

Idea Exchange May 2002 - Digital Wanted Posters

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Dan Serafin of Food Market creates posters of alleged crimes in progress from the store's video system, then posts them in the store.

"I can show you second by second the person taking a bottle from the shelf, tell you what the product was and at every point where the bottle is going down his sleeve," Serafin told the Associated Press. "Then I can show him walking out of the store without paying."

The posters are proving more effective than signs and surveillance cameras alone. "You don't see a simple written warning, now you see the end result," Serafin said. "There is no doubt the cameras are real and the people on the camera are busted."

With the poster system, the store no longer feels the need to confront shoplifters, thus increasing staff safety. "My dad is 75 and he's been punched and kicked trying to stop somebody who was shoplifting a \$2 product," Serafin said. "We're not putting our lives on the line for that stuff anymore. You can run away, but I've got your picture and somebody is going to recognize you."

This may be the first time a retailer has used the system in such a way, said George Jacob, video product manager for ADT Security Services Inc., Boca Raton, Fla., and provider of Serafin's video system.

"Our legal department is looking to see if it's something we can propose to the field," Jacob said of Serafin's practice. Signs and cameras to deter shrinkage, he said, but "he's raised the bar five- to tenfold by adding the human element."

Shoplifting has dropped "dramatically" in Food Market since Serafin began the poster program, although specific numbers have not been disclosed.

Charity Parades

Proceeds from the Bedford Glens Garden Center Parade of Ponds will be split between the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association's scholarship fund and at least one general charity, possible the American Cancer Society.

Bedford Glens, a Bedford, Ohio, distributor for Aquascape Designs, expects to feature about 100 ponds and between 25 and 40 contractors in its inaugural August 10-11, 2002, event. Tickets for the event will cost \$15.

Similarly, Cooper's in Danbury, Conn., has scheduled its first Parade of Ponds for July 13, 2002. Proceeds from the self-guided tour's ticket sales will benefit Family and Children's Aid, a United Way-sponsored agency.

The Miracle of Aging

The Japanese Garden of Seattle's Washington Park Arboretum reopened this spring, following a \$390,000 pond renovation project to restore the pond's shoreline and install a hydraulics system to save water, The Seattle Times reported.

The garden is designed in part to give the illusion of age. For example, young pines along the pond's shoreline are pruned to look like grarled elders. Elsewhere, granite boulders are partially buried to give the impression that they've been smoothed by eons of water cascading over them, the paper reported.

The garden, established in 1960, ranked No. 8 of the 300 best Japanese gardens outside of Japan in a survey by Roth Teien, publisher of The Journal of Japanese Gardening.

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