Product Overview Guide
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About This Guide

The Aloha Configuration Center Product Overview Guide introduces you to our centralized, multi-store database management solution. This guide describes the main features and benefits of Aloha Configuration Center, explains what Aloha Configuration Center does and how it works, as well as provides an overview of the Aloha Configuration Center user interface.

Is This Guide for You?

The audience for this guide is anyone who wants to understand the fundamentals of Aloha Configuration Center, including corporate, franchisee, or individual store owners, sales representatives, project managers, point-of-sale database administrators, and technical support.
Introducing Aloha Configuration Center

Aloha Configuration Center is a centralized database management application that manages Aloha Point of Sale (POS) configuration settings for multi-store restaurant organizations and offers remote access capability, through an easy-to-use .NET rich client interface.

Aloha Configuration Center combines the strengths of Aloha Manager and the Aloha Centralized Data Management (CDM) application, to form a new, more powerful, POS database management solution that eases the complexity of database management for your stores and helps lower the overall cost of ownership.

If you are a store owner, administrator, manager, or store operator, and currently manage POS data for multiple stores, you know the task to configure and maintain a group of stores is complex. Through Aloha Configuration Center, you can manage your menus, pricing, and much more in a quick and efficient manner.

Aloha Configuration Center enables you to create and maintain POS database records and configuration settings for multiple stores from a single, centralized database more effectively and efficiently. POS data is stored within a SQL database, in a secure, centrally-located data center, which you can access any time over the Internet through an attractive, easy-to-use client-side application. No matter the type of device you use to connect, whether it’s a workstation, home computer, or laptop, Aloha Configuration Center is ‘always on’ and always ready for your business needs.

Even if you manage data for a large chain of restaurants, Aloha Configuration Center lets you reliably distribute POS data from a central location to multiple stores with minimal effort.

If there is one thing you can count on, it’s that different stores within your chain may have different needs. Each individual store must cater to the needs and trends of its local market. Aloha Configuration Center enables you to create versions of your database records, to handle the ever-changing needs of each store. You can also schedule POS data changes for one or more stores, from a...
single point of reference. Menu, price, promotion, and screen design changes are now easier than ever to maintain with Aloha Configuration Center.

Moreover, not only are POS data changes more manageable, data record security is now manageable on multiple levels. Aloha Configuration Center uses a multi-tier record ownership model that enables you to designate who controls certain POS data.

If your organization owns multiple brand concepts, in addition to multiple stores, you too can enjoy the benefits of Aloha Configuration Center. You can effectively control multiple concepts, such as a coffeehouse, donut shop, and ice cream parlor, from a centralized source. Each store sees only the data applicable to their specific concept.

Another ‘always easy’ feature of Aloha Configuration Center is the user interface, which offers a new approach to data entry designed to increase data entry efficiency, increase clarity, and reduce the complexity of multi-store POS data management. The interface makes great use of its real estate and keeps information visible at all times. Aloha Configuration Center uses the latest interface design technology, to give you a rich mix of features and tools.

Corporate multi-store organizations, franchisees, existing Aloha customers, and brand new customers can all benefit from the flexibility and robust configuration capabilities of Aloha Configuration Center.

Why Use Aloha Configuration Center?

The primary purpose for Aloha Configuration Center is to maintain POS data, such as restaurant menu items, prices, and taxes, in a single, centralized database, for distribution to multiple stores.

But what makes Aloha Configuration Center stand out from its predecessors, Aloha Manager and CDM, as well as other POS database management systems? The answer is simple. Aloha Configuration Center takes POS database management to the next level because the POS database is stored on an Aloha Configuration Center hosted server, at a secure data center location. With Aloha Configuration Center, you have the flexibility to access your POS data from virtually any location, and from multiple types of devices.

Each time you add a new menu item or make a POS configuration change to the database, you can keep the data synchronized with your stores, through data distribution and POS updates.

Each store retrieves its database changes from the data center through a polling process, and updates the Aloha Front-of-House (FOH) terminals at the store with new data, when a system refresh (update) or end-of-day process occurs.

