

Things to Consider When Adding GPS to Your Security Arsenal

Use of various technologies to alert and track stolen merchandise is under consideration by retailers. GPS tracking is one option that has created buzz in the industry. We asked someone with experience with this technology to provide some insights for those considering GPS tracking as a possible solution to recovering stolen merchandise and potentially preventing robbery from retail stores.

How is GPS tracking implemented? Is it visible or covert?

The whole idea of using GPS to catch criminals and recover assets is that the criminals unknowingly steal the device. That only works if the device is undetectable. Look for solutions that either mimic or can be hidden in high-demand items. Using GPS to secure assets with higher theft rates increases the chances of recovery, arrest, and criminal prosecution.

How is the technology activated?

The device should automatically and silently detect theft and begin reporting. This is key as it eliminates

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Interview with Mary Pifer



Pifer is vice president of global marketing and product management for 3SI, a technology company providing security systems for asset protection and recovery, including GPS tracking. She has over thirty years of experience in the security business.

employee involvement, notifies authorities while the event is in progress, and reduces the likelihood of a violent confrontation. As with most technologies, the lack of human interaction and manipulation increases the device's success rate.

Who receives the alert from the tracking device?

The device should link directly to a security company monitoring center or law enforcement to improve response time and, therefore, increase the likelihood of an arrest. It also keeps staff and customers safe by getting the criminals out of the store and into the hands of professionals.

How does the device communicate?

GPS devices typically use cellular networks to report their location. Users should be sure to choose devices that are 4G/5G compatible, so they will last well into the future. This will help to reduce future replacement costs.

What are some other things to consider during the selection and deployment process?

There are a number of questions I would suggest someone ask during the assessment and selection of GPS tracking technology.

- Is it easy to use and maintain?
- Is the device self-reporting to ensure reliability?
- Does it provide data that can be used forensically after the crime to help law enforcement secure a conviction?
- How many devices should be used for maximum effectiveness in whatever application someone is considering?
- Where should the devices be placed within the store?
- What types of crime is the retailer wanting to target?

What are your thoughts on the short- and long-term benefit of GPS tracking?

Adding a tracking and monitoring solution to an existing security program can provide real-time visibility and data. As the retail application of GPS tracking continues to grow, it has proven itself to be an ally in the fight against organized retail crime and burglary. As more retailers embrace the technology, it will continue to grow as an essential tool in the loss prevention industry. ■