

■ SHOPLIFTING

a learning element for staff of consumer cooperatives

international labour office, geneva

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by Gert Hansson



MATCOM
Material and techniques for cooperatives management training

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SHOPLIFTING

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HOW TO LEARN

- Study the Element carefully.
- Give written answers to all the questions in the Element. This will help you to learn, and also use the knowledge in your work at a later stage.
- After studying the Element on your own, discuss it with your instructor and your colleagues, then take part in the practical exercises organised by your instructor.

PREREQUISITES

To benefit from this MATCOM Learning Element, you should:

- Have some retail shop experience.
- Have studied the MATCOM Elements on "Display of Goods in Self-service shops" and "Leakage".

TRAINER'S NOTES

are available for this Element. See the Trainer's Manual.

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INTRODUCTION

What does the word "shoplifting" mean? Let's listen to two shop managers with different views.

"When people take things from the shop without paying for them, I say they are shoplifting. In a way I can understand them. We have a lot of nice goods openly displayed in our self-service shop, and customers are free to choose what they want. In fact, you could even say that we are tempting people to steal. I don't set out to catch shoplifters here, but I do all I can to protect the shop and the goods from them. Shoplifting must be reduced to a minimum."



"Stealing is stealing and shoplifting is the same as stealing! It doesn't matter how the goods are displayed - it seems some people just can't tell the difference between theirs and ours. Shoplifters are criminal! They should be caught and handed over to the police! The best prevention is severe punishment for the culprits. Shoplifting must be reduced to a minimum."

Most people would probably say that there is some truth in both the statements. The interesting thing is that both opinions lead to the same conclusion.

In this MATCOM Element you will learn how to minimise shoplifting in your own shop.

HOW SHOPLIFTERS OPERATE

If you remember these basic facts, it will help you to prevent shoplifting.

This is the pattern shoplifting follows:

Step 1:

The shoplifter takes the goods from the shelf, like all the other customers do.



Step 2:

When nobody is looking, the shoplifter conceals the goods on his person.

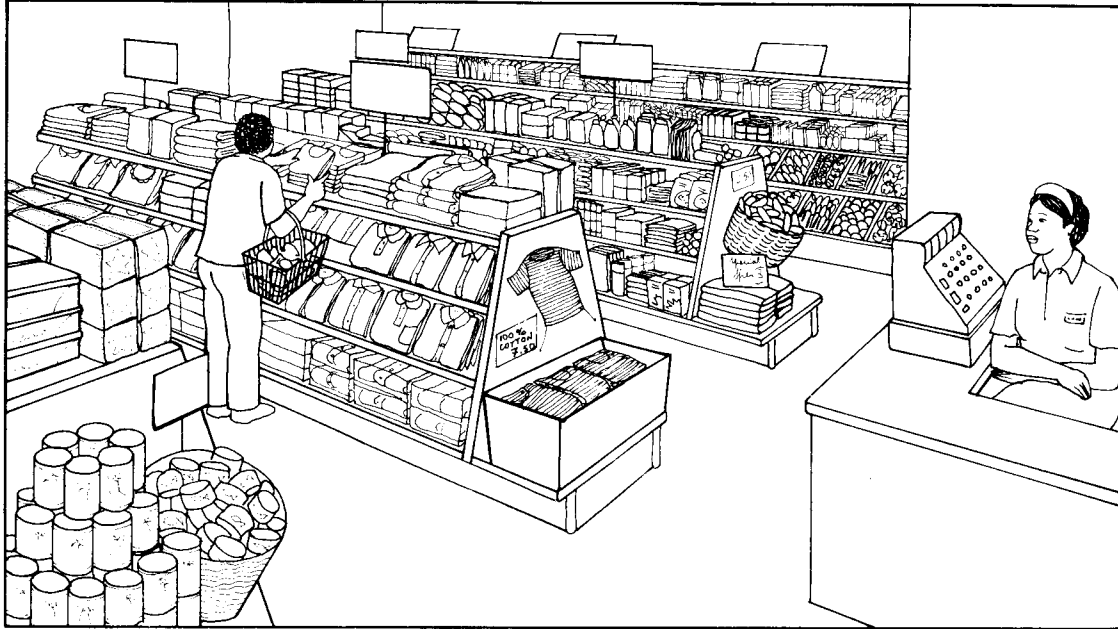


Step 3:

The shoplifter goes past the cashier, leaving the shop without paying for the goods.



Only when the customer walks past the cashier without paying (Step 3) does he become a shoplifter, but it is the second step that we have to prevent. Once the goods are concealed, it is very difficult to detect the shoplifter. And, to make detection even trickier, the second step may not have any direct connection with the first. Look at this example:



A lot of goods are displayed on a gondola (set of shelves) within sight of the cashier. Good! That will prevent shoplifting here. Or will it?

A man takes something from a shelf, like any other customer. So what?

The man then walks round the gondola and, when he is out of sight, conceals the article somewhere - in his clothing, for instance. Obviously the man intends to shoplift.

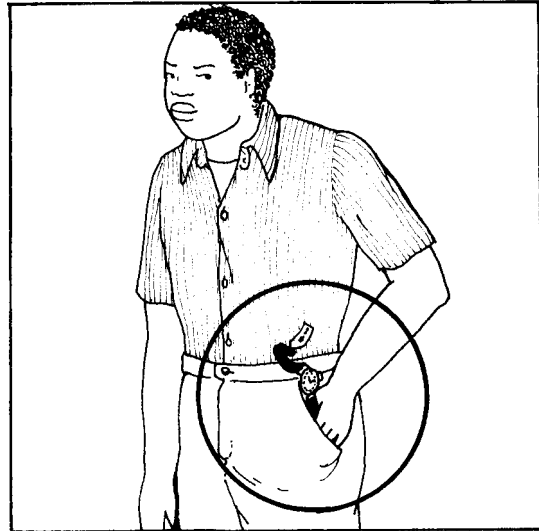


From this, we learn that the critical point is the action of concealing the article. We must prevent shoplifters from concealing goods.

HOW DO SHOPLIFTERS CONCEAL GOODS?

Concealing goods in pockets :

Putting things in a pocket is probably the most common way of shoplifting. Of course, only small articles can be hidden in pockets.



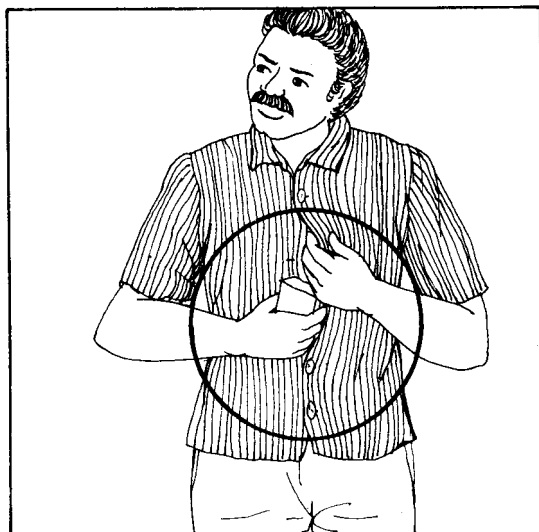
Concealing goods in handbags, briefcases, cartons, etc. :

Bigger articles can be stolen if they can be hidden in a handbag or briefcase or a carton.