In addition to distributing centralized database information to multiple stores, you also use Aloha Configuration Center to build and activate the POS order entry screens that appear on the FOH terminal or self-service kiosk in a store. These screens are also managed in the centralized database, and distributed to stores, as necessary.
Benefits
Aloha Configuration Center enables you to see value in your investment, from the first day. You benefit greatly from this product because Aloha Configuration Center enables you to:

- Access your database from anywhere with Internet access and a client-side application.
- Control access to data based on security roles and permissions.
- Distribute database updates to a group of stores or individual stores.
- Update data in a real-time environment.
- Ensure data integrity.
- Eliminate duplicate data entry.
- Improve menu and menu-pricing accuracy.
- Implement promotions and pricing strategies effectively.
- Manage unique database configurations across multiple sites.
- Improve compliance with government laws and regulations.
- Increase up-time.
- Improve supportability.
- Support international requirements and provide easy localization.
- Integrate closely with related corporate systems.

Features
Multi-store restaurant organizations need a POS data management solution that will help manage individual stores more effectively. Aloha Configuration Center offers an extensive list of features to help promote a successfully managed multi-store operation.

Secure, Hosted Environment
The Aloha Configuration Center hosted solution includes a .NET architecture designed specifically for the Microsoft platform and Windows-based operating systems. This hosted solution offers a single point of administration at a data center backed by multi-redundant Internet and database access. You have access to your Aloha Configuration Center database from any computer with the Aloha Configuration Center client-side application installed.

You receive a guaranteed service level agreement including close to 24/7 uptime on data center core services, such as electrical power, Internet access and bandwidth scalability.

With the Aloha Configuration Center hosted solution, there is no need to worry about network administration, data backup, and server software and hardware purchases and upgrades; instead, you receive an easy, and reliable IT solution, at a fraction of the cost.

Enhanced Data Management
Aloha Configuration Center offers a more robust data management solution, through the use of features, such as record versioning, store group hierarchies, record ownership, and data distribution. These features are discussed in more detail later in the guide.
Business Continuity

For Aloha Configuration Center, Business Continuity is more than just disaster recovery, it is about continuous daily operations and the features and processes in place to keep critical data available, to reduce the issues associated with downtime.

Aloha Configuration Center allows you to recover your data set quickly, in the event you lose your BOH file server. It also enables you to distribute database changes for a future date, to intended stores. The changes remain in the local, store database until the specified effective date. This ensures database changes take effect on the POS as scheduled, even if the file server cannot connect to the host database. Moreover, if for any reason the store cannot connect to the host database, store employees can work in offline mode, and critical database changes, such as employee information and price changes, are updated on the POS in real-time mode. Then, when the connection is reestablished, Aloha Configuration Center synchronizes the hosted, centralized database with the store data.

Rich, Easy-to-Use Interface

The Aloha Configuration Center user interface presents an intelligent, uniform, and easy-to-use client-side application. The client-side technology helps increase performance, and optimizes your access to the centralized database at the data center.

The Aloha Configuration Center screens are intuitively designed, for the ‘novice’ user; yet, still offer a rich set of advanced features and tools for the ‘power’ user. The new ‘grid view’ style of each function screen keeps your data visible when you add or edit records in the application.

Compatibility with Current Aloha Manager Design

Aloha Configuration Center is designed to support the features and functionality of its predecessor, Aloha Manager. Current Aloha POS customers will not lose critical functionality when they migrate to Aloha Configuration Center; instead, they can expect familiar features and functionality in the Aloha Configuration Center application.

For example, how you add a menu item to the database may be slightly different; but, the reasons and rules in regards to ‘adding menu items’ remain the same. This greatly reduces the time it takes to become proficient with the new Aloha Configuration Center application.

Multi-Level Data Management

Aloha Configuration Center enables you to manage database records at the store level, as well as at the corporate, concept, and franchisee levels, through the use of ‘owners’ and ‘record hierarchy levels.’ These two concepts offer enormous flexibility because they enable you to control who can view, update, and receive data, in a multi-store environment. See “Record Ownership: Managing Users and Data at Multiple Levels” on page 17 for more information.

Data Integrity

Corporate POS databases might have inaccurate and conflicting data that can hamper the smooth distribution of POS data from the centralized database down to the stores. Menu items and other information can vary from store to store, which makes it difficult to know which item is accurate. Aloha Configuration
Center keeps common product data consistent across multiple stores and provides instant updates, when necessary, to keep corporate and store data accurate and synchronized at all times, and allow for consistent reporting.

**Real-Time Update Capability**

Aloha Configuration Center enables you to provide your stores with immediate database update capability. Stores can receive menu and other POS configuration changes from the data center and perform immediate updates to the FOH terminals, if necessary, before normal end-of-day processing.

You can perform certain restaurant operational tasks, such as adding a new employee to the system, and update the FOH terminals with the new information, without the need to bring down the FOH terminals.

