

Retail Crime Control: An Operational Strategy

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Abstract

Retail, squeezed by competition, shareholder demands, rising losses, and civil and criminal liability risks are concentrating resources on crime and loss control (CLC) efforts. This effort demands a more formalized CLC process. This paper outlines the concept of 'prevention-marketing', which delivers CLC initiatives into 'zones of influence'. This proactive approach should improve deterrence and reduce loss in a more cost-effective manner. A formalized protection process also allows for increased focus, better coordination, empirical testing and more meaningful training.

Keywords: Crime and loss control; Prevention marketing; Deterrence; Zones of influence; CPTED; Routine Activities; TDCs

Introduction

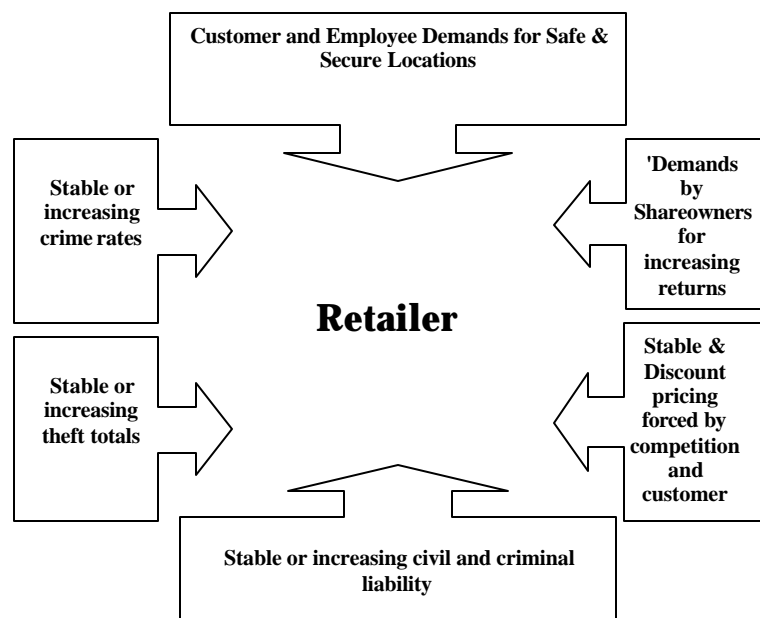
After 10 years of data collected for the University of Florida's National Retail Security Survey, one thing is clear: inventory losses do not seem to be decreasing (Hollinger, et al. 1991; Hollinger et al., 2001) (Fig. 1 - Loss). Overall loss totals are going up because sales revenue numbers are increasing. In 1990, US retail sales were approximately \$1.27 trillion (National Retail Federation) while shrinkage was reported at 1.79% (see Fig. 1) In 1995, retail revenues were estimated at \$1.40 trillion (National Retail Federation) while reported shrinkage averaged 1.87% (Hollinger et al., 1996) (Fig. 1.) These inventory losses create extensive problems for retailers since US retail companies are caught in the middle of a 'big squeeze' (Fig. 2). Crime losses, and the demand for safety, are increasing with volume increases. At the same time competition still keeps pricing low pressuring margins (Jackson and Outcalt, 1996), and meanwhile, shareholders still demand excellent performance from companies they invest their hard-earned dollars in.

Fig. 1. Rising Retail Sales and Losses.

Year	Estimated Retailed Sales	Average Estimated Shrinkage	Estimated Shrinkage Losses
1990	\$1.27 trillion	1.79%	\$22.7 trillion
1991	\$1.14 trillion	1.91%	\$21.8 trillion
1992	\$1.23 trillion	1.88%	\$23.1 trillion
1993	\$1.28 trillion	1.92%	\$24.6 trillion
1994	\$1.35 trillion	1.83%	\$24.6 trillion
1995	\$1.40 trillion	1.87%	\$27.0 trillion

This expectation of rising profits comes as retail companies are faced with greater losses and a reduced ability to absorb or pass on those mounting losses, or the rising costs of protection. Besieged retailers must take more preventative action, however, demand for protective efficacy as well as civil and criminal liability risks for poor or poorly executed security demand prevention efforts be carefully designed and implemented (Federal and Fogelman, 1986). The implications of retail companies just holding their own against crime and loss aren't lost on most senior loss prevention and operations decision-makers. Attendance at loss prevention conferences is up and crime and loss control solution companies are thriving. Retail loss prevention participants in the series of Brainstorm and Organized Retail Crime Conferences held in Orlando, Florida, as well as various retail association conferences have identified the need for a more formalized crime and loss control (CLC) methodology. Furthermore, the same major retailers are asking for more scholarly research on the causes and effects of crime, and for evidence-based crime and loss control. Retail loss practitioners need objective, measurable solutions.

Fig. 2. Economics of Crime Dynamics: 'The Big Squeeze'.

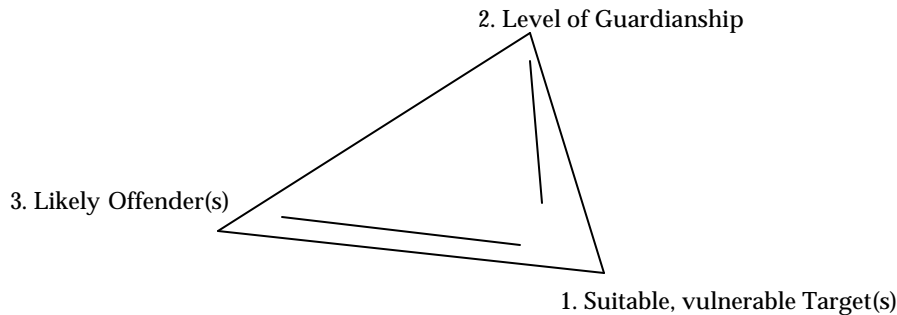


Why theft, why me

The complex explanations of theft and loss are many, and are often not well understood among ground level practitioners. Loss problems have always been a function of demand, supply and the “plumbing that connects the two (Hayes and Rogers, 2003). Insatiable demand for basic and luxury items by consumers and commercial buyers, as well as opportunistic, ad hoc, illicit supply chains, are fed by vulnerable supply chains and stores manned by a small number of overwhelmed, sometimes ill-equipped, occasionally corruptible and often incompetent staff. However, what we now know is helpful for devising a formalized approach to crime and loss control (CLC). Credible scholarly work has been done on the broad understanding of crime and its causes, with the idea of routine activities