Concealing goods in clothing :

This is a very common method of hiding goods. Quite a lot of things can be concealed inside a shirt, in a boot, in an umbrella, or even in a hat.



False wrapping

Professional thieves sometimes take an expensive article and put it inside a packet used for some cheaper goods. The cashier will charge the low price marked on the packet, and the thief will happily pay that price,

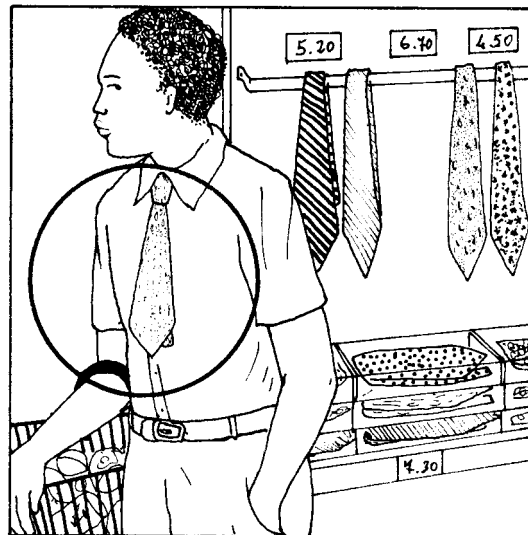


SHOPLIFTING WITHOUT CONCEALING THE GOODS

Although the most common method is to hide the goods, some other tricks are used:

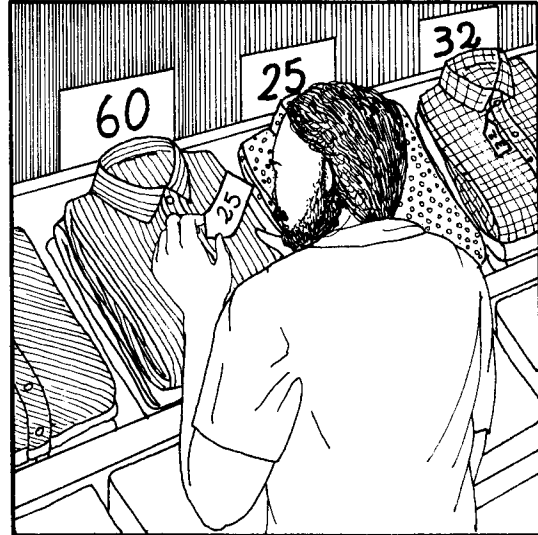
"Putting on" the goods :

This method is quite common, especially if you have a fitting room. Shoes are often stolen like this, as well as clothes. The number of second-hand, worn-out shoes found stuffed away probably equals the number of new pairs that have "walked away" without being paid for.



Using false price labels ,
or switching price labels :

Professional thieves use this method. They bring their own price labels which, of course, are different from yours. In the shop they exchange the price labels and claim that the goods were bought somewhere else. A more common method, at least in large shops, is the switching of price labels. Suppose you



have a shirt at \$60 and another of lower quality at \$25, the shoplifter switches the labels and stands a good chance of getting a \$60 shirt for \$25.



These were examples of some of the methods that shoplifters use when they are stealing from shops.

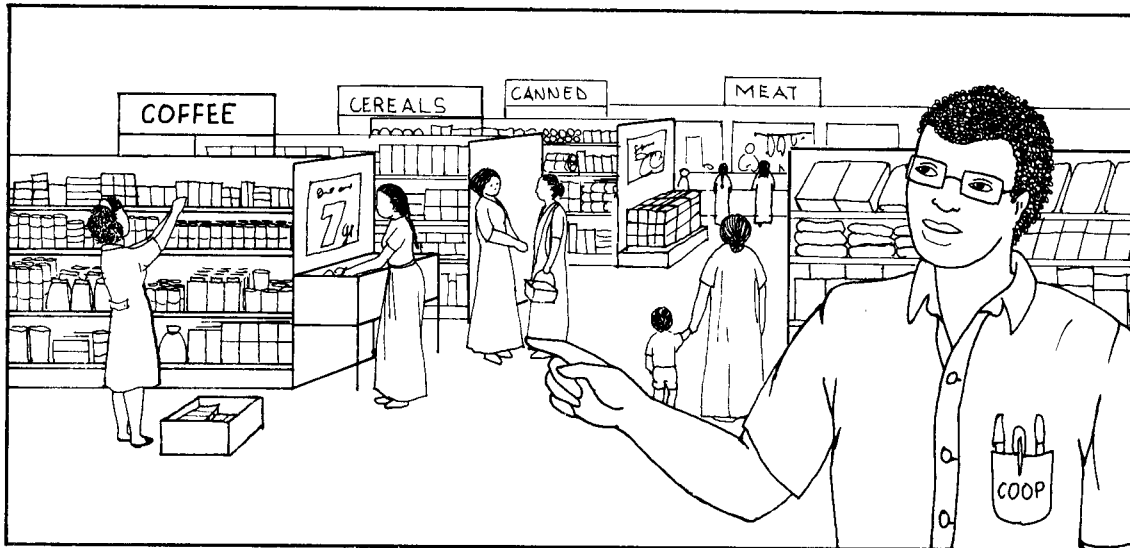
Which of these methods do you think have been employed in your shop?

What other methods do you think shoplifters use when stealing goods?

PREVENTION OF SHOPLIFTING

Mr. Leaka is the manager of a large co-operative shop. He is very sales conscious. His only worry is that he cannot control leakage.

He has checked all the possible reasons for leakage without finding anything alarming. Talking about shoplifting, he says: "Shoplifting is not a problem - I have never seen a shoplifter in this shop"



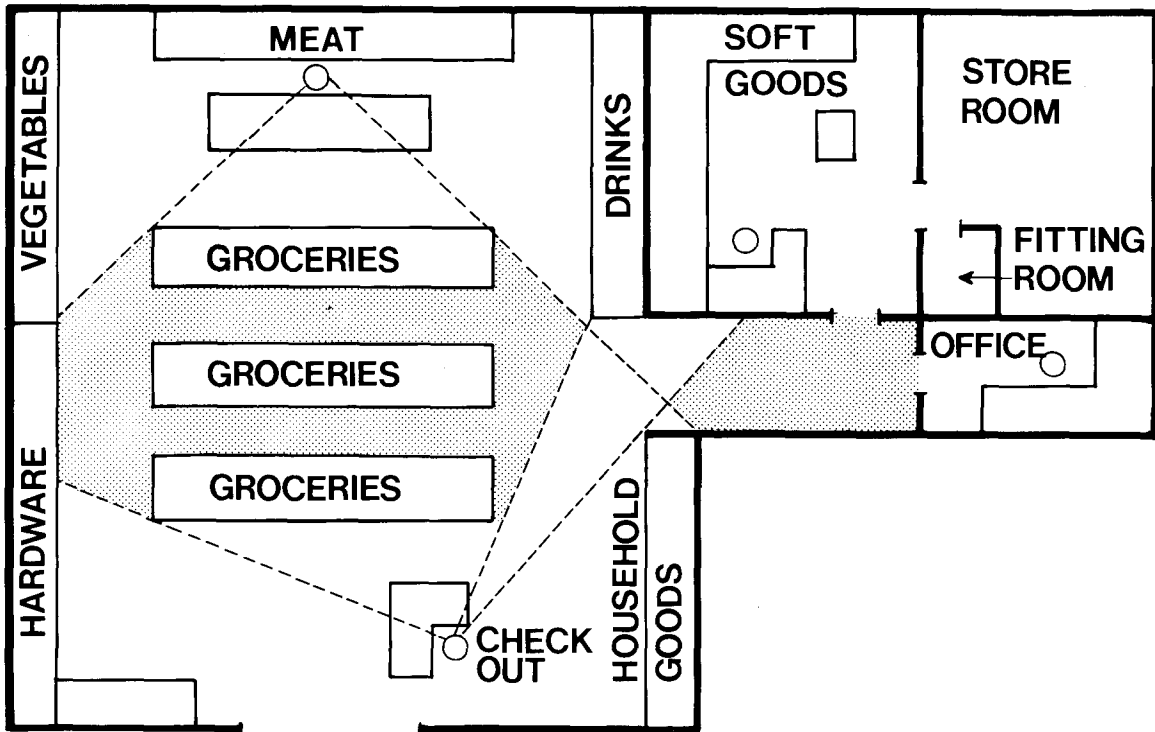
But he is wrong. Shoplifting is the main reason for his leakage. The fact that he does not see any shoplifters only proves how easy it is to steal goods without being seen.

