



Improving Security of Retail Locations

Store safety is a top priority for all retailers. In addition to cameras and security personnel, a regularly updated lock maintenance program is critical to ensuring the safety of employees, customers, and merchandise.

As part of a retailer's long-term lock maintenance program, Branded Group recommends educating essential employees about the different types of locks installed at each location, ensuring that exit doors are fire code compliant, utilizing a master key for doors and display cases, being prepared with high quality back-up batteries for safes and panic bars, and inventorying keys.



CHALLENGE: IMPROVE RETAIL SECURITY WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

STEP 1: Inquire With a Trusted Partner

Whether seeking to develop or enhance a retail lock maintenance program for one or one hundred stores, it is imperative to partner with a facilities maintenance company that has a lock subject matter expert on staff as well as a lock-trained account coordinator team. This level of staff expertise enables the facility maintenance company to efficiently and effectively inquire about the retailer's challenges, identify the individualized needs of each retail location and implement a cost-effective and customer-focused solution that promotes store safety and security.

An integral part of our solution for a luxury retail brand with 20 retail locations was to ensure compatibility with existing equipment. To aid in our inquiry, the retailer took photos of each lock in all retail locations. This approach not only saved the client time and money, it also enabled a faster overall solution by eliminating incompatible lock maintenance solutions.



STEP 2: Identify the Challenge

The next step in the development of any customer-focused solution is to identify and document the root causes of the challenge. This is done in partnership with subject matter experts and the key personnel at the client.

The following deficiencies were identified when analyzing the twenty retail locations:

1. The retailer was using standard cylinder locks with keys that could be easily replicated.
2. At several retail locations, the front and back doors had different keys, increasing the likelihood of a key breaking inside the lock.
3. There was no inventory of existing keys so no one knew with whom or where keys were located.
4. The current locks did not have interchangeable cores, making it difficult to quickly provide store managers with new or replacement keys and minimizing security in the event of staff turnover.
5. At several retail locations, panic bars were not installed on the back doors, leaving the doors out of compliance with fire code regulations.
6. With no master key to unlock all respective stores, district managers were overwhelmed with several keys.

STEP 3: Implement a Customer-Focused Solution

Given the above-mentioned challenges, the following lock maintenance solutions were recommended and quickly implemented. The client's goals of maximizing customer and employee safety along with enhancing store security were achieved with a cost-effective and efficient solution that included:

- Locks with an interchangeable core
- Panic bars with reliable back-up batteries
- A master key system for district managers

Locks with an interchangeable core

The recommended retail lock solution was to utilize locks with an interchangeable core, saving the retailer time and money. After this retailer's current lock hardware was assessed, it was determined which stores needed hardware that was compatible with interchangeable cores. Utilizing a lock system with an interchangeable core allowed the retailer to establish a master key system and immediately change cores, as needed, without a facilities maintenance technician. The initial hardware conversion did require a technician, yet retail staff handles subsequent core changes.



Panic bars with reliable back-up batteries

Every marked emergency exit door must be fire code compliant. That is, each door must be able to be opened from the inside, open readily, swing out, and be marked with an exit sign. Also, there should be no use of the device or alarm that restricts the use of the door if the device fails to operate, and the exit routes must be unobstructed.



For the client's retail stores in need of this solution, technicians installed panic bars and recommended that the customer have back-up batteries (9-volt) readily available. The batteries must be either Duracell® or Energizer® and should be replaced every six months.

A master key system for district managers

A master key system was also recommended, enabling the retailer's district managers to have keys only for the stores they manage. If a manager leaves the company and keys are not returned, the retailer can quickly change the cores with a rekey kit that includes new cores and new store keys.



The rekey kit can be provided on an as-needed basis or the customer can choose to pre-order rekey kits to keep in their safe and have readily available during emergency/urgent situations. When the store is rekeyed the district manager's master key will still operate this store—a new master key is not required. Again, this saves the retailer time because service calls are no longer needed.

CONCLUSION: Maximize Store Safety and Security while Minimizing Costs

The concerns and challenges noted in this case study are not unique however the solution is tailored to the unique needs of the client. With a three-pronged customer-focused solution coupled with a locksmith subject matter expert and a lock-trained account coordinator, Branded Group provided a lock maintenance program that not only addressed our client's concerns, but also minimized their costs while maximizing store safety and security.



By enabling the stores to be more independent, this solution has the potential to save the company thousands of dollars. With service calls currently priced at about \$300 per call, costs can quickly add up if you have multiple retail locations and repeated calls over time. Additionally, productivity is lost when employees have to wait for technicians to arrive and be monitored during the service call.

“I feel much more confident knowing that our doors have top-of-the line high security locks installed. Branded Group's exploratory and implementation process went smoothly, and their recommendations helped us to increase store safety and security while also saving both time and money.”

— Michael Muoio, AG Jeans' Retail Operations Manager