



Theft prevention: protecting people, products & profits

How to increase sales of high-theft items while making stores safer for customers and staff



Click [here](#) to view the infographic



The solution can result in a 5–10% increase in sales of items that would otherwise have security tags or other “on-item” security solutions on top of a reduction of shrinkage from theft to zero.

Read the full article in *The Grocer* [here](#)

The Grocer

Introduction

The cost of theft-prevention measures now outweigh loss from theft

Theft in stores is a large and growing problem. According to the British Retail Consortium, £953 million was lost to theft, despite spending over £700 million on crime-prevention measures.¹

It isn't just about theft though. One must also consider the associated attacks on store staff and the psychological impact of the threat of violence.

For example, Tesco workers have been offered body cameras because "200 of its employees are victims of serious physical assaults each month,"² and a grocery store owner in South London was reported as "being targeted by shoplifters up to 10 times a day."³

It was reported in November 2023 that Co-op had "300,000 incidents of shoplifting, abuse and violence" and "detained 3,000 offenders this year."⁴



Crime is getting worse. Thieves are becoming bolder and more aggressive. Violence and abusive behaviour are on the rise. Retailers are playing their part, investing nearly £1bn into crime prevention measures in the past year alone.⁵

Helen Dickinson
Chief Executive
British Retail Consortium



What can grocery retailers do now to combat theft?

There is a solution that can reduce the theft of high-value and theft-prone items and that is already being used in thousands of stores in continental Europe and Scandinavia: automated product dispensers. Known as Vensafe Select & Collect, these dispensers securely store a wide range of items that would otherwise require security tags or other theft-prevention solutions.

The Vensafe solution helps reduce shrinkage to virtually zero, and, according to our insights, many retailers have seen a 5-10% increase in sales compared to using security tags or other "on-item" security solutions.

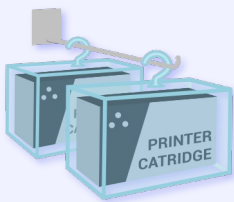
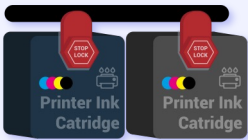
With Vensafe, you can reduce shrinkage from theft to almost zero and increase sales by 5-10%.



1. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-retailers-demand-government-action-rising-crime-2023-09-30/>
 2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/tesco-staff-body-cameras-violence-b2403998.html>
 3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/robbed-spat-assaulted-british-shopkeepers-despair-over-retail-crime-2023-10-18/>
 4. <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/the-co-operative-group/police-failing-to-respond-when-co-op-detains-offenders/685297.article>
 5. <https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/retail-theft-up-27-across-ten-of-the-largest-uk-cities/>

What are stores doing to **combat theft**?

In the UK, many grocery retailers are adding security tags or other theft-prevention solutions to products, including:

				
Spider tags	Safer boxes	Peg-hook security stop locks	RFID stickers	Products kept at staffed checkout/kiosk

Retailers can also resort to extreme measures.

Some are completely removing certain items from the store or are altering their product offerings at stores experiencing the most theft.

All these solutions come with drawbacks, however. They lead to a decrease in sales and don't prevent *all* theft.



The solution

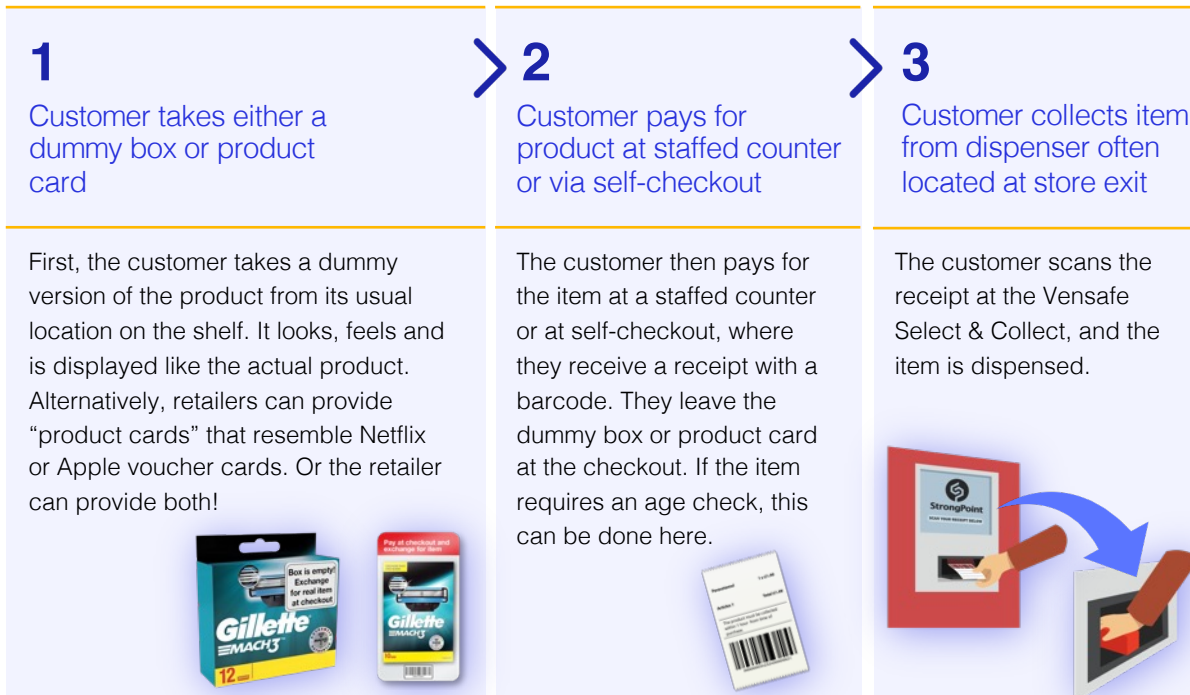
Vensafe Select & Collect is a tried-and-tested solution already being used by over 2,500 stores across Europe.