Let's help Mr. Leaka make it difficult for shoplifters, because that is the best way to prevent shoplifting.

THE SHOP LAYOUT

The sketch on the following page shows what Mr. Leaka's shop looks like. The extra room for the clothes and soft goods department is most noticeable. Originally, it was part of the store room. There is always an attendant in this section.

The cashier and the attendants in the meat department also have fixed working places.



Shoplifters like to work unseen, and Mr. Leaka's shop gives them plenty of opportunity because of all the "hiding places". From their fixed working places the staff are unable to see any of the shadowed areas on the sketch. As you can see, this means that almost the whole of the grocery and hardware sections are out of sight of the staff.

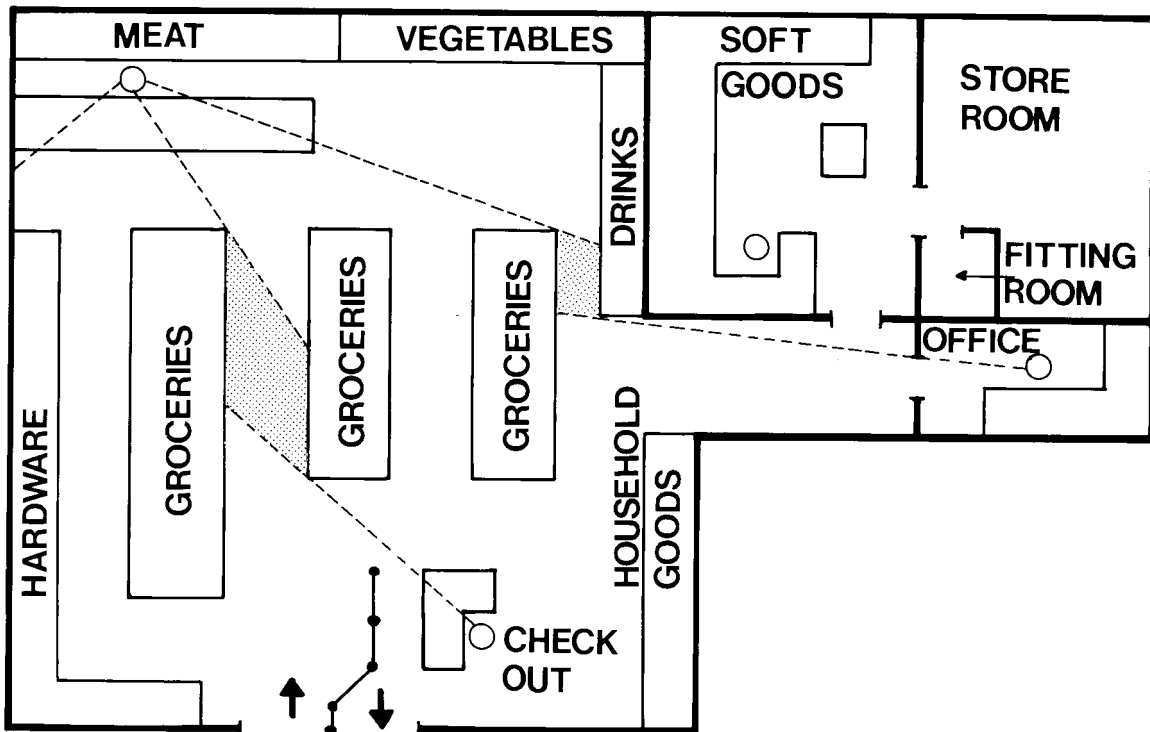
The soft goods section seems to be safe, since there is an attendant there all the time. But remember - it is the opportunity to conceal the goods which helps the shoplifter. That passage outside the soft goods department must be a paradise for shoplifters. They can get something openly from the soft goods department - or any other department - and then conceal it as they walk along the passage unseen. Of course, once an article is hidden, we stand very little chance of stopping the shoplifter.

Let's see how we can improve the layout of the shop to reduce the opportunities for shoplifting to a minimum,

The staff will be able to see most of the shop area from their working places if we change the arrangement of:

- (a) the gondolas,
- (b) the meat and vegetable departments,
- (c) the office.

Take a look at this new layout:

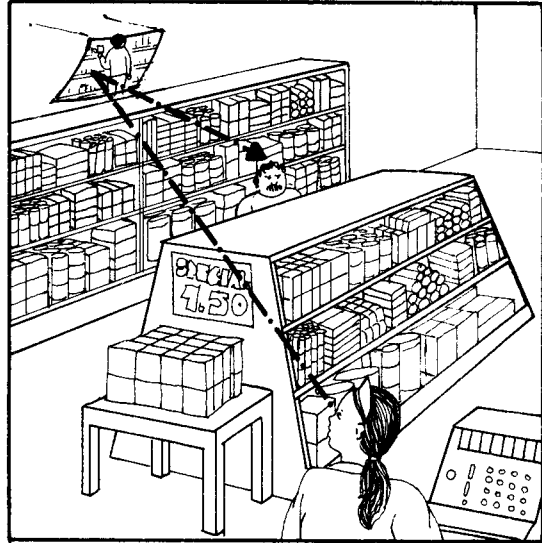


Only a few minor parts of the main shop are now shadowed. What about the soft goods department and the passage? Well, if we try to move the soft goods out into the main selling area, we will not have so much space for it and the stock will have to be reduced. That would mean fewer sales. Of course, if we forget about sales, it is easy to reduce shoplifting. Drastically speaking, we could close the shop altogether - and be proud of having wiped out shoplifting! Naturally, that is not our aim. We want to reduce shoplifting without reducing the sales.

Therefore, we'll keep the popular soft goods department and solve the problem of the passage another way. Let's make a slight modification to Mr. Leaka's office. If we put glass in the door leading to the passage, then he will be able to keep an eye on the people walking up and down the passage!

