

PLAN A POP PROJECT ON ID THEFT

Choose a specific ID Theft problem:

- Credit card fraud at local retail stores
- Sudden rise in individual victims asking for police reports
- Check fraud at local supermarkets
- Giving false ID when stopped by police
- Mail interception
- Prevention against mass ID theft (stealing agency databases)
- Burglary with ID theft as the motive
- Theft from cars with ID theft as motive
- Obtaining false driving license
- Hotel fraud

Specific ID Theft Problem: Hotel Fraud

How problem identified: Local hotels report increase in hotel fraud. Individuals check in using other person's identity (credit card). Offenders run up big bills, and leave after paying with stolen card.

Action: Collect data

1. Survey hotels to assess incidence, and identify those hotels that are most targeted.
2. Review time of day, week or month when frauds committed. Coincide with special events?
3. Identify, if possible, any location patterns. Downtown district? Near or in entertainment district?
4. Interview managers of "hot" hotels on authentication procedures employed for guest check-in procedures
5. Collect information (or have hotel keepers do it) on employee backgrounds. If it is one specific hotel with the problem, advise managers to monitor employees to check for employee theft of personal information from guests, or collusion with offenders.
6. Collect information that links patters of fraudulent check-ins with specific desk clerks.
7. What financial arrangements does the hotel have with its merchant card account holder? Does the card issuer take loss from fraud, or must business?
8. How long does it take for hotel to discover the fraud on average?
9. Are the stolen identities from a variety of locations or from one area? Local or distant?

10. Log in to the FTC Sentinel Database to check on incidence of consumer complaints concerning ID theft in or around your locality.
11. Connect with adjacent jurisdictions to see if they have similar problems.
12. Contact multi-agency task forces for information on incidence in your jurisdiction.
13. Scan your department's crime incident reports for ID theft related information.

Narrow down the problem: e.g. focus on authentication procedures, if you find they are poor.

1. Choose the most victimized hotel.
2. Work with managers to develop better authentication procedures at check-in. E.g., ask for additional identifying information such as a driver's license, check validity of credit card on check-in.
3. Work with managers to develop procedures to analyze spending patterns by guests to flag exceptional spending.
4. Encourage hotel to conduct ID authentication training for desk clerks and training in other security procedures for all employees.

Measure as you go

Make sure the hotel you choose will work with you to collect the necessary information to assess the effectiveness of your intervention. This means that you need data both before and after your intervention on:

- Number of successful frauds
- Number of attempted frauds
- Time it took to discover the frauds
- Amount lost to the fraud

Expand your influence

1. Partner with local hotels and banks to
 - Develop an area wide training program on ID theft prevention focusing on the specific hotel fraud problem as it appears in the data you have collected.
 - Encourage hotels to develop a consistent and detailed reporting system to record ID thefts.
2. Establish regular meetings with adjacent jurisdictions to
 - spread the need for collection of ID Theft related data,
 - implement training programs in other jurisdictions,
 - coordinate data collection efforts and
 - coordinate the writing up of ID theft police reports.