



8 Restaurant Loss Prevention Solutions to Evaluate for **2026** Budget

Restaurant chains are now pushing the boundaries of service innovation.

With delivery-focused micro-outlets to completely redesigned curbside pickup options that cater to drive-through customers as well as those that come in just for pick-up, restaurant chains are going through a massive IT, process and business security overhaul.

Entering 2026, restaurant loss prevention teams face compounding pressures. Consumers maintain heightened safety expectations, particularly in urban markets struggling with vagrancy and vandalism. More critically, employee safety has become a primary driver of talent retention, especially when restaurant operators are struggling to fill open positions and dealing with high attrition rates. Loss prevention has thus become a strategic talent retention tool, not just a cost center. In addition, loss prevention teams are grappling with sophisticated frauds, smash-and-grab crimes, and angry or potentially violent customers.

To compound the challenges, historically high inflation rates have contributed to a spike in crime rates.*

As security and loss prevention leaders in restaurant chains start planning for their 2026 security budgets, they are working to optimize costs, leverage existing investments smartly, and use innovative security solutions that maximize ROI.



1 Implement AI-Powered Virtual Perimeter Guard to Secure the Perimeter

Traditional video surveillance is reactive and doesn't stop a wide variety of security incidents outside the four walls of a store. The Virtual Perimeter Guard has AI-enabled cameras that detect threats in the perimeter, such as loiterers and vandals, proactively. It automatically issues voice-down messages and escalates persistent threats to Interface's interactive security operations center (iSOC) live response from intervention, stopping incidents before they occur.

- Detect loitering and unauthorized access around outdoor perimeters
- Issue autonomous voice alerts that immediately warn trespassers and potential vandals and burglars
- Escalate persistent threats in real-time to a U.S.-based security operations center for intervention
- Integrate seamlessly with existing alarm systems to ensure rapid response

By preventing trespassing, vandalism, and break-ins before they happen, Virtual Perimeter Guard reduces costly incidents and decreases manual monitoring demands, improving overall security effectiveness.

To learn more about Virtual Perimeter Guard, [click here](#).

Video cameras have advanced beyond simple motion detection to sophisticated AI systems that recognize context and behavior. These systems now distinguish humans and vehicles with a high degree of accuracy.



2 Deploy Virtual Security Guards

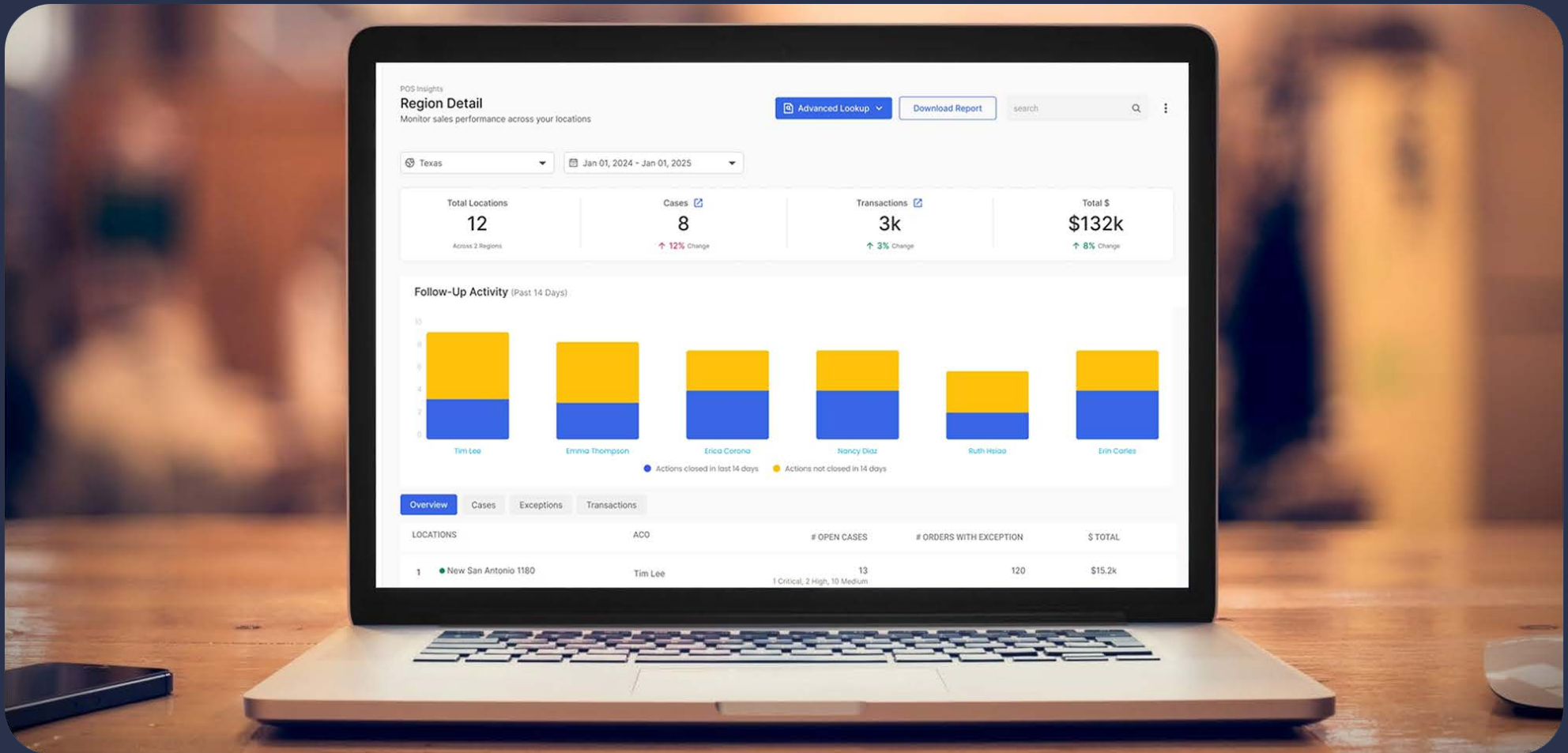
Most restaurant chains have vulnerable locations in challenging neighborhoods plagued by organized crime or have serious internal shrink issues. While it might make sense to deploy security guards at vulnerable locations, it might not always be the best approach. Just the cost of employing an armed security guard can be in the range of \$60,000 to \$75,000 per year.

