

# STORES

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## A TASTE FOR SUCCESS

Food halls are the next step in the evolution of food retail



# Hands-on Merchandising

Retailers deter theft while maintaining high-touch environments



by LIZ PARKS

Here's the quandary: To minimize shoplifting, retailers lock up or chain down valuable merchandise from electronics and hardware to cookware and high-end jeans. That, of course, makes evaluating these desirable products more difficult, often resulting in customer annoyance and lost sales.

Teri Tapella, senior manager of security operations at Ace Hardware, says Ace store owners need something that is “practical, easy to use and a step beyond traditional alarms that are easy to beat. They also need solutions that can provide a substitution or an alternative to locking products in glass cases, and Se-Kure can do that.”

Se-Kure Controls, a manufacturer of retail product security devices, has a wide variety of anti-theft solutions that satisfy both loss prevention and merchandising needs. Tapella says Se-Kure enables “a

perfect balance of helping our retailers best sell and merchandise their products.”

Ace Hardware is a co-op of 5,000 independently owned stores. Tapella says one of the most popular systems with its retailers is a hidden power tool display alarm that lets customers touch, feel and handle items on display while keeping the items securely protected.

The alarm, which protects various pieces associated with power tools such as battery packs and handles, can be hidden under or behind display cases, pegboards and in inconspicuous locations.

If someone tries to cut or remove an attaching adhesive or loop, the long-life battery-powered alarm is triggered. “These alarms work even if the store’s electric power is disabled,” Tapella says. The alarms can be daisy-chained together to protect up to 120 items.

Ace co-op members use a wide variety of Se-Kure systems including security mirrors, cash drop boxes, locking hooks and anti-skimming devices on their point-of-sale systems. Tapella says Se-Kure also works with retailers to customize anti-theft solutions to meet specific needs, sometimes even co-developing solutions to meet unique needs.

## A ‘WIN-WIN’

Tonya Sjolín, manager of loss prevention for Sur La Table, has been working with Se-Kure for 10 years. She says Se-Kure has worked with the 137-unit Seattle-based chain to develop several merchandising-friendly anti-theft solutions that have helped reduce shrink significantly while at the same time making products accessible and attractive, which has helped increase sales.

“We have been able to maintain the look and the feel of our products, meet customer experience expectations, yet keep merchandise in the stores.”

— Tonya Sjolín, Sur La Table

“We don’t want to detract from the appearance or the function of our merchandise,” Sjolín says, “so with our partnership with Se-Kure, we were able to find and help develop anti-theft products that met our needs. We have been able to maintain the look and the feel of our products, meet customer experience expectations, yet keep merchandise in the stores.”

Sur La Table first used Se-Kure’s power cord security lock box to make it possible for customers to interact with electric appliances. Sjolín says the device protects up to eight power cords and prevents unauthorized removal of display electric appliances from the shelves.

Due to its success, Sur La Table worked with Se-Kure five years ago to develop a slim steel cookware lockbox, containing eight retractable lanyards that sit behind sets of cookware display items. The lanyards attach to the components of a cookware set, making it possible for customers to interact with products.

“When they’re done, the cookware goes back on the display and the cord retracts,” Sjolín says. “It keeps the higher-end cookware secure and in place. It was a win-win from the standpoints of merchandising appeal, in-store housekeeping and asset protection.”

Today Sur La Table is testing magnetic peg locks which sit on the end of expensive display merchandise such as knives retailing for over \$50, preventing them from being swept off their pegs.

#### PROTECTING CUSTOMER INFORMATION

John Mangiameli, Se-Kure’s executive vice president, says the company’s anti-skimming device was developed specifically for use with the Ingenico ISC Touch 250 card reader at the request of Robert Hirnikl, corporate manager of asset



protection at Hudson, Ohio-based Joann Fabric and Craft Stores, a specialty retailer with nearly 900 stores.

The device prevents thieves from overlaying skimming devices on a widely used POS system and is a proven way to protect the critical financial information of customers.

Tapella says Se-Kure customized its anti-skimming device to fit most of Ace’s POS terminals “It has been very successful. I can honestly say that if you are using their anti-skimming device, inserting skimming overlays would be much less practical.”

Mangiameli says Se-Kure is currently working with a large chain of gas stores to develop an anti-skimming device for its gas pumps. “Protecting customers’ financial information is a key way for retailers to develop and keep brand loyalty,” he says.

Because a majority of Se-Kure’s anti-theft solutions are customized, designed, made and distributed from its three facilities in the United States, Se-Kure can turn around, develop and implement very quickly.

“They’re very prompt and very responsive,” Sjolín says, “and they do control costs very well because they develop in-house. Plus, they have a wide variety of products, both mechanical and electronic. Their mechanical solutions are very simple in design and we’ve never had one fail. I’m highly satisfied with them.”

In business since 1965, Se-Kure today has customers in a wide variety of retail sectors. Mangiameli says a large electronics retailer uses its products “in every store they have in the world.”

In one instance, Mangiameli says thieves broke into one of the electronics retailer’s mall stores without the perimeter alarm going off. But when the thieves tried to steal products protected by Se-Kure’s display alarms, they did go off, attracting mall security to the store.

#### PROTECTED SELLING

Most of Se-Kure’s anti-theft solutions are plug and play, though retailers can instruct fixture makers to buy the devices they need from Se-Kure. Se-Kure sends installation instructions to the selected fixture makers, minimizing paperwork and the number of purchase orders that retailers must create, which reduces operating expenses.

“All a retailer has to do when devices come in is put them on the displayed items,” Mangiameli says.

In the 10 years that Tapella has been on Ace’s Retail Loss Prevention team, she says, “we have looked at a myriad of anti-theft solutions. It wasn’t out of complacency that we stuck with Se-Kure. We stuck over the years because the products they bring to the table don’t just provide a solution, they provide flexibility and a really nice way to merchandise.

“At the end of the day, you can protect products or you can sell products, but how do you do both? The Se-Kure products, specifically the power tool alarm device in our case, do a fantastic job of bringing both of those things together.” **STORES**

Liz Parks is a Union City, N.J.-based writer with extensive experience reporting on retail, pharmacy and technology issues.