# Elevating Security and Customer Experience: Cosentino's Innovative Approach with i3Ai Sentry

About Cosentino's Food Stores

Founded in 1948 by Jim, Dante, and Jerry Cosentino, Cosentino's Food Stores have blossomed into a beloved grocery chain renowned for exceptional customer service and a diverse range of high-quality, fresh foods. Now under the stewardship of the second generation, Cosentino's operates multiple locations in Kansas City. These stores include popular banners such as Price Chopper, Sunfresh, and Apple Markets, as well as three distinct Cosentino's Market Store formats.

Cosentino's stands out in the grocery industry through its innovative use of technology, and of artificial intelligence in particular. The company has adopted cutting-edge IP technology, deploying 155 media servers and 2,680 IP cameras across its stores to optimize operations and enhance security.
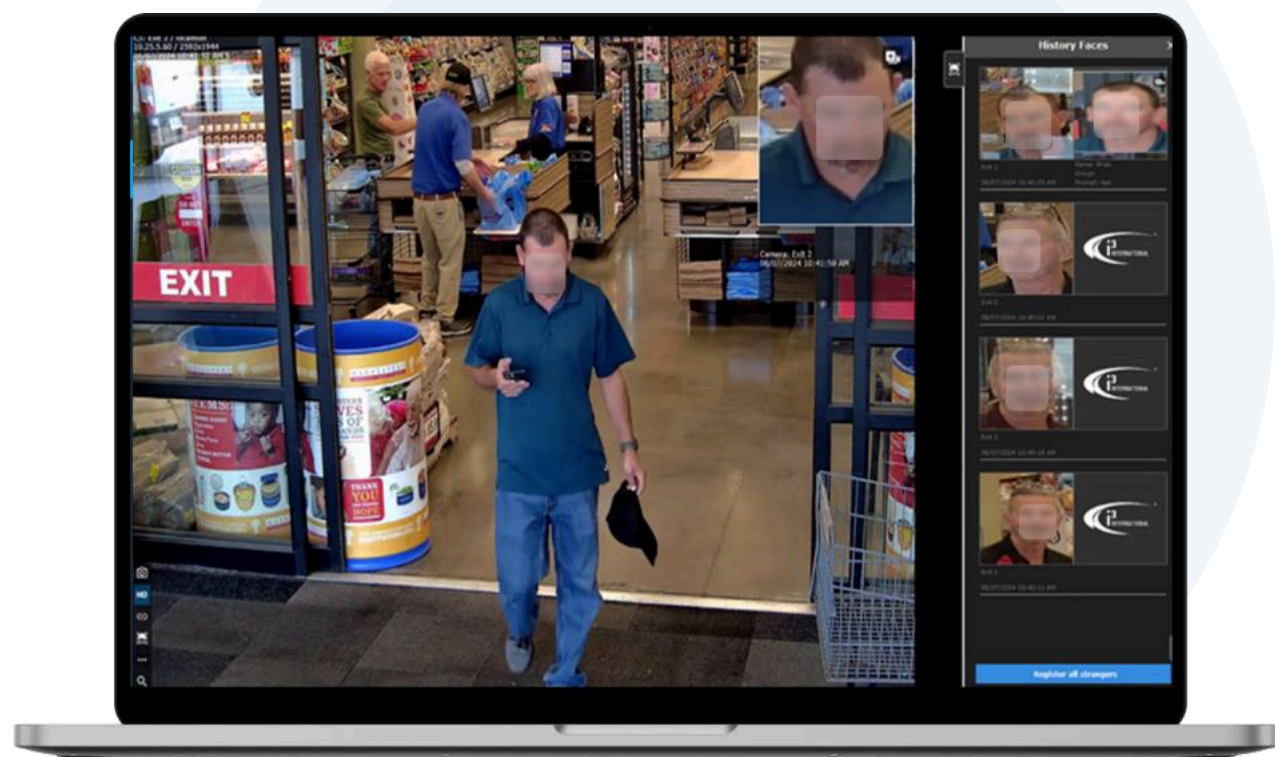

The Challenge

The grocery industry operates with narrow profit margins, typically ranging from 1% to 3%, due to fierce competition and the need to maintain competitive prices. Despite a reduction in the U.S. inflation rate from 9.1% in 2022 to 3.3% in 2024, food theft has surged, becoming a significant component of organized retail crime (ORC) (https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/). In 2022, retail theft losses in California reached $5.23 billion, followed by Texas at $3.58 billion and Florida at $2.79 billion. These challenges have prompted grocers to adopt proactive and preventive measures to mitigate theft and sustain their operations (https://capitaloneshopping.com/research/shoplifting-statistics/).

Consentino's experience reflects that of the wider grocery industry. Greg Collins, an asset protection expert with 34 years of experience in the grocery industry, observes that most repeat offenders engage in theft as their primary occupation, stealing merchandise to resell for cash. These thieves often target high-value items that are easy to resell, repeatedly hitting the same stores until the products are depleted or deterrent measures are taken. Theft from multiple stores in a single day can result in significant losses, with grocery thieves making a few thousand dollars daily, and those targeting home improvement, electronics, or department stores netting tens of thousands in a single day.

The Solution: i3Ai Sentry

ORC has become one of the main challenges in the grocery industry and i3 believes that the solution is Ai technology. In collaboration with i3, Cosentino's has implemented i3Ai Sentry, