

GARAGE DOOR INSTALLERS ARE ALSO IN THE SECURITY BUSINESS

2022 crime blotter serves as a telling reminder

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If you take a few minutes to set up a Google News Alert for the search term “garage doors”, it will then return a daily array of national and local news features. Collectively, it will reveal key industry trends to be aware of as you do your own business planning and evaluation.

Based on recent search results, it seems as though 2022 has already seen an exceptionally high volume of crime stories from across the U.S. and Canada. They serve as a stark reminder that while the primary focus of the garage door and door operator industry is about curb appeal, convenience, and functionality, there is an additional component that is increasing in importance: security.

Two types of burglars

News coverage reveals that criminals may be becoming more brazen. The Daily Courier in Prescott Valley, Arizona recently published a two-part feature on keeping your home safe from burglary.

It reported “There are basically two kinds of burglaries – Day Burglary and Night Burglary. The former means that your home has been

cased and you are gone. The latter means that the bad guys don’t care if you are home or not. They might even prefer that you are home to assist with finding valuables or to perpetrate an assault – the most dangerous to you.”

In East Texas, the Harrison County Sheriff’s Office kicked off “a #9PMRoutine anti-theft initiative, urging residents to make it a part of their nightly routines to lock their vehicles and their homes at 9:00 p.m. The routine also includes turning on outside lights, closing all garage doors, and removing all valuables including keys, wallets, cash, and garage door openers from vehicles.”

Automotive supply chain issues spike carjackings

With national supply chain issues affecting the auto industry, cars have become popular targets at any time of day or night. KSDK TV News in Missouri reported that a father was shot while chasing a man who tried to steal his car with his child inside. The incident occurred early in the morning.

The father had briefly left the vehicle

running inside his own garage with the door open to warm it up and had gone inside for a blanket for his son. When he returned, a car thief was attempting to steal the vehicle. The man chased the thief down the street and was shot in the leg. Fortunately, the father survived the injury, chased off the carjacker, and prevented his son from being kidnapped.

A story reported on KIRO 7 News in Seattle, Washington is an example of an even more alarming incident. An auto repair business in Pierce County was robbed on an early Saturday morning when its roll-up garage door was literally pulled off. The business had a surveillance camera that revealed two people using a pry bar to rip the door apart. The criminals got away with a customer’s SUV and some tools.

The Montreal Gazette reported that a home was targeted in a very unusual way—someone set the garage door afire. Officers on the scene extinguished the fire, which had only damaged the facade. Fortunately, no one was injured.

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May as well leave the house unlocked

In central New Jersey, the Middlesex Daily Voice reported that local police are seeing a “steep rise in break-ins in which the burglars are using garage door openers stolen from unlocked vehicles to get inside homes.” They noted that in almost all motor vehicle burglaries, “the vehicles were left unlocked.”

In Rochester, N.Y., the Post Bulletin reported an unusual business crime. A local construction company reported that thieves entered their facility through a garage door and stole a large amount of copper.



Garage security IS home security

Why is all this varied criminal activity important to you?

It’s an important way to become an even more valuable supplier to your customers. With the increasing number of incidents being linked to garage door openers in unlocked vehicles, dealers in the garage door industry need to educate their customer base.

Homeowners may be oblivious to how vulnerable they are. When they leave a car unlocked in the driveway, with a door opener on the visor,

they are literally handing a criminal an extra set of keys to the house. However, making a casual, easy-to-implement suggestion is not enough.

Add-ons encourage safety and build trust

There is added business potential for installers who proactively assess a customer’s vulnerability to break-ins when onsite for a door repair or installation. As some of the aforementioned news stories reveal, criminals can be both resourceful and desperate. The more you can do to help discourage break-ins for a home or business owner, the greater value you will deliver as a trusted supplier.

Some recommendations might lead to

convenience of a workhorse operator to their residence or commercial property.

Crime is never going to be completely avoided, but deterrence is half the battle. The harder things are for a criminal, the more likely they’ll give up or move on.

Growth through added services

Door installers can do their part for home security by plugging into smart home trends and offering garage-related tips and recommendations. Doing so can help increase the security for the homeowner and the overall portfolio of services for the door dealer.

There are other types of home services companies out there that already have sepa-

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products you can sell, such as a garage door camera that ties into an existing smart home system. Others might just fall into the category of friendly advice, such as spotting a need for more outside lighting or the trimming of shrubbery or trees near the garage where an intruder can easily hide.

Obviously, you don’t want to frighten customers or overstate a problem that might not be happening in that area [yet]. But if a customer can avert a break-in [or worse] based on your suggestions to better secure garage access to their home or business, you have done them a huge service. Such expertise extends beyond selling an attractive garage door or the

rate divisions for home heating, oil supply, home security, lawn care, pest control, and other specialties. While the garage has long been its own unique domain, in the future, proactive door installers might find it worthwhile to add their own smart home services division. Never say never, especially when you are filling a growing need for customers without losing sight of your core business. ■

Newton Associates is a metro Philadelphia-based business-to-business advertising and PR agency with a long history in this industry, representing manufacturers of garage doors, door operators, gate operators, access control systems, radio controls, and related residential building products.

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