Key features:

- Provide a secure location to store a range of items, including pregnancy tests, batteries, condoms, electric toothbrushes, knives and scissors, and ink cartridges.
- Almost impossible to break into and can be restocked when the store is closed.
- Each dispenser can hold up to 80 types of products and approximately 1,600 items.

How does it work?

Example of a customer journey:



Used by
+2,500
stores across
Europe

You can have multiple dispensers "sunk" into the wall in larger stores or just a single unit in smaller or convenience stores.

Reducing friction, increasing safety

Creating as frictionless a customer experience as possible while making the store safer

With Vensafe Select & Collect, you maintain a nearly identical shopping journey for your customers but drastically reduce the use of the anti-theft devices that lead to a drop in sales.

By using dummy items or product cards in combination with Vensafe, the entire customer experience – from finding the items to checking out – is as smooth as possible.

There is more friction than by not having any theft-prevention solution at the shelf or on the product, but it means a far safer store for staff.

Age-check process is also the same

For age-restricted items, the customer has to go through the normal purchasing process so their ID can be checked at the point of sale.

Traditional anti-theft methods:



Common **on-item theft prevention** discourages honest shoppers but not all thieves



Using Vensafe Select & Collect:



Dummy boxes can have stickers with information for customers



Product cards can have information on how to use them

Alternative – digital experience

Digital displays select items either from shelves, in aisles or at the counter

As an alternative to dummy boxes or product cards, many retailers use digital displays or kiosks for their customers to make product choices.

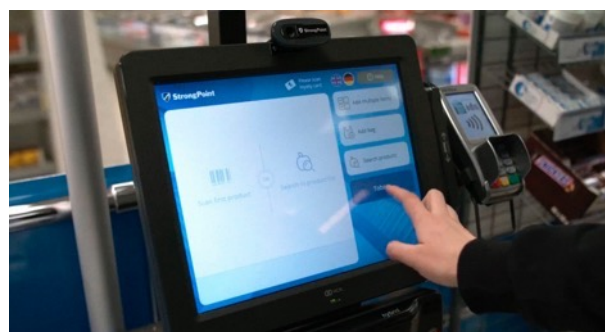
How this works:

The customer retrieves a ticket from a printer at the console, takes this to the staffed counter or self-checkout, then scans the ticket and pays for the item. Age checks can be done if necessary.



