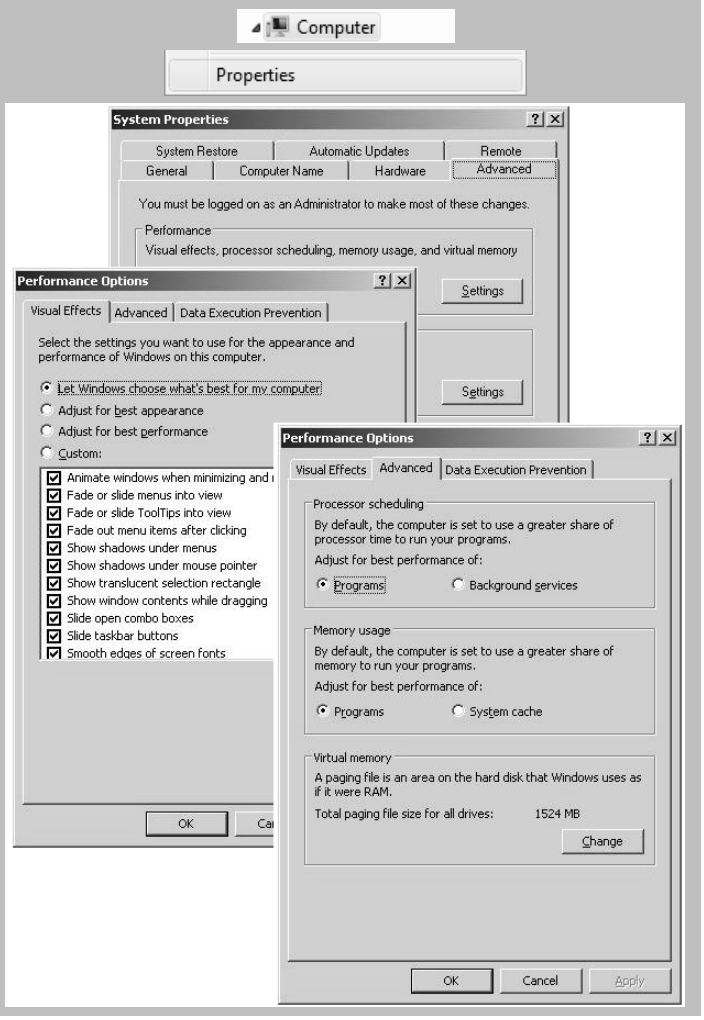
Due to ever changing software requirements and program enhancements, PC's often need to be upgraded with faster Processors and more memory. The following recommendations can ensure a smoother running system with less errors and better performance.

Use the following guidelines to implement recommended system settings:

1. Right Click on the My Computer on the desktop and select the Properties menu option. The System Properties window will be displayed.
2. Select the Advanced tab.
3. Click on the Settings button in the Performance frame.
4. Select the Adjust for best performance option.
5. Select the Advanced tab.
6. Select the Programs option in the Processor scheduling frame.

   The Programs option allocates short, variable time slices or quanta, to running programs.

   The Background services option assigns long, fixed quanta to running programs.
7. Click on OK to return to the Desktop.



Equipment Related Problems

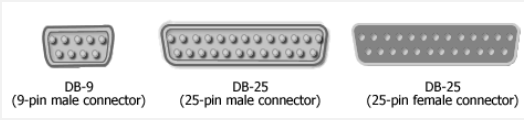
There are a range of problems that could be generated by the equipment in your business. Work through the following questions and problems to see how you can avoid some basic POS equipment problems.

1.	**Bill does not print.**	Make sure that the printer POWER is in an ON position. Make sure that there is paper in the printer. Make sure that all cables at the back of the printer are securely fitted. DO NOT GENERATE THE BILL AGAIN.		**Extra Notes**
2.	**The router does not seem to be working.**	Make sure that it has power and that the router light flashes green. Reset the router. Unplug the 12 volt supply and restart the PC.		**Extra Notes**
3.	**There is a problem with the UPS.**	Make sure that it has power and has not been damaged by a power surge. Check the DB board for a tripped switch.		**Extra Notes**
4.	**Network connectivity problems.**	Check the RJ (telephone connection) clips and that all network cables are securely fastened to the clips.		**Extra Notes**
5.	**Cash drawer doesn't open.**	Check the RJ (telephone connection) clip to the cash drawer. Confirm that the cash drawer hasn't been locked.		**Extra Notes**
6.	**POS Touch screen doesn't work.**	Check that the VGA and the Comm cables are connected securely.		**Extra Notes**

Understanding Basic Networking and Connectivity

When we refer to the networking of Pilot POS workstations and the Pilot Administrator's PC, we are simply referring to the how two or more computer machines are linked together for the purpose of sharing transaction and stock information. Whilst we will not go into technical detail here of how networks are built with combinations of hardware and software, it is important to have a basic understanding in place so that you can perform some simple troubleshooting steps before contacting the Pilot Support Call Centre.