Mirrors

If we put up some mirrors in suitable places, we can eliminate the remaining shadowed parts of the shop. The staff are now able to watch the whole area. But are they supposed to spend their time keeping a look-out for shoplifters? Of course not! The important thing is that they can see every spot of the shop



at a glance. This fact will make the shoplifters feel insecure and reduce their temptation. The mirrors will have a preventive effect, and that is exactly what we want. We do not install mirrors with the hope of catching shoplifters, do we?

The fitting room

Amazing stories are told about what can happen in an unsupervised fitting room. Shoplifters have been caught, dressed in three or even more shirts and several pairs of trousers. The fitting room is an ideal place for the shoplifter to work unseen while concealing the goods.

If you have a fitting room, you have to apply a system to protect against shoplifting. Preferably, one attendant should be in charge of the fitting room as part of his duty. He should not allow customers to take anything other than clothes into the room, and he should check that they bring out what they take in.

! In Mr. Leaka's shop, the fitting room was situated in the store room. Are there any disadvantages to this? Give your comments.

The store room

One of the basic facts about shoplifters (page 4) is that they have to get out of the shop with the stolen goods. One of the best ways to get away unseen - even with bulky things - is through the back door.

In Mr. Leaka's shop it was possible for thieves to enter the store room as they could just pretend to use the fitting room. Then they could pick up any goods they liked in the store room and escape through the back door.

To prevent this we'll move the fitting room into the software department and keep the door to the store room closed. The software attendant should be instructed to guard both the fitting room and the door to the store room.

The display

Mr. Leaka had never thought that the way he displayed goods was important in the context of preventing shoplifting, but there are quite a few things he ought to check,

Shoplifters feel insecure when they have eye-contact with other people. Therefore, gondolas and special displays should not normally be so high that they block the view. Posters and price placards must also be placed so that they do not hinder free vision.



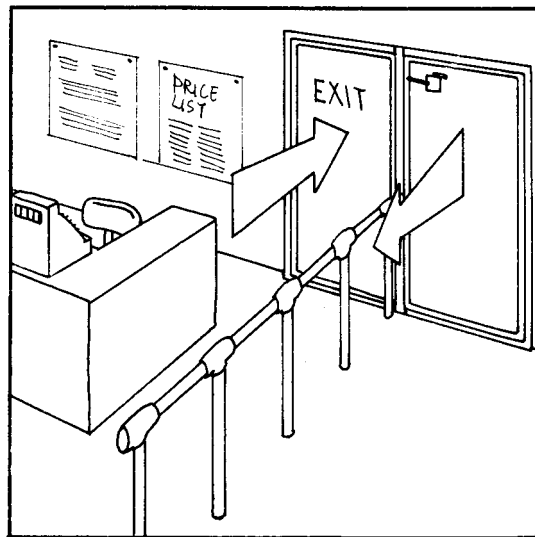
The entrance

Mr. Leaka had specially instructed the cashier to check that no one slipped out without paying. The entrance door was quite wide, however, and customers could walk in and out freely. During the rush hours it looked like this. With customers queueing up at the checkout point, the cashier could not even see the exit and, anyway, she had no time to keep an eye on it. She had to attend to the customers, which was her main duty, of course! Anyone could leave the shop unnoticed!



This leads us to one of the golden rules regarding the prevention of shoplifting:
Keep the incoming and outgoing customers apart, and make the outgoing customers pass the checkout desk.

We have to rebuild the entrance of Mr. Leaka's shop. This is a good solution:



A barrier forces the outgoing customers to pass close to the checkout desk. The entrance door is equipped with an automatic door-closer, and has no handle on the inside. It can be pushed open only from the outside.

A cheaper alternative is to make the entrance narrower, by locking one of the doors, for instance. Another alternative is to staff the entrance with a "doorman" during rush hours.

! Compare the suggested security arrangements at the entrance. How are they likely to affect the sales and the costs? What would you recommend? Give your comments.

THE GOODS

In the shop there are hundreds, maybe thousands of articles, some of which are more attractive to shoplifters than others. We have to pay special attention to the following:

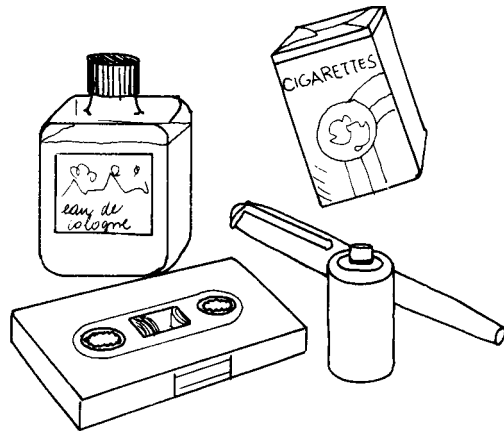
Expensive goods :

It is just as risky to steal something cheap as it is to steal something expensive, and obviously expensive goods are more tempting.



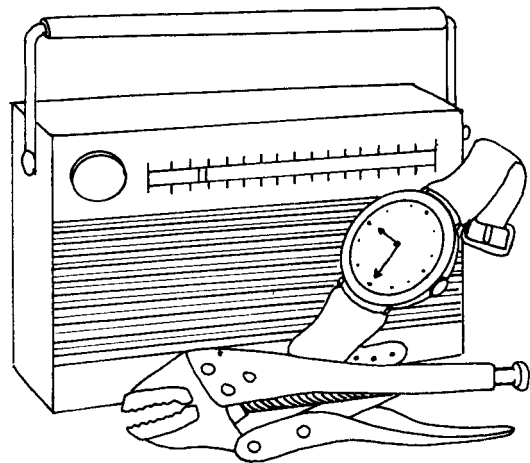
Small goods :

Small articles are tempting even if they are cheap, simply because they are so easy to pilfer. It only takes a moment, unnoticed, to slip a packet of cigarettes into a pocket. If the goods are both expensive and small, they are a real shoplifting risk.



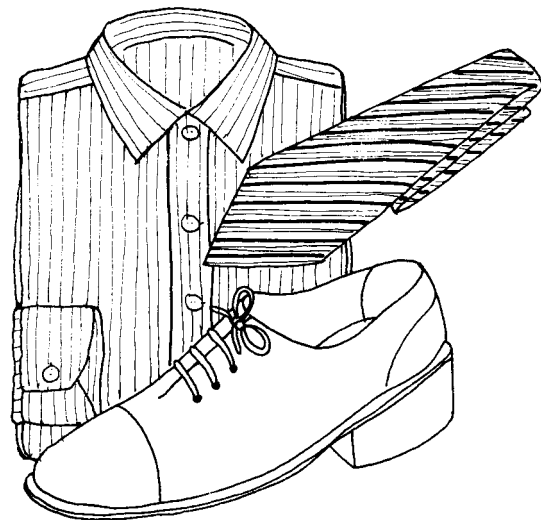
Goods for the black market :

The professional shoplifters do not always need the goods they steal - they need the money. They are interested, therefore, in relatively expensive articles such as cigarettes, liquor, clothes and tools, which have some value on the black market.



Clothes, etc. :

Once clothes and shoes have been put on unnoticed, it is very difficult to prove that they have been stolen. Therefore these items create a special risk.