**Offline Mode Capability**

Each time you log in to Aloha Configuration Center, the system attempts to connect with the hosted, centralized database. If a connection cannot be established, Aloha Configuration Center converts to ‘offline’ mode.

Offline mode enables you to perform the same functions as when connected to the host database; however, the changes you make while in offline mode are saved to the in-store database until Aloha Configuration Center resumes a connection with the host. When a connection is reestablished, Aloha Configuration Center synchronizes the centralized database with the store data.

**Smooth Upgrade and Migration Process**

Aloha Configuration Center works with your current store database(s), if you are an existing Aloha customer. We help you migrate your Aloha POS data to Aloha Configuration Center, to minimize downtime and disruption for your stores. You can quickly import your current Aloha Manager and CDM store data to Aloha Configuration Center, without the need to re-input all data. In addition, the directory structure is similar to Aloha Manager; so, those well known directories, such as Aloha, Bin, Data, and Bmp, are also utilized in Aloha Configuration Center. This makes the move from Aloha Manager to Aloha Configuration Center a smooth and seamless transition.

**Built-In Security**

Anytime you allow a company other than your own, to be responsible for hosting your data, the element of security becomes a focal point for your organization. You want to be sure that only authorized users can access your hosted database. You also want to make sure that once your data gets to each store; it is protected from employees that do not need access to all the data. We anticipated the increased need for security; therefore, in addition to standard authentication and encryption support, we built multiple layers of security into Aloha Configuration Center, which focus on the access privileges of the application, as well as the view and edit capabilities of anyone that has access to data within the application.

**Role-Based User Security** - Aloha Configuration Center uses role-based security to grant different levels of system access to different types of users within the application.

A user account contains the job roles assigned to you and the specific access rights associated with each job role. Security roles attached to job codes
determine who has access to the different functions and options within Aloha Configuration Center, and are the foundation of our role-based security platform.

Your user account is linked to your Aloha Configuration Center user ID and password. Each time you log in, Aloha Configuration Center verifies you as a valid user and grants access rights to only those areas you are allowed to use, based on your assigned job code and security roles.

**Record-Level Data Security** - Aloha Configuration Center enables you to control who can view and edit data in Aloha Configuration Center, based on the ownership levels assigned to each record in the system. Ownership levels are assigned to both users and database records, to enforce multiple levels of data security. Ownership levels are discussed in more detail, later in the document.

**Additional Aloha Configuration Center Features**

Along with the list of key features previously discussed, Aloha Configuration Center also boasts the following notable features:

- POS data change distribution reporting by store.
- Support for multiple POS versions across stores.
- Easy deployment of initial installation and updates.
- Licensing control and enforcement at the hosted data center.
- Upgrade assistance to transfer existing CDM or standalone data into Aloha Configuration Center.
- Backup and disaster recovery support.
Requirements

To use Aloha Configuration Center, we recommend you meet certain knowledge and system requirements.

Knowledge Requirements

Knowledge requirements differ, depending on your job role and the tasks you are completing; however, to maintain Aloha Configuration Center, you should have knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Basic knowledge of how to use Windows.
- Working knowledge of restaurant operations and menu design.
- Working knowledge of Aloha Manager is a plus.

System Requirements

The client-side system and store system requirements for Aloha Configuration Center are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remote Client System Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows 2000 or above operating system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.NET 2.0 framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512 MB memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 MB free hard drive space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 X 600 video resolution (1024 X 768 recommended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-speed connectivity between remote client and the data center (512K recommended minimum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store File Server and Client System Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows 2000 Pro or above operating system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS SQL Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.NET 2.0 framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512 MB memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 MB free hard drive space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 X 600 video resolution (1024 X 768 recommended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-speed connectivity between remote client and the data center (384K recommended minimum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aloha Configuration Center Architecture Overview

The Aloha Configuration Center codebase, which is written in Microsoft C#, integrates with the Microsoft .NET 2.0 framework to support a reliable, distributed POS database management solution.

SQL Platform
Aloha Configuration Center utilizes a SQL 2005 platform to form a secure, reliable enterprise data solution. SQL Server 2005 promotes high performance, availability, and scalability of the centralized database hosted at the data center. SQL Server 2005 Express Edition allows individual stores in a multi-store environment to maintain data at their site, while preserving data integrity when retrieving data from the centralized database.

