

Furnishing loss prevention and business intelligence with Axis.

RC Willey saves millions by reducing shrink, improving inventory tracking, and analyzing operations with a full portfolio of Axis products.



Organization:

RC Willey

Location:

Salt Lake City, UT, USA

Industry segment:

Retail

Application:

Property and asset protection, service and business optimization

Axis partner:

Mountain Alarm

Mission

RC Willey, a large home furnishings chain in western United States, had been using Axis surveillance cameras in its distribution centers and retail stores for years. While the initial deployment had helped them save millions in reduced shrink, management was confident that deploying additional Axis security video, audio, and analytics technologies could have an even greater impact on their bottom line.

Solution

As the original Axis cameras reached their end-of-life, the company replaced them with newer models and added thermal cameras and security radars to increase surveillance coverage 24/7. They integrated AXIS Perimeter Defender analytic and network horn speakers to detect trespassers and broadcast messages. They deployed AXIS P8815-2 3D People Counter and AXIS Store Reporter to track the flow of customers and to report other business intelligence.

They also replaced their previous video management system with the robust AXIS Camera Station for monitoring live and recorded video and they use AXIS Device Manager dashboard to remotely manage and monitor all their networked security devices.

Result

From a loss prevention standpoint, since deploying AXIS Perimeter Defender and Axis horn speakers at its Las Vegas distribution center, theft and vandalism expenses have dropped from \$40-\$50K a year to zero and they've saved \$100K a year on private security. This has also had a positive impact on logistics and customer satisfaction since deliveries are no longer delayed due to vandalism. From a business intelligence standpoint, AXIS Store Reporter, which correlates data from AXIS P8815-2 3D People Counter, helps the company evaluate the success of advertising campaigns driving traffic to their retail stores. The reports are also being used to satisfy building occupancy audits put in place due to COVID-19.



Millions in inventory on the move

RC Willey has been selling home furnishings, household appliances, consumer electronics and more for over 85 years. To meet its commitment to customer delivery, the company maintains millions of dollars in inventory for its distribution centers and retail stores.

"We keep between \$20 and \$30 million in inventory in transit at any given time," said Rod Mosher, Director of Loss Prevention and Safety for RC Willey. "Without Axis surveillance cameras we'd never be able to keep track of all that inventory in motion."

RC Willey has been using Axis network cameras to document inventory flow, track discrepancies and investigate shrink. The technology has helped the company maintain an outstanding 0.01 percent in inventory shrink for five straight years saving the company millions in lost product.

The company standardized on Axis security cameras because "We needed cameras that could handle constant motion without blur and deliver sharp, forensic-quality images no matter the lighting conditions," stated Mosher.

RC Willey currently deploys more than 1000 Axis cameras in its three distribution centers and twelve retail stores – a mix of HDTV-quality and 5-megapixel fixed dome, 8-megapixel 180° panoramic, security radars, and thermal cameras for nighttime surveillance.

Curtailing loss in high-crime locations

RC Willey initially focused on using their video cameras to resolve inventory discrepancies. Since the Axis cameras monitor each step of a product's movement from warehouse to delivery, the Loss Prevention team can pull up the video on the AXIS Camera Station to visually verify that a product did, in fact, go where the warehouse management and point-of-sale systems reports indicated.

As their return on investment from Axis cameras grew, the company began exploring the Axis portfolio for other security tools that could help them become more proactive about loss prevention and asset protection.

One of the biggest and most immediate payoffs has been AXIS Perimeter Defender, an analytic that helps the company detect the movement of people and vehicles entering, loitering, or passing through the property. "We were having tremendous overnight theft and vandalism problems at our distribution centers [DC]," stated Mosher. "At the Las Vegas DC alone, I was spending a \$100K on private security and still losing between \$40K-\$50K a year. Since deploying the Axis cameras and analytics we have yet to have a single loss at that location, despite it being situated in a high-crime area."

