



Protecting people, profits & brand: The imperative role of retail incident/case management for security, safety, and loss prevention.

E-book

'Knowledge is power'

ZiNC
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Retail Risk: The value of incident/case management.

'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 (LP) / Asset Protection (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 prioritise this data into timely and impactful actions. Many organisations 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.

Source: Corin Dennison at Insight Retail Risk Consultancy



The 4R's principles of Incident Management process highlight the key steps of;

- Repair
- Resolution
- Recovery
- Restoration

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.

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.

What Good vs Great looks like.

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 organisation 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.



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!

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.'



Retail Risk: Identifying the Wood from the Trees!

As we close 2023 and start a new year, the World of UK Retail has plenty to reflect on.

With global socio-economic disruption leading to 'cost of living' crisis factors such as fuel price rises, mortgage rate hikes, increased food costs and the spectre of organised retail crime, flash robbing and violence against shop-workers, the challenges for retail leaders have been immense, and even more so for those tasked to manage retail risk.

Tracking retail shrinkage has always been a core KPI and risk gauge for retail risk professionals, but with the varying challenges of loss drivers from internal to external factors, it can be difficult to see the wood for the trees and to prioritize where to focus first to mitigate the biggest risks. Sharing some published statistics from 2023 the outlook for UK retail would appear to be bleak.

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) 2023 Crime Report with data collated from over 16,000 members highlighted:

63% of theft within a retail environment is committed by repeat offenders;

79% of retailers believe that the cost-of-living crisis has led to an increase in theft;

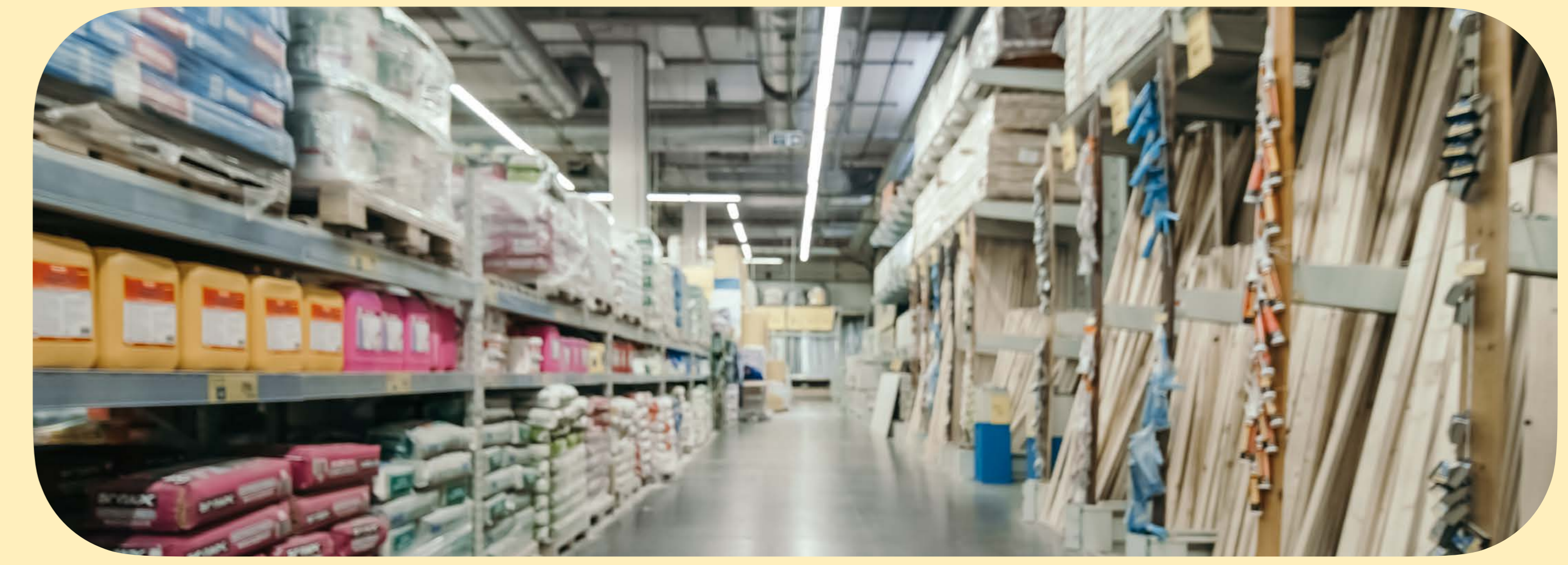
87% of colleagues working in convenience stores have experienced verbal abuse over the last year;

But maybe all is not lost as we advance into 2024. In 2022, following an extensive campaign by the BRC and others, an amendment was secured to the Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, aimed at better protecting people working in retail. In 2023, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) produced a Retail Crime Action Plan initiating the launch of Operation Pegasus, a national partnership between several major UK retailers and the Home Office to combat Retail Organised Crime.

This is indeed a positive step forward but there may continue to be challenges ahead for retailers, large or small, who will not or cannot afford to fund such a bespoke partnership initiative. With a large portion of retail crime committed by a smaller but committed group of offenders, the answer may still lie within the quality and the consolidation of reporting data to be able effectively identify prolific offenders and risk groups much earlier.

