



King Dick's in Kelston is a thriving liquor store on the Great North Road. The business is owned by the Portage Licensing Trust, West Auckland's charitable organisation that invests profits back into the community. King Dick's in Kelston makes a substantial contribution to the trust's annual income of \$40 million plus.

The Challenge

When Sean Leonard began managing King Dick's, Kelston in January 2009, he brought with him a zero tolerance for stock loss caused by theft. He considered the monthly losses of between \$800 and \$1500 to be totally unacceptable and suspected the store was a regular target for 'career criminals' and opportunists.

The CCTV system already installed was an ineffective deterrent as well as being unwieldy, expensive and time consuming because, once a loss had been identified, it required many hours of staff time to pinpoint recordings of the incident and suspect.

Sean, an experienced retailer, knew there were better options available, in particular, the electronic 'gate' systems used to protect stock in many retail environments. The Portage Trust supported Sean's efforts to curb theft and he was referred to Leading Solutions.

The Solution

Leading Solutions recommended the Diaward RF (radio frequency) Electronic Article Surveillance System (EAS). All stock would be tagged, gates would be installed and an alarm would sound if anyone passed through with an item that had not been deactivated. A buzzer would ring when someone walked into the shop, alerting staff to their presence even when staff could not see the doorway.

However, prior to installation, the EAS system had to be customised to address a number of issues peculiar to the Kelston store. The first concerned the entrance. With no rear access, it is necessary for deliveries – many of which are stacked on wide wooden pallets – to be made through the front door. To accommodate the

Zero Loss

Electronic Article Surveillance

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wide pallets, there needed to be more than the standard 1.2m gap between the EAS pillars. In response, Leading Solutions designed the gate as a mobile unit which could be moved during deliveries.

Leading Solutions also came up with an innovative answer to the problem presented by the store's stainless steel countertops. Usually the deactivator pads are installed underneath countertops, but radio frequencies cannot travel through metal so customised stands were designed to re-site the pads.

Highly focused on getting every element of the system the best it could be for King Dick's, Leading Solutions also worked closely with Sean to select the best tags to suit different types of bottles and labels.

"We had quite a number of special requirements, and Leading Solutions responded quickly and innovatively to provide us with a system that was a perfect fit to our needs," says Sean.

The Result

Since the system was installed, stock losses have plummeted. "Some months our loss is at zero and, at worst, would be around \$200," says Sean. He believes that high visibility of this system is an instant deterrent for would-be thieves. "When they see the gates and hear the buzzer they are alerted immediately to our system."

Regular 'career criminals' were weeded out quickly, and opportunists now think twice. As a service to other businesses, the store shares CCTV images of thieves. The setting off of the alarm alerts staff to the time that the crime takes place, making it easy for them to find the images of the theft in the system. The system paid for itself within six months - exceeding expectations in cost benefit analysis. "It really has brought a substantial financial benefit for this business," says Sean.

An additional benefit is the boost in confidence the system has given staff. "It has been great for the team - they don't feel they are managing theft on their own." Initially, staff were apprehensive about the increased workload of tagging all stock. Leading Solutions provided support, visiting the store and working with staff every day for a week to assist with installation and to ensure that all staff were very familiar with the new system. As a result, the team learnt quickly and any previous doubts were eliminated. The tagging process is now part of the store's induction training.

The solution

EAS TAGGING SYSTEM

In summary...

The combination of Leading Solutions' dedicated approach to workable retail security systems and Sean's determination to rid the store of thieves has paid off. The customised system has not only brought a dramatic drop in stock loss but has also, as an added benefit, provided a sense of security and improved confidence for the team at King Dick's in Kelston.



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