

C-Store Saves with Smart Safes

Triton's VersaSafe allows New Orleans-based Brother's Food Mart to trim costs while better managing their cash.

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The players

Triton has been a trusted leader in the ATM space for 30 years. The bulk of Triton's full line of ATMs for retail locations and financial institutions are designed and assembled in the United States at a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Long Beach, Miss. Recently, Triton decided to apply their three decades of extensive experience and expertise to the development of affordable, retail friendly cash security and cash management solutions, known as smart safes.

LKM Convenience operates a number of Brother's Food Mart convenience stores in southeast Louisiana. Along with the standard convenience store products, the company's locations feature a full menu of New Orleans favorites, including chicken tenders, fried chicken and fish, meat pies, jambalaya as well as red beans and rice. The company operates under the slogan, "Often imitated, never duplicated."

The challenge

One of the largest expenses a merchant faces when managing their business is the cost associated with traditional cash

management. While credit and debit card purchases can cost merchants upwards of two percent of the consumer's purchase price, cash purchases are not without burden.

Traditional cash management encompasses a variety of tasks from having clerks count cash in an effort to balance a register to the manager counting, sorting, balancing and reconciling cash in a back-office environment at the end of the business day.

Merchants spend upwards of two to three hours per business day managing their cash volume, meaning the cost of managing



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cash can approach \$1,000 per month for a single store. Forward thinking merchants, such as LKM Convenience, were quick to reduce that expense.

Until a few years ago, merchant safes were typically reinforced boxes. Although the lock may have incorporated timers, electronic keypads, or other high-tech features, the only way to know what was inside the safe was to open it and physically count the contents. A smart safe, on the other hand, incorporates a bill validator, tracking not only the amount of money deposited into the safe, but also keeping a log of who accessed the safe and at what time they did so.

Many smart safes also incorporate the ability to communicate directly with a financial institution, giving the merchant immediate provisional credit for the receipts deposited in the smart safe.

As a 24-hour operation with stores throughout the New Orleans area, Brother's Food Mart had long depended on CIT companies and smart safes for cash handling. The CIT provider Brother's had been working with, however, required the stores to use the CIT provider's own armored car service as well as its own safes and service organization, minimizing the flexibility the Brother's Food Mart had in choosing solutions that best met its cash handling needs.

"Also, with our previous smart safe and CIT provider, we had a 3-day lag with the deposit of the funds," said Tomina Gross, controller, Brother's Food Mart. "The company would pick up the money on Monday, but we actually wouldn't receive credit in our accounts until Thursday."

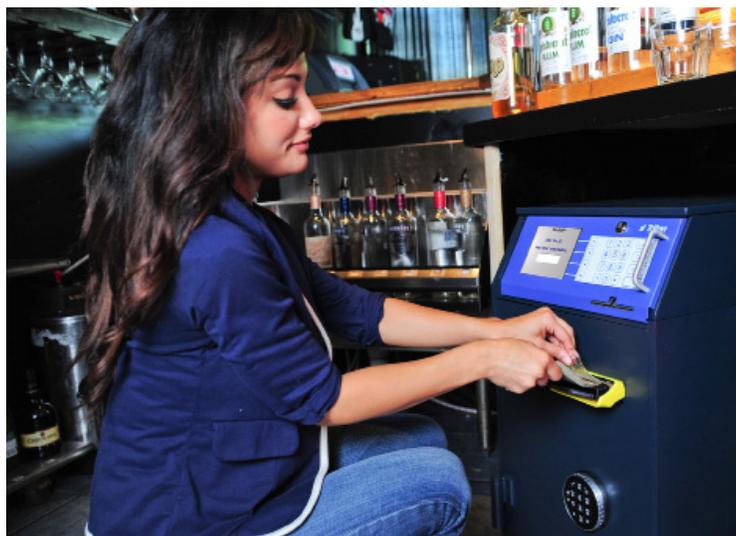
Making a change in CIT providers, then, would require Brother's to move to a new smart safe provider as well.

The solution

When Brother's switched to a CIT provider better suited to meet its needs, that provider recommended the Triton VersaSafe.

The VersaSafe is a fast, secure, and accurate smart safe system for cash-intensive environments that allows merchants to spend less time counting money and more time serving customers and managing their store. Retailers can quickly and accurately secure cash and dramatically reduce both internal and external theft by eliminating cash touchpoints while reducing the number of labor hours spent managing the daily cash volume.

VersaSafe is provisional/same-day credit capable, meaning merchants who choose that option can receive same-day credit to their accounts on funds deposited in the VersaSafe.



The VersaSafe allows employees to quickly and accurately secure cash.

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— Tomina Gross, controller, Brother’s Food Mart

When paired with the Web-based monitoring system VersaLink, merchants can keep track of the safe’s activity 24/7 from a computer or other Web-enabled device. Merchants can view cash levels, both validated and dropped, in order to optimize visits. They can view, print and save personnel, shift and end-of-day audits. In addition, the VersaSafe software and bill validator firmware can be updated remotely. Merchants can manage user accounts and VersaSafe settings and determine the overall health of the VersaSafe and individual components from anywhere at any time. Each VersaSafe is configured to communicate with VersaLink in real-time, meaning the information provided to the merchant is up to date, accurate and timely.

The result

Brother’s originally tested the VersaSafe in one location in the New Orleans suburb of Metairie, eventually rolling it out to all of their locations.

Not only does the system allow the company to minimize the time store managers would have typically spent counting cash and preparing deposits, it helps save on costs associated with employee error and the acceptance of counterfeit bills.

Consider, for example, a scenario where three \$12-an-hour employees each spend a half-hour per shift balancing cash and preparing deposits. That alone adds up to

\$18 per day. Add to that an average \$10 per day cash shortage from employee error and the acceptance of counterfeit bills plus another half-hour for the manager’s time. At nearly \$35 per day times 365 days per year, those cost savings alone add up to nearly \$13,000 per year per location.

The system allows Brother’s to generate reports remotely that allow them to manage a variety of issues, including tracking which employees conducted a transaction. Those reports allow the company to spot issues and deal with internal shrinkage quickly, helping them to further reduce costs by giving the company the ability to solve problems before they get out of hand.

“Having VersaLink as a companion definitely helps,” Gross said. “Our previous system was very complicated and it took a long time to go through the data to find the information we actually needed. With VersaLink, we are able to look at transactions in real-time, and if there is a problem, we can pinpoint it to the user and the specific time. We’ve also been able, with Triton’s help, to customize many aspects of the application to fit our needs.”

About the sponsor: *With more than 200,000 ATMs shipped to 24 countries worldwide, Triton has been a trusted leader for affordability and service in the financial services industry for 30 years. The bulk of Triton’s full line of products are designed and assembled in the United States at a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Long Beach, Miss. Now, with Triton’s partner ATMGurus, they have become the premier provider of parts, repair, and technical training.*