

W WOLNYM CZASIE

Angielski z Personelem

HR Emergency 11

Pogotowie HR

Ludowe porzekadło mówi, że na złodzieju czapka gore, ale czy na pewno?

Opracowania próbujące oszacować wartość aktywów kradzionych z firm przez zatrudnionych w nich ludzi podają wręcz astronomiczne kwoty. Dlaczego pracownicy kradną? Czy da się ich wykryć i powstrzymać?

Zapraszam do lektury...

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Sticky fingers

Lepkie ręce



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Dear HR Manager,

I'm not convinced I should be writing to you... Actually I don't even believe you will decide to choose my email for any public discussion. Even I can see there's no actual story but a compilation of gloomy news. Still I can't stop myself from telling you that each time I open the daily press I get a bit panicky. Only within the span of the last few-days my local newspaper has informed me about a man who allegedly claimed his ailing girlfriend as his wife in order for her to qualify for company sponsored medical treatment and two other employees at a retail outlet supposedly stole and sold merchandise for private profit.

I've looked up some statistics and it seems that 75% of all employees steal from their employers at least once in their careers and 50% of them commit multiple thefts. 'On job nicking' is estimated to be responsible for

47% of store inventory shrinkage. You can imagine that figures like these can make the hair of an owner of a chain of hardware shops stand on end...

It means that instead of protecting my business against shoplifting I should rather be keeping a watchful eye on the purses and pockets of those I used to trust, my own employees. After all it's their dishonesty that proves the greatest threat to profitability at the store level. I keep wondering whether it's possible that the people whose salaries and benefits are paid by me are at the top or if it's the cost of their thefts. What an insidious crime!

With all this knowledge what should I do now? I need people to run my business; at the same time I can't watch them all the time. Besides that, they have an insiders' knowledge of my security systems so I'll never be able to catch them red-handed.

Angielski z Personelem

Am I doomed or are there some effective steps I could take?

Yours Low-spirited

Dear Low-spirited,

I wish I could reply that **pilfering, larceny and embezzlement** don't really exist or are rarely committed. Unfortunately it's not the case. To my knowledge employee theft does take place and it's also difficult to detect. On average it can take up to 18 months for an employer to catch a dishonest employee.

It might be worth adding here that money, supplies and merchandise are not the only **asset** stolen from employers. Companies frequently have to face theft of time. It's easier to detect when in the form of **falsifying time records**. When our staff doesn't work on the job, we may have more problems dealing with the issue. I personally remember counseling an international service provider whose employees would **overcharge** customers and then **pocket** the extra cash. With time this drastically affected the company's reputation and we needed a seasoned **spin-doctor** to gradually regain their customers' trust.

Last but not least, there's information that theft in the form of **insider trading** is **fueling industrial espionage**. The **commonest** example would be theft of technological solutions or designs. Just imagine developing a product for a long period and being deprived of your innovation **in the nick of time**... Most theft by employees is **revealed** by accident, for example during an unexpected audit or when an employee has to take sudden sick leave. Feeling uncomfortable with **whistle blowing** or being afraid that information passed to their manager won't be kept anonymous other

workers tend not to report theft cases. The tendency makes preventing theft an even more difficult challenge for retailers.

Let's analyze the case step by step...

Is there a clear profile of an employee who steals? There is none in terms of age, size, **gender**, ethnic background, **household income** and educational background.

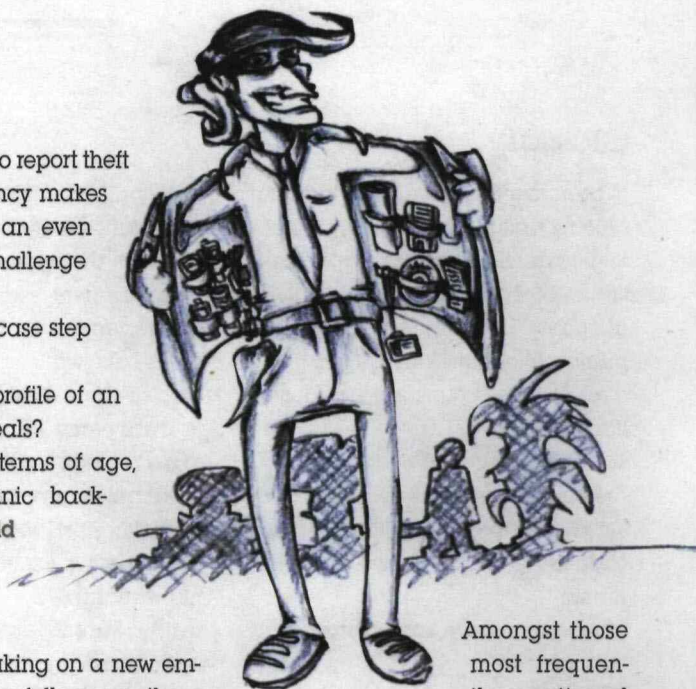
However, when taking on a new employee we can carefully **screen** them in terms of their past performance. Many companies **fall into the trap** of hiring a relative of a **trustworthy** employee and taking it for granted that their conduct will be equally **up to scratch**. It doesn't have to be the case...

