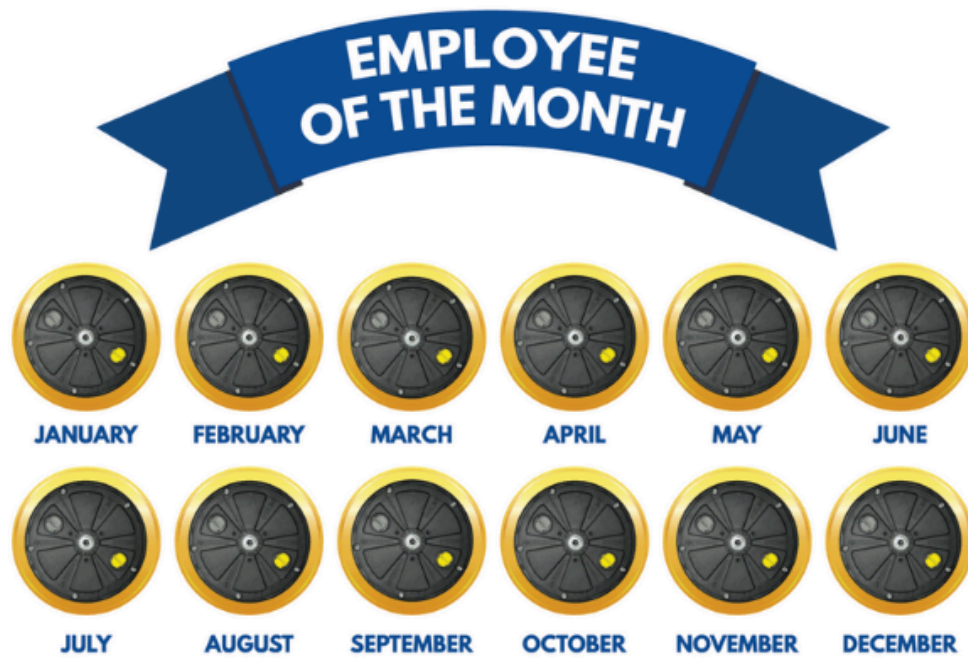


Always On Duty



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What your staffing situation says about your retail store: How shoplifters decide where to steal
Are thoughts of shoplifting offenders taking notice of your “skeletonized” crew enough to make you lose sleep at night? If you’re a retail loss prevention executive, the organization’s workforce is one of your biggest and most important assets. The strength of a store’s crew can mean the difference for just about every key metric, including shrink. They can either make your year or have you updating your resume before the next inventory gets booked.

So, let’s ask the obvious question – what does your staffing situation say about your retail store?

Not to worry, your customers will be sure to offer their qualified opinion...that’s their job. Customer feedback is critical to improving the retail experience, however, long lines at the checkout, the no-show security guard, reduced operating hours, and empty shelves seen through the lens of a potential shoplifter tells a completely different story.

Covid-19, again, is responsible for putting retailers at greater risk for losses – ironically during a time of economic recovery. The second chapter of pandemic blight has begun, triggering a mass exodus. This trend, dubbed the Great Resignation continues today as workers, including frontline retail employees, quit their jobs at a record pace. In April, 649,000 retail workers gave notice, the “largest one-month employment loss since the Labor Department began tracking such data more than 20 years ago,” [according to the Washington Post](#).

Shoplifting 101

As loss prevention leaders, we know two things to be true about shoplifters:

- 1.They don’t want to be noticed; and
- 2.They don’t want to be noticed

You heard it right, there’s no echo in here. A shoplifter’s strategy against retail theft prevention strategies is simply not to be noticed.

According to industry researcher, Adrian Beck, Emeritus Professor at University of Leicester, shoplifters assess the following factors before coming to a decision to steal:

- The perceived risk (how likely is it that they will be caught?)
- The relative ease with which the offense can be committed (how easy is it for them to do this?)

Of these factors, it has been found that “the risk of being caught” is the most important in a shoplifters’ decision-making process. Strategies have been developed to amplify the risk such as by increasing surveillance, guardianship, and reducing the amount of anonymity enjoyed by the offender. Said another way, shoplifters seek out targets where they can commit their crimes unbeknownst to weary retail employees.

The Reality

The speed at which retailers are losing employees (and struggle to re-hire) is alarming. “We absolutely have a labor shortage in this country,” said Kip Wright, CEO of Houston-based staffing and recruiting company Genuent. “We are seeing that clients are struggling to find resources to fulfill their needs and their growth, as well as their ability to produce products and serve customers.”

For retail loss prevention executives, the struggle is real, and the stakes are high. Shoplifting offenders are finding refuge in these under-staffed retail stores. How? You might ask.

- The cashiers and self-checkout attendants who notice who is coming and going? Just one showed up.
- Service clerks helping customers with questions? They quit.
- The security guard watching over the store? Hasn't shown up yet.
- The manager on duty? Covering for everyone that didn't show up for work today.

It's no wonder shoplifting and retail losses are at an all-time high. Shoplifters are emboldened by the reduced risks of shoplifting, which has been exacerbated by the labor crisis. The "employee" which was a retailer's first line of shoplifting defense, is now a thing of the past.

The solution

The Great Resignation is here whether we like it or not. The reasons for this phenomenon, from a loss prevention standpoint, do not matter.

What if the very existence of this labor crisis didn't matter either? Well, it doesn't have to. Successful loss prevention executives are implementing a shoplifting prevention strategy that doesn't primarily rely on workforce.

Gatekeeper's Purchek solution, a cart-based pushout prevention system, thwarts shoplifters at the moment a theft occurs. As an offender attempts to leave, the pushout prevention system locks the cart in place keeping the merchandise in the store, with most offenders walking away empty handed. As shoplifters experience less success by getting exposed by an integrated camera and alarm system, the offenders will be driven to easier targets – where the risk of being caught is much lower.

Did another employee quit today? Is the guard running late? That's ok. Purchek doesn't take days off. This 24/7 solution is always on duty so the employees that do show up can focus on running your business.

About Gatekeeper

Gatekeeper Systems' expanded product suite of intelligent cart solutions offers solutions for EVERY retailer's needs to minimize merchandise loss, reduce asset and labor expenditures. Gatekeeper's loss prevention and cart containment solutions utilize patented locking technology to put an end to cart-based shoplifting, shopping cart loss, and uninformed decision-making. Cart management solutions increase safety and reduce labor costs by maximizing productivity while simultaneously resulting in a positive store image. Intelligent pushout theft prevention solutions stop thieves and their cart full of unpaid merchandise from leaving the store. Customizable technology allows retailers to defend their entire store or just a high loss department based on the store's unique layout. Business Intelligence solutions provide increased visibility for informed decision making. Increase efficiency, optimize fleet size, and perfect the entire customer shopping experience with store and enterprise-level analytics.

