

SHOPRITE FIGHTS CRIME TO KEEP CUSTOMERS AND STAFF SAFE

The Shoprite Group is fighting crime by investing heavily in sophisticated security and other measures to make its shopping space secure, reduce the number of criminal incidents and increase the number of arrests.

This is in the wake of the retail industry experiencing significant crime incidents in which the Shoprite Group had to contend with 489 armed robberies and burglaries in its 2018 financial year.

Its investments in crime prevention, including a centralised Command Centre and anti-crime team, gives the Group the ability to monitor stores and vehicles, remotely trigger security devices, follow up on crime incidents and ensure suspects are arrested.

Through an extensive intelligence network, the Command Centre receives live information on strikes, protests and other incidents. This information can be used to react and take necessary measures to safeguard the Group's fleet on the road as well as staff and customers in its stores.

Shoprite's efforts to keep its customers and staff safe are reflected in a reduction of contact (violent) crime incidents and increased prosecutions. "It is a work in progress," says Group Loss Prevention Manager, Oswald Meiring. "Incidents of violent crime and robberies are coming down, and we will continue to do everything we can to make us a harder target."

Arrests have increased by 200% as a result of the Group increasing its capability to identify, trace and arrest suspects. Recently the Group was also able to assist with the arrest of two suspects after the manager of its Worcester branch was shot and killed in a robbery. A third suspect has been identified and arrest is imminent.

"We continue to focus on creating a safer environment for customers and staff. That is our first priority and we will go to any length to prosecute whoever is committing these crimes."

The Group works closely with the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) to affect the necessary arrests. It shares intelligence with them to ensure that bail is successfully opposed and that prosecution of criminals is successful.

In addition to tracking devices, the Group installed cameras and electronic locks on trucks which are managed from the Command Centre. Trucks can be remotely opened and closed, with alarms triggered if trucks are stationary for a certain length of time, or if unusual driving behaviour is detected. Since these devices were installed, there have been no incidents in transit on these vehicles.

It has also employed an in-house investigation team made up of experienced investigators. It has a team of Data and Crime Analysts who utilise predictive and historical analysis of all the crime data, to identify which stores or areas should be focused on. The Group has also employed an expert criminal lawyer to assist with the successful prosecution of criminals.

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