The Axis thermal cameras have electronic image stabilization, Axis Zipstream technology, and built-in analytics for high quality detection. RC Willey uses them to detect the heat signature of trespassers and trigger pre-recorded warning messages from an Axis horn speaker. "Those speakers are very, very loud and very clear," said Mosher. "When an intruder hears that they've been detected, their activity is being recorded, and the police are on the way, they're scared to death and run away."

The thermal cameras and analytics are connected to the building's alarm system through an Axis I/O board. When staff activate and deactivate the alarm system either closing at night or opening for the day, it also activates and deactivates the thermal cameras and AXIS Perimeter Defender. "Automating the process this way makes it really easy for us to operate," said Mosher. "We don't have to figure out scheduling or have someone manually turn the Axis system on and off."

Using the analytics has been especially effective in stemming the theft of batteries and diesel fuel from their delivery trucks. "We have about 60 delivery trucks out of the Las Vegas warehouse," said Mosher.





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Rod Mosher, Director of Loss Prevention and Safety, RC Willey.

“Before we deployed the new Axis technology, there would be days when we couldn’t get our trucks on the road until afternoon because we were scrambling to replace stolen batteries and fuel.”

In other locations, RC Willey opted for Axis security radar in lieu of Axis thermal cameras. The security radars are great options for day and night detection as well, but they have the added benefit of a 120-degree horizontal coverage area and a 164-foot range. “We have a retail store in Murray, Utah, where skateboarders were coming in and tearing up our docks,” said Mosher. “With the security radar, AXIS Perimeter Defender and horn speaker, we’ve stopped people from engaging in that destructive behavior on our property.”

Gleaning useful business intelligence

RC Willey has also looked to Axis to help them address areas of their operations besides security. “We used to keep track of traffic in and out of our stores with a system photoelectric beam,” said Mosher. “But those numbers were inconsistent and really didn’t give us much usable information.”

Mosher decided to deploy AXIS P8815-2 3D People Counter to capture more granular intelligence about who was shopping in their stores. “We were really shocked when we first began to use it,” said Mosher. “We quickly learned that our peak traffic patterns were very different from what we thought they would be.”

Mosher says his advertising people love AXIS P8815-2 3D People Counter because it helps them know whether the millions they’re spending on advertising is really driving traffic to the store and they can measure the sales conversion they’re experiencing.

AXIS Store Data Manager collects information from all the AXIS P8815-2 3D People Counters. Store managers can then drill down into the statistics in real-time using AXIS Store Reporter dashboard to make informed decisions about staff planning, operating hours and operational efficiency. They can even analyze the impact of weather conditions on customer trends.



“We’re also exploring the possibility of carving our stores into different areas using the people counter technology,” said Mosher. “That way we’d not only know the traffic walking through the front door, but we’d also know the traffic walking into electronics, carpeting, refrigeration, mattresses or other departments.”

With the advent of COVID-19, Mosher really appreciates the accuracy of data generated by the analytic. “Given the mandates about occupancy, it’s nice to know exactly how many people are in the store at any given time,” said Mosher. “If we were ever to get audited, we’d be able to show we were compliant with occupancy caps.”

Simplifying management and system health

As system administrator, Mosher relies on AXIS Device Manager to help him maintain all the Axis devices spread across all the chain’s locations. “AXIS Device Manager lets me see the entire ecosystem at once,” said Mosher. “I can verify that everything is working the way it should, update firmware, and generally manage the health and activity of our systems.”

The importance of service and support

“In addition to their cutting-edge technology, Axis customer service and customer support is absolutely the best in the business,” said Mosher. “It’s the reason I do business with them.” Mosher points to their longevity in the industry and their delivery on what they promise.

“When I get a product from Axis, I know it’s going to work,” said Mosher. “I know they’re going to be here tomorrow and five years from now and 10 years down the road with high-quality products and support.”



About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, intercom and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,800 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Axis was founded in 1984 and has its headquarters in Lund, Sweden.

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