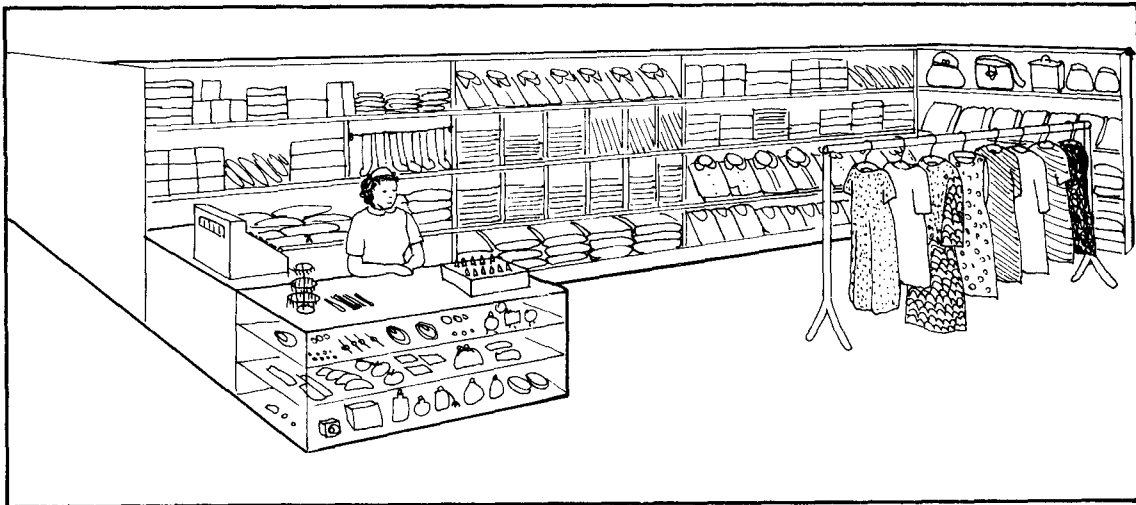
- Most of what we sell in our co-operative shops are foodstuffs. Are foodstuffs attractive to shoplifters? Explain your answer.

SPECIAL PROTECTION

Let us now see how we can protect those attractive items from shoplifters. Of course, what we have already discussed about the layout of the shop: the entrance, the display, etc. (pages 9-15) is of basic importance, but here are a few suggestions for extra security measures:

Counter sales:

Since there is always one employee in the software department, she could just as well stand behind the counter. Then, expensive items such as perfumes, jewellery, leather articles, tapes, radios, etc., could be sold "over the counter". If possible, there should be a cash register. That way you get a nice "shop within the shop".

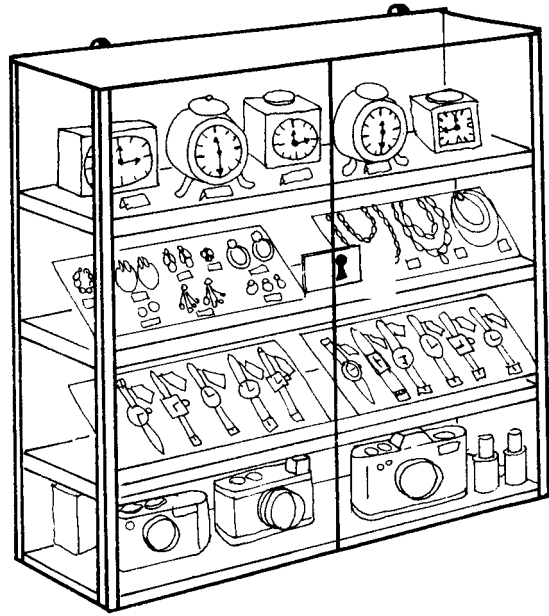


Having counter sales inside a self-service shop might cause problems to the checkout-cashier. How would she know whether a customer, who is going out, has already paid for some goods? Usually this problem is solved by issuing receipts at the counter. The customers are requested to show these along with the goods at the checkout. The cashier should mark the receipts so that they cannot be reused for bringing out stolen goods.

You may avoid this problem, if you combine the counter sales with the checkout. This is probably the best solution if there are not too many risky items for sale.

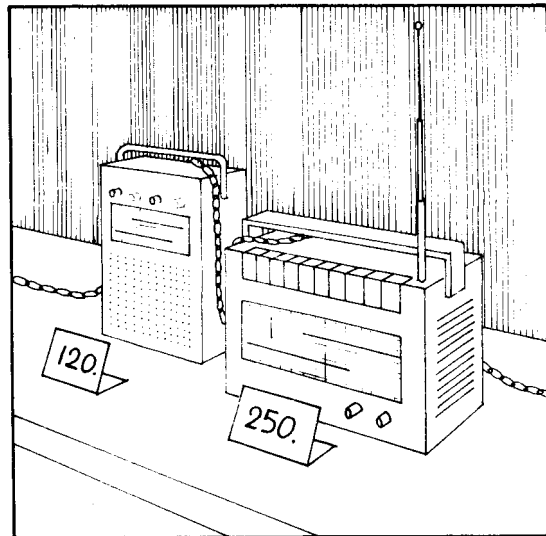
Locked cupboards :

Attractive items can be displayed in locked cupboards. The customers can see the goods through the glass doors but if they want to buy they have to approach a salesman who will open the cupboard. Since the customers do not normally buy these items without consulting an assistant, this method does not hinder the honest customer; it only stops the shoplifter. You only need to display one of each of the expensive items. The stock can be kept in a safe place, e.g. locked up in a store room.



Chains :

The samples could also be chained to the desk, as you can see we have done with the radios here. If you use this method, don't overdo it! Too many chains and padlocks will give the impression of a prison, not a friendly shop! Remember - most customers are honest. If we discourage them when trying to prevent shoplifting, we will lose more than we gain.



Price labels :

To prevent people from changing the price labels or tags we have to fix them properly. Use suitable glue, strong strings or staples. Handwritten figures should be in ink and not easy to alter. Finally, it is important to have cashiers who notice if a price is far too low.



Why is it also important to fix the labels carrying very low prices firmly?

Packets :

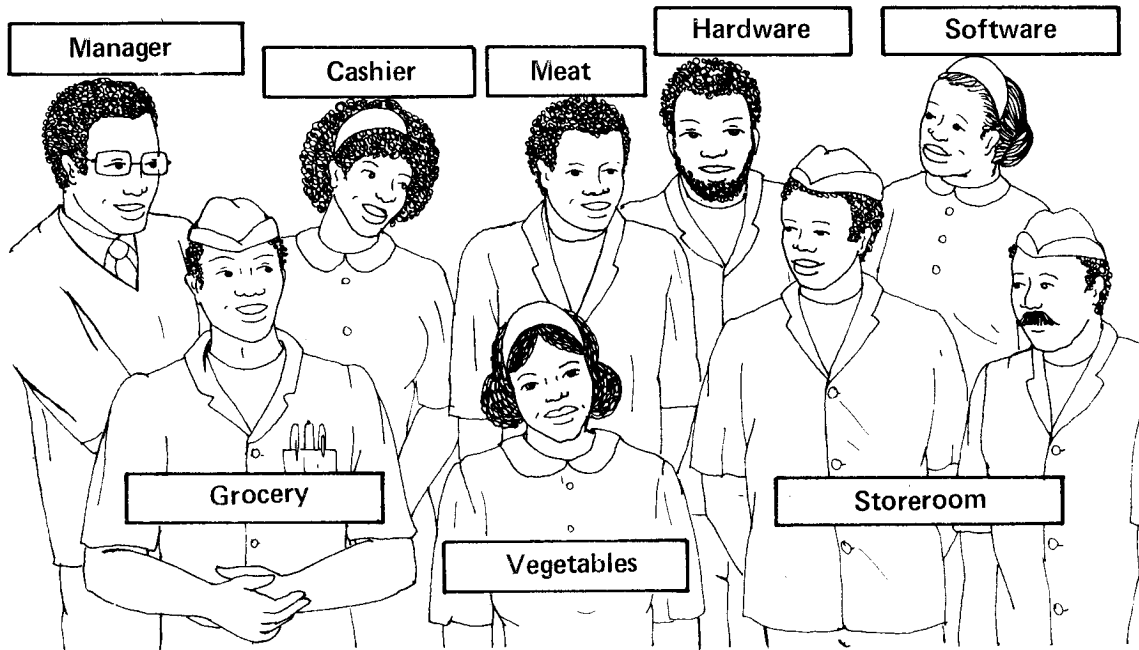
In order to prevent shoplifters from switching the contents of various packets, we should remember the following: Make sure that all packets on display are well closed, particularly the big ones.