.NET Framework
Aloha Configuration Center leverages the latest development technology available from the Microsoft .NET framework to build and deploy Aloha Configuration Center. .NET is the latest Microsoft strategy to connect information, people, systems, and devices through software. The .NET platform supports centralized data storage and data synchronization, which increases efficiency and ease of access to information between a corporate restaurant organization and its stores.

.NET Remoting
Applications that communicate with one another can be located on the same computer, different computers on the same network, or even computers on different networks, across the Internet. .NET Remoting is a powerful component of the Aloha Configuration Center architecture because it enables applications to communicate with one another across the Internet. In addition, .NET Remoting supports different transport protocol formats and communication protocols, which allows us to build an application that adapts to different types of network environments.
User Interface Controls

We utilize Developer Express (Dev Express) tools for Visual Studio® .NET, to design and build a more efficient and flexible user interface. You add and maintain data in Aloha Configuration Center using a grid-view interface, which allows for easier data selection and editing, and keeps data visible at all times.

.NET Security

The .NET framework has built-in security that manages authentication. Authentication determines whether a user or application requesting access is, in fact, who or what they claim to be. Additionally, .NET Encryption converts data into a non-understandable form, and then uses ‘decryption’ to convert the encrypted data back into its original form, to make it understandable by those authorized to receive the data.

Implementation Options

Aloha Configuration Center is designed to support both hosted and standalone installation models.

Hosted Model

The hosted model uses a state-of-the-art data center to house the centralized Aloha Configuration Center database for a customer. In a hosted model, the hosted database is the core of the solution. The corporate office connects with the hosted database over the Internet to make database modifications, and each store connects with the hosted database to receive those modifications.

Figure 3: Basic Network Topology for Hosted Model
Self-Hosted Model
The self-hosted model enables a restaurant organization to host their own centralized Aloha Configuration Center database for their stores. We do not currently support this model.

Note: This is a future implementation feature.

Standalone Model
Aloha Configuration Center is also available to configure standalone restaurants that are not centrally managed. In a standalone model, the features used for a multi-store environment are hidden in the Aloha Configuration Center client-side user interface. This model is considered included in the base Aloha POS license fee.

Note: This is a future implementation feature.

Installation
It’s easy to get up and running with the Aloha Configuration Center hosted solution. There are three main installation components in a hosted solution:

- Host-Side Installation
- Remote-Client (Corporate) Installation
- In-Store Installation

Host-Side Installation
In a hosted model, your data is securely stored at the secure data center. Although there is an installation process to prepare your hosted database, you do not have to worry about the installation because we take care of it for you. We handle the entire host installation process, to ensure the data center is ready to support your critical POS data.

Remote-Client (Corporate) Installation
You can install the Aloha Configuration Center remote client-side application on any computer that meets minimum system requirements, and that has Internet connectivity, or a designated port.

Whether you want to install Aloha Configuration Center on your company workstation, on your laptop, or both, the installation process is the same for both types of computer devices.

When the host-side installation and configuration process is complete, you receive a secure, unique activation code. Use this code when you access our designated Web site from the computer device on which you want to install Aloha Configuration Center. Before you can install Aloha Configuration Center, you must have the Microsoft .NET 2.0 Framework installed on your computer, which requires a compatible operating system.

The Web site guides you through the application download process. You can run the install application directly from the Web site, or save it on your computer and then run the install application.

The install application verifies your system has the minimum system requirements, before it continues with the installation. After the installation is
complete, you can use Aloha Configuration Center to access your hosted database.

**In-Store Installation**

The in-store installation process is similar to the client-side installation; however, because each store keeps a mirror image of the hosted database on site, the Aloha Configuration Center in-store installation process requires you to install Microsoft SQL Express, in addition to the .NET 2.0 Framework.

**Application Upgrades**

Aloha Configuration Center upgrades are smooth and seamless because they are deployed automatically, behind the scenes. This causes minimal interruption to your daily operations. Each time you start Aloha Configuration Center, the system checks for available updates. If an application update exists, the update downloads instantaneously.
Aloha Configuration Center Key Concepts

To understand how Aloha Configuration Center can work for your organization, it’s important to first understand the basic concepts behind how Aloha Configuration Center works.

Record Ownership: Managing Users and Data in a Multi-Store Environment

Aloha Configuration Center provides restaurant organizations with an unprecedented model of data management. From the corporate office to the restaurant back office, Aloha Configuration Center enhances data management at multiple levels.

For some companies, the corporate office controls the database records for all stores within their company. Within other organizations, the corporate office controls the records for the stores they own, while allowing each franchisee to have control of certain records, as necessary. Additionally, there are various database records that individual stores need to control for their operation.

