Using store design to reduce shoplifting

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Giving consideration to crime prevention practises in and around your business ensures staff and customer security. Consider the following suggestions to reduce the impact of crime upon your business:

Business identification

- Clearly display business names and numbers as this will assist emergency services locate your business if needed.
- Ensure your business name and store signs are visible at night, either by using luminous signs or lighting.

Entry/exit

- Where appropriate bell chimes/alarms should be fitted to notify of customers entering and exiting the store.
- High shelving should not be placed in front of the entry/exit as staff must have a clear view of people coming in to or leaving the store.

Windows

- Windows should be clear of excessive signage.
- The inside of the store should be clearly visible from outside the store.
- Open-style grilles or shutters should be used instead of solid style shutters to protect windows and doors. This reduces opportunities for vandalism as well as increasing visibility into the store.

Lighting

- A well-lit area increases the chances of any unwanted behaviour being detected.
- Ensure car parks are well lit to assist staff and customers feel safe as they leave and reduce the likelihood of victimisation by increasing visibility.
- Do not light areas outside of store hours that cannot be seen (e.g. loading docks) by passing pedestrians or cars, as they may assist potential burglars access your store.

NSW Police Force

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WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?

MAKE SECURITY YOUR BUSINESS

Shelving

- Reduce the height of shelving where possible to increase visibility in the store.
- Shelving that is above shoulder height should have mirrors positioned around them to ensure staff can see customers on the other side.
- Shelving should be positioned so that aisles between shelves are visible from the register.

Other displays

- Ideally displays throughout the store should be no higher than waist-height to prevent blocking sightlines throughout the store.
- Higher display units and shelving should be placed against the walls of the store to ensure clear visibility of those using them as well as maximising clear sightlines.
- Displays next to store exits or outside of the shop are extremely vulnerable to theft. Reconsider the use of these, unless you have staff monitoring these displays at all times.

Sales counter and register

- Elevate the sales counter/register so staff have greater visibility of the store.
- Registers should be positioned either near entry/exit points or with clear visibility to entry/exit points.
- Consider leaving empty cash registers open at night (to prevent their being broken into).

Storage room

- Access to storage rooms should be controlled with either a key or pin code. These should be changed to ensure former staff are unable to access these areas once they have left your employment.
- Where appropriate, ensure CCTV monitor storage areas/reserves.

Fitting rooms

- Limit the number of items customers can take into the fitting rooms, and ensure staff enforce this.
- Ensure staff are rostered on to fitting room areas to increase security and identify if items go missing from here.

Staff areas

- Ensure there are designated secure areas for staff to leave their bags, phones and wallets. Having staff lockers assists staff to securely store their belongings.
- Discourage staff leaving their personal items around the sales counter/register as this may place their items as well as your business at risk of theft.

Blind spots/difficult areas in your store

- Install a convex mirror to increase the visibility of blind spots.
- Reduce the height of the shelf or increase distance between shelves so staff can see customers on the other side.
- Elevate the sales counter/register so staff have greater visibility of the store.

Product positioning

- Position high-value items in areas that are well monitored by staff.
- High-value items should have security devices attached, for example source tagging, cable ties or even locked in display cabinets.
- If security tags are on store products, ensure customers' bags are checked if sensors are alerted, whether they are walking into or out of the store.

- Consider displaying empty boxes for the same marketing impact, as this greatly reduces the risk of theft.
- Keep a record of the items most commonly stolen from your store. This will help you to determine the products most at risk, as well as vulnerable areas of your store.
- Give careful consideration about placement of products next to doors, fire escapes and windows that are left open – these items may be vulnerable to theft.

CCTV

- If you have CCTV, ensure that they are positioned to gain maximum coverage. Consult your local Crime Prevention Officer of the NSW Police Force to assist with this.
- Ensure CCTV is recorded with new tapes or DVDs to ensure clear images.
- Ensure hanging displays, decorations and signage do not block lines of sight for CCTV.
- Ensure you regularly review CCTV footage, and ensure that staff know that you do this. Reviewing CCTV can assist in detecting patterns of crime, identify blind spots, and notice any technical errors with CCTV and its footage.
- Consider registering with the NSW Police Force CCTV register. For more information go to www.police.nsw.gov.au/cctv_register
- Ensure you are complying with the necessary privacy legislation. For more information visit www.privacy.gov.au/law

Staff

- Ensure staff greet and make eye contact with all customers that enter the store. This let's all people entering the store know that you are aware of their presence.
- Ensure there is an adequate number of staff to work at all times, so the store or sales floor is never unattended.
- Ensure staff have been trained in loss prevention and customer service.
- Communicate with staff about any recent shoplifting that has occurred in the store or in other stores in your area.
- If appropriate hire staff to work at night to clean up, restock and change window and other displays. This ensures the store is being monitored at night.

Signage

- Security messages should be displayed as they may act as a useful deterrent. For example, 'Shoplifters will be Prosecuted' and 'No cash kept on premises after hours'.
- Display signage about bag-checking policies.
- Inform customers if you have CCTV and that they are being monitored.

Community network

- Join a local business watch or Chamber of Commerce if they exist in your area. This will help in finding out and sharing local knowledge about any recent crimes against retailers.
- Get to know your local Police Crime Prevention Officer at the Local Area Police Command. The local Crime Prevention Officer can also provide security advice about your store.

For more information on securing your retail premises and identifying vulnerable areas in your store, download a copy of the 'Designing Crime Out of Your Business' checklist on the NSW Preventing Crime website at www.crimeprevention.nsw.gov.au. There is also a copy at the end of this resource manual.