



OPERATIONS

Customized devices helps deter theft at Joann

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April 25, 2018

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Like so many other things in retail, there is no one-size-fits-all solution theft deterrent. Limited merchandising space, a store's layout and the nature of the item being protected are just a few of the factors that need to be considered.

When this occurs, many retailers require more customized anti-theft equipment to stay ahead of the customer – and also the thieves.

“Customization is often required to successfully deter theft,” said Robert Hirnikl, corporate manager of asset protection at Joann, which operates more than 865 stores across 49 states. “There will always be new products, new challenges, and new technologies, so we need to work with a partner with the flexibility to adapt to the inevitable changes.”

Hirnikl wanted to improve protect high-value items like scissor from theft while adding to the customer experience. He turned to Se-Kure Controls, a manufacturer of retail product security devices, which customized the branding and messaging on the peg hook locks that secure those types of items at Joann stores. This included adding the notification to “see a team member for assistance” when the customer wanted to handle a secured item.

After successful implementation, the fabric and craft retailer later sought help with another challenge for which there was no immediately apparent solution on the market: deterring thieves from placing inconspicuous devices called overlay skimmers on the store's credit card readers. In a problem across different types of retail settings, thieves attempt to place the skimmers on point-of-sale systems, ATMs, and gas pump, where credit and debit cards are swiped for payment. When fit over the card reader slot of such devices, thieves can capture the data and “clone” the customer's card, which is then used in fraudulent transactions.

“We didn't want to work with a vendor who would just throw generic equipment at us and say, ‘Try this,’” said Hirnikl. “So we challenged them [Se-Kure] to create a device for us that would prevent an overlay from being put on top of our credit card readers.”

According to Hirnikl, Se-Kure took Joann's input and the dimensions of their card readers to come up with a device in the requested price range. The metal anti-skimming device fits over the top and side of card readers to prevent an overlay from being placed on them, while allowing full functionality. It comes with a special security tool for fastening so thieves cannot use regular tools to tamper with it.

“The anti-skimming device fits securely over our credit card reader, which would prevent the overlay skimmers from being placed on the unit,” said Hirnikl.

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