

Con Edison Small Business Direct Installation (SBDI) Program

The Con Edison SBDI program is designed to help small business customers save money and save energy. If you are a Con Edison business customer with a monthly electric bill under \$6,000 participating in the program is easy and quick! We will conduct a free energy efficiency survey of your business; show you how to spend less on your energy used for lighting, heating, and cooling; install energy efficiency measures at no cost to you such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), low-flow aerators, high pressure rinse sprayers, and a water heater thermostat setback; and make recommendations on how you can achieve even greater energy and financial savings. Con Edison will provide up to 70% of the cost of the upgrades when you install high efficiency lighting, ballasts and



fixtures, retro commission your existing heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) system, and more. Join us in making our communities more energy efficient! We will visit your business in the near future to discuss the program with you and how you can take advantage of this offer.

For more information, and to sign up for your free Small Business Energy Survey, contact us online or give us a call at (888) 945-5326. We're here to help. ■

From the Director

This has been an interesting summer. Over this summer we have had three successful Sidewalk Sales and then came hurricane Irene. The forecasting of this storm caused the City to cancel the permit for the last scheduled sidewalk sale of the summer. We had planned a large back to school event on August 27th, which we will reschedule if the City will allow. The BID sponsored games and prizes on Southern Boulevard and 163rd Street. Many stores participated by providing gifts and prizes which were won by shoppers who played our roulette wheel. Other stores participated by displaying reduced price merchandise outside of their stores. Forever Beauty Supply made a killing each time by displaying 50% off beauty products and house wares. We have applied for a permit for a sidewalk sale to occur before the weather changes. We will keep you posted if a new permit is granted.

It appears that NYPD is attempting to clean up the streets. Since the police began their crackdown on illegal street vendors they have also become more vigilant at giving tickets for having any objects displayed on the Boulevard. Remember the city has a zero visibility policy on Southern Boulevard. So, place nothing in front of the stores. This policy has more so been enforced on the South side of the Boulevard where the sidewalk is more crowded. Although (NYC) sanitation enforcement has agreed to lay off the BID area, I would advise you all to keep advertising materials and merchandise from the from in front of your storefronts.

Also over the summer there was a break-in attempt at a store on the Boulevard. The break in attempt occurred during the overnight hours. Thieves attempted to break the locks on the gates on the front of the store. Since then the locks have been strengthened and additional security cameras have been installed. Although the BID has cameras at several locations throughout the district, we still recommend that you install cameras at your business. See article below for more burglary prevention tips. Another major loss to retailers is shoplifting. To help retailers address this problem we have included some tried and true remedies in a featured loss prevention article found on page two. ■

What is the Southern Boulevard Business Improvement District?

The Southern Boulevard Business Improvement District is a vital step in improving the commercial environment in what was once known as the third busiest shopping district in the Bronx. As a public/private partnership, the property and business owners elected to make a collective contribution and promotion of Southern Boulevard and attract more shoppers in this united effort with the community.

The purpose of the BID is to improve business conditions in a specific area, attract and retain businesses, generate jobs and improve the quality of life for those who use the district. A BID enables stakeholders to decide which

services to provide to meet the district's unique needs.

The BID is managed by a District Management Association which is made up of the local business and property owners and community leaders. The BID also has an Executive Director who is available to anyone within the BID district.

The boundaries run on Southern Boulevard from 163rd to 167th Street, Both sides of Westchester Avenue from Fox Street to the Southwest side of West Farms Road and East 163rd Street from Fox to Hoe.

For additional information call Medina Sadiq, Executive Director at 718-974-2990 or by email at: msadiq@sobobid.org ■

Tips to prevent shoplifting

Loss experts agree that a crucial way to prevent shoplifting is to have well-trained and alert employees who know how to spot a potential shoplifter. Employees need to watch for customers who:

- Avoid eye contact
- Appear nervous
- Wander the store without buying
- Leave the store and returns repeatedly
- Linger in a location that employees have a hard time monitoring
- Constantly keep an eye on store employees and other customers.

In addition to training your employees to spot shoplifters, general shoplifting-prevention techniques include:

- Staying alert at all times.
- Greeting all customers.

Tips to prevent shoplifting

Some specialty retailers say employee theft is a bigger threat to their bottom line than shoplifting. Experts agree that the best defense is a watchful eye. Try these strategies:

Stop by your store without warning. Make periodic (yet randomly timed) unannounced visits to each and every retail location.

Spot-check inventory/drawer. During unannounced visits, announce: "I'm just double-checking inventory numbers and doing a register check." Pick a few products and check physical inventory against inventory sheets/POS inventory figures. If possible, run a cash drawer reconciliation. Announce: "I'll be back again soon to run through this again." This lets employees know management is keeping its eye on the ball.

Have an inventory-tracking system. Use a POS system that tracks inventory automatically or, at a minimum, use paper-based inventory-tracking sheets to send a signal to employees

- Asking lingering customers if they need help.
- Knowing where shoplifting is most likely to occur in the location.
- Using a log to share suspicions about shoplifters among employees.
- Displaying signs that "Shoplifters will be prosecuted."