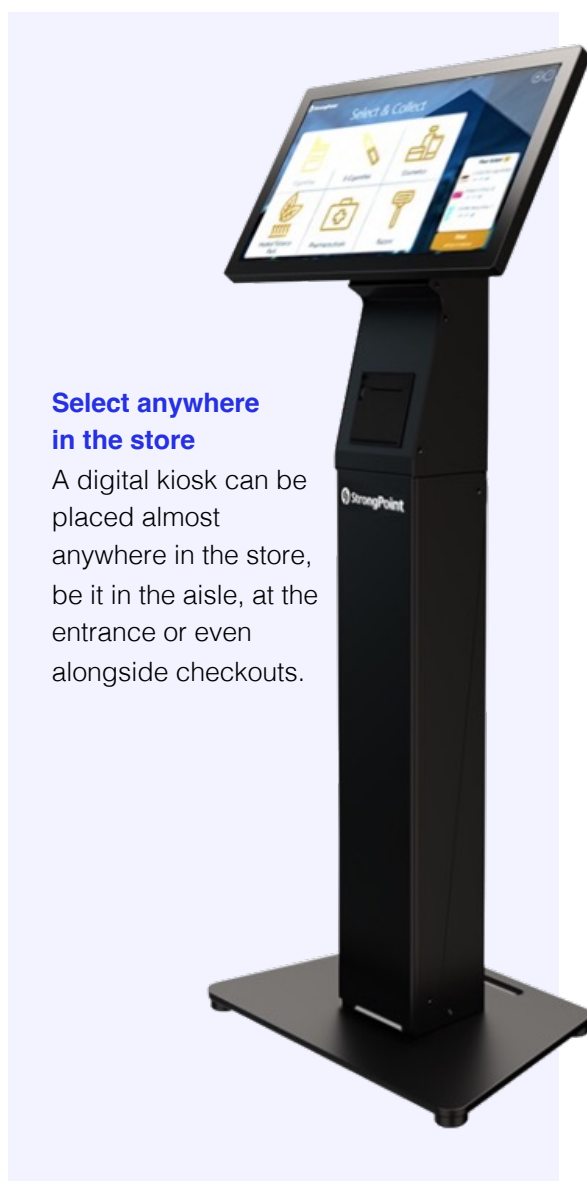
Select at the staffed checkout

A screen console is embedded in the checkout, allowing customers to select items.



Select at the self-checkout

Customers can select items on the screen at the self-checkout and receive an additional receipt, which they then scan at the dispenser to retrieve their purchase(s).

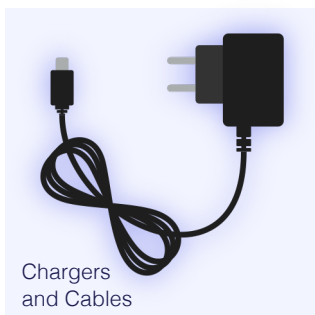
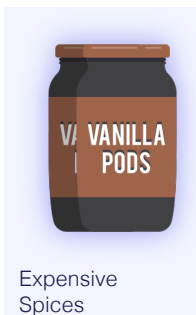
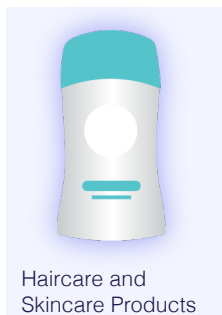
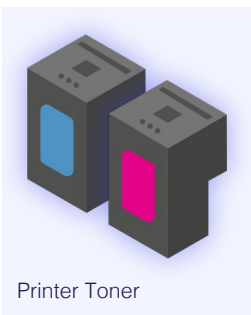
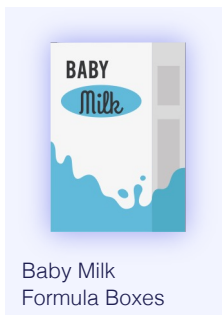
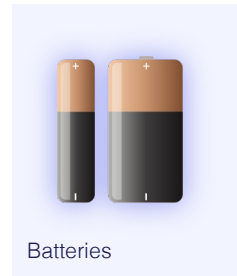
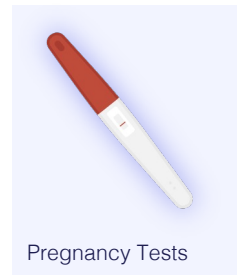
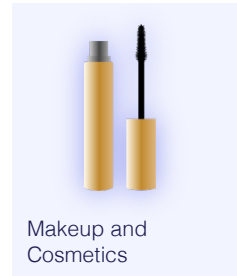
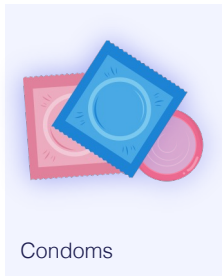
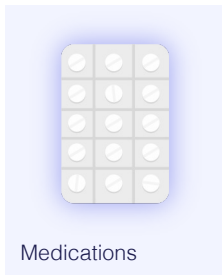
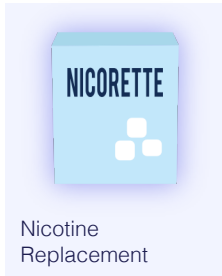


Select anywhere in the store

A digital kiosk can be placed almost anywhere in the store, be it in the aisle, at the entrance or even alongside checkouts.

Items suitable for Vensafe Select & Collect

What the dispenser looks like on the inside



...and many more!

What about self-checkout?



The Great British Carrot Heist!

