



Contact:

Bill Petropoulos  
P&L Solutions  
www.plsolutions.net  
(760) 887-4800

## **A New Age in Loss Prevention Awareness**

By Kevin Lynch

Technology. Everyone wants more technology. In the Loss Prevention industry, we have seen technology change our ability to manage more tasks in more places. Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) helped slow down shoplifters and is now morphing into RFID, which should help us take shoplift prevention a step further. Still CCTV cameras evolved into speed domes, which are now evolving into 360 degree cameras giving us more floor coverage and more flexibility than ever before. Video recording evolved into DVRs. DVRs help save tremendous time in reviewing video and made for smart recording technology, helping to insure that when there was a problem in the store, it was recorded and easy to locate. Of course, the most popular use of technology currently has to be exception based reporting. The ability to have a tool that brings dishonest employees right to the surface, practically handing us the thieves, is still rather amazing.

With so many different ways that technology has changed our industry, why has technology not played a more advanced role in Loss Prevention Awareness Programs?

P&L Solutions is a business solutions provider that provides Loss Prevention Outsourcing programs. One of the many different ways that we help companies is by building, implementing and maintaining Loss Prevention Awareness Programs. When you go through this process with many different companies, it affords you the opportunity to see what strategies work, and work in a variety of environments. You have the ability to constantly reassess how your program is working and what elements you can add or subtract to present a more comprehensive and effective program.

We have discovered a tool that finally takes Loss Prevention Awareness into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! It is called Digital Signage.

### **Traditional Shortcomings of Awareness Programs**

Awareness programs have always been trying to find better ways to captivate the employee's attention and engage them in behaviors that will help reduce losses in the stores. One of the oldest and most established methods of doing this are putting up posters and flyers in break rooms. The idea is that as employees sit in the break rooms, they will take in the same message day after day after day. We hope that as the message is observed over and over again, employees will start to understand and will unconsciously change their behavior. Over time we realized that when the poster remains up too long, it goes unnoticed. So we started figuring out that to keep the employee's attention we had to change the look and change the message on a frequent basis.

So companies started putting out new posters annually, bi-annually, or even quarterly to keep the look and message fresh.

I can remember being 17 years old working in a retail clothing store and seeing similar type of posters on the wall. In those days, the message was very straight forward, and boring. Something along the lines of “If you see an employee stealing, call today...” Today, the posters are slicker, prettier and more like an advertisement.

Wait a minute...did I just say like an advertisement?

## **The MTV Generation**

MTV premiered on August 1, 1981. At that time, nobody fully understood just how much it would change the landscape of America. People anticipated it would change the face of music, that is evident by the first song ever played on MTV, “Video Killed the Radio Star” by The Buggles. However, I don’t think anybody really anticipated the impact it would have upon advertising. The MTV Generation consists of everybody born after 1965. We were the Generation that grew up watching the fast paced video clips on MTV. Songs that were 3:30 seconds long broken up by 100 different cuts filled with various beautiful people and images. These quick cuts caused our attention spans to shorten, but as our attention span shortened, we spent more and more time in front of the TV. This basically meant that as long as we kept getting new messages and visuals quickly, you could keep us tuned in. When the messages and visuals didn’t change, we tuned out quickly. Not coincidentally, channel surfing also became prevalent during this same time period. More and more channels with nothing ever to watch!

Now, what does this have to do with Loss Prevention Awareness Programs? It is quite simple really. We need to approach Loss Prevention Awareness the way that advertisers do, sending out short, interesting and attention grabbing ads on a consistent basis. To put it bluntly, posters don’t work. When people see the same visual day in and day out, they just don’t notice it. They just don’t pay attention to it.

That is where Digital Signage comes in. Digital Signage is a product that allows you to store any video or audio data and broadcast it to all the stores. Digital Signage gives you the opportunity to create “commercials” to promote Loss Prevention Awareness. Imagine the possibilities. A humorous commercial showing an employee caught stealing. A serious public service announcement talking about the consequences of stealing, a light-hearted, quick cutting clip, set to upbeat music, showing the positive effects of customer service in preventing shoplifting, an inspirational message promoting use of the company hotline. Now imagine these messages played on a constant loop on a flat screen TV in the break room, inter-spliced with music videos. How much more impact would that have on an employee compared to merely looking at a poster on the wall?

The great thing about Digital Signage is that it can be used in so many different ways. Think about promoting awareness for safety campaigns. Think about sending out emergency response messages when a natural disaster, such as Hurricane Katrina, is about to strike. Think about incorporating the company newsletter to keep employees informed of company events. Think

about how you can keep employees aware of current sales and promotions. Think about how you can send reminders to employees on new or changed policies. Think about how you can send reminders to employees about complying with existing company policies. Think about how you can use digital signage for marketing products in the store by putting screens out on the sales floor for customers.

The uses for Digital Signage are only limited by your own imagination. Any message that you want to communicate to your stores, you can. While for many Loss Prevention Awareness Programs, Digital Signage would be used as a one-way communication device the added bonus is that Digital Signage has the ability to provide two-way communication. It can be used for video conferencing. This allows another added benefit to Loss Prevention because you can conduct interviews and interrogations from a remote location.

Digital Signage offers so much for Loss Prevention Awareness. It allows fresh, exciting messages sent to all employees on a consistent basis. It provides the message in a format that employees enjoy and will capture their attention. It allows flexibility to change the message as often as you would like. It provides tremendous cost savings in printing travel, and time.

Isn't it time that you moved your Loss Prevention Awareness Program to the next level?

For more information, please visit [www.plsolutions.net](http://www.plsolutions.net) or contact P&L Solutions at (760) 887-4800.

#####

P&L Solutions, the leading loss prevention service provider in the US, helps stores and restaurants achieve their potential through intelligent loss prevention solutions. While many loss prevention services are designed to reduce current losses, P&L Solutions offers solutions that also prevent future losses and maintain profit margins well into the future. P&L Solutions achieves this by offering proactive loss prevention programs that focus on improving the behavior of employees and store management through advanced training, development, awareness, accountability and execution. Our proven history of success allows us the flexibility to meet the needs of just about any size organization.