When shoplifting is suspected, it's crucial for your employees to know how to handle incidents. The Los Angeles Police Department recommends that retail employees:

- Never directly accuse anyone of stealing (call security instead).
- Give the person a chance to pay for the item they "forgot" to pay for by asking, "Are you ready to pay for that?" or "Can I ring you up?"
- Never try to physically stop a shoplifter. Call security.
- Cooperate fully with center security and the prosecutor if/when the time comes. ■

that inventory is indeed being monitored.

Check the z-tape. Check those z-tape numbers. If yesterday's z-tape was number 24 and today's is 27, what happened to 25 and 26?

Train employees. Provide all employees with training on theft-prevention, both shoplifting and employee theft. Discuss the ways the company is prepared to detect either.

Encourage anonymous tips. Publish a phone number employees can call to leave an anonymous message if they suspect a co-worker of stealing product or cash. If employees are aware their co-workers are watching and could report them, they will be less inclined to get sticky fingers.

Watch for employees with calculators and receipt books. Many retailers say that a sure sign of a problem is an employee who has a calculator next to the cash drawer, or a separate re-

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Rio Fitness

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Helping Southern Boulevard Stay Fit



Southern Boulevard has a new gym. This brand new top tier fitness facility is located at 961 Southern Boulevard replacing Fitness for Life gym that had been there for several years.

Fitness for Life left a huge gap in services in our community as fitness facilities are few and far between. So we welcome Rio Fitness with open arms. Although at the same location of the former gym, every aspect of Rio Fitness is new—from the walls to the machines to a mirrored dance room with blond wood floors. We spoke with Seth Oliphant, the owner of Rio Fitness,

and he told us that the impetus for the gym was the fact that he saw few fitness facilities in the Latin and lower income areas. He said that he was amazed at the fact

that those communities are targeted with fast food yet they don't have enough physical fitness facilities in our communities. Seth is scouting for other locations in the Bronx. Tranquil yet energizing, Rio Fitness offers the following Specials: \$19.99 per month with no classes or 24.99 per month with a wide array of classes offered. ■

Shoplifting (cont.)

ceipt book tucked into a drawer or pocket.

Check deposits. Don't just check if the deposit numbers match the sales figures. Also check that deposits are being made routinely and when expected (particularly easy to do through on-line banking). If deposits are typically made every day and then suddenly they are being made every-other day, find out why.

Check cash-to-credit purchase ratios. If the typical purchase ratio is 30 percent cash to 70 percent credit, and then suddenly the ratio is 10 to 90, it's time to ask a few questions.

Watch the "no-sales." Many retail owners know that the lead-

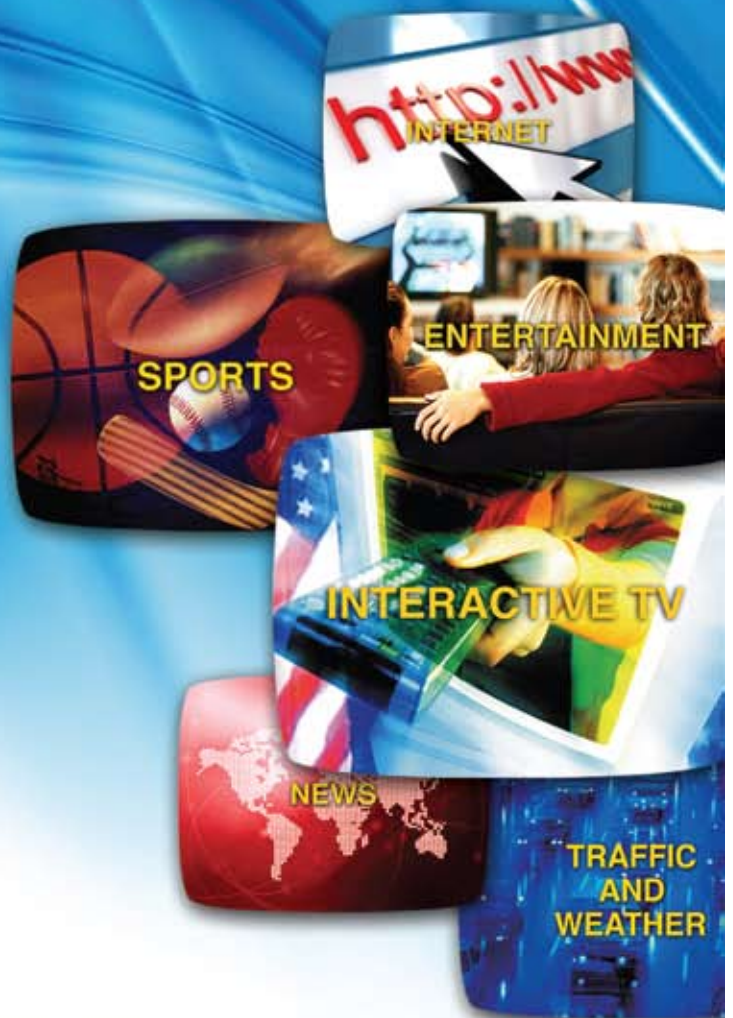
ing indicator of theft is a single piece of data on your x-tape: the "no sale" number. If a typical day's no-sale tally is four, but every time a particular employee works the tally is 10, there may be a problem.

Of course, there's no way to completely protect yourself against shoplifting and employee theft, but if you make customers and employees aware that you're keeping a close eye on your business, experts say that's the first and most-critical step in shrinking your shrink this holiday season. ■

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