



Loomis Smart Safes Transform Border Foods' Operations



With the right smart safe solution, the costs associated with managing the retail cash handling process are reduced, which can increase profitability.

To find a successful smart safe solution, retail businesses must partner with a smart safe vendor who can meet their specific needs and provide a high quality level of customer service.

THE CHALLENGE

Border Foods, Inc., owns and operates 172 Taco Bell restaurants in Minnesota, Illinois, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. A former subsidiary of Taco Bell Corporation, Border Foods was founded in 1996, and has grown to be one of the 12 largest franchisees of Taco Bell restaurants.

In 2007, Border Foods began using smart safes in their Taco Bell restaurants after recognizing the advantages they offer to cash-intensive retail businesses. By reducing cash shrinkage and the time spent managing cash at individual restaurants, smart safes made sense for the franchise owner. The elimination of time spent on counting and tracking cash, as well as on investigating cash shrinkage due to internal theft, loss, and shortages, were important in making the restaurants more profitable. In addition, the elimination of the risk of robbery, theft, and injury associated with employee bank runs to make deposits and pick up change orders made for a safer and more secure working environment.

Initially, the majority of Border Foods' smart safe services were provided by two of Loomis' competitors. While the smart safe solution was conceptually a good fit for the company, the quality and execution of the services they received turned out to be less than satisfying. When the existing contracts with their smart safe providers neared their end, the decision was made to seek out a vendor who would partner with Border Foods to provide a more satisfactory relationship.

Ed Heskett, the Loss Prevention Manager for Border Foods, played a key role in the vendor selection process. With over 30 years in the restaurant industry, Heskett has developed, implemented, and utilized loss prevention tools to improve restaurant operations and profitability. For over 15 years, he has also trained and assisted restaurant operators with the implementation of loss prevention tactics and software.

According to Heskett, the problems Border Foods faced with their existing smart safe vendors were difficult to resolve. "We needed a vendor that provided reliable service when there was a problem with the safe," Heskett explained. "Service calls and repairs were frustrating. Every time we had an issue with the safes, it was almost as if it were our fault. We wanted a vendor that realized who the vendor was and who the client was."

The poorly defined support structure, coupled with employees who were unwilling to take responsibility for their safe's operations created a difficult working relationship between Border Foods and its smart safe vendors. "We rarely knew who we were supposed to call to get the support we needed," Heskett explained.

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Ed Heskett,
Loss Prevention Manager, Border Foods



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To find a better alternative, Border Foods invited Loomis and several other smart safe providers to make a presentation of their products and services. "The Loomis presentation resonated well with the Border Foods committee responsible for reviewing the smart safe services," Heskett explained. "Loomis was down-to-earth, and very clear about what they could and could not do." Significantly, Loomis offered a clearly defined structure for addressing service issues, sophisticated hardware and software, and also featured the largest national service footprint. The decision was made to go with Loomis.

THE SOLUTION

After a successful pilot test, Border Foods installed the Loomis SafePoint solution in 148 of its 172 Taco Bell locations in 2014. The fully integrated cash handling system manages cash handling in their restaurants, and provides provisional credit for bank deposits made to the safe. Weekly secure armored transportation reduces the risk of injury and robbery associated with bank deposits and change order runs previously made by restaurant employees. In addition, Loomis provides a reliable support system with a dedicated team of local and national SafePoint support specialists.

THE RESULTS

The successful rollout of Loomis SafePoint smart safes continues to deliver a superior service experience to the 148 Taco Bell locations. Benefits of the Loomis and Border Foods partnership include:

Superior service

With Loomis, Border Foods' service issues are simpler to resolve with a clear understanding of who to call when service is needed. "The other vendors came in and promised to take care of us, but Loomis keeps their word," Heskett said.

"When Border Foods acquired 48 stores, we had a narrow 45-day window to purchase, acquire, deliver, and install the Loomis safes, and while it was a challenge, they were up and running on the first day of operations. We're at a point where we have 172 restaurants," noted Heskett. "20 are still serviced by a Loomis competitor due to existing contractual obligations, but Loomis now services 148 of our restaurants. We prefer Loomis because they provide superior service."

In addition, the Loomis national service footprint means that the majority of the Border Foods restaurants are serviced by Loomis. Local and national Loomis SafePoint support specialists ensure that the smart safes run smoothly and cash is picked up and delivered as scheduled. While there are some remote markets that Loomis does not service, their footprint covers almost all of the Border Foods Taco Bell operations. "Loomis pretty much goes everywhere," Heskett noted.

Reduction of cash shrinkage and theft

With SafePoint smart safes, employees do not collect and count cash at the end of their shifts, they deposit it to the smart safe as needed. At the end of the cashier's shift, employees generate an end-of-shift report which details how much money they deposited in the safe. By closing the loop where cash shrinkage occurs, cash shrinkage and theft is deterred.

Reduction in risk of robbery, theft, injury, and accidents

Using Loomis secure armored transport removes the risks of robbery, theft, injury, and accidents associated with employees transporting deposits and change orders to and from a bank. In addition, the time saved is focused on customers and operations.



Easier to maintain smart safes

Loomis SafePoint smart safes require fewer service calls than the safes of other providers, according to Border Foods. Removable bill readers in the SafePoint safes allow store management to easily clear bill jams and clean bill readers, which reduce the need for service calls. By comparison, the older safes of most other vendors required frequent service calls which were handled by subcontractors who were not always familiar with the equipment.

Better safe tutorials

Border Foods noted that Loomis SafePoint safes feature better safe tutorials. "Training on the Loomis SafePoint safes is easier, featuring a more descriptive training outline, and the websites available for training are also excellent," Heskett stated.

Superior online account management

Loomis Direct online account management provides Border Foods a fully integrated customer portal that is designed to manage and streamline cash handling data. Real-time cash management and robust reporting tools provide extensive cash management and reporting.

Return on Investment

The monthly cost of the Loomis SafePoint smart safe is offset by the savings realized through the reduction of labor of management and employees involved in handling and counting cash. "We save from 2 to 3 hours per day, which ultimately adds up to an amount that more than pays for the monthly cost of the safe," Heckett said. The time Border Foods saved allows employees to focus more attention on customer service and operational efficiencies. This has also allowed managers to spend more time managing people and the restaurant, and less time managing cash.

CONCLUSION

As retailers partner with cash handling companies for smart safe solutions to mitigate risk, reduce costs, and streamline their cash handling at multiple locations, retail businesses will continue to utilize the smart safe solution based on their needs of:

- Mitigating the risks associated with robbery and injury
- Increasing profitability by
 - Reducing costs associated with inefficient cash handling processes
 - Reducing costs associated with cash shrinkage
- Streamlined account management and responsive support service

While these factors drive smart safe usage, a strategic partnership of retail businesses and cash handling companies such as Loomis US will determine the level of success achieved. For many customers, the quality level of customer service will be the deciding factor for vendor selection.