This presentation aims to:

- Consider a **decision tree** that represents offenders’ thinking on entering a store to steal
- Evaluate the **offender perspective** on the risks & opportunities the **retail environment** presents
- Discuss the implications of these findings from an **organisational perspective**
- Advocate a **holistic approach** to prevention as part of the wider problem of ‘**shrink**’
Overview

- Security measures & other anti-shrinkage tactics do influence offender behaviour.
- Yet the motivation to steal is very high & often driven by drug dependency.
- Determination, willingness to take risks & acquiring criminal skills help shoplifters defeat preventive measures.
- Limited available data suggests only a fraction of thefts are deterred or detected.
- We must not underestimate shoplifters.
## Victimisation of retail premises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of employees at establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted base</td>
<td>3,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any crime</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any property crime (including burglary)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft by customers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft by persons unknown</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud by outsiders</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft by employees</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft by outsiders</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from vehicles(^1)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud by employees</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of vehicles(^1)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any burglary</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted burglary</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any violent crime</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat, assaults, intimidation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery or attempted robbery</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being offered stolen goods</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol/tobacco smuggling</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribery, corruption</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic crime(^2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classifying shoplifters

- Some research classifies shoplifters by their experience & frequency of offending
- Others by their motivation (i.e. whether they steal for personal use or steal to sell on)
- All thieves can be skilled
- All thieves can exploit opportunities
- Thieves can also demonstrate intelligence & intuition in how they assess risk to apply skills with maximum effect
• Key decisions occur during four phases:

- Appraisal of combinations of factors influence decisions to *proceed* or *abort* at each stage

- All decisions can be driven or dominated by rational & emotional factors
Part 1
- What offenders say
Is there anyone in the store I could collude with?

How many staff are working?

Do I know the layout?

Does this store sell what I'm looking for?

Are there any good opportunities?

Has anyone noticed me?

Do I feel confident?

Am I dressed correctly?

Do I need to steal today?

Where are the exits?

Does the store have high shelves?

Will they hassle me?

What security measures are present?
Entering the store

- Offenders are adept at spotting & exploiting opportunities
- Staff presence will not deter if detection can be evaded
- Some consider customers a greater risk

Are there any good opportunities?
Entering the store

- Am I being watched?
- How are the products I want to steal protected?
- Is there anything about the product that makes it hard to sell?
- Can I reach the products I want to steal?

Locating the product

- Do I feel comfortable in this part of the store?
- Can I sell these products?
- Do I look like a thief?
- What are they worth?
- Am I being followed?
- What products are worth stealing?
- Am I being watched?
- What are they worth?
- Do I feel comfortable in this part of the store?
- Can I sell these products?
- Do I look like a thief?
- What are they worth?
- Am I being followed?
- What products are worth stealing?
Can I sell these products?

- Many ‘hot’ products are FMCGs in high demand
- Easy to conceal in clothing or bags
- Easy to sell, low risk for anyone selling on
- Frequent replenishment = constant supply
- Often neglected by security surveillance
**Entering the store**
- Should I move the products before concealment?
- What about product placement?
- Do I need a partner?
- Can I neutralise the product protection?
- Do I need to create a distraction?

**Locating the product**
- Will anyone see me conceal the product?

**Concealing the product**
- Can I carry enough in one go?
- Can I steal this without getting caught?
- Can I conceal the products in my clothing or a bag?
- Will it make a noise?
- What role will a partner have to play?
Can I conceal these products in my clothes or in a bag?

- Offenders use ordinary clothing to considerable effect
- Bulky items aren’t necessarily harder to steal
- Packaging can be discarded if value makes it worthwhile
Entering the store

Locating the product

Concealing the product

Leaving the store

Will I be able to come back?

What will I do if the alarm goes?

Am I nervous?

How will I leave?

Have they been watching me since I came in?

What if a guard stops or chases me?

Is there anything that will stop me leaving?

Will I have to fight to get out?

Should I make a decoy purchase?

Will anyone notice me?

Will I have to fight to get out?
- Some product placement tactics give a false sense of security
- Using learnt techniques helps deflect attention
- Products can be moved to evade surveillance

How will I leave?
Part 2

- What’s going wrong & what are we getting right?
Strategic challenges

• Security measures often applied in a piecemeal fashion
• Security managers often not persuaded of the commercial implications of protective measures
• Loss prevention is often not a priority within strategic thinking
Tactical conflicts

- Security & marketing functions often perceived to have different priorities
- Security measures often perceived to inhibit rather than assist sales
- Some merchandising techniques take little account of loss prevention issues
- Full impact of shoplifting on shrink rarely quantified or understood
Operational challenges

• Non-security staff not adequately informed of nor trained in loss prevention issues
• In-store decisions taken without security considerations
• Decisions often driven by assumptions rather than knowledge
Case study: EAS

• The offender perspective has many ramifications
• Impossible to discuss all, so let’s focus on one: EAS or ‘tagging’
• Product tagging costs millions each year
• Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t
• The following clips illustrate how offenders think and act in response to product tagging
Case study: EAS

- Hidden tags would have caught this offender out
- The security case displaced him to a higher value product with the same size packaging
Case study: EAS

- Most of the tags shown are easily removed
- However, they would deter offenders from stealing large quantities if every tag had to be removed.
Case study: EAS

- Offenders can deploy technology of their own
- This ‘magic bag’ is lined with metal foil to prevent EAS activations
Case study: Design solutions

- The offender perspective has many ramifications
- Think environment – think design - think thief – think cost
- Some examples
What works

- Well spaced displays
- Bright, light colours (walls, furniture, displays)
- Well-placed Signage (clear, accurate & consistent messages)
- Effective Lighting
- Controlled Access
- Monitored Syringe Disposal Units
- Fitting rooms
- Toilets
Part 3
- Towards a holistic solution
Offender perspectives on retail security measures

Offenders identified 10 different security measures (in descending order of importance):

1. CCTV
2. Electronic Article Surveillance
3. Sales Clerks
4. Loss Prevention Officers
5. Mirrors
6. Customers
7. Layout of store
8. Random Police Officers on patrol
9. Product Hooks
10. Products locked up behind counters
Security in perspective

• Current solutions definitely help, but motivated offenders can overcome them
• Product protection is an organisational issue requiring consideration at all levels
• Organisations need to gather data to identify precisely where action is needed
• Security solutions must be coordinated & respond to specific defined problems
• This requires a good risk assessment
• Design solutions are often a cost effective choice but form only part of the toolbox
Thank You!

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