

Stop that thief!

AXIS Camera Station and HDTV-quality network cameras help small town drug store catch them red-handed.



Organization:

Wallace Drug Store

Location:

Cochrane, Ontario, Canada

Industry segment:

Retail

Application:

Loss prevention

Axis partner:

Tech Galaxy

Mission

Wallace Drug Store in the small town of Cochrane, Ontario, knew petty theft was eating into their bottom line. But even when their old analog security cameras caught someone pilfering, often the image wasn't clear enough to prosecute. The store needed a much higher resolution surveillance system, one that could be easily learned and operated.

Solution

Wallace Drug Store turned to Tech Galaxy, a technology solutions provider and Axis partner, to design and install a new network video camera system that could deliver the forensic quality evidence they needed. Tech Galaxy installed a mix of Axis HDTV-resolution network cameras controlled by AXIS Camera Station, a straightforward plug-and-play video management system. Tech Galaxy also installed Axis video encoders to integrate the drug store's legacy cameras into the new system.

A mobile viewing app allows the store owner to monitor store activity remotely from his smartphone or tablet while at home or on the road.

Result

In the first six months of operation, the new Axis cameras caught half a dozen shoplifters stealing over \$1,000 worth of merchandise. Thanks to the exceptionally high image quality of the video, the police were able to identify and apprehend the individuals in very short order.



Creating a theft deterrent zone

Despite its small town location, there's nothing small about Wallace Drug Store. The 8,000 square foot building is one of the largest retail buildings in town. In addition to a bustling pharmacy business and an in-store health and wellness clinic, the store carries \$650,000 in inventory that includes home healthcare supplies, personal care products and sundries.

When the company moved to its new location five years ago, owner Frank Louvelle took great pains to design the floor in such a way as to make it hard to shoplift. The new store has lower shelving, wider aisles and lots of straight lines to minimize opportunities for theft. But despite everyone's best efforts, the thefts continued. And the old analog cameras weren't providing much help. Not only was the system complicated and cumbersome, the low-resolution video made it difficult to identify what was being stolen and who was doing the stealing.

Tech Galaxy stepped in with a simple solution. The company installed an Axis Camera Station system, complete with half a dozen HDTV-quality Axis network cameras and a 16-channel AXIS M7016 Video Encoder to integrate into the store's legacy analog surveillance cameras into a complete security solution. The integrator chose several AXIS M3104 Network Cameras operating in corridor view to monitor the aisles. The cameras' built-in infra-red illumination and Wide Dynamic Range (WDR) with Forensic Capture would provide crisp video even after store closing hours.

At the store's entrance, an AXIS M3024-LVE was installed to capture video of patrons as they leave the store.

The camera's infra-red illumination and automatic IR-cut filter ensure crisp video images day or night. To monitor pharmacy activity, Tech Galaxy installed an ultra-compact and covert AXIS M3046-LV. The versatile camera provides a 128° field of view as well as WDR and digital pan/tilt/zoom for closer observation as needed.

"I'm finding the system very user-friendly," says Frank Louvelle. "It's easy to do recordings and go back after the fact and look at the footage. And I like the fact that I can monitor the cameras on my phone when I'm home at lunch or out of town and see what's going on." Louvelle also appreciates how easy it is to download camera footage to a USB drive and hand it to the police for evidence.

No plausible deniability

In the first six months of installation, the Axis cameras caught half a dozen people stealing from the store. "That's more people than I pressed charges against in total for the two previous years," states Louvelle.

One woman came in empty-handed, proceeded to the store's purse section and took the largest bag she could find, stuffed it with items and left the store. "Everything she grabbed was caught on camera," shares Louvelle. "So we were able to give the police the actual SKUs of what she took along with the video."



Another woman caught on video managed to steal \$200 worth of cosmetics in a matter of minutes. "I was surprised how much somebody could steal in so short a time, especially in a store laid out the way ours is," remarks Louvelle.

In another incident, a man grabbed an expensive medical device, went into the washroom, stuffed it in his knapsack and then left the store. "We caught the grab on camera after the fact and sent the video to the police who subsequently arrested him," reports Louvelle.

Learning from what he saw on the video, Louvelle has made a few changes in the store such as moving certain high-theft items behind the counter and locking the washroom and requiring customers to request the key from an employee. He also added new pegboard anti-theft technology to prevent people from sweeping an entire display of products.

Improving accountability

Louvelle has discovered other benefits to having a quality surveillance system on site. "If I'm at home I can log into the dispensary camera and see if prescriptions are piling up in the drop-off section," explains Louvelle. "If it's busy, I'll cut my lunch short and go back. If it's not, I can take my time."

With cameras in every section of the store Louvelle can keep an eye on the staff to make sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. "If somebody's not at the front register and they should be, I'll know it," he says.

Gaining a reputation for toughness

Louvelle has plans to step up surveillance in the receiving area and loading dock with new Axis network cameras to monitor deliveries and discourage impulse pilfering. And as the old analog cameras reach their end of life he'll replace them with new Axis cameras as well.

In the meantime, Louvelle feels that the new Axis system is definitely helping Wallace Drug Store significantly lower incidents of theft. "I was surprised that we've arrested so many people in just a short period of time," states Louvelle. "But this is a small town. Word gets around. We're already seeing the number of incidents dropping."

According to Louvelle, even the local police and judges are wondering why anybody would steal from Wallace Drug Store given all the high-resolution cameras they have. "When people look at the video evidence, it's hard to deny their accuracy," declares Louvelle. "They make identifying people so very easy."

"Our Axis system is getting a great reputation around town. One of my staff overheard a judge say that our cameras have such great resolution that it's easy to identify suspects."

Frank Louvelle, owner and pharmacist for Wallace Drug Store.



WALLACE DRUG STORE

TECH GALAXY

About Axis Communications

Axis offers intelligent security solutions that enable a smarter, safer world. As the market leader in network video, Axis is driving the industry by continually launching innovative network products based on an open platform - delivering high value to customers through a global partner network. Axis has long-term relationships with partners and provides them with knowledge and ground-breaking network products in existing and new markets.

Axis has more than 2,700 dedicated employees in more than 50 countries around the world, supported by a global network of over 90,000 partners. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

For more information about Axis, please visit our website www.axis.com.