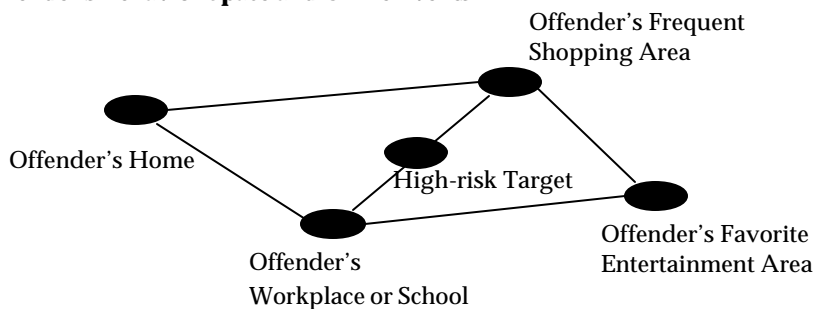
proving particularly useful (Cohen and Felson, 1979, Felson, 1998). This theory holds that people (likely offenders, employees and patrons alike) make daily decisions about what they will or won't do. Because of their interaction with the environment (human ecology), and movements in time and space, motivated or likely offenders can come into contact with a suitable target with low perceived guardianship. Capable guardians or place managers include those who protect areas, and those who protect specific assets (Eck, 1995). In this model decisions are made and actions taken by all parties involved which lead to the opportunity and probability for a crime (Figure 3).

Fig. 3. Routine Activities Theory (Felson, 1998)



Environmental criminology theory (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993 a, b) compliments the routine activity model in that it illustrates how decisions and movements by offenders and victims can lead to crime. The authors of this theory believe the activity spaces (home, recreation, work/school) of offenders and victims overlap. Criminal activity tends to occur along the paths offender take (Figure 4).

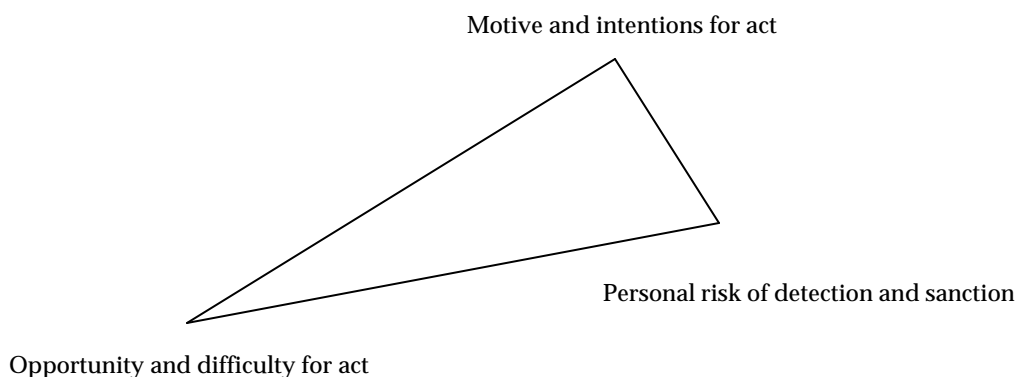
Fig. 4. Offender's Behavior Space and Crime Events



Just as important as macro explanations for criminality are the individual considerations and responses of offenders. Many potential offenders likely consider factors when contemplating committing a crime in a specific location. According to Taylor and Harrell (1996) these questions can include the following: (1) is there an attractive/desirable/vulnerable target? (2) Is it quick and easy to get to the target and remove the item(s)? (3) What are the chances I'll be seen? (4) If I am seen, will anyone actually do something about it? (5) Is there a quick, direct escape route? One should also note that if these thoughts occur, they could take place instantaneously or over time.

To further operationalize offender decision-making, we have the theft triangle model (Hayes, 1993) (Figure 5). The theft triangle (derived from the age-old fire triangle of fuel, heat source, and oxygen) addresses the psycho-sociological reasons for, and an individual's decision to attempt a theft. The previous theories help explain deviance on a more macro level while the theft triangle helps explain the personal perceptions of deviant individuals. Three primary perceptual variables help explain individual deviancy. The offender has a perceived need, desire or intention to possess and actually steal something from us, while neutralizing their guilt (Hollinger, 1991). Offenders generally must also believe they have the opportunity to safely commit the theft with relatively little effort. Further, offenders often take action, at least partially, when they perceive little downside risk such as capture and serious sanction. This decision-making process can occur instantaneously or over time.

Fig. 5. Theft triangle: Offender Considerations



Using theory to take action

Loss prevention people need to understand how best to influence would-be offenders before or during their decision-making process. We must make better decisions about what assets to carry and how best to protect them. From the preceding theories, as well as other academic and trade literature and loss prevention practitioners' experience, we can begin to assemble a workable, testable loss preventing methodology. Why people are deviant is just as important as how. If we understand the dynamics of human behavior, we can often influence that behavior. Our prevention efforts must be designed to alter and counter undesirable behaviors.

Situational Crime Prevention

Another very useful model for our retail CLC purposes involves the concept of situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1983; Newman et al., 1997). This model stresses our need to fully analyze a current or projected crime problem, then designing and testing situational protective measures. By better understanding the desirable asset(s), the probable 'threat', i.e. motives and techniques, and current protective efforts and vulnerability, it is possible to design a set of initiatives to reduce crime attempts in a specific situation (Hayes, 1995). Clarke describes sixteen crime prevention techniques that take into account situational factors about offenders, targeted assets, locations and current protection efforts (Figure 6).

Fig. 6. Sixteen Situational Crime Prevention Techniques (Adapted from Clarke and Homel, 1997)

Increasing Perceived Effort	Increasing Perceived Risks	Reducing Anticipated Rewards	Social Control
<p><i>1.Target hardening</i></p> <p>Locks Bollards for ram raids Bandit screens Hard plastic safers Special item packaging</p>	<p><i>5.Entry/exit screening</i></p> <p>Visible entry-way cameras Bag checks at entry EAS/RFID Parking lot entry/exit cameras (ID driver & tag #)</p>	<p><i>9.Target removal</i></p> <p>Removable car radio Time-lock safe or frequent cash deposits Remove firearms, knives, alcohol, etc. from high-risk stores</p>	<p><i>13.Rule setting</i></p> <p>Workplace behaviour code Sign workplace behaviour code</p>
<p><i>2.Access control /Item removal</i></p> <p>Parking lot barriers Fenced areas Locked backrooms Merchandise cabling Locking POS register Safes Limit parking lot entry/exit curb cuts</p>	<p><i>6.Formal surveillance</i></p> <p>Obvious cameras Burglar/EAS/merchandise alarms Security guards/police Alert staff Store detectives Exception reporting software</p>	<p><i>10.Identifying property</i></p> <p>Property marking (ink, dye, etching, RFID, etc.) Vehicle licensing Item branding</p>	<p><i>14.Stimulating conscience</i></p> <p>Roadside speedometers Signage: "Shoplifting is stealing" "Drugs don't work here" "Delivery people check in"</p>
<p><i>3.Deflecting offenders</i></p> <p>Bus stop placement Game room location Street/parking closures & traffic channeling</p>	<p><i>7.Surveillance by employees</i></p> <p>Pay phone location Parking lot attendants CCTV systems</p>	<p><i>11.Reducing temptation</i></p> <p>Quick & friendly customer service Quick & friendly employee benefits & service Deliveryman service</p>	<p><i>15.Controlling disinhibitors</i></p> <p>Drinking/smoking-age laws Protective merchandising (off open-sale)</p>
<p><i>4.Controlling facilitators</i></p> <p>Credit card/check photo Gun controls Caller-ID</p>	<p><i>8.Natural surveillance</i></p> <p>Defensible space (regular employee surveillance from work station) Street lighting "Hot products corrals"</p>	<p><i>12.Denying benefits</i></p> <p>Ink & mechanical merchandise tags Special clothes hangers Graffiti cleaning Close down fences/TDCs that convert items to cash</p>	<p><i>16.Facilitating compliance</i></p> <p>Easy store checkout Good employee pay & benefits Trash cans</p>

CPTED

A final guiding method for our purposes is termed Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or CPTED. Shaped over the last three decades (i.e. Angel, 1968;

Crowe, 1991; Jeffery, 1971, 1990; Newman, 1973; Schneider and Kitchen, 2002; Wood, 1973), CPTED has gained widespread acceptance since it is easily understood, and can provide practical ideas and guidelines for crime prevention in a variety of settings. CPTED principles can guide designers as they layout new or redesigned spaces and places. Environmental protective designs should help shape the perceptions and behavior of workers, visitors and offenders. CPTED principles include:

1. Natural surveillance:
 - a. The placement and design of assets and physical features to maximize visibility. This includes building and inside spatial layout and orientation, windows, entrances and exits, parking lots, walkways, landscape trees and shrubs, fences or walls, signage and other physical obstructions.
 - b. The placement of persons and/or activities to maximize surveillance possibilities including natural gathering areas, guard gates and regularly manned workstations.
 - c. Lighting that provides for enhanced illumination of work areas, sales floors, parking lots, walkways, entrances and exits.
2. Natural access control:
 - a. The use of sidewalks, pavement, lighting and landscaping to clearly guide the public to and from entrances and exits.
 - b. The use of fences, barriers, display fixtures, signage or landscaping to influence travel direction and speed as well as to prevent and/or discourage public access to or from dark and/or unmonitored areas.
3. Territorial reinforcement:
 - a. The use of physical attributes that express ownership of property, such as pavement treatments, landscaping, art, signage, screening, display fixtures and fences.
4. Maintenance:
 - a. The use of low maintenance landscaping, surveillance and access control technologies and lighting treatment to facilitate the CPTED principles of natural surveillance, natural access control and territorial reinforcement.

The Three D's of CPTED

CPTED involves the design of the physical space in the context of the bona fide user of the space, the normal and expected use of that space, and the predictable behavior of the bona fide users and offenders. CPTED emphasizes the connection between the functional objective of space utilization and behavior management. We must differentiate between designation of the purpose of space, its definition in terms of management and identity, and its design as it relates to function and behavior management. By using the "Three D's" as a guide, space may be evaluated by asking the following types of questions:

Designation:

What is the designated purpose of this space?

For what purpose was it originally intended?

How well does the space support its current use or its intended use?

Is there conflict?

Definition:

How is space defined?

Is it clear who owns it?

Where are its borders?

Are there social or cultural definitions that affect how space is used?

Are the legal or administrative rules clearly set out and reinforced in policy?

Are there signs?

Is there conflict or confusion between purpose and definition?

Design:

How well does the physical design support the intended function?

How well does the physical design support the desired or accepted behaviors?

Does the physical design conflict with or impede the productive use of the space or the proper functioning of the intended human activity?

Is there confusion or conflict in the manner in which physical design is intended to control behavior?

Once these questions have been asked, the information received may be used as a means of guiding decisions about the use of human space. The proper functions have to be matched with space that can support them. The design has to assure that the intended activity can function well and it has to directly support the control of behavior.