Instruct the cashier to examine all large packets at the checkout. Parcels which are not properly sealed should be opened and checked by the cashier. The same applies to pails, pots, and similar goods in which other articles could be hidden.

If the same type of carton is used for articles with different prices (for instance, shirts), it is better to put the price labels on the goods, not the cartons.

THE STAFF

You have already met the cashier, the meat assistant and the soft goods assistant who, along with Mr. Leaka, are able to keep an eye on every part of the shop.



How can the other employees help prevent shoplifting? It is a golden rule to have all available staff in the selling area during the opening hours. Even if a spot can be seen by the staff with fixed places, it is better to have staff moving around. Customers will receive better service, and the shoplifters will never feel safe. The hardware assistant in Mr. Leaka's shop is available to move around.

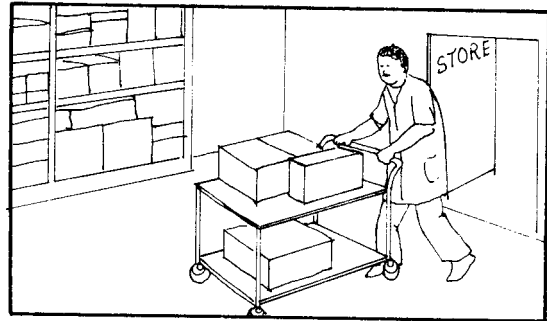
There is also a grocery attendant and a vegetable attendant, who work mornings only, filling shelves before the shop opens.

It would be better if they shared the duties and worked during opening hours, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In that way, there would be one attendant in the vegetable and grocery department throughout the day.

WORK SCHEDULE						
WEEK 28						
	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
Wilson	am	am	pm	pm	x	am
Morra	pm	pm	am	am	x	am
Ron	x	x	x	x	/	x
Kaluga	/	/	x	x	x	x
Johnson	x	x	x	x	x	/

Then there are two store room assistants who receive, check and pricemark the goods. One of them is in charge of foodstuffs, the other of non-food.

If one of them could take care of receipt and checking of all types of goods, the other could concentrate on price-marking, much of which he could do in the selling area.



Staff working in the selling area during opening hours will make it difficult for the shoplifters and, at the same time, they can help the customers. Staff working in the store room, or before opening hours, can do neither,



Describe what you can do to improve the staff organisation in your shop in order to increase the security. Explain how this will affect the sales.

Of course, well informed and motivated staff is the very best protection against shoplifting, The manager alone cannot stop the shoplifters, he has to work hand-in-hand with his employees. It is extremely important that all staff know - not only how to fight against shoplifting - but also why they should do it. Staff training in this field is a must.

The actions we have recommended will make Mr. Leaka's shop much safer against shoplifters. We will now discuss some other measures which may be considered in special cases.

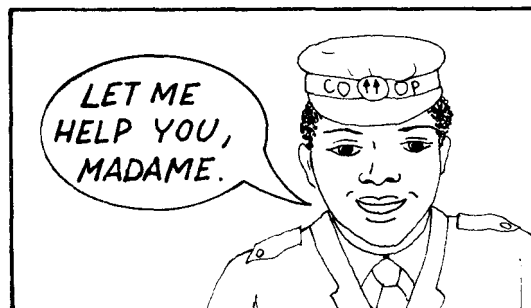
Special watchmen

In some larger shops, special so-called "shop detectives" are hired to catch shoplifters. They are normally dressed in plain clothes and mix with the customers. It is very important that the detectives are properly trained for their task. They



must know exactly how to behave in the shop, and what kind of action they are allowed to take, according to the law. Usually a sign at the entrance informs the customers that the shop is guarded by detectives. This sign would be silly if the only purpose was to catch as many shoplifters as possible. However, the sign will probably stop many more shoplifters than the detectives ever catch, and that is exactly what we want - to prevent shoplifting.

In other places they prefer uniformed guards as a preventive. Of course, this method is also costly. If you have a uniformed watchman posted at the checkout, you may consider letting him walk around the shop every now and then - to discourage shoplifters. But before you let him loose in the shop, make sure that he understands his duties and that you fully trust almost all of your customers. You do not want your customers to be offended,



d() vrnM?

Instead, all the honest customers should be encouraged to look upon the man in uniform as a kind of welcoming "shop receptionist" (compare with a hotel!), always ready to give them a helping hand with their purchases and so on.

THE MEMBERS

Someone has to pay for the things which are stolen in the shops. Who will it be?

Usually, the honest customers will have to pay, since the shop owner is likely to compensate for the loss by increasing prices.

If price controls or fierce competition make it impossible to increase prices, the shop owner will stand the loss.

Now think about the situation in a co-operative society. The members of the society are both customer and shop owner; so the members will have to bear the shoplifting losses in either situation.

Therefore it should be natural for a member of a co-operative to help in the struggle against shoplifting, since he is protecting his own money. If this was properly understood by all members, we would have a better chance of reducing or even wiping out shoplifting.

How can we achieve this? How can we get support from the members? We'll give a few suggestions below, and you must decide what is suitable for your society.

A. Information at meetings

The problems of shoplifting can be explained to the members at general meetings. Certain control regulations can be explained and the members asked to accept them, in their own interest.

B. Printed information, posters

Leaflets can be distributed to the members. Special posters can be displayed in the shop, both seeking the support of the members in the fight against shoplifting.



C. Rules about shopping bags

The members could agree to special arrangements about the use of personal shopping bags in the shop.

When they are shopping, many members use their own bags. However, if they bring bags into the shop it creates a problem, because goods can easily be concealed in them. There are two ways of solving the problem:

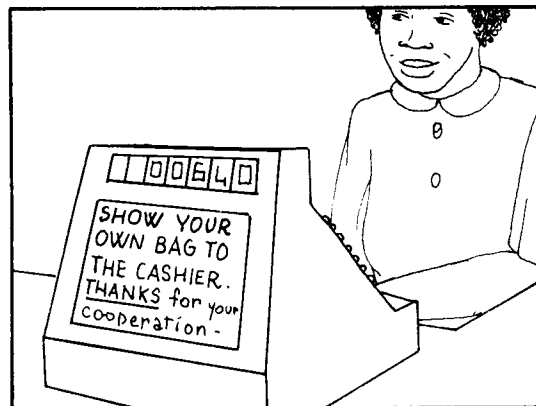
- Customers should open and show their personal bags to the cashier when checking out.
- Customers should be requested to leave their personal bags at the entrance while shopping.

