

CUTTING EDGE

YOUR PRODUCT GUIDE TO THE SPRING & FALL CO-OP MARKETS
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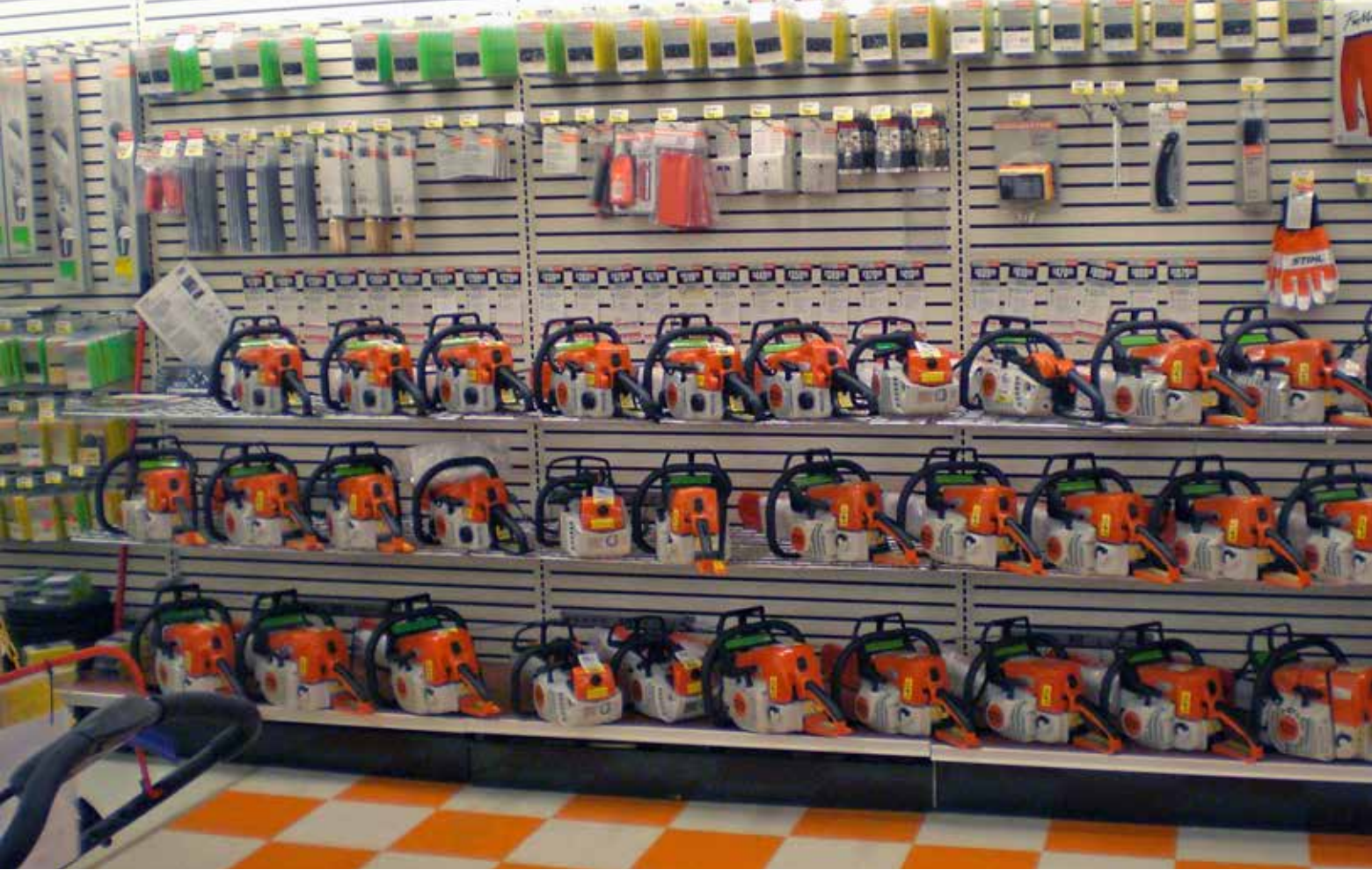
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POWER TOOL

By Del Williams

DISPLAYS

Enhancing Interactivity, Preventing Theft

New options promote customer interaction and deter theft with cordless and corded tools

For retailers of power tools like electric drills, grinders, sanders and reciprocating saws, the customer's retail experience is just as important as loss prevention. Allowing customers to interact with the product on display by physically handling and testing its weight, heft, and ergonomics can be crucial in a customer's purchasing decision.