CPTED Examples

Example 1:

Current approach: A retail store is designed with an expansive sales floor, numerous head height or higher display shelves, and several poorly lighted “dead zones” where other customers or employees rarely venture. Over time, losses mount, employees and customers complain about the discarded packaging and frequent out of stocks of certain items. The store manager installs CCTV and mirrors to monitor the situation. But by now people do not feel comfortable coming here. They feel they can’t always find what they came looking for, that it may be unsafe, they are being watched on video cameras, and NOW things are so bad that they have to have a security guard at the front of the store all the time.

A better approach: The CPTED or environmental approach would have been to design in the opportunity for Natural Surveillance from the beginning. Wider aisles, brighter lighting, upbeat and modern signage, and shoulder height display fixtures with long sight lines angled so employees at regular workstations can easily monitor them can be employed. Destination points are placed at the back of the store, and displays act to steer consumers and workers through less visited spots. A coffee stand, staff break area, local police substation work area, or reading area may be placed so as to increase legitimate activities and traffic flow in select areas. Put some type of helpful activity into an unassigned space in order to create natural crime prevention. In addition, the CPTED approach should be much more customer service oriented. It serves the same purpose as the guard, but does not look as harrowing. In fact, it is much more inviting.

Example 2:

Current approach: A local store reports increasing high losses of certain goods, but is reluctant to stop carrying or lock up the important items since these practices caused them to lose needed sales of the products to competitors in the past. The store's interior design has store products arrayed to maximize visibility, but some cosmetics, over the counter medications and other items just seem to always be out of stock, with discarded packaging for them being frequently found. Just as in the first example, customers and employees are growing very frustrated.

A better approach: CPTED principles would suggest re-setting the store so most of the very high-loss items moved to a new store inside a store concept. An area near the center of the store is set apart with display fixtures so that people must enter and leave through a single point. That point is where a cash register that is always manned is placed. All purchases of the protected items must take place at the special register. This concept promotes natural access control, natural surveillance, and territorial reinforcement at the same time. Customer service should improve with adequate numbers of well-trained and motivated staff. Currently power tools, electronics, cosmetics and other categories are protected in some high-loss stores using this CPTED approach. Although this example is more intense, and can hinder staff and consumer flow, some stores may require more extreme measures.

CPTED principles can help provide natural protection, but the concept is best used in conjunction with a sound asset protection audit to provide focus, as well as with complimentary procedures and technology. The good and unintended negative effects of any loss prevention design should always be considered before taking action.

Displacement Versus Diffusion of Benefits

A concept worth mentioning in this paper is displacement. This construct has been widely discussed and accepted, but data indicate it is still poorly understood or predicted. At this point, the prime question is whether a particular protective treatment cost-effectively reduces the targeted problem, particularly in a generalizable manner. Not whether it displaces crime or not. Displacement should be studied however. As a result of our protection efforts, we may displace targeted crime to other areas, other times, other targets, or to other crime tactics (Hayes, 1995). More likely however, if a protective treatment proves effective, we may gain some hoped for deterrence as well as additional benefits from situational prevention efforts (Welsh et al., 2001). Specific crime and loss control efforts often result in a "diffusion of benefits" (Clarke and Weisburg, 1994), or what's termed the "halo effect" (Scherdin, 1986), by fooling would-be thieves into believing all of our assets or stores are similarly protected. Some protective efforts not only reduce crime, they may also reduce the fear of crime felt by our visitors and staff. Managing fear of crime levels means reducing avoidance behavior (limiting the frequency and duration of shopping visits) by customers. Finally, in some cases, crime may just be completely 'quashed' (Felson, 1994) with no displacement or diffusion.

Setting Goals

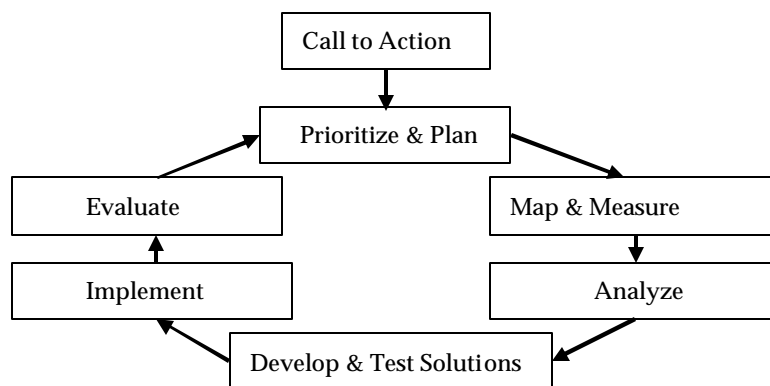
Zero tolerance of crime as a goal is good, but usually not reasonable. In order to maximize shareowner value we must increase or maintain our sales levels while reducing our losses and costs. Sound loss prevention should help achieve both. Soundly protected items mean more desirable assets available for sale (data show thieves don't usually steal our throw aways). Consistent on-shelf availability of key products means more revenue and happier customers. Protected cash receipts mean the retailer retains hard-earned money. A safe atmosphere means our best customers and staff feel comfortable spending time, and money, on our property.

In order to reduce loss, we must first reduce crime attempts. We must convince people they shouldn't even *try* to steal from us. Secondly, we must reduce the *loss* we incur from those theft attempts that do take place. Finally, we must reduce the *impact* of those losses on our company; we can reduce the impact of loss by tax write-offs, insurance claims, and some civil actions. We can reduce loss from incidents by an early detection and quick response, this means we either catch the thief in action so nothing is lost, or catch them sooner. If we catch a burglar in the act, or the clerk the second or third time they steal from the register (rather than the 10th or 20th time), we don't lose as much. By sometimes focusing on the second goal of reducing loss from incidents, we can accomplish our primary goal: reducing crime attempts. Quick response, and total or partial recovery of stolen assets, reduces the inducement or rewards for crime. Hence, the real possibility of sustained crime and loss reduction exists. This paper focuses primarily on our first obligation: to reduce crime *attempts*.