Tragically, guards are often the first to be targeted by a determined criminal. A better, more cost-effective approach would be to deploy a virtual security guard solution with a team of remote security professionals monitoring locations 24X7X365 via live video and two-way audio with the ability to hear and speak directly to associates and/or customers.

The virtual security guard can conduct virtual tours of vulnerable locations to check for suspicious activities, remove unwanted people from the property, deter loitering, dumpster diving, and track employees in vulnerable situations, e.g., during bank deposit runs or exiting the outlet at night during closing.

Remote security teams can initiate voice-down announcements to check in with employees or warn customers who might be behaving suspiciously.

All of this can be done discreetly without negatively affecting the customer experience at the location.



3 Utilize Video-Integrated POS Exception Reporting

The easiest way for restaurants to get a return on their security investment is to implement a point of sale exception reporting solution.

With POS exception reporting integrated with security cameras, restaurant chains can check-in on all of their sites anytime from any device to review videos and associated transactions right down to the receipt level.

The solution opens the door for uncovering coupon fraud, sweethearting, unauthorized price overrides, and refund scams. POS exception reporting can also be used for training cashiers, measure cashier productivity, and track cash movement.

At Interface, we have customers that are saving thousands of dollars per location per year by taking every point of sale, overlaying the exception reporting and integrating it with their video systems.



Point of Sale Exception Reporting at Panda Express

Interface implemented a POS exception reporting system at Panda that identified suspicious transactions across 2,000 Panda locations. The solution included video integration to view recordings of flagged transactions.

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4 Replace DVR with an NVR

The focus on curbside delivery and drive-thru has created a compelling need to upgrade perimeter security for restaurant chains.

A prerequisite for upgrading perimeter security would be to invest in an NVR (network video recorder) that supports IP and analog cameras. This hybrid approach will allow restaurants to continue using their analog cameras while retaining the option to upgrade to higher resolution IP cameras with video analytics features when budgets allow.

Without making a major investment, restaurant chains can get a significant boost in the productivity and effectiveness of their security teams as NVRs come with upgraded features for accessing live and recorded video.

Accessing security camera video recordings from any location via the cloud is a key benefit of implementing NVRs.



5 Upgrade to Video-Verified Alarms

Plan to upgrade alarm systems to a video-verified alarm. Restaurant chains that already have an intrusion alarm system and CCTV cameras should consider integrating the two systems to maximize effectiveness and minimize false alarm costs. 99.5% of commercial burglar alarm signals turn out to be false with police often taking longer than 40 minutes to respond.

Conversely, video-verified alarms provide live eyes on site giving law enforcement a play-by-play account of what's happening when an alarm goes off during a break-in or robbery. The police arrive within minutes because they know they've got an opportunity to catch a criminal in the act and they can respond with a lot more intent to apprehend the perpetrator.