No matter how you want to control database records within your organization, Aloha Configuration Center enables you to create a hierarchy structure to successfully manage database records for your multi-store environment. To do this, Aloha Configuration Center employs two concepts known as ‘Owners’ and ‘Record Hierarchy Levels.’

Owners

Aloha Configuration Center requires you to assign an ‘owner’ to each database record you add to the system. An owner is a restaurant organization, franchisee, or individual store that controls one or more records in your Aloha Configuration Center database. When you assign an owner to a database record, you are designating who has control of that record.

Owners are created when your database is set up, and each owner has an inherent ‘record hierarchy level.’ The record hierarchy level attached to the owner becomes attached to the database record, as well. It is the record hierarchy level associated with both the owner and record, that ultimately determines who can view and edit a database record.

![Diagram: A Database Record Inherits the Record Hierarchy Level of its Owner]

Figure 4: A Database Record Inherits the Record Hierarchy Level of its Owner
The owner assigned to a database record also determines how the database record is filtered, when data is distributed to stores. This provides control over where data ends up during the data distribution process, for a multi-store, multi-owner organization.

Moreover, the owner affects security of database records. When you add an employee to the system, you must assign an owner to the employee. The owner you assign to the employee determines the data they can see when they log in to Aloha Configuration Center. The owner assigned to the employee also determines the choice of owners they can assign to any new records they create; thereby, establishing the appropriate record hierarchy level for each record.

**Record Hierarchy Levels: Global, Corporate, and Store**

As mentioned earlier, an owner has an associated record hierarchy level. There are three record hierarchy levels built in to Aloha Configuration Center: Global, Corporate, and Store, with Global as the highest level and Store as the lowest. The fundamental purpose of these levels is to control:

- **Record Visibility** - Restricts employees from viewing records they are not entitled to see.
- **Record Maintainability** - Controls who has the ability to edit records in the Aloha Configuration Center database.
- **Record Distribution** - Filters the database records that are sent to each store, based on who owns the records.

![Figure 5: Example Owner Hierarchy for Multiple Stores](image)
The following matrix indicates the ‘view’ and ‘edit’ privileges for a database record, based on the owner assigned to the employee accessing the record, as well as the owner assigned to the database record:

![Figure 6: View and Edit Privileges Based on Employee and Record Ownership](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Global-Level Employee</th>
<th>Corporate-Level Employee</th>
<th>Store-Level Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global-Level Database Record</td>
<td>View/Edit</td>
<td>View</td>
<td>View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate-Level Database Record</td>
<td>View/Edit</td>
<td>View/Edit</td>
<td>View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store-Level Database Record</td>
<td>View/Edit</td>
<td>View/Edit</td>
<td>View/Edit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Versioning: Managing Database Variations

Many multi-store restaurant organizations allow their stores to have POS database variations. Different stores might use different tax rates, sell items at different prices, or offer different promotions for a given period. Aloha Configuration Center uses a concept called ‘Versioning’ to accommodate multi-store businesses with these types of varying needs.

When you set up an Aloha Configuration Center database, you generally start with a set of corporate-owned records that are applicable to the majority of your stores. These initial records are considered ‘primary’ records. Versioning allows you to have variances in a primary record, without the need to create a separate, unique record for each store.

A version of a primary record is beneficial when a store requires certain settings in the record to be different. A version is essentially a composite copy of the primary record, except for the few changes made to the record that one or more stores may need. The version is not a standalone record; it shares the record number of the primary record, but overrides the primary record at designated stores.

There are two types of versioning methods: **Standard** and **Scheduled**.

**Standard** versioning is the versioning method used for the majority of Maintenance function records. Standard versioning enables you to create a version of a primary record, and then assign the version to an individual store, or group of stores. When data is sent to each store during the data distribution process, the system filters the data so that only those stores to which the version is assigned actually receive the version of the primary record.

![Figure 7: Example of a Primary and Versioned Day Part Record](image)

The version overrides its primary record indefinitely, as there are no start and end dates used with Standard versioning. If you no longer want a version available at a store, you delete the version, and the primary record will be in effect at the store. Additionally, when you use standard versioning, a store can have only one version of a specific primary record active at any given time.

**Scheduled** versioning works similar to standard versioning, except that scheduled versioning provides the ability to set start and end dates to indicate when a version is active at a store.
Store Group Hierarchies: Organizing Stores Based on Your Business Needs

If your organization owns a large number of restaurants, it might be common practice to organize your restaurants by certain classifications, such as by size or location, for sales reporting or regulatory purposes.