Electronic loss prevention devices, which typically involve an alarm console, sensors, and related accessories, are the ideal way to display this type of merchandise and protect against theft. Now, as retailers face competitive pressure to reduce costs and staffing, a greater array of standard and custom options is further improving this category's appeal in the industry.



“Our focus is on finding the perfect balance of helping our retailers best sell and merchandise their products with minimal theft,” says Teri Tapella, Senior Manager of Security Operations at Ace Hardware, the world’s largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative, comprised of more than 5,000 stores in over 60 countries. “This requires letting customers touch, feel, and handle power tool display models while fully protecting them.”

According to Tapella, Ace Hardware’s retail stores are independently owned and operated by local entrepreneurs. “From a retail security standpoint, we operate as consultants for our retailers and help them implement best practices to mitigate losses within their stores,” she says.

Tapella warns that theft is a problem with power tool displays, including removable rechargeable batteries, and that simple tethering alone seldom resolves the issue.

“While store owners can use wire from their own store as security cable, I caution them that any thief can cut it with wire snips found in store a few aisles down,” says Tapella. “That’s why having a second layer of protection like an electronic alarm is essential.”

As a solution, Ace Hardware vets and maintains a preferred vendor of loss prevention systems. From the preferred vendor list, Tapella often recommends various units from Se-Kure Controls, a Franklin Park, Illinois-based manufacturer of retail product security devices.

Tapella says that the security product selected most often to prevent the theft of displayed power tools is a local alarming system with an electric strip that easily conceals behind or under pegboard. The devices can be connected by cords in a “daisy chain” fashion to allow use at adjacent power tool displays. Multiple security tethers can wrap around or attach directly to each power tool on display.

She points out that a number of features in such systems can help to enhance theft prevention in hardware stores.

“Se-Kure’s system has local backup battery power, for instance, so if we lose store power, we retain alarm capability,” says Tapella. “The alarm is shut off with a key, which makes it more difficult for thieves to disable it.”

One such system operates with battery life of up to 16 months, and if the alarm is triggered, battery power can sustain a continuous alarm for almost seven days. For greater security, it incorporates a “visual memory” that keeps the system’s LEDs

flashing until the tampered sensor is identified and corrected. It also has a “Where-It’s-At” option that flashes a light at the top of the display to help employees locate the source of the alarm.

Tapella says that attention should also be paid to the types of tether options used.

“We find several of Se-Kure’s tether options helpful,” says Tapella. “One simply loops around the power tool’s handle, and if the tether is cut, the system triggers an alarm because it interrupts electrical flow through the tether.”

However, according to Tapella, certain items like removable battery packs for cordless power tools cannot be protected with a simple tether because there is no handle to loop it through or around.

In such cases, the company offers an option for tethers with dual sensors that Tapella appreciates.

“With the dual sensor approach, one tether secures the body of the power tool, and an accompanying tether has an adhesive piece with a sensor alarm on it as well,” says Tapella. “The adhesive attaches to the battery, so if the battery is removed the sensor triggers and the alarm is set off. This can help prevent the theft of any displayed power tools, as well as valuable accessories like lithium batteries.”

Another benefit of such an approach is that it preserves the ability to sell display models without damaging them, according to Tapella. In contrast, other approaches, such as those that drill a hole into the product to run a security cable through it, or those that cut off power cords, can render display models unsaleable.

To protect corded display merchandise such as drills and sanders from theft, another approach enables securing any corded electrical device by locking the power cord in a power cord lockbox, opened by a key.

“As consultants, we can recommend best practices to follow for retail security, but ultimately it is up to the store owners to decide what makes the most sense to them,” concludes Tapella. “Fortunately, there are a range of effective theft prevention options that enable customer interactivity with the hardware tools on display.”

For more info, call 800-250-9260 toll free; fax: 847-288-9999; email info@se-kure.com; visit www.se-kure.com; write to Se-Kure Controls, Inc., 3714 Runge St., Franklin Park, IL 60131, USA. ■

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