Action Process

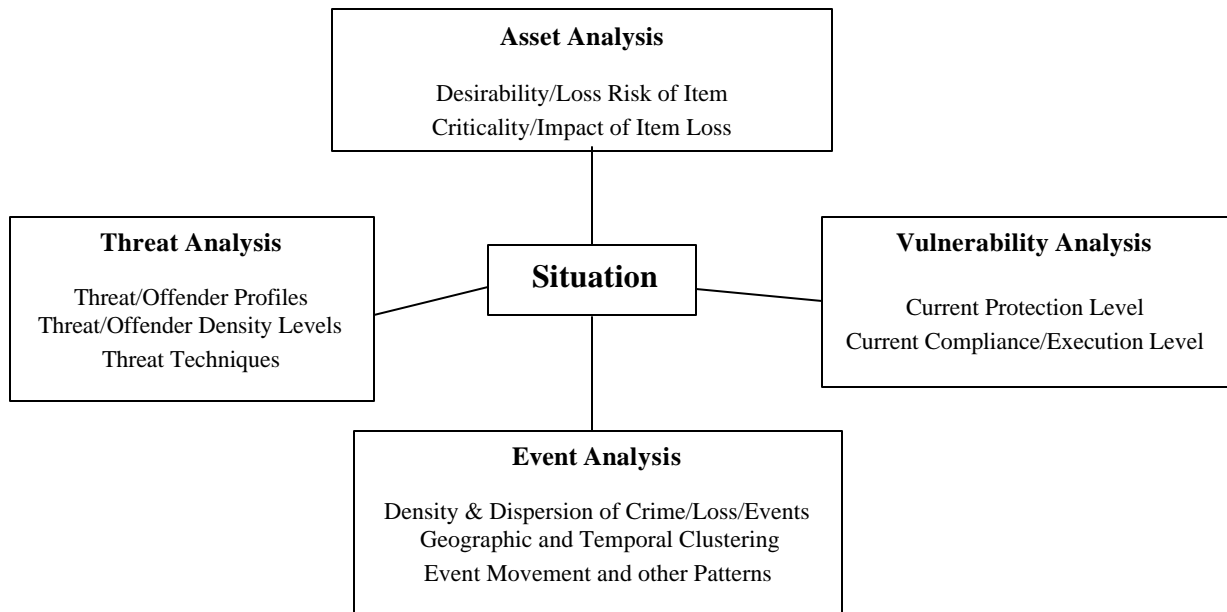
Using the action process or "road map" (Figure 7), LP planners should form a multi-functional team made up of human resources, logistics, merchandise, IT, store operations and loss prevention (Beck et al., 2002). The road map provides for consistent project execution.

Fig. 7. Project Road Map or Action Process



After the issue is raised and prioritized, we begin our loss prevention strategy by conducting a situational crime analysis (Figure 8). Our team can evaluate stock counts, video footage data, cash and inventory transaction exception reports, protection audits, supply chain and in-store process mapping, staff and offender observations, interviews and surveys, staff hotline calls and other loss, crime and apprehension reports, by benchmarking against competitors, and with other situation-specific data.

Fig. 8. Situational Asset Protection Analysis.



A thorough situational analysis should provide considerable detail on the scope, scale, dispersion, and prime causes of the problem. Crime and loss events tend to non-randomly cluster in space and time (Clarke, 1999), and using fairly clean data from multiple sources and methods should visually indicate priority protection opportunities. The data patterns should also provide for reasonable goal setting, given resource and time capabilities and limitations.

War of maneuver versus a war of attrition

The military science literature contains useful concepts and models. Perhaps none more suitable to crime and loss control than the comparisons of two different types of operational strategy. Some armies train to conduct wars of attrition, while others practice the concept of maneuver. Most militaries strive to defeat their enemies through incremental attrition. Their objective is to defeat the enemy on the battlefield by destroying a significant portion of their assets thereby rendering them combat impotent.

Still other units now practice a war-fighting style termed maneuver (Department of the Army, 1993). These officers practice to win the dangerous, fluid and uncertain combat

environment by rapid flexible and opportunistic maneuvers. Maneuver proponents maneuver to gain a spatial and temporal advantage. They seek to shatter the enemy's cohesion and morale by rapid, violent and unexpected actions. Effective maneuver requires good intelligence about the enemy (threat assessment) and well-trained, independent, mobile and creative personnel.

Felson (1996) invites his readers to 'think about retail crime and its prevention. This thought process offers more promise than inviting people to steal and then trying to catch them afterwards'. The argument here is crime and loss control efforts should move from an attrition model of solely defending assets and chasing offenders (although both practices can be helpful) to the more aggressive maneuver style. We should quickly analyze our potential and current crime risks and 'attack' the 'enemy's' centers of gravity. Retailers should work collaboratively with product suppliers, transport companies, law enforcement agencies, and solutions providers to gather sound data and test and implement focused solutions. Simply sticking EAS tags on merchandise or catching thieves may not always be enough. A retailer's best loss prevention R.O.I. may result from studying their assets and potential offenders and applying the following model. The protection strategy or model is designed to exploit the motives and weaknesses of the threat. Retailers can take the initiative from potential offenders.

Multi-level marketing

The ebb and flow of people, desirable assets, effective protection and crime events take place in many dimensions. People make choices or decisions, but within their own circumstances (Felson, 1994, 1998) and based on their particular (and often unique) perceptions. The best way for us to reduce crime attempts on our property is to try and influence would-be offenders (their ideas and actions) in stages. Hayes (1996) called this action "prevention-marketing." Prevention marketing concepts are built on traditional marketing principles. People do, or don't do, things based on their current activities, interests and opinions (Blackwell, 1993). And perceptions (influenced by biology and social learning) shape both lifelong activities and more importantly for us, on-site behavior (Akers, 1998; Jeffery, 1990). Loss prevention managers can reasonably think of crime reduction efforts as a form of marketing. When an offender commits a crime, our "deterrence message" probably wasn't received, recognized, believed or cared about. To reduce deviance, we need to improve our prevention-marketing program. Our marketing "messages" are delivered in the form of four methodologies: social control, benefit denial, asset surveillance and asset control by using the three primary mediums (Figure 9) of people, programs, and systems.