That's not all. Integrating video with intrusion detection devices such as motion detectors, glass-break detectors or even devices used to monitor environmental parameters (at locations where produce is stored) such as water, carbon monoxide, temperature or fire, will significantly improve the speed and precision with which security teams can react to real threats as they happen. Integrating video with alarms reduces instances of false alarms and the expenses associated with them. Having a reliable solution to avoid false alarm penalties will more than pay for the service.

Key associates won't be frequently called up to visit a location after shift hours to verify an alarm or the operations team won't be busy handling the paperwork associated with paying false alarm fines.



El Pollo Loco Slashes False Alarm Cost by 95%

To protect their inventory, assets, and people, El Pollo Loco relies on Interface's managed video-verified alarms and intrusion alarm monitoring to reliably detect intrusions and minimize false alarms. With Interface, El Pollo Loco saves several thousand dollars in annual false alarm penalties across 198 locations.

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6 Implement a Video Management System

When investigating crimes or security incidents, loss prevention teams spend a lot of time sifting through video recordings from security cameras. Accessing video recordings often requires significant wait times as IT teams may have to download or export video recordings from the location of interest. Once the video recording is available, finding the relevant clips is not easy as hours of video recording need to be reviewed to find clips of interest. Once the evidence is gathered, sharing the video evidence internally or with law enforcement using USB Drives or CDs carries significant risks as videos can be leaked.

Implementing a centralized video management system (VMS) can eliminate the endless wait time to access video recordings and speed up investigations. Cloud-based video management systems enable loss prevention teams to access video recordings from any location via a browser and app. Most VMS solutions offer advanced search capabilities that can dramatically speed up the process of gathering evidence. Once the video evidence is collected, it can be easily shared via secure, password-protected links with any third party. In addition to streamlining investigations, restaurant operations teams can review video recordings to identify gaps in customer service, cleanliness standards, and store operations.



“VMS allows us to virtually check in on our stores to monitor operational consistency, customer experience, employee safety, and use video snippets for training.”

Kathleen Rogers,
Vice President of Stores,
Pressed



7 Invest In Video Analytics Capabilities

Video analytics offers restaurants to maximize the investments made in the existing security cameras. Video analytics solutions can detect line crossing, monitor dwell times, count people in queues, spot when objects appear/disappear, monitor occupancy levels and record drive-thru and dine-in metrics. Loss prevention teams can leverage video analytics to reduce workloads and improve productivity.

It is now possible to easily sift through video recordings to locate, for example, a perpetrator wearing a red shirt or a lost iPhone in a restaurant. In addition, there are immense benefits to understanding customer or employee movement or behavior inside and outside the restaurant that goes beyond security.

Video analytics can uncover insights such as table turnaround times, drive-thru service times, food wastage, safety and compliance issues, employee training gaps, staffing, restaurant design issues, drive-thru bottlenecks, to name a few.

Security and loss prevention departments can make a strong case for apportioning the investments needed for implementing a video analytics solution across multiple departments.



Salata Optimizes Restaurant Operations

Interface implemented a cloud-based video analytics solution for Salata. The solution generates valuable business insights from security camera feeds. Using the insights from video analytics, Salata was able to identify training opportunities and enhance loss prevention productivity and effectiveness.

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8 Upgrade Your Network Infrastructure

Any security solution is only as good as the network upon which it resides. When restaurant locations have limited bandwidth, security solutions end up competing with other mission-critical applications such as credit card transactions or inventory management applications. So no matter how sophisticated the security solution is - IP cameras, video analytics or advanced remote monitoring, it will be difficult to justify the investment if the restaurant chain cannot derive the value from the solution due to network limitations.

One way to mitigate this challenge is to rightsize existing network bandwidth or roll out parallel 4G/LTE wireless connectivity so that performance of mission-critical applications are not impacted.

Conducting a network audit can become the basis for a network upgrade. Some of the questions that can uncover opportunities for network upgrade include:

- Can the routers support QoS (Quality of service) functions?
- Which locations have bandwidth limitations that limit what applications can be supported without performance degradation?
- Does the network management system have the capability to route network traffic through the best available network connectivity?

A comprehensive network audit will uncover opportunities for improving the overall performance of all the enterprise applications including security solutions.



Long John Silver's Deploys Network of the Future

Long John Silver's chose to work with Interface to implement a fully managed, restaurant-technology-in-a-box solution that includes prefabricated network equipment ready for SD-WAN expansion, wireless WAN backup and VoIP connectivity.

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Protecting customers, staff and company assets is crucial to business success. The best bet for security and loss prevention teams is to focus on implementing targeted solutions that maximize ROI, improve customer satisfaction, and employee experience.

Talk to Interface solution experts to understand how consumer-facing, multi-location enterprises can innovate faster and grow rapidly with our suite of managed services.

→ [Schedule a Free Consultation](#)

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