Those same classifications can also be very useful when you want to better manage the menu items, promotions, tax rates, and other POS database records that are available for use at only certain restaurants.

Aloha Configuration Center provides a store group hierarchy feature that enables you to define several hierarchies, or classifications, by which you can group your stores.

A hierarchy is any classification you find helpful when organizing your stores, such as region, tax jurisdiction, store size, or pricing tier, to name a few. You can use as many hierarchies as you need, to place your stores into logical groupings.

For each hierarchy you define, you can create several store groups to assign to the hierarchy. For example, for a tax jurisdiction hierarchy, you could create a store group for each state, to organize tax jurisdictions for your restaurants, by state.

![Diagram of a Store Group Hierarchy by Region](image)

Figure 8: Example of a Store Group Hierarchy by Region

After you set up store groups for a specific hierarchy, you assign each applicable store to the appropriate store group. And you can assign a store to only one store group, within a given hierarchy.

After you set up your hierarchies and store groups, and then assign your stores to the applicable store groups, you can then use those store groups to assign a different version of a POS database record to multiple stores.

If your organization has many restaurants, we recommend you take time to plan your hierarchy structure and store group assignments carefully, before you begin to import data for each store.
Offline Mode: Keeping Your Business Operational

Each time you log in to Aloha Configuration Center, the system attempts to connect with the hosted, centralized database. If a connection cannot be established, Aloha Configuration Center converts to ‘offline’ mode. Offline mode enables you to perform the same functions as when connected to the host database; however, the changes you make while in offline mode are saved to the in-store database until Aloha Configuration Center resumes a connection with the host. When a connection is reestablished, Aloha Configuration Center synchronizes the centralized database with the store data.

Figure 9: Offline Mode Process Flow

Any changes saved to the in-store database are transmitted to the hosted, centralized database and subsequently, purged from the in-store database. The next time a data distribution process occurs at the store, the records are retrieved from the hosted database, and re-saved to the in-store database, following the normal export process.

If the export process runs at the store before any changes made in offline mode are transmitted to the hosted database, the system combines those changes with any new updates from the hosted database, and then updates the POS data files.
Real-Time Updates: Ensuring the POS Receives Critical Data without Interruption

As a store manager, you might need a new cashier to have immediate access to the FOH terminals to start training, or, have an urgent need to change the price of a menu item. If the need arises while the restaurant is busy, it might be difficult to perform a refresh, which brings down the terminals to update the FOH terminals with the new information.

To accommodate situations such as this, Aloha Configuration Center provides a Real-Time Update feature that enables you to send certain record changes to the FOH terminals, without the need to bring down the terminals through the normal refresh process.

You can update your most critical POS changes on the BOH system, and perform immediate updates to the FOH terminals, if necessary, before normal End-of-Day processing, or a manual refresh process.

Figure 10: Real-Time Update Process Flow
How Aloha Configuration Center Works

Aloha Configuration Center uses a centralized database that restaurant organizations access to maintain and distribute POS data changes to their stores.

The two primary processes that allow you to get up and running with Aloha Configuration Center, as well as effectively manage data across multiple stores once you are using Aloha Configuration Center, are the “Import” process and the “Data Distribution and Export” process.

Present Aloha customers use the Import process to get their existing POS data into the Aloha Configuration Center database.

Both new and existing Aloha customers use the Data Distribution and Export process to distribute initial data to stores after the import process, and distribute database updates (i.e., new items, price changes, promotions, and more) for each store.

Data Import Process

There are two types of imports: **Primary** and **Secondary**. Existing Aloha POS customers need to import their POS data into Aloha Configuration Center and distribute to each store, before they begin to use Aloha Configuration Center. The Import process performs an initial import of data from an existing Aloha POS database, and populates the centralized Aloha Configuration Center database. Restaurant organizations with multiple stores must perform a separate import for each store, to transport store data into the centralized database, as well.

The following diagram illustrates the Aloha Configuration Center import process to get existing POS data into Aloha Configuration Center.

![Data Import Process Diagram](image)

**Primary Import**

The initial data import is called the ‘Primary’ import. The primary import assumes the Aloha Configuration Center database is empty; therefore, we recommend existing customers use the database from their most standard Aloha store data for the primary import. This data can be a regular store database you consider to have common data that most stores will use.

By default, imported data has corporate-level data ownership assigned; however, data records that contain store-owned data, such as hardware devices, are not
assigned corporate-level data ownership, but are assigned to the store from where the data was selected for the primary import.

