

# Designing out retail crime



The huge losses caused every year by retail crime make it clear that security demands the same level of professionalism and expertise as every aspect of design. In this exclusive article, Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Security Consultancies Section of the British Security Industry Association (BSIA), looks at the role of the independent security consultant

The latest figures from the British Retail Consortium (BRC) show that crime and the expense of crime prevention measures cost retailers about £2.1 billion last year, a huge sum that clearly warrants professional management, both to reduce losses and to obtain the best possible value from security spending.

Relatively few retailers engage the services of specialist advisors, even though they often do so routinely in other key areas like marketing, shop fitting and logistics.

A good consultant will bring a holistic approach to the issue of loss prevention, which goes beyond technology and procedures. Retail losses are influenced not only by what happens on the sales floor but also by events in the surrounding environment, which need to be taken into account early in the construction phase. Deterring and detecting crime through closed-circuit television cameras, appropriate lighting and the careful design, positioning and arrangement of displays to improve customer convenience and reduce opportunities for concealment,

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are all measures which help the retailer control events.

Planning these measures at the construction or refurbishment phase can create significant savings if security becomes integral to design. Retail losses remain a huge financial threat, partly because not all retailers use the available technology and procedures to best effect, which may be connected with the absence of professional advice, including the failure to recognise the importance of other aspects of retail crime.

BRC figures over the years have consistently identified staff theft as a source of major





losses, amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds annually. Therefore, the security of the storage and staff areas needs to be considered in the design and construction phase.

In a new build, a consultant will advise on the appropriate electronic and physical security measures that will secure both staff and storage areas. These may include CCTV, electronic tagging, alarm systems, and access control, so that areas where money is kept or counted are secure.

There is also considerable evidence to suggest that the quality of the outside environment has a major influence on retail crime. As well as dealing with the physical aspects of burglary prevention, protection against ram-raiding and other threats, a consultant will work with external agencies such as town centre management groups, to maximise the benefits of initiatives like street security cameras, town centre wardens and retail radio networks.

A key asset of BSIA Professional consultants is the ability to adopt a business perspective, whereby the protection of people and assets are addressed in the context of the client's wishes, image and wider commercial objectives. The provision of advice covers the whole spectrum of security issues, from risk assessment and the selection of security systems and services, to the development of security policy, procedures and infrastructures. All with the assurance that their standards are subject to rigorous validation and continued monitoring.

Assistance in the preparation of tenders, the project management or design of security systems and services and contract negotiation with suppliers, ensuring best value in service provision and maintenance, often result in considerable cost savings over time and ensure a consultant's expertise can effectively pay for itself.

**“IN A NEW BUILD, A CONSULTANT WILL ADVISE ON THE APPROPRIATE ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES THAT WILL SECURE BOTH STAFF AND STORAGE AREAS”**

For further information, visit [www.bsia.co.uk](http://www.bsia.co.uk). The BSIA operates a local rate help line, open during normal business hours on 0845 389 3889.