Fig. 9 Prevention Messages and Mediums

Prevention Methodologies	Prevention Message(s)	People	Programs/Procedures	Systems
<u>Social Control</u> (Cultural Integrity Initiatives) (informal control by establishing an honest culture or reinforcing guilt or embarrassment)	"What's right, what's wrong" "Crime hurts the victims" "If you do it, you can't get a good job, etc" "Don't humiliate yourself in front of your friends, families and peer groups"	Leaders at all levels maintaining culture of honesty through direction and discipline. Peer review committees for policy and discipline Loss prevention team as omni-present reminder.	Employee awareness multi-media initiatives Joint mass media prevention efforts Exterior and in-store customer deterrence efforts. Community programs Loss Performance Bonuses	Crime offender database system
<u>Benefit Denial</u> (Formal control by denying a benefit from stolen assets)	"Don't (steal this item), you won't be able to use it"	Loss prevention and non-LP enforce BDD compliance	I.D. mark select items with visibly and covertly Tag select items with Benefit denial devices Work with law enforcement and shutdown aftermarket (TOC'S) Civil action to recover Damages against criminal	Ink tags Mechanical tags/clamps Electronic implants I.D. marking systems
<u>Asset Surveillance</u> (Formal control by (the credible threat of detection and sanction)	"Don't (steal this item), your attempts will be detected and you'll be quickly and severely punished".	Store greeter Store staff Fitting room clerks Store agents/detectives Uniformed personnel Parking lot patrols	Procedural controls which require approval or observations Employee Awareness Initiatives	CCTV Electronic detection tags (EAS) Merchandise display alarms Access Control Systems (AC) P.O.S. exception reports Lighting Mirrors Barriers
<u>Asset Control</u> (Formal control by restricting access to an asset, or the mobility of an asset)	"Don't try to (steal this item), it will be too tough or take too long.	Company staff Guards	Procedural Controls which require I.D. or restrict access Employee Awareness Initiatives	Barriers (fencing et) Locks/Doors Safes P.O.S. terminals Cabling Secure fixtures Access Control Systems

The four basic prevention methodologies provide any retailer with a variety of tools for reducing crime attempts. These methodologies, and their inherent messages, are designed to reduce the desire or inducement for deviance. The messages should impact behavior by targeting shaping a would-be offender's perceptions of motive, opportunities and personal risk. Social control (or cultural integrity) initiatives allow the retailer to unilaterally build and maintain a solid, cultural base of honesty and safety in the office, distribution center, transport vehicles, store and even the nearby community environment.

Our prevention messages here can take several forms: 'Don't steal from us, don't hurt us' (there is a real victim); 'Don't do it (the crime), because you will hurt and/or embarrass yourself'. Company leaders can use these messages by establishing a simple company vision;

clearly defining deviant behaviors and corresponding sanctions, having staff learn the principles through multi-media and testing, and sign pledges and codes of conduct. Equally critical is the constant maintenance of peer/leader driven honesty and loss prevention efforts. Ethical and protective behavior must be considered the norm. Near term (such as every paycheck timeline), and readily achieved performance bonuses for all employees is a powerful way for the company to reinforce its commitment to an honest workplace.

Multi-lateral opportunities also exist for retail companies to work with each other and through associations to target specific problems with mass-marketing and community programs. Parents, teachers, and peers need guidance and support resources. Initially, retailers should build their loss prevention program with these social control efforts. Formal controls such as well designed, consistent enforcement personnel, procedures, and technologies should enforce and reinforce the desired culture of honesty.

The relatively new benefit denial concept (Hayes, 1993; DiLonardo and Clarke, 1996) reduces theft by denying would-be offenders any real benefit from their crime. Our deterrent message here is 'don't steal it, because you can't use it'. Ink stained garments, broken eyeglass frames or VCRs that must have an inside circuit completed before they are usable, are examples of benefit denial. Benefit denial also includes the practice of marking high-risk assets with indelible (visible or invisible) engraving, inks, or unique chemical isotopes. Efforts against illicit after-markets for stolen property such as flea markets and pawnshops, some beauty shops and other 'theft demand centers' also fit this category. Benefit denial can eliminate an offender's motive for theft.

The most widely used prevention technique asset surveillance (threat of detection) encompasses technologies like store, area, display or merchandise alarms and annunciators, electronic detection tags and targets (EAS), point of sale (P.O.S) and merchandise transaction exception reports, increasingly "intelligent" CCTV domes and camera systems, and lighting. This category also includes alert employees (absolutely key), store detectives, uniformed greeters and even special procedures (i.e. utilizing clear trash bags, or requiring management approval of high-risk transactions like voids or refunds). Unfortunately the asset surveillance-marketing message: 'don't steal from me because I will detect you act, apprehend you, and quickly and severely punish you', is relatively long and difficult to transfer convincingly. Asset surveillance messages must be easily seen, appear very credible and be constantly reinforced.