Self-checkout poses its own problems

There has been a significant issue with theft from supermarkets in the UK, where individuals are exploiting self-service checkouts by **misrepresenting high-value items as carrots** in order to purchase them at lower prices.

This deceptive practice has become a notable concern in many countries, and the “purchase” of these carrots exceeds the actual number produced.

Another way to fool the system is to simply not scan the item but simply bag it. If the self-checkout doesn't include a weight-security feature, this can be a significant problem. Some UK grocery retailers deliberately remove or disable this feature to create a faster customer experience or for optimal branding.

What grocery retailers are doing:

-  Re-installing gates after the self-checkout area
-  Reducing the time self-checkouts are available
-  Increasing staff to monitor self-checkout areas
-  Removing self-checkouts completely
-  Restricting access to shoppers over age 18 or forbidding groups

Gates are a trend that many grocery retailers have been keen to reduce or discontinue in the last decade to improve the customer experience. It is ironic that they are now making a comeback, since they do not necessarily reduce theft. Customers could still deliberately not scan some items and use the receipt for items they have legitimately bought to exit the shop.

Some grocery retailers disable self-checkout gates at peak times to reduce customer bottlenecks. Or, due to high-theft, they reduce the hours customers are allowed to use the self-checkout area.

Problems with these solutions

These ideas all suffer from a major drawback: they lead to a decrease in sales. But there is a solution. **Turn the page to find out more.**



Theft-reducing self-checkouts!

Is that a thing?

Welcome to the world of next-generation AI-powered self-checkouts

Self-checkouts come with their own challenges, irrespective of whether they use Vensafe technology or not. What can be done to reduce theft via self-checkouts? It's all about cutting-edge technology that detects, nudges and prevents.

How AI can be added to self-checkouts to reduce theft

The AI camera can recognise the difference between products, even between types of bananas. This means a faster customer experience and fewer mistakes, be they honest or intentional.

The camera can see what has been bagged and purchased.

The camera can see how many items are in the basket and check that all have been scanned correctly.





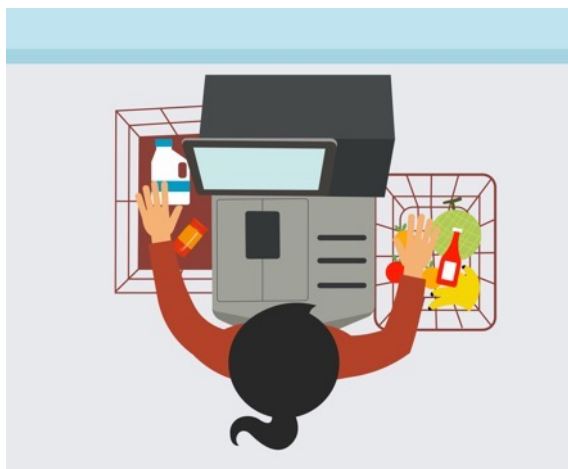
AI-powered theft prevention

Detect items automatically



Next-generation self-checkouts using AI and computer vision can automatically identify fruits, vegetables and other non-barcoded items. This speeds up the process by eliminating the need for customers to locate items and aids in theft prevention. For example, it can detect whether a bunch of bananas are budget variety, standard or premium. This can also be used to ensure that a customer doesn't claim a product is carrots when it's really a bottle of champagne.

Detect items that have yet to be scanned



AI and computer vision can “see” what items are in the basket and “check them off” as they are scanned, which can prevent customers from failing to scan items. This technology can also be used at staffed checkouts. Such methods are not just to stop theft but can be used to “nudge” people who might make an honest mistake. For example, instead of instantly requesting a staff check, it can ask, ***Did you forget to scan the bananas?***



Conclusion

We started this whitepaper by talking about theft, but we want to conclude with friction.

Decreasing theft by using various types of security tags that prohibit smooth transactions can create a massive amount of friction for customers. But with that friction comes a benefit: safety.

The question some grocery retailers now face is whether they want high friction or high theft.

With Vensafe Select & Collect, the amount of friction added to the customer journey is brought to an absolute minimum.

From a staff safety perspective, the impact is almost as good as removing the items from the store completely.



With Vensafe Select & Collect, you can minimise friction, maximise safety and increase sales.

Select&Collect

Produkthämtning



Vensafe Select & Collect is being
used in over **2,500 stores** today



I would recommend Vensafe. The benefits are numerous, not least the security and safety it brings to the staff. When we had established routines for refilling the Vensafes, we experienced higher sales, in addition to other advantages. It's also good financially, with reduced shrinkage as a bonus.

Anna Löwström
Store Manager
ICA Supermarket Åsa



Carrefour





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