

Honest Employees? Can Often Cause Problems

By Marvin Badler

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The proverbial "disgruntled employee", typically considered the source of most employee theft, may also be very good at disguising his or her complaints about the company. In fact, that same person is very likely to be your best worker.

Executive Security Group, LLC. Of New York / New Jersey and Florida, a security-consulting firm has compiled information over the past twenty-five years of operation through personnel experience and with data from the Uniform Crime Report of the FBI. Along with various personal and other studies on theft in the work place, produced many findings about the pervasiveness of theft on the job. Some of the studies involved anonymous questionnaires to employees in a sample of industries, and follow up interviews with employee representatives to determine their perceptions of theft and their reactions to the employee assessments. We have found that the typical dishonest employee falls into particular areas. Some of the findings and conclusions are:

• 1/2 Most employees claim that they do not steal, but thefts been reported in every one of the employer locations sampled.

• 1/2 The greater the opportunity for theft the greater the likelihood of theft.

• 1/2 Young employees steal more and more frequently. (This finding correlated findings in the shoplifting and retail store theft studies.)

• 1/2 Those Concerned with advancement and achievement in their careers are apt to steal more than others.

• 1/2 The employee who is satisfied on and with the job is less likely to steal from the employer.

• 1/2 Theft volume is inversely proportional to the perceived possibility of detection. The greater the fear of detection, the

Less the theft.

• 1/2 Concerted efforts to reduce theft by the employer will achieve theft loss reductions.

• 1/2 Following a security audit and the establishment of an expressed management policy prohibiting theft was sufficient in

Some cases to reduce incidence.

• 1/2 About one third of all employees reported stealing. (This has correlated with findings from field tests in the use of

paper and pencil honesty type tests.)

• 1/2 Lack of prosecutorial policies and lack of vigorous prosecution efforts tend to encourage theft. Actual dismissal from

Employment of the threat of dismissal, alone, is not effective deterrents, particularly for the young employee.

"Internal theft occurs on all employment levels". Many of the cases Executive Security Group has investigated were

Initially uncovered by a security survey, where employers could not pinpoint the cause. "In every case, the employer

Was surprised to learn who the culprit was". His advice: "Take no employee for granted, refine Inventory control,

Restrict Key access, background investigations, don't be too demanding, and conduct regular security Investigations or Surveys".

In summary, theft is a widespread work place problem. It is not reduced or controlled without specific policies and programs. It is greatest where opportunities are great and perceived that the likelihood of detection is least. Industrial discipline "firing" is not, by itself, an effective control. You can contact Marvin Badler at: mb@implexsecurityproducts.com

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