

Sentry Technology and Mills Fleet Farm

A Partnership for Effective CCTV

Mills Fleet Farm is a privately held thirty-store chain consisting of big box retail, auto service centers, convenience stores, and carwashes. Mills sells farm implements, sporting goods, clothing, and tools in four Midwest states. Their stores average 150,000 to 250,000 square feet.

Loss prevention in large-store environments is challenging and costly. Mills wanted to find a lower cost and more easily administered CCTV program. They found their solution with Sentry Technology's SmartTrack™.

Utilizing SmartTrack enables Mills Fleet Farm to lower the number of CCTV cameras needed to cover their stores while maintaining 100 percent coverage of critical LP areas. SmartTrack is a mobile camera system with fully functional PTZ cameras that are "driven" around the store on concealed tracks located on the ceiling.

SmartTrack is easy to use with an intuitive approach to tracking and observing both dishonest customers and employees. It can lock on to the suspected person and follow their movement without changing cameras. This technology eliminates the need for dozens of PTZ and fixed cameras traditionally used in large stores. Easy to operate, easy to train, easy to achieve results, lower overall cost of ownership. With SmartTrack, Mills is able to better control loss prevention personnel expense due to increased productivity and ease of use.

Why SmartTrack

Nick Widi is the corporate loss prevention manager for Mills Fleet Farm. Widi is a ten-year veteran of the LP community and agreed to answer a few questions.

Q: Why did you choose SmartTrack for Mills Fleet Farm?

A: We chose track for our stores approximately ten years ago. We have used three generations of track systems, and the SmartTrack, by far, is the best yet. I continue to purchase SmartTrack due to its reliability and its ability to cover several aisles. I have the luxury of having multiple loss prevention personnel in each of my stores. These employees have the tools to monitor customers or employees from one centralized area.

We only have to supplement traditional PTZ CCTV in places such as storage areas. I would need to install 120 to 180 PTZs for the same coverage.

Q: How do you use SmartTrack?

A: We have 4 to 8 fully functioning mobile cameras that are programmed to tour the entire sales floor 24 hours a day. When we have a suspicious individual, we can lock onto a suspected person and not lose sight of them. In addition, we use it for locating safety concerns and employee productivity issues. The quality of the image is excellent with the same zoom, auto focus, and auto iris control as a PTZ camera.

Q: How about the recording of incidents?

A: We record our stores 24/7 and have had success in reviewing after the fact thefts, slip-and-fall incidents, et cetera. Approximately every minute the track carriage passes by each of our aisles. Oftentimes, we capture the actual incident, but if not, we see the before and after, which can be beneficial when determining the condition of the area.

Q: Where do you see the future of this technology?

A: I think we can get more value by expanding the use of the SmartTrack for operational and merchandising applications. The ease of use and intuitive nature of driving a camera around the store makes it ideal for anyone to use. With advances in the remote video surveillance area, I see a future with fewer cameras that are smarter and mobile. This is particularly important when considering your loss prevention budget.

Sentry Technology

Sentry Technology Corporation designs, manufactures, sells, and installs a complete line of CCTV solutions, electro-magnetic (EM), and RFID-based library management systems as well as radio frequency (RF) and electro-magnetic (EM) EAS systems. The CCTV product line features SentryVision, SmartTrack, a proprietary, patented traveling Surveillance System. For further information, please visit our website at www.sentrytechnology.com. ■