The main challenges are two-fold for retailers; namely what data to report and capture and subsequently into what management system this should be reported, all of which needs to be as time and cost effective as possible.

There are many case and incident management providers to choose from, and whilst each may have unique functionality and selling points, the main question to be asked is how can these feed into the respective law enforcement systems to achieve the big evidential data picture that we all aspire to? With 43 UK police forces using a range of data management systems from NicheRMS, X-Fire to Vantage (naming a few) there requires a real focus on data integration and convergence, at the very least the adoption of an agnostic system approach, to be able to achieve success.



Turning our attention to larger blue-chip retailers the findings are similar and equally alarming. The British Retail Consortium (BRC) Annual Crime Survey for 2023 highlighted:

867

Incidents daily of retail violence and abuse

£1.76 B

Total retail crime of £1.76 billion of which £953 million is attributed to customer theft

£722m

Spent by retailers on crime prevention

Referring back to the industry statistics quoted in this article, there are two call outs, the first being the volume of incidents occurring daily in UK Retail. If the scope of Retail crime is to be fully recognised and acknowledged then the challenge is to ensure that the reporting of retail crime is elevated from the 16% reported to police. Clearly there continues to be a 'disconnect' between crime incidents, reported crime, police investigations leading to prosecutions, and finally convictions, but the starting point needs to be the comprehensive capture of incidents and the quality of data and evidence that will support a police action.

£228m

was invested by convenience retailers in crime prevention measures over the last year.

16%

Retailers estimate that just 16% of crimes against their business are reported to the police;

Retail Risk: The experts

Zinc Systems have been working with several UK retailers over the past years to refine the reporting of retail crime to provide the best-case scenario for submitting a police crime report. 'Understanding the retail environment and operational framework is critical to building a resilient incident management model' says Sophie Malone, Chief Commercial Officer of Zinc.

'No one retailer operates the same and our mission is to create operationally sound systems that empower retailers to capture incident data at the time of occurrence and provide the best evidential output that law enforcement requires to be able to progress an incident from point of occurrence to apprehension of an offender, to charge and subsequent conviction. This requires bridging the gap between the retailer and law enforcement, ensuring the data is evidentially sound and clear. We must remember that retailers are in the business of selling, and any other activity including the management of retail crime must be complimentary to this goal.'

Integrated incident management, investigations and compliance.

Zinc Synapse helps LP and risk leaders to make informed decisions at speed, to avoid unnecessary costly delays. With its user-friendly interface the platform has been designed to enable retail employees to capture and submit incident reports, leading to the consolidation of quality risk data, empowering retail businesses to resolve incidents and cases quickly, streamline communication and apply assurance activities to improve resilience.

Unlocking the potential

For retailers, management, and staff of high-risk environments, knowing that there is a robust incident management platform in place can provide peace of mind and installs confidence in your organisation's ability to respond effectively to emergencies.

Connected teams, guided action, and effective communication.



Enhanced Safety & Security

A pivotal role in enhancing safety, security, and operational efficiency, taking appropriate actions to protect retailers and supply-chain.

Faster Response Times

By centralising critical events, response teams can pinpoint the location of an incident and take immediate action based on the playbook of controls.

Streamlined Communication

Allowing management to rapidly disseminate critical information to staff, LP teams, security, and first responders through various channels.

Data Insights & Analytics

It allows location and event managers to identify trends, assess vulnerabilities, and make informed decisions to enhance long-term security and safety.

Resolve Cases Rapidly

Investigate and collaborate effectively to respond to offender and OCG activity streamlining the process for civil recovery or prosecution.

Regulatory Compliance

Provide documentation and reporting capabilities to demonstrate compliance with these standards, reducing liability and potential fines.

Resource Optimisation

Make informed decisions about security postures, control, and resource deployment, ensuring efficient use of personnel and equipment.

Business Continuity

Help protect the location & assets by enabling proactive risk management, rapid incident response, and disaster recovery planning.

Everyone deserves to be safe.

During a critical event, safety & security should never be an afterthought.

Retail Risk: Unified data is your key to strategic success

A unified data source provides a 'single pane of glass' and enables the prioritisation of all safety and security postures. This ensures proactive risk and loss prevention strategy focussed on data and actionable insight.

-  Incidents
Store Teams, Security, SD's & LP's
-  Activities
Patrol & Compliance Activities
-  Police
Crime Sharing Initiatives
-  Integrations
Alarms, EAS, RFID etc.
-  Console
Data Import



Actionable Insight: Data & Reporting

Operational

- Share & Export
- Trending & Hotspots
- Organised Crime Groups
- Security Team Performance
- Targeted Products
- Offender Gallery
- Banning Register
- Location Reporting
- Compliance
- MI Reporting
- Risk-based Deployment
- Situational Awareness
- Health & Safety

Strategic

- Risk Management Model
- Governance & Compliance
- ROI

Report

Manage & Investigate

Analyse

Zinc Systems - find out more at www.zinc.systems

With risk and technical landscapes both evolving at pace, it's clear to see that the cost of doing nothing or simply not doing enough, is one that can have catastrophic impacts. Get in touch to learn how Zinc Systems can support your business to achieve high standards of safety and control and how our platform 'Synapse', delivers a unified, consistent and seamless process, within a user centric design, tailored to an organisations priorities, process and strategy.

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