Retailers are most reluctant to use our fourth methodology—asset control and security techniques because of capital expense, aesthetic appearance, and hindrance. However, in many cases, crime and loss levels require we restrict access to something by way of passwords, codes, locks, barriers, safes, displays, signage, P.O.S. terminals, or secure merchandise fixtures. In extreme situations, very high-risk items are removed from open sale during certain shifts or at all times. Cabling and other special fixtures restrict the mobility of selected merchandise, slow down selection rates, or require two hands to remove an asset to disrupt concealment. Keep in mind some policies or procedures also restrict access to areas

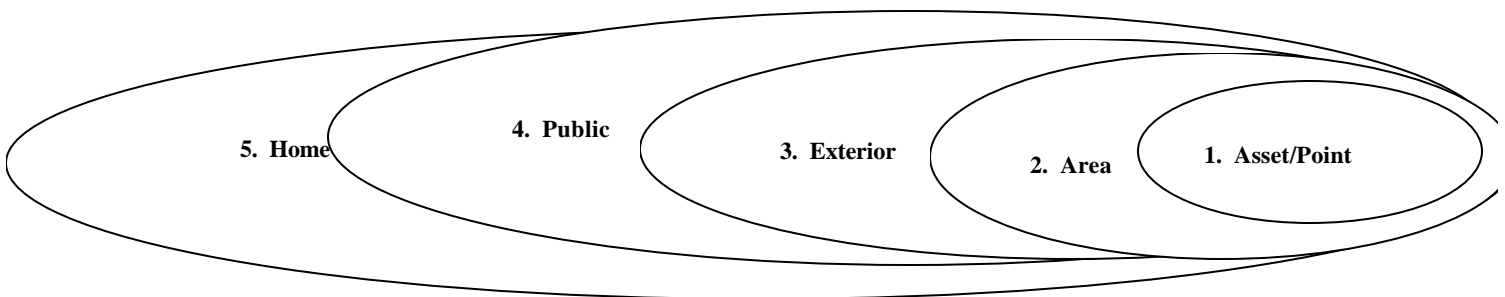
(or information), or the mobility of those assets. Over sized product, tamper-resistant packaging and applied plastic “safers” simultaneously hinder concealment, reduce the carrying capacity of items by thieves, and may even make a noise if the covers are removed. Electronic tags and store-specific logos may also be affixed to further affect item disposal. Asset control also bolsters deterrence by threatening increased risk of detection (asset surveillance). The longer we delay someone, or the more demonstrative or involved the theft attempt must become, the more likely the fear of detection and capture forces the offender to retreat.

All crime and loss control efforts should be evidence-based. Offender, consumer and staff interviews, video footage analyses, and randomized controlled trials or field experiments can provide data to critically determine real world efficacy and cost-effectiveness of protective measures (Farrington and Painter, 2003; Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002; Sherman et al., 1997).

Delivery in the zones

To maximize our success, we should consider delivering our prevention marketing messages in concentric ‘zones of influence’ (Figure 10). In the past we often thought of prevention and security solely in terms of things we do to protect an asset locally (the asset itself and its immediate surroundings). Now we can add to that model as we now think three-dimensionally.

Fig. 10. Zones of influence.



Asset protection efforts begin with the asset itself and work their way outward. Our initiative in Zones 1-3 are generally unilateral in nature, while we often act in conjunction with other companies and law enforcement agencies in Zones 3-5. There are some crime-reduction actions companies can take individually such as protective policies and systems. There are other initiatives (advertising, community outreach), which are probably best done in conjunction with groups of companies and public entities.

The zones of influence encompass interrelated environmental areas. When scholars talk about crime, and when security partners (vendors) design crime control solutions, and of

course when proprietary loss prevention people implement measures, there is sometimes a large jumble of ideas and opinions with no real shape. This makes it difficult for us to visualize what we're really trying to do. Proper execution in this instance is difficult at best, and training and mentoring future LP decision-makers is next to impossible. The 'zones' concept can give us a clearer, more visual way to plan, describe and deliver our strategy. We can insert prevention/protection packages into it. This strategy is easier to explain to senior managers what we're up to, and it's easier to assign responsibility. With the zones of influence model, and the prevention/protection matrix, we can coordinate our efforts within our company, with other companies, and with public entities.

An important point to consider in developing prevention marketing packages is the tendency of humans to quickly adjust to and learn to ignore our efforts. We must keep coming up with fresh protection ideas and concepts (Ekblom, 1997; Farrington et al., 1994). Zone 1 is the actual asset or point we must protect and really is the most important because if the other zones fail (or the theft act is purely impulsive), this zone is where the action is. In most cases our deterrent measures such as CCTV, employees, signage, product marking and security systems should be visible and/or clearly understood to exist in order to work (Farrell, 1985). Whether our would-be thief thought about stealing from us before they came into our store (pre-meditated), or after (impulsive/opportunistic), they must understand our previously outlined prevention messages. We don't want them to try anything in the first place!

Zone 2 is the interior location of a specific area (places and spaces). We obviously have multiple opportunities to influence the behavior of people in our stores, and retailers spend millions of dollars to merchandise the store in very specific ways for that exact purpose. From the moment people (customers or staff) enter the store, they should perceive they are in a warm, personable location, with a strong sense of discipline and control (Turner and Cashden, 1988; Schlueter et al., 1989; Cox et al., 1990). For example, an atmosphere of local 'ownership' and control reduces theft while boosting sales (Carroll and Weaver, 1986). It is through a combination of environmental and technological cues and through contacts with our staff that potential offenders form their opinions about crime opportunity. It is important to bear in mind that many people may see deterrent cues until they are looking for them, so prevention marketing in Zone 2 is vital (Farrell, 1985). CCTV domes and monitors, active, greeters, specially designed signage, visible tags, a visible sales floor with few hidden areas, protective displays for very high-risk products, and of course motivated and mobile staff all create a subtle atmosphere of control and concern inside Zone 2.

We also have the opportunity to market our store and its security in the parking lot and at the front door. Zone 3 initiatives can include highly visible camera domes, bicycle or motorized patrols, carefully designed lighting, traffic and landscape barriers, signage and even a sense that people inside the store can, and do, see those outside it. Zone 3 helps us pre-form visitors' perception of security and control *before* they enter our building.

