

## TESCO SUPERMARKET

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Tesco plc</b>
<b>Trigger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition by Tesco's Director of Loss Prevention and Security that the criminal justice system alone does not prevent crime, as is harder to get a conviction.</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce shoplifting and 'push-outs' of loaded trolleys.</li> <li>To reduce violence against staff in stores.</li> <li>To reduce crime by 'designing it out', thus providing an environment in which customers feel safe and can enjoy shopping.</li> </ul>
<b>Tools/techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment of a new Group Crime Risk Manager to conduct 'risk health checks' and make recommendations</li> <li>Working in partnership with local agencies, Police, Social Services, Fire Service, Local Authority, NSPCC, Help the Aged etc. to ensure that stores located in high crime areas are safe.</li> </ul>
<b>Enablers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition that the best way to design out crime is by reducing the opportunity and desire to offend, which requires an understanding of the current models of criminal behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Tensions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial concerns by top management that designing against crime measures might interfere with a successful, winning, retail formula.</li> <li>Wide aisles and lower shelves, which help to reduce crime also reduce sales space.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer concerns about their safety in stores in sensitive areas, which have been modified as a result of the design against crime initiative, have reduced.</li> <li>Although only in place for 2 years the new approach has had a significant impact on both in-store and car park crime in existing stores.</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition that customers will not come to a store if they perceive a risk of becoming the victim of a crime</li> <li>Designing out crime at the outset is much easier than trying to bolt measures on afterwards.</li> <li>Understanding the criminology of the built environment and its impact on behaviour is key.</li> </ul>

### Synopsis

This case illustrates the approach taken by a major retailer to increase resistance to crime in the form of theft, criminal damage and violence against the person. Two years ago Tesco plc employed a Group Crime Risk Manager to recommend measures to help to reduce crime both inside existing stores and in the car parks of those stores and to work with designers and planners on the designs of their new stores with the intention of 'designing out crime' from the outset. The case describes the measures recommended and taken. In store changes such as lower shelving, wider aisles, removal of blind spots, visible CCTV surveillance, careful positioning of 'hot products' are discussed. The measures introduced have reduced actual crime substantially.

### Background to Tesco Supermarket

The British Retail Consortium Retail Crime Survey 1999 showed the cost of crime losses by UK retailers from customer theft, staff theft and criminal damage to have been a staggering £1.3 billion, an increase of some 28% on the previous year and this figure does not include other criminal activities, such as car theft and violence against the person committed in retail car parks. The problem of crime in the retail environment is clearly major and very costly to retailers. In addition, it is increasingly difficult to get a conviction for theft and therefore it is harder to use the criminal justice system as a preventative tool. Tesco plc recognised these problems and took new steps to deal with them in 1999, by appointing a Group Crime Risk Manager, Greg Lawrence, whose role was to make recommendations aimed at reducing the level of crime in existing stores and to become involved at the outset in the design of new stores to ensure that crime would be kept to a minimum. As an experienced 'designing out crime' practitioner, Lawrence brought his knowledge of modern theories of criminal behaviour to bear on the problem. This understanding of the criminology of the built environment and the way that this affects the behaviour of the criminal was the key to the success of the plan. Lawrence explains his approach:

"There are three key elements which lead to a greater propensity for a criminal to perform a criminal act, anonymity, freedom from surveillance and alternative escape routes. Criminals ask three basic questions: 'Can I be seen? If I am seen will I be noticed? If I am seen and noticed will anybody do anything about it?' So, in designing against crime we must address these issues."

Based on this thinking, Lawrence set about advising Tesco on how they might combat crime inside their stores. His job is primarily one of explaining to all levels of management in Tesco why it is easier to steal from one type of shelf than another and providing advice on how to tackle problem areas. This case is based on an interview with Greg Lawrence.

## Design Process

### Concept

Lawrence's approach very much reflects current best practice. In particular, overall layout should ensure visibility, whilst décor and background music can help to reduce aggressive behaviour. The blind spots in Tesco stores created vulnerability to theft (see figures 1 and 2).



