

## Protecting nightshift cashiers from harm.

ARCO am/pm convenience store thwarts robbers and shoplifters with Axis camera and an intelligent biometric software solution.



### Organization:

ARCO am/pm  
convenience store

### Location:

Yakima, Washington, USA

### Industry segment:

Retail

### Application:

Safety and security,  
loss prevention

### Axis partners:

Blue Line Technology,  
Skyline Communications

### Mission

The ARCO am/pm convenience store in Yakima, Washington has always been a proponent of surveillance cameras to deter theft. But when a tragic robbery occurred at a neighboring convenience store, the franchise owner knew it was time to ratchet up his store's security even more. He was particularly concerned about the safety of employees on the graveyard shift, a time when convenience stores are most often targeted. He began looking for a solution that would assist in preventing an armed robbery from occurring.

### Solution

Skyline Communications, a Seattle-based systems integrator and Axis partner, installed an HDTV-resolution Axis camera at the store's front entrance tied to an automated door locking mechanism. The camera is equipped with intelligent biometric software from Blue Line Technology and monitored through a computer at the register.

The solution requires that anyone wanting to enter the store from dusk to dawn, when the door is locked, must show their face to the camera. The door will automatically unlock and allow nighttime patrons into the store when the system detects a human face and determines it isn't on the store's list of prior offenders. As an added safety precaution, the cashier can push a button to override the locking mechanism.

### Result

Since installing the system, the store has thwarted two attempted robberies and blocked several known shoplifters from returning to the store. With greater nighttime security, cashier retention has increased from four months to more than two years. Adding the Axis cameras with Blue Line Technology software to its other loss prevention measures has also enabled ARCO am/pm to reduce shrinkage to less than 1%.



## Heading off threats at the door

Convenience stores have long been a favorite target for armed robbers and shoplifters. As the franchise owner for ARCO am/pm Convenience Store in Yakima, Washington, Khushdip Hans was determined to stop his store from becoming just another statistic. He was especially concerned about the safety of his employees on the graveyard shift, the store's most vulnerable hours of operation.

"I've always been proactive about security," says Hans. "But when a cashier was murdered at another convenience store just a few miles away from us, I decided I needed to add more security for my night shift cashiers in particular."

His search for a solution led him to Blue Line Technology, a software company that bundles its patented intelligent biometric solution software with a high-resolution Axis network camera and an automated door locking mechanism. "We already had theft prevention cameras inside the store, including several Axis cameras," says Hans. "We wanted a solution that could help us during the graveyard shift to keep out individuals who were intent on harming our customers and employees. This detection system was exactly what we needed."

### Instituting a safer security protocol

Superior image quality was the driving factor in bundling his company's software with an Axis network camera says Thomas Sawyer, Blue Line Technology's senior partner and former police detective. "Anytime you're using a solution like this, it's important to have equipment that is reliable, vandal-proof and can deliver great facial clarity," asserts Sawyer.

With the camera solution in place, Hans instituted a policy of locking the entrance door from dusk to dawn. When a customer approaches the door, a sign instructs them to look directly into the camera. If the individual is covering their face, the camera won't detect it and the door remains locked. If the face shot is clear, the software will scan the store's database of prior offenders.

If no matches are made, the door will automatically open before the customer has even reached the threshold. As a safety precaution, the cashier can always override the lock at the touch of a button.

The system has already prevented two attempted robberies since being deployed. On the first occasion, video of the two masked assailants was provided to law enforcement along with the license plate number of their vehicle that was obtained by a separate camera in the parking lot. The combined forensic evidence ultimately helped officers apprehend the suspects. Since that event, word has gotten around that ARCO am/pm is no longer an easy target. "Before the system was in place, we averaged two armed robberies a year," shares Hans. "Now we're down to zero."

Sawyer calls it the power of a glance. "When somebody looks into a camera, their desire to commit a crime goes way, way down," he says.

Late night shoplifting was another big problem for the store. "We used to get a lot of people who would try to shoplift in the middle of the night when there was only one cashier on duty," says Hans. "We'd see them on our inside cameras. Now we note the time of the incident, go back to the system, find that person's image and mark it as an alert. Next time they try to come into the store, the door stays locked."



### Addressing customers' privacy concerns

To protect customer privacy, the solution purges facial images after 24 hours, unless an incident causes a specific image to be flagged. If an image is flagged, it's automatically encrypted, assigned a random number in lieu of a name, and saved locally on the store's computer for future comparison.

### Promoting the solution to other franchisees

As a member of the ARCO am/pm Franchise Advisory Board, Hans continues to promote his solution to other franchisees and store owners. "Everyone who's in touch with me agrees that this is a great solution for their store," says Hans. "But when it comes to money, they drag their feet."

For Hans, that reluctance is unthinkable. "If they can prevent someone from being hurt or killed, why would they quibble over such a small investment?" questions Hans.

Hans encourages his cashiers to brag about the system. He wants everyone coming into the store to know that they take security seriously.

"Adding the Axis cameras with Blue Line software to our other security measures gives me great peace of mind," adds Hans. "I like that I can monitor the video remotely through viewing tools whenever I want. My cashiers and regular customers are very happy about it, too. They trust the system to protect them and that makes everyone feel safer."

**"We put the Axis cameras with Blue Line software in place to protect our customers and cashiers. If anyone objects to having their picture taken at the door, they're welcome to shop elsewhere."**

**Khushdip Hans, franchise owner of ARCO am/pm convenience store in Yakima, Washington.**



# About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,000 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Axis was founded in 1984 and has its headquarters in Lund, Sweden.

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