

Becoming a Crime Problem-Solver

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It might not be as interesting as solving the crime of the century, but becoming a crime problem-solver can be good for business. Everyone can be a crime problem-solving.

In working with retail outlets, shopping centres, local government and law enforcement agencies, we try to help everyone become crime problem-solvers. If everyone in your workplace thinks about crime risks, stock shrinkage and company losses can be reduced and workplaces can be made safer.

Becoming a crime problem-solver is easy. Just follow the steps.

Step 1: Know the Ingredients of Crime

Every crime has the same basic ingredients:

- A motivated offender
- A victim or target
- A location

Remove one of these and you've prevented a crime. If there are less motivated offenders, then there will be less crime. Remove targets of crime and it cannot occur. Alter the location that conceals a crime and offenders will go elsewhere or give up.

It sounds easy and in some ways it is. For example, the following common practices in the local post office help to prevent crime.

Standard Procedure	Prevention Outcome
Counter attendants who get to know frequent clients and welcome new customers.	Potential offenders become known and are less able to be anonymous.
Expensive items kept behind the counter and empty boxes are displayed.	Removing access to 'hot' or frequently stolen items prevents opportunities for theft.
CCTV cameras at entry showing breadth and quality of surveillance.	Risks of detection are increased and would-be offenders are alerted to roving cameras.
Windows facing the street are kept clear of clutter and promotional material.	Natural surveillance from the street increases the likelihood of robbery attempts being witnessed and authorities being notified.
Signs reveal use of time-lock safes installed which limit access to large sums of money.	Would-be offenders are deterred due to reduction in potential rewards due to use of time-lock safes.

Step 2: Know the CRAVED Stock

Research suggests that certain items are more likely to be stolen than others. Those items that are CRAVED are more likely to be stolen.

Concealable

Removable

Available

Valuable
Enjoyable
Disposable¹

It won't take long to work out which items are CRAVED. Displaying empty boxes, placing expensive items behind locked cabinets or behind the counter, placing stock within the vision of counter staff and ensuring any camera surveillance is greatest in areas of greatest risk all helps to prevent shop theft.

Step 3: Review Shop Layout

Staff know a lot about the problems with shop or business floor plans. Hiding spots, poor sight lines, poor access control (limited entry and exit points) and poorly lit areas are just some of the ways that shop layout can contribute to crime. Regularly conduct audits of the shop so that you can identify design problems that require attention.

Step 4: Armed Robbery Prevention Training

Regular training on armed robbery awareness and prevention can help staff review relevant policies and procedures and to be prepared for the unlikely event of a robbery. The old adage, practice makes perfect is true. By rehearsing how you will respond to a robbery incident, you can minimize the chances of something going wrong or staff reacting inappropriately.

This information is very basic, but it can be used effectively to help prevent crime in the workplace. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact Michael on 0417 448 507 or Michelle on 0401 870 117 or check out our website – www.chdpartners.com.au

¹ Clarke, R. (1999) **Hot Products**. Police Research Series. Paper 112. Home Office, London.