What's worth noticing though, is that in work environments with a lower workforce turnover, incidents of theft by employees seem to be considerably rarer. Evidently long-term loyalty doesn't **come in pairs** with theft.

Why do employees steal from their employers?

It would be more understandable if employees stole because of a need, unfortunately this doesn't seem to be a dominant motive. Theft mostly happens because an opportunity for it **presents itself** and the chances of being caught in the act are low or there is no real threat of being **fired** and **prosecuted**. What obvious conclusion would there be? Every business has to implement a system of checks and **punitive** procedures that will reduce the opportunity, **willingness** and lack of punishment for theft, consequently functioning as an effective **deterrent**.

Are there any more factors **triggering** internal theft?



Amongst those most frequently mentioned is low morale in the workplace. If your staff feels **exploited, overworked, mistreated, underappreciated** they will be more likely to 'seek alternative compensation' by **helping themselves** to your assets.

Summing up, don't panic and don't close your business when faced with theft by employees. It's just another challenge. It can turn into a **crippling** problem when **insufficient** attention is paid to it. Take a moment then and **ponder** whether:

- ▲ there's a program of zero tolerance of theft
 - ▲ employees are informed about it during **orientation**/the recruitment procedure
 - ▲ security measures are constantly in operation
 - ▲ the recruitment process involves **past record** and criminal checks
 - ▲ A/P and A/R aren't assigned to the same people
 - ▲ surprise audits are organized
 - ▲ there are clear procedures for dealing with suspected or detected theft
- Have you ticked all the points? No? You know what to do next...

Yours HR Emergency Manager

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Glossary

to be convinced - być przekonanym
 gloomy - ponury, mroczny, posępny
 to get panicky - wpadać w panikę
 span - okres (np. kilka dni)
 allegedly - rzekomo
 ailing - chory, niedomagający
 a retail outlet - punkt sprzedaży detalicznej
 supposedly - ponoć
 merchandise - towar
 'on job' nicking - podbieranie w pracy
 shrinkage - kurczenie się, zmniejszanie się
 hardware - sprzęt komputerowy; artykuły żelazne
 shoplifting - kradzież dokonywana przez klientów sklepów
 to keep a watchful eye on sb/sth - uważnie kogoś/coś obserwować
 dishonesty - nieuczciwość
 profitability - rentowność
 insidious - podstępny, pozornie niewinny
 insiders' knowledge - informacje, do których dostęp ma pracownik
 to catch sb red-handed - złapać kogoś na gorącym uczynku
 doomed - skazany na niepowodzenie
 low-spirited - przygnębiony

pilfering - podkradanie drobnych/małowartościowych przedmiotów
 larceny - drobna kradzież
 embezzlement - defraudacja, sprzeniewierzenie
 asset - aktywa
 to falsify time records - fałszować kartę czasu pracy
 to overcharge - pobrać za usługę lub towar opłatę wyższą niż w cenniku
 to pocket - przywłaszczyć sobie
 a spin-doctor - specjalista od ratowania wizerunku
 insider trading - sprzedawanie poufnych informacji
 to fueling - napędzać
 industrial espionage - szpiegostwo przemysłowe
 the commonest - najpowszechniejszy
 in the nick of time - w ostatniej chwili
 to reveal - ujawnić
 whistle blowing - informowanie władz/przełożonych o popełnianym przestępstwie
 gender - płeć
 household income - przychód gospodarstwa domowego
 to screen sb - sprawdzić kogoś
 to fall into the trap of doing sth - wpaść w pułapkę robienia czegoś

trustworthy - godny zaufania
 up to scratch - spełniający oczekiwania
 not to come in pairs with sth - nie chodzić z czymś w parze
 to be fired - zostać wyrzuconym z pracy
 to be prosecuted - być ściganym sądownie
 punitive - karny
 willingness - chęć
 a deterrent - odstraszacz
 to trigger - powodować
 exploited - wyzyskiwany
 overworked - przepracowany
 mistreated - źle traktowany
 underappreciated - niedoceniany
 to help oneself to sth - wziąć sobie coś
 crippling - paraliżujący, poważny
 insufficient - niewystarczający
 to ponder - zastanowić się
 an orientation - przeszkolenie, wprowadzenie
 past record - historia dokonań/poczynań
 A/P = accounts payable - forma kredytu pozwalająca na uregulowanie należności za dostawę/usługę już po jej otrzymaniu
 A/R = accounts receivable - płatność, która nie została jeszcze uregulowana za już otrzymane dostawy/usługi

Exercise

In the below names of criminal activities some letters were substituted with symbols.

Would you be able to break the code? What letters do the symbols represent: *, &, \$, @ represent?

* I L F & @ I \$ G - stealing things that are not worth much, especially from the place where you work

* & T T Y L A @ C & \$ Y - the crime of stealing things that are worth only a small amount of money

& M B & Z Z L & M & \$ T - stealing money from the place where you work

F @ A U D - the crime of deceiving people in order to gain something such as money or goods

* H I S H I \$ G - the criminal activity of sending emails or having a website that is intended to trick someone into giving away information such as their bank account number or their computer password. This information is then used to get money or goods.

Key

R = @
 N = \$
 E = &
 P = *