

Value within Case Incident Management

By Corin Dennison

'Scientia potentia est' is a Latin aphorism meaning 'knowledge is power' and is widely attributed to Sir Francis Bacon, and since used by many thought leaders including Thomas Jefferson.

Applying this principle to the subject of Retail Risk it is indeed true, but I would challenge is it not the case that the 'Power' we seek is that to make informed risk decisions and this comes from our data, big or small??

Loss Prevention / AP leaders are regularly courted by vendors offering solutions that provide critical and valuable risk insights, ranging from exception-based reporting, consumer analytics, payment risk management, returns fraud to EAS activation, CCTV gesture recognition, physical security intrusion. Without a doubt there is a myriad of big data options within our grasp (if we choose to procure them) that will change our professional lives and mitigate risk, but what about the operational challenges? Like the adage 'With great power comes great responsibility' (attributed to Marvel's Spiderman)there should be a complimentary statement that reads 'With big data comes big analysis' - the responsibility to convert, consolidate and prioritize this data into timely and impactful actions. Many organizations can be overwhelmed by the volume of data available and the many choices they can or want to make to convert this into actions.

A foundation block of a sound LP strategy or plan, and often overlooked or given the importance it deserves, is an effective Case / Incident Management platform. Many risk leaders will tell you that to mitigate risk you first need to identify it and analyse it, and this clearly comes from consolidating your risk and incident data and having timely workflows and management reporting. The 4R's principles of Incident Management process highlight the key steps of Repair, Resolution, Recovery and Restoration and whilst management solutions enable the user to command, control and communicate, more importantly they should enable informed decision making at speed, to avoid unnecessary and costly delays.

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To clarify, sound Incident/Case Management is more than merging multiple data sources into a single platform and delegating actions...if only it was that simple. There is complexity involved from quality of data capture, user interface, triage and assessment, escalation, and critical management, to audit pathways, decision making, management reporting and reflection.

Interviewing Sophie Malone, Chief Commercial Officer at Zinc Systems, a SaaS solution provider for Incident Management she highlighted *'The vast majority of brands we speak to have risk data available within their eco-system but struggle to consolidate it and actively use it at the time when it is most valuable. Bringing this data together within a single platform enriches the quality, providing a transparent and complete view of organisational risk and enables effective delegation and management to mitigate.'*

Often when researching a topic, I try to benchmark my assessment to what Good vs Great looks like. Next Plc is a prime example of a multinational omni retailer with over 700 retail stores and multiple brands including Gap UK, Victoria's Secret, Joules, and Bath & Body Works, who have made this Case & Incident Management journey. Speaking to Steve Teatum, Head of Group Loss Prevention for Next, on the importance and value of resilient incident management to his organization he states *'Next started this journey several years ago with a vision of bringing all aspects of our operational company risk under one reporting and management model, applicable anywhere in our business from Store to DC to Corporate Office. Having accurate and timely data, with sufficient context, allows myself and other Senior leadership to make sound judgements and risk led decisions to protect our people, our consumers, and our profit.'*

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B&Q is another UK retailer who has advanced its incident management capabilities beyond simple reporting/recording to operating a dedicated Crime Centre, processing incident events from across its 315+ stores. Simon Moss, B&Q National Security Manager comments *"B&Q recognised the need to accurately record and capture the volume / types of Crime related incidents that we were experiencing. We have worked in collaboration with our partners, Zinc, over the last 10 years to evolve how we capture, analyse, and report this data, developing a simple database into a sophisticated incident management and crime analysis platform.*

The focus was to allow incidents to be reported easily, accurately and in a timely manner so that we can determine at speed the actions needed. The use of this platform has allowed better visibility of the risk data for the estate, improved the efficiency of our security infrastructure (Retail guarding, CCTV, Store Detectives, etc.). We can communicate threats to our store teams at speed so they can be best informed and reduce risk. A great incident management and analysis platform allows for our Crime Centre Team to focus their time doing what they do best, engaging with stores, security, and law enforcement to ensure we have the best possible chance of a successful apprehension / prosecution of offenders."

It is clear that the benefits of having a robust incident management platform are faster resolution to solve or mitigate issues and incidents, comprehensive overview of risk, consolidation of quantitative and actionable data, efficient decision-making, enhanced management reporting, and the provision of auditable data learnings. All of which should lead to creating a safer and more profitable business!



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