Members may dislike both of these solutions. must remember that most customers are honest. We don't want to offend them in our efforts to stop a few shoplifters! We have to balance service and control.

Which alternative is best? Most self-service shops provide baskets and trolleys for the customers, so they don't need to take personal bags into the shop. It is a good idea to arrange it so that customers may leave their bags in safe custody at the entrance while they shop.



If personal bags are allowed into the shop they should be checked. A little placard at the cash desk may be helpful. When necessary, the cashier should ask in a friendly, polite way that the customer open their shopping bag and show the contents.



Should anyone refuse to show the contents of the bag, the manager may be called in to help explain the society regulations - or perhaps to catch a shoplifter!



Write down your own opinions about the following security measures. Explain why you would, or would not, use these methods in your shop.

Shop detectives (p.22)

Watchmen in uniform (p.22)

Information to members at meetings (p.23)

Posters in the shop (p.23)

Personal shopping bags forbidden inside the shop (p.24)

Personal bags to be shown to the cashier (p.24)

Other comments

Your problem is that you do not know in advance who is a shoplifter. You should, of course, be on the alert, but as a salesman you must behave in the most polite way, and never show that you are suspicious. After all, it is more likely that the newcomer to the shop is someone who may join your co-operative as a good member!

Be sure of your facts

Never accuse anyone of being a shoplifter unless you are 100% sure.



Describe what would happen if you wrongly accuse a customer of being a shoplifter. What would happen to the customer, to the co-operative, to you?

Before taking any action you must see the customer concealing the goods. But this is not enough. You must also be sure that he does not intend to pay for the concealed goods. You have to observe him until he has passed the checkout. Then you approach him.

Take action

When you are sure that he has taken something from the shop without paying, you have to take action.

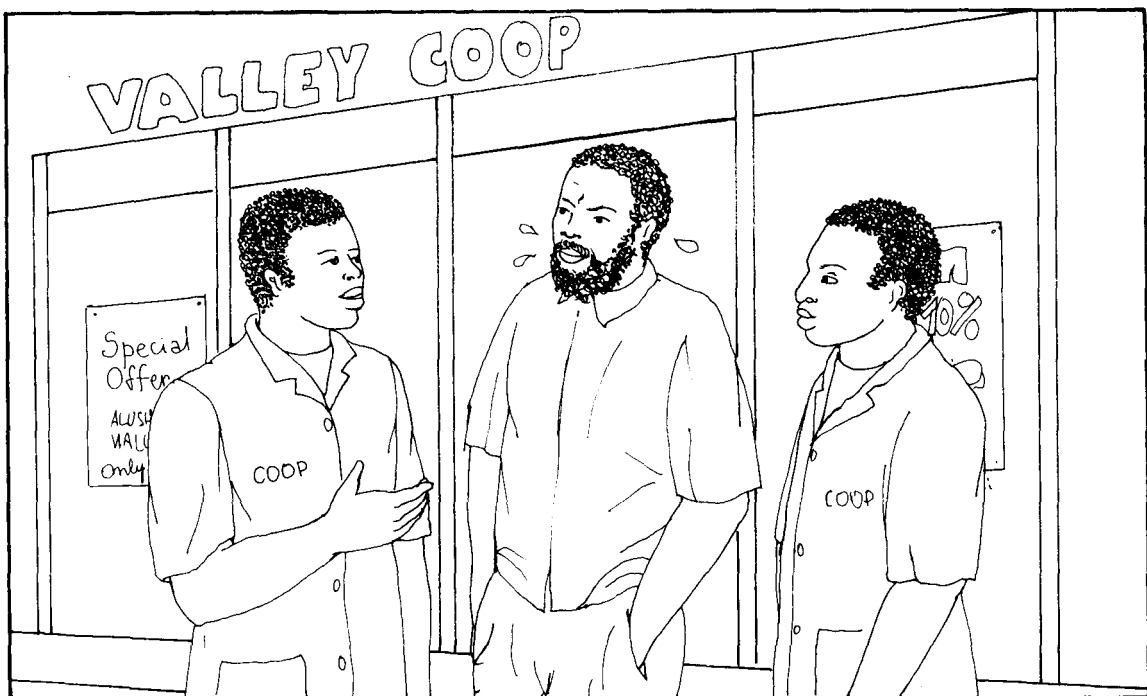
How this should be done depends first of all upon the law. The law probably stipulates that shoplifting is an offence and that the police should be called in to deal with the culprit.

Your shop or your society should also have some sort of policy on how to deal with shoplifters from the practical aspect. Don't leave the formulating of the policy until you catch a shoplifter; it is too late then! The policy, of course, will depend very much on the local situations, traditions, etc. Bear this in mind when reading the following recommendations:

Be discreet and polite

Shoplifting is an unpleasant thing both for the shoplifter caught red-handed and for the other customers. There is no reason at all to start shouting. Your job is neither to judge him nor to punish him. Your job is to hand him over to the police. That can, and should be done, without disturbing the other customers.

Approach the person politely and ask him to follow you to the office. It is better that two employees should approach the shoplifter. This will help to prevent him from being violent or trying to escape. You should never start questioning a shoplifter out in the open, or in the sales area.



If he asks why he has to go with you to the office, tell him that you have some questions to ask him. There are a great many reasons for being discreet and polite:

- An argument in the open will disturb the other customers and possibly create a bad name for the co-operative.
- If you accuse the shoplifter outright you may frighten him and make him run away or become violent.

Important: If the person in question has stolen, he or she will probably try to dispose of the goods on the way to your office. So be observant!



Be correct:

When you have the shoplifter in the office you can tell him what it's all about. If you tell him where he stole the goods, what he stole, and where they are concealed, it is likely that he will admit to the shoplifting offence. Then, you simply keep him in the office until the police arrive. If he refuses to show you the stolen goods, there is no point in accusing him or searching him, Leave that to the police.

SUMMARY

In this MATCOM Element we have discussed:

- how shoplifters operate
- what we can do to prevent shoplifting, and
- how to deal with the persons we catch shoplifting.

You will certainly agree that the most important is the prevention of shoplifting. If we succeed here, we will not need to spend a lot of time on unpleasant "shoplifter-hunting", and we will avoid losses.

Use the following list to check if you can do anything more to improve your shop in this respect.