Figures 1 & 2: Blind Spots in Tesco

Designing counters with raised flooring both protect staff from customers and improve opportunities for surveillance. Exits should be accessible only through the pay point and staff should be positioned to see customers entering and leaving the store. Shelves can be designed to prevent products being removed in bulk by thieves, without deterring shoppers and various security and safety measures may be used such as security staff, alarms, cash protection equipment and staff training (Design Policy Partnership, 2001).

## Layout

The layout is designed to reduce anonymity, freedom from surveillance and alternative escape routes. For example, wide, straight aisles and lower display shelving shown in figure 3 are the key to addressing these problems.



*Figure 3: Wide straight aisles & lower display shelving*

Although this might reduce the sales per square foot of a store initially, the benefits in terms of crime reduction and customer satisfaction with the environment, encouraging repeat visits outweigh these concerns. Staff can see what is happening. Ideally,

there should be no vulnerable blind spots. No hidden corners in which shoplifters can 'repackage' goods before stealing them from the store. However, in practice in some older stores highly visible CCTV cameras and mirrors have been erected to cover blind spots which cannot be designed out.

## Product Placement

Certain products are more vulnerable to being stolen than others. These are known as 'hot products' or CRAVED products. Lawrence explains the acronym:

“Such a product is Concealable, Removable, Available, Valuable, Enjoyable and Disposable. If a product satisfies the following criteria then it is very attractive to shoplifters. DVDs, are good examples of these types of products. We try not to put these sort of light, pocketable products by the store exits.”

Such CRAVED products are placed in view of the check out staff if possible, or if that is not possible, they are protected by the CCTV cameras. The CCTV has to be clearly visible to potential criminals to be effective, which was not the in Tesco's stores originally (see figure 4).



Figure 4: CCTV is highlighted

## Impact

Designing out crime at this very early stage is a cost efficient approach to crime reduction. If the store is designed against crime, for example, with straight building lines at the outset, then the number of CCTV cameras needed is reduced. The whole process from the outset to the final opening of the new store is expected to take about three years. Since Lawrence has only been in post for two years, no stores in which this new policy has been adopted have yet opened. However, if the success of the measures introduced in the existing stores is an indicator, then the new policy should lead to better designed, more crime resistant stores and a better shopping experience for customers.

## Lessons Learned

This case suggests that it is much easier to 'design out crime' at the outset of a project, rather than trying to bolt it on afterwards. But perhaps the overriding lesson to come out of this case is the need to understand the effect on the behaviour of criminals of the built environment and the way that the space within it is organised. Since changes required to improve security have to be balanced with other financial implications, then discussions with the various stakeholders are essential.

## References, Related Case Studies and Further Reading

Clarke, R. (1995) Situational Crime Prevention, in Tonry, M. and Farrington, D. (eds) *Building a Safer Society: Strategic Approaches to Crime Prevention*. Crime & Justice: A Review of Research, vol. 19. London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Design Policy Partnership (2001) *Off the Shelf*. University of Salford and Sheffield Hallam University.

### Contact Details

Greg Lawrence  
Group Loss Risk Manager  
Tesco plc  
Heldrew House  
Delamare Road  
Cheshunt  
EN 8 9SL  
Tel: 01992 644451  
Fax: 01992 646117  
E-mail: [greg.lawrence@uk.tesco.com](mailto:greg.lawrence@uk.tesco.com)

### Classification Index

Ekblom's crime classification	Misappropriation (theft), misbehaviour (violence against the person, criminal damage, anti-social behaviour).
BCS crime classification	Theft, violence against the person, criminal damage.
DAC	Protecting profits & enhancing the shopping experience.
Primary motivation	Product and people protection
Type of designer	Industrial
Approach	Problem-solving
Sector	Retail
Location	Supermarket
Author	Anne Tomes

DAC – TESCO supermarket