Networking Terminology and Concepts

Concepts and Abbreviations	Definitions
Comport	Com Ports, also known as serial ports or RS-232 ports, are connections or hardware interfaces that are used to connect serial devices and are located at the back of the computer where various peripherals can be connected. In the right conditions the length of a cable can be up to 50 feet which can outperform the length restriction of parallel port connections. 
LAN	Local area networks (LAN's) typically reach across a single home or business location.
WAN	Wide area networks (WAN's), reach across cities, states, or even across the world. The Internet is the world's largest public WAN.
Modem	A modem is a networking hardware device used to allow remote computers to "speak to each other". Several kinds of modem devices exist for dial-up, broadband and cellular networking.
Network Adapters	A network adapter allows computing devices to interface within the local network and is typically a small hardware device. Several types of hardware adapters exist: • Traditional PCI adapters that fit inside a desktop PC (an NIC adapter). • PC Card adapters connected the side of a computer (sometimes called PCMCIA cards). • USB adapters. • Media adapters that can be used to provide a bridge to Wi-Fi wireless capability. • Newer notebook computers contain integrated wireless adapter chips.
Network Cables	While wireless connectivity is the future of connectivity, most computer networks will utilise cables for many years to come. You typically get Patch Cables and Ethernet Crossover Cables.
Network Drive	This refers to a hard-drive of a PC being made accessible over the network.
Network Protocols	In networking, the protocol refers to the type of communication language that used by the linked computers to "talk to each other". The most common protocol is called TCP/IP.
Network Router	Routers are sophisticated hardware devices that join multiple wired or wireless machines and networks together. A router has a number of "ports" that provide the connection points for different computers, a connection for electric power, and a number of LED lights to indicate the status of the device. Routers receive TCP/IP packets of information and forward the information to the appropriate IP addresses (machines).

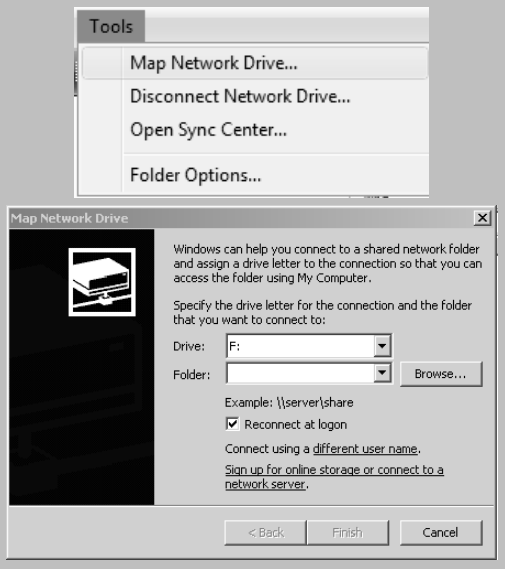
Mapping a Network Drive

When you access the My Computer icon or Windows Explorer function on your computer, you will notice that there are letters assigned to the hard-drives of the machine. For example, the floppy disc is assigned A, the main hard-drive C and the CD-ROM is assigned D or E.

When machines (their hard-drives) need to copy information to each other (communicate with each other) on a regular basis, their drives can be "mapped" to the network for easy access. This gives each hard-drive an assigned letter which can be viewed in Windows Explorer.

Use the following guidelines to map a network drive:

1. Open the My Computer folder or the Windows Explorer function.
2. Select the Tools…Map Network Drive to display the Map Network Drive window.
3. Select the letter that you want to assign to the hard-drive you are working with.
4. Confirm the location of the networked / shared hard-drive that you want to connect to by either typing in the details of the drive or browsing to it.
5. Select the Reconnect at logon checkbox so that the computer will map to that drive automatically each time the machine is logged on.



Testing Network Connectivity

Whether you are working with a dial-up connection or the business network, there will be occasions where you have problems communicating with either your Internet Service Provider or machines on the network. This can be due to a number of factors such as the other computer may not be switched on, the application server may be down, or there may be a fault in the communications network somewhere.

When the other computer you are trying to connect to is on your local network you have control of the situation and can rectify things once you figure out what is wrong. If the computer or service you are trying to access is located outside of your business you will probably not be able to resolve fix the problem yourself, but you can at least determine where the problem is.

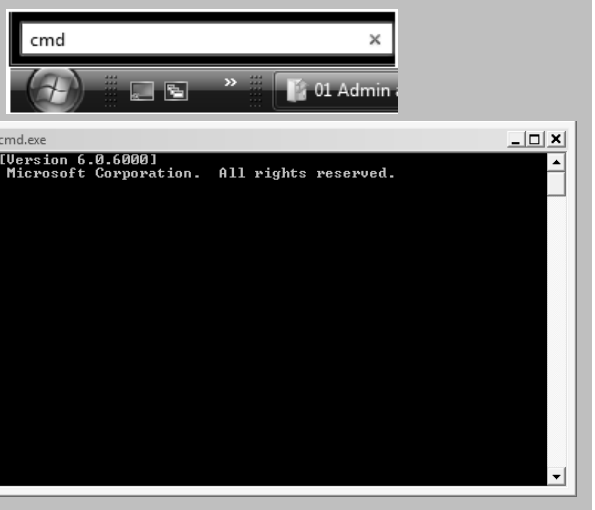
Use the following guidelines to test network connectivity in Windows:

1. Confirm that all the machines you are trying to connect to are switched on.
2. Click on Start and in the Program Run field type CMD.

   The Windows Command Prompt window will be displayed.
3. Type PING and the Computer-name.

   If you get message – REPLY FROM 192.168.x.x (for example), you have successfully communicated with that computer.

   If you get a message - PING REQUEST COULD NOT FIND xxxx, then there is no communication.



4. If you do not have connectivity with a machine, check the following:
   - The computer you are trying to connect with has not been switched on
   - The network cable has not been plugged in or connected properly
   - Appropriate IP settings (which you would need to have recorded when setting up the system)
   - The hard-drive of the machine has not been shared across the network
   - There is Firewall or Security software on the computer.

Extra Notes!