

Planned Projects Present Unplanned Disasters!

1 983 was the start of an era. An era that seemed to start with those darn, ugly Cabbage Patch dolls. The Associated Press reported in November of 1983 that several episodes of violence occurred in toy stores around the country that season. A store in the Roxbury section of Boston sold 100 of the moon-faced dolls in twenty minutes. Five thousand West Virginians lined up early on a Sunday morning to fight over 120 dolls. And an employee at a Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania store used a baseball bat to fend off the Cabbage Patch Cult.

Shortly to follow came Furbys, Beanie Babies, and, of course, who could forget Tickle Me Elmo; all much publicized product rollouts that led to consumer chaos and ultimately violence. These were not just isolated cases, but a full-blown phenomenon.

Marketing Gone Mad

The “extreme-is-the-norm” 21st century dynamic product rollouts or “planned projects” have become downright frightening. This last November, thousands of customers set up campsites outside of stores across the nation several days before the release of the new PlayStation 3 console. The widespread craze over the product’s extremely limited availability led to multiple acts of violence, including one shooting outside a store in Putnam, Connecticut. Other cities were forced to call in police to help subdue unruly crowds of people fighting for a spot in line. Of course, some of the retailers whose customers were involved in the disputes were presented a hefty bill by the city and the inevitable lawsuits that followed.

Unfortunately, the days of little old ladies and unruly soccer moms quibbling over a misshapen doll are over and retailers big and small will be left to pick up the pieces. How long will it be before we are horrified to learn that someone is killed in one of these events? According to the most recent U.S. Department of Labor statistics, 10 percent of workplace fatalities are homicides and 80 percent of those are perpetrated by someone that is not an employee. In fact, workplace violence is the fourth leading cause of death in cases of fatal workplace injuries.

In February, 2007, two individuals were arrested and are facing felony charges of placing a hoax device in a way that results in panic as well as disorderly conduct for placing light board signs throughout Boston and nine other cities to advertise a late night cartoon, causing many observers to mistake these signs as explosive devices. The authorities have not ruled out criminal charges or a civil suit to recover the estimated hundreds of thousands of dollars it cost responding to the bomb scares. You would think that in a post 9/11 era, the

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Ken Wolfgang
Director of Operations
Security Resources, Inc.

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Security Risks When Remodeling

Product rollouts are just one example of the high security risks involved for retailers and any other industries that execute “planned projects.” Remodeling presents an opportunity for disaster as well. An ex-director of retail development with a major shoe company (who wishes to remain anonymous) told us that it was very common for him to find hand-sewn Italian shoes in their boxes in the dumpster while opening or remodeling their stores. “It got to be such a huge problem that we had to bring in a third party to watch the workers unload the displays and furniture on and off the truck to prevent them from throwing shoes in the dumpster, only to return later at night to retrieve them.”

While retail theft by construction workers is not well documented, homeowners who have been ripped off by them have been. Perhaps, one of the reasons why this hasn’t been more widely recognized is that it may be going unnoticed. How many organizations are conducting inventories on a daily basis while in the midst of remodeling their stores or offices?

Law Enforcement Takes Note

Recently a major police department for a prominent East Coast city published an entire doctoral on what businesses should be addressing during any remodeling or expansion project. The question becomes—if this isn’t a big problem then why are law enforcement professionals publishing instruction manuals regarding it? Their suggestions for prevention are

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enough to give the average retail executive or loss prevention specialist a heart attack. Following are some excerpts (in italics):

Gather your employees and put together a plan that will enable you to keep the store open during renovations and yet not lose inventory to thieves.

Check the inventory before the crews arrive and when the job is about half done, and again when the job is complete.

Are you kidding? This is why these guys are in law enforcement and not accountants. Good managers are almost impossible to find and retain. Now you're going to ask them to stay all night to supervise a renovation after working 60-plus hours per week? Not to mention the overtime you'll have to pay for your hourly employees to conduct multiple inventories.

Engrave all furniture, computers, and all other office equipment with an engraving tool.

Not bad, but again there is substantial cost and time associated, plus simply engraving equipment does very little to prevent their theft in the first place.

Never leave work crews alone. If they must work on weekends or overnight, you must be there too.

This makes perfect sense but this also leads to what may be an ideal and cost-effective solution to all of these problems.

The Solution

Hire a security officer.

Security Resources Inc. is a nationwide provider of on-demand security services specializing in providing temporary

and permanent security solutions throughout the U.S. and Canada. Its trademarked XpressGuard® service guarantees a licensed and insured security officer on location anywhere in four hours or less.

Our on-demand services allow our clients to manage risk while maintaining budgetary considerations. Just as manufacturers and retailers have adopted just-in-time delivery practices to minimize standing inventory costs, XpressGuard® provides the same mechanism for security managers.

You Want What by When?

Through its "All Star" network consisting of over seven hundred vetted security providers, Security Resources provides its clients a reach and flexibility that no other company can claim, all through a single point of contact. Whether you need coverage at 1,300 locations for a single night or rolling coverage for renovating sixty stores at a time scattered all across the country, one call does it all.

With years of experience managing multiple projects for multiple clients, Security Resources offers loss prevention specialists a tremendous range of flexibility to meet their unique needs.

"Our ability to consistently provide customized on-demand security for our clients has set us apart from the rest of the industry," explains Ken Wolfgang, director of operations for Security Resources. "Whether for one location or thousands, we are available on a moment's notice and for as long as necessary."

Disturbing and Prevalent Trends in the Retail Industry

Security Resources has commissioned an independent study performed by a research group that lists fifty *Fortune* 500 companies as clients. In this study they examined several disturbing and prevalent trends within the retail industry that we think all businesses will find very interesting and invaluable. We would be honored to share this information with any one of our friends in the retail industry. Simply contact Joe Malone at 877-477-9638 or visit us on the web at www.securityresources.biz. ■

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