



## Employee theft down, shoplifting up, say retailers

As shoplifting in New South Wales soars by 5.8 per cent\*, a new study suggests that employees are stealing less while shoplifting or theft by consumers and gangs is on the rise.

Among the other findings, while employee theft is down, it is also changing, with retailers increasingly concerned about workers stealing cash as opposed to merchandise. The online survey of 83 small-to-large multi-national retailers was conducted by Retail Systems Research (RSR) and is titled Loss Prevention 2010: Retailers Battling Shrink in Tough Times. The study is sponsored in part by ADT Security and its Sensormatic Retail Solutions group. Traditionally employee theft has been the largest portion of the retail crime pie and it still is, but we believe we are seeing a shift in employee theft as retailers get better at spotting it, said Phil Brown, National Retail Manager (Sensormatic), ADT Security. At the same time, the economy is reducing the number of employees in the stores and creating more opportunities for shoplifting and gangs. Retailers were asked to name their top three sources of theft. In 2009, 68 percent named employee theft of merchandise as one of their top concerns down 12 percent from the previous year. At the same time, 62 percent of retailers listed shoplifting by customers as a top concern, compared with 52 percent in 2008. While employee theft of cash is a smaller portion of retail crime than merchandise theft by employees, customers and gangs, it has become of increasing concern to retailers. More than 45 percent listed theft of cash by employees as one of the top three concerns, which is 13 percent more than in 2008. According to Brown, retailers have gotten better at identifying employee theft. Still, the economy presents more opportunities for shoplifters because in addition to there being fewer watchful employees on the store floor, there are more opportunities to resell discounted stolen items online or at flea markets to bargain-hungry consumers. The good news for retailers is that new anti-theft technologies like point-of-sale and analytic software are working to help reduce theft of all kinds, said Brown. Deterrence is the name of the game in retail theft and today's technologies are making employees think twice, said Brown. We are continuing to work with our retail customers to help them maximise and add technologies like cameras, video analytics and anti-theft tags to target shoplifters and organised retail criminals. According to Brown, there are also solutions available for employee theft of cash that include new and more extensive data collection and analysis of transactions. The Loss Prevention 2010 report shows that loss prevention remains a focus for retailers. In 2009, more than 68 percent said limiting retail theft had increased as a priority compared with 57 percent in 2008. The most successful retailers, with sales out-performing their competitors, were even more likely to indicate an increased priority for reducing retail crime. According to the latest quarterly report\* from the Bureau of Crime Research and Statistics, the retailers hit hardest by theft were clothing shops (up 30.3 per cent), licensed premises (up 18.1 per cent), shopping complexes (up 12.7 per cent) and supermarkets (up 7.0 per cent). \* NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research: 16 December 2009 [http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll\\_bocsar.nsf/pages/bocsar\\_mr\\_rcs\\_sep09Ends](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/pages/bocsar_mr_rcs_sep09Ends)

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