The possibility is also there to shape attitudes and opinions about theft, fraud and fencing (or buying questionable merchandise) behavior, company vulnerability, and even the

apprehension risks to potential offenders in a general public setting. Retailers working with other retailers and law enforcement agencies can deliver focused prevention messages in neighborhoods, schools, buses, clubs, on the Internet, in movie theaters, churches, wherever likely offenders, and there “handlers” congregate. We call this public venue Zone 4. We can help prevent problems by 'planting' perceptions in Zone 4 (Decker, 2003; Hiew, 1985; Johnson and Bowers, 2003). We can also support groups that train, counsel or otherwise have dealings with our youth, and other potential offenders. Zone 4 initiatives may also bolster (pre-market) the effectiveness of our prevention efforts in other zones by pre-selling the pervasiveness and effectiveness of asset protection efforts. Collaborative efforts against ORC or organized retail crime networks also take place in zone 4 since demand reduction marketing to retail buyers and consumers need to be convinced that buying suspicious items helps support product tampering, theft, hijacking, counterfeiting of items and packaging, expiration date changing, public corruption and violence at several levels (Hayes and Rogers, 2003). Likewise, disruption of illicit markets and ORC offenders is typically a joint project involving retailers, associations and law enforcement professionals (Hayes and Rogers, 2003).

The home (Zone 5) is similar to zone 4, and provides several opportunities for prevention marketing via home study kits, TV, radio and Internet-delivered messages. Core value formation and informal control start in the home (Felson, 1998), and parents need graphic, user-friendly teaching tools such as those provided for anti-smoking and drug use campaigns. Parents, teachers, clergy and other influencers also need reinforcement for their own teaching efforts. Companies (victims) working with each other can affect public perceptions and behavior (Decker, 2003; Hiew, 1985; Johnson and Bowers, 2003).

Discussion

This paper outlines some current thinking on real solutions retailers can examine and tailor to their individual situations. Much remains to be done, but through cooperation, retailers, law enforcement, academia and others, the 'mixed' record of crime and loss prevention success can be improved. The concepts of focused prevention marketing of evidence-based protective measures and messages into multiple zones of influence offers hopes for moving toward real, sustained theft and loss control. This multi-faceted, multi-level marketing effort better ensures loss prevention success. Lowered theft and crime attempts mean safer and more profitable stores. This model (Figure 10) is meant to provide a starting point for research and development. More research on individual crime prevention efforts, perhaps using experimental designs, should be done in cooperation with individual retail companies. Also, retail companies need academic support for their loss prevention training programs as well.

Fig. 10. Prevention Marketing Model.

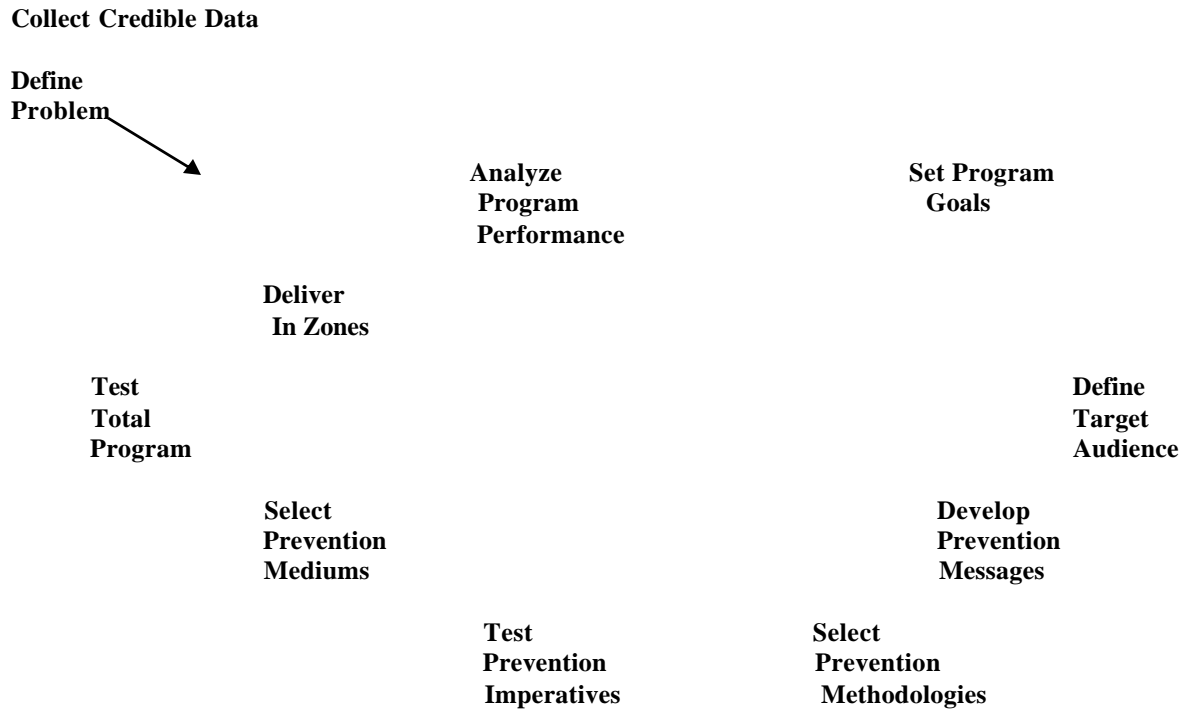


Fig. 10. Prevention marketing matrix (partial listing).

Number and Intensity of Cues to Deter

Heavy Asset Control
With other
Methodologies

Hard-core
Offender
(Creates opportunities)_

Primarily
cover and very credible

All Methodologies

Opportunistic
Offenders (seek opportunities)

Visible and Convert and
Good Credibility

Asset
Surveill and BD

Impulsive Offender
(Seizes opportunities)

High Visibility and
Very Recognizable

Potential Offender Population
Cues to Deter

Visibility of Prevention

Fig. 8. Prevention marketing mix matrix.

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