After data is imported, it must be committed, or saved to the database. The saved data is stored in the centralized database at the data center, where it is ready to be sent to each store using the ‘data distribution’ process (discussed later in this section).

Store Import

Subsequent data imports are called ‘Store’ imports. Store imports, which are similar to primary imports, process individual store data with the existing Aloha Configuration Center database, and handle conflicts when stores have the same information, but defined differently, such as the case with employee data, store settings, and hardware devices. When the system imports store data, it compares each record against the data used for the primary import. All records that match the corporate records exactly are ignored. This is because the store is going to receive that record as a corporate-level record, during the data distribution process.

Any store records with a record number that does not already exist in the primary import data set, is automatically assigned to the store currently being imported. The records considered primary store-level records and are used by that store only.

When data records conflict, this means the record number is the same for both a corporate-level record and a store-level record, but one or more settings in that record are different. If this happens during a store import, the system automatically creates a version, or composite copy of the primary record, and assigns the ownership of that version to the imported store, or a store group, if applicable store group hierarchies exist in the system.

Data Distribution and Export Process

The Data Distribution and Export process enables the corporate office to send the imported data to each store, as well as distribute daily POS data changes, such as new or updated menu items, prices, promotions, and more, and then update the POS terminals at the store, with the new data.

The following diagram illustrates how Aloha Configuration Center database changes are updated and distributed to each store. The steps that follow the diagram correspond to the numbers within the illustration and provide additional details.

![Data Distribution and Export Process Diagram](image-url)
The following steps describe the general process Aloha Configuration Center follows to handle POS data maintenance distribution and export at a store:

1. **Data Distribution:**
   The POS database administrator accesses the Aloha Configuration Center client-side application to add, modify, or delete menu items and other POS configuration settings in the Aloha Configuration Center database. When the administrator saves changes to the database, the changes are saved immediately to the hosted, centralized database.

   At regular intervals, the database changes are transmitted to each store’s local database, where they are kept until the store performs one of the following tasks:
   - The store manually runs the "Refresh" utility, which brings down the FOH, pulls the current day changes from the local database, and updates the POS with the new changes.
   - The store manually runs the “Update” utility, which brings down the FOH, pulls the next business day changes from the local database, and updates the POS with the new changes.
   - The store performs an “End-of-Day” process (manually or automatically), which in addition to other important end-of-day tasks, brings down the FOH, pulls the next business day changes from the local database, and updates the POS with the new changes.

2. **Export:**
   An export service runs on the store file server, to generate a new set of POS database files. These files include any database changes, as well as any database records that are valid for the current business day, based on an associated event or activation schedule that is active. The new POS database files are stored in a temporary directory, and then copied to the \NewData subdirectory.

   The system brings down the FOH terminals, forces an update of database and configuration files from the \NewData subdirectory to the \Data subdirectory, and restarts the FOH terminals. Any new, active records are now available on the FOH terminals at the store.

   If the store performs an Update, any database records that are valid for the next business day, are also stored in the temporary directory.

   **NOTE:** If a store loses data connectivity for several days, the export process still functions successfully because the data distribution process sends all applicable data to the store-level database, including data that is scheduled to be active for a future date.
Aloha Configuration Center User Interface at a Glance

The Aloha Configuration Center user interface takes a fresh approach to data entry. It leverages the latest look and feel of 'grid-view' application screens, and offers a mix of rich features and tools. This section looks at some of the common screens and tools you will use in Aloha Configuration Center.

Screen Components

The standard dimensions of the Aloha Configuration Center screen are 800 X 600 pixels; however, you can resize to accommodate different monitor sizes and resolutions. The items below describe the common components that appear on the main Aloha Configuration Center screen.

Product Panel

The Product panel appears under the Configuration Center title, and displays the additional Radiant applications for which you may have a license to access, such as Aloha Takeout. This panel enables you to switch between applications and return to the core, Aloha Configuration Center application, as well. A separate icon for each application you are authorized to use appears on this panel.

Function Pane

The Function pane includes the Open Tasks and Store Selector functions. Open Tasks provides centralized navigation and quick access to open function screens. The Store Selector pane enables corporate- and global-level employees to load data for select stores. This feature minimizes the amount of store-level records to filter through at any given time, which maximizes system performance.
Feature Panel

The Feature panel contains the name of the selected function, such as Items, Employees, Promos, and more.

