

**CASE STUDY SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF  
INSTAKEY LOCK CORPORATION  
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**Stein Mart Finds a Security Program that Equals Savings**

It was a mathematical equation that led Carl Davis, vice president administrative services for Stein Mart, to consider a new security program. When Davis did the math on management turnover and store keys that weren't returned, he found Stein Mart was losing hundreds of dollars each time it incurred locksmith expenses.

For Davis, a security program with *added* security that saved time and money was needed. He read about the integrated key tracking management system from Denver-based InstaKey Lock Corporation that combines its patented hardware with real-time record management software. Before he was sold on the system, though, Davis conducted research, including a 10-store test, before a rollout for the conversion of Stein Mart's stores.

**Evaluating the InstaKey Security System**

Davis, along with his colleague, Joe Martinolich, vice president of loss prevention, previously had observed a demonstration of InstaKey's patented hardware. It allows the end user to re-key a lock whenever needed, without the cost and delay of technical support or removing a core from the door.

They found other inherent advantages with InstaKey's hardware technology:

- Store locks can be rekeyed with a turn of the master key, eliminating cost and time spent waiting for a locksmith.
- InstaKey's exclusive key blanks are not available to locksmiths or hardware stores, meaning its key blanks cannot be duplicated.
- Every key has its own unique identification number to aid in key tracking and key audits.

"The InstaKey system is especially helpful for thwarting an employee with bad intentions," said Davis. "On a moment's notice, it allows you to make any key inoperative and not take a chance that someone will have access with keys he or she had duplicated for the store."

In addition, InstaKey's web-based record management system provides real-time tracking of every key, every key holder and every location – accessible from anywhere at any time. Authorized users can also order new keys, change key holders and deal with lost keys, all via InstaKey's web-based program.

### **Selling the Program**

In preparing for his presentation to senior management, Davis developed two main selling points for converting to InstaKey – added security and cost savings that were easily documented. Davis supported his proposal with statistics on the expenses associated with changing locks when there was management turnover.

Per the company’s budget parameters, Davis suggested installing the system in 10 stores as a test group.

According to Davis, Stein Mart saw immediate savings as the testing got underway. The company was able to finance the initial phase through normal operating costs without any up-front costs or capital outlay.

“There were no budgeting blips when we started implementing the system,” said Davis. The math worked. “The InstaKey program is tailor-made to minimize cost.”

### **The Return on Investment**

Stein Mart has now reached 75 percent conversion of the entire chain. InstaKey is now installed every time Stein Mart opens a new store, or when one of its 263 existing stores has significant management changes. Currently, it has stores in 29 states, from California to New York.

"The system proved its flexibility when we used it among select stores," said Davis. "Based on the results, we'll continue with it until we have 100 percent changeover that will ultimately impact 1,000 doors."

InstaKey’s patented hardware also led Stein Mart to revise its key distribution policy. Previously, only the manager and assistant manager could open the store. Now, Stein Mart distributes keys to area managers and for up to eight key carriers at each store.

“We can change our own locks 12 times on one InstaKey key set,” said Davis. “We can execute more key changes because the expense has gone away.”

The system provides Davis with peace of mind knowing that employees (typically 40 to 60 per store) aren’t left vulnerable while waiting for a locksmith to arrive and change the locks.

When there is store management turnover and a key isn’t returned, Davis automatically sends a new installation packet to that particular store. The packet includes generic instructions for the InstaKey dealer on rekeying at that location. And, it includes new data that instantaneously updates the existing records system in the Web-based software.

When there is a question about a key in circulation, Davis and his staff use the Internet-accessible record management software to track key inventory and keys by location.

**Working with InstaKey**

Davis found the compatibility of the InstaKey program extended beyond InstaKey's technology to the administrative support of its staff. Ryan Carter, customer service manager at InstaKey, worked with Davis on the installation at stores and in creating a manual with instructions that are tailor-made for using the system.

“We work hand-in-hand with InstaKey and Ryan,” said Davis. “They work with us to ensure that the system is installed quickly.”

Davis oversees the key tracking and defers operations to Carter. When a user does have questions, Carter refers a local InstaKey dealer to assist with operating the system.

“The program wouldn't be nearly as effective if they just sold us the system without backup support as the system administrator,” said Davis.