Checklist for prevention of shoplifting:

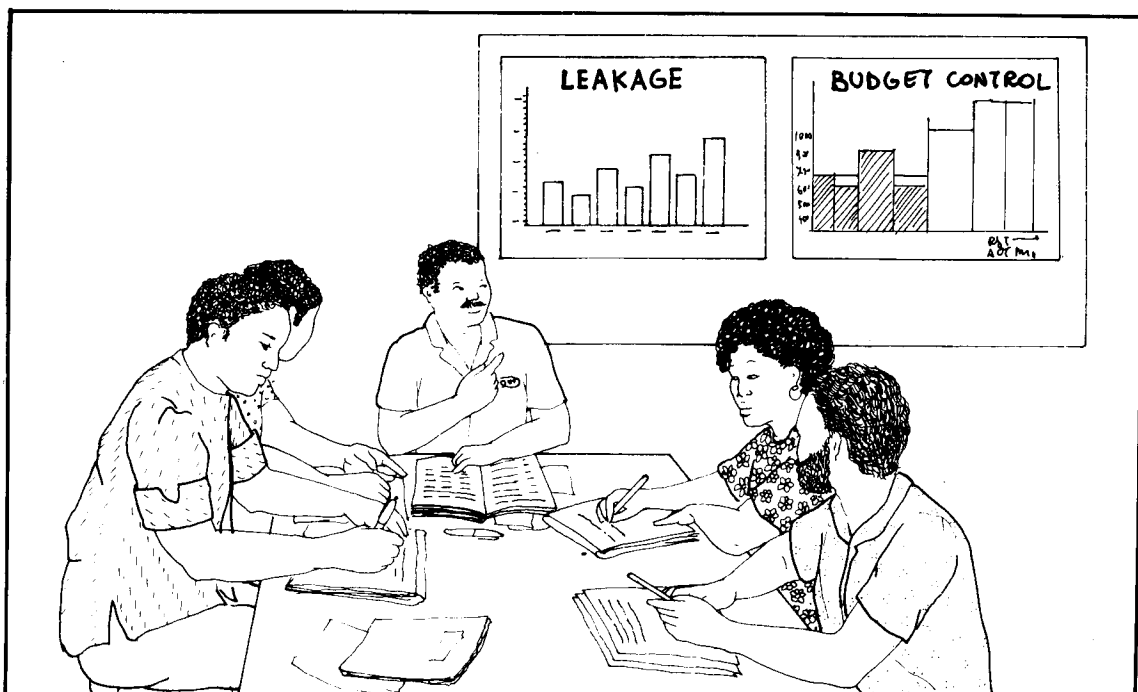
1. Are there any places in the shop where a shoplifter can work unseen?
 - Any need to change the layout?
 - Any need to move the fixed working places?
 - Any need for mirrors?
 - Any need to rearrange the display?
 - Any need to move any posters or signs?
 - Is the fitting room locked or watched?
 - Is the store room locked or watched?

2. Is there any way through which a shoplifter can leave the shop unseen?
 - Are entrance and exit separate?
 - Is the entrance blocked for outgoing customers?
 - Any need for a watchman?
 - Is the back door watched or locked?

3. Are goods that specially attract shoplifters displayed in a safe way?
 - Any need for counter sale?
 - Are small items displayed at the checkout,
 - Any need for locked cupboards?
 - Any need for chaining goods?
 - Are price-labels fixed properly?

4. Do all staff members contribute in preventing shoplifting?
 - Is everybody informed about the shoplifting problem?
 - Is everybody instructed as to what they should do to prevent shoplifting,
 - Could any job be done in the selling area instead of the store room or office?
 - Could any job be done during working hours instead of before or after?
 - Any need for shop detectives?

5. Do the members appreciate the actions against shoplifters?
 - Are the members informed?
 - Do the members accept to leave their personal shopping bags at the entrance or to show them to the cashier?



"CHECK-OUT"

To prove to yourself that you have fully understood this Element, you should now go through the following questions, Mark what you think is the right answer to each question. If you have problems with a particular question, go back and read the corresponding chapter again. Your teacher will later check your answers.



- 1 Which place in the shop does a shoplifter like most?
 - a Where there is a crowd of customers.
 - b Where nobody can see him.
 - c Where people pay for their goods.

- 2 What should we do to prevent shoplifters from concealing the goods?
 - a Place watchmen in all corners of the shop.
 - b Install automatic cameras.
 - c Arrange the shop so that the staff can see all parts of it from their working places.

- 3 Which of the following is the best method of preventing shoplifting in a software department?
 - a To price-mark all articles.
 - b To control the use of the fitting room.
 - c To reduce the size of the selling area.

- 4 What is the main purpose of having mirrors in the shop?
 - a To show the goods better.
 - b To catch shoplifters.
 - c To prevent shoplifting.

- 5 What is the main duty of the cashier?
 - a To look out for persons who are hiding some goods.
 - b To prevent shoplifters from passing through.
 - c To attend to customers who would like to pay for their goods.

- 6 Which article is likely to be most attractive to shoplifters?
 - a A loaf of bread.
 - b A packet of cigarettes.
 - c A bag of sugar.

- 7 Suppose that there are only a few small items in the shop which are attractive to shoplifters. What do you recommend?
- a These items should be kept in the store room.
 - b These items should be sold at the checkout counter.
 - c These items should not be kept in stock.
- 8 Who should take part in the work to prevent shoplifting?
- a The manager only.
 - b All the shop staff.
 - c Only one staff member with special training.
- 9 How can the price-marking staff help to prevent shoplifting?
- a By doing their work in the selling area during opening hours.
 - b By using coded price labels.
 - c By acting as shop detectives.
- 10 What is the main purpose of having a uniformed watchman?
- a To catch shoplifters.
 - b To discourage shoplifters,
 - c To protect the staff.
- 11 Who will suffer the total loss due to shoplifting in a co-operative shop?
- a The shop manager.
 - b The members.
 - c The shoplifters who are caught.
- 12 When should a shoplifter be caught?
- a As soon as he hides something,
 - b As soon as he puts some goods in his personal shopping bag.
 - c As soon as he has passed the checkout without paying for some hidden goods.

COMPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

To complete your studies of this topic you should take part in some of the following exercises which will be organised by your teacher.



PRACTICAL GROUP ASSIGNMENT IN A SELF-SERVICE SHOP

1 A survey

Make a study visit to a self-service shop.

- a) Interview the manager, one assistant and one cashier. Ask about their experiences of shoplifters and what they have done to prevent shoplifting,
- b) Try to get the latest leakage figure. Compare it with previous figures. Is the leakage increasing or decreasing? What is the value of the goods which is lost every month? How much of it could be due to shoplifting?
- c) Study the shop layout, the display of goods, the staff organisation, etc. Use the check-list on pages 30 - 31. Write a report on any weak points you may find and recommend measures to improve the situation.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

2 The net surplus

Discuss the group reports from the study visits. Try to estimate the monthly costs for each of the recommendations (equipment needed, increased salary costs, etc.).

Also discuss what effect the recommendations could have on the sales. Consider the amount of monthly leakage and which of the recommendations would increase the surplus of the shop.

3 Instructions for cashiers

Discuss what instructions a cashier would need concerning the shoplifting problem. Prepare a list of "points to remember" for the cashiers.

4 Policy

Discuss the two different views on shoplifting, presented on page 3 in this Element. Which of the two views do you support? Formulate a policy - based on your views - on how to deal with shoplifters.

5 Dealing with shoplifters

Discuss how the staff should act when discovering that a person is a shoplifter. Perform some "role plays" to illustrate the correct procedure.

6 Staff training

Plan a training session for the staff of a supermarket about the shoplifting problem. What aspects should be included, what methods would you use (lecture, discussion, exercises, etc.) and how much time would you need?