Record Selection Area

The Record Selection area is a search and edit tool used to select from the database records currently available. This tool enables you to sort, group, and filter records, as necessary. A new search function is built in to make it easy for you to locate existing records.

Screen Tabs

Each function screen uses a series of tabbed screens to sort and categorize options in a logical workflow. Use the tabs to navigate to all the options required when creating a record.

Content Area

The content area enables you to view the options for a record defined in the database, for a selected maintenance function. It also displays the options when adding or modifying a record for a given function.

Command Panel

The Command panel, which appears on the right side of a function screen, contains a standard set of command buttons that perform specific actions, such as add, delete, edit, and copy.

Online Help

Aloha Configuration Center includes an embedded online Help file you can access anytime you are using the application, no matter the screen you are on at the time. The following type of information is available:

![Configuration Center Online Help](image)

**Figure 14: Configuration Center Online Help**
Key Interface Features

The Aloha Configuration Center user interface offers very useful tools to help you perform database maintenance functions quickly, and more efficiently. This section describes a few of the new interface features.

Type and Owner Assignment

The Type and Owner dialog box enables you to assign a specific owner to a record, when you add a record to the Aloha Configuration Center database. The owner determines who controls the record. Depending on how you plan to use the record, you might assign a record to a specific store, or assign a corporate owner to the record, which enables your corporate office to have control of the record. If you create records at the store level, the owner automatically defaults to the store.

You can also assign a record type for applicable functions. For example, when you add menu items to the database, you can specify if the item is a standard food item, or a gift card/certificate item.

Number Assignment Dialog Box

The Number Assignment dialog box enables you to specify how the system determines the next available record number. This is a useful feature when you want Aloha Configuration Center to automatically number new menu item records in incremental numbers (e.g., 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and so on).
Version Assignment Dialog Box

The Version Assignment dialog box enables you to create a version of an existing record, to effectively handle POS database variations at different stores. When you create a version, you need to assign the version to one or more stores. Click Version on the Command panel, to display the Version Assignment dialog box.

![Version Assignment Feature](image)

Record Comparison Dialog Box

The Record Comparison feature enables you to compare the option settings that are different between two records. For example, if you need to understand why a particular version of a primary record was created, you can compare the options between the primary and versioned record, to determine if the versioned record is needed in your current database.

![Record Comparison Feature](image)
Smart Search Capability

The Smart Search feature helps you quickly locate a specific database record. When you begin to type text in the record selection area, the system uses 'prefix-matching' to display the closest record that matches the text.

Drag and Drop Sorting

An easier way to sort item records is now available. The drag and drop sort feature enables you to reorder and view records easily. Sorting is very useful if you have many columns on a single line in which some columns are not visible. In this situation, you can reorder the columns so that the columns you use most frequently are visible. This feature is also useful if you want to order your records by a different column heading, such as by Name, instead of Number.
Screen Designer: The New Panel Editor

Aloha Configuration Center introduces a redesigned version of its Panel Editor interface, which is used to create order entry screens for the Aloha POS terminals.

The new Screen Designer provides great tools to easily customize the panels and screens used for the Aloha QuickService and Aloha TableService order entry screens. The new ‘Properties Window’ allows you to view and modify the appearance, function, and other characteristics of each Screen Designer element, such as the buttons, panels, and screens. You can easily change the attributes of a group of buttons, at one time.

Additionally, the new ‘Button Grid’ feature introduced with Screen Designer makes the process of aligning, organizing, and resizing multiple buttons an almost effortless task.
In addition to the new features within QuickService and TableService Screen Designer, Aloha Configuration Center introduces a brand new ‘SelfService’ Screen Designer.

SelfService Screen Designer is used to create order entry screens for standalone, order entry terminals.

With SelfService Screen Designer, you can design an order entry system that guides customers through the entire ordering and payment process, without the need for a cashier, in most cases.

Additionally, you can use SelfService Screen Designer to promote upsell items and display animated advertisements during the order entry process, to help increase sales for your establishment. You can use the new SelfService feature in combination with either QuickService or TableService.

From creating screen layouts with panels, buttons, and animations, to defining element properties such as size, font, and color, Screen Designer enables you to quickly and easily customize the look and feel of your order entry screens.

**Conclusion**

The Aloha Configuration Center centralized database management solution is the best choice for any restaurant organization that wants to effectively manage multiple stores from a single database, and have access to that database anytime, from the corporate office, or a remote location.

Aloha Configuration Center offers unprecedented database management capabilities that advance multi-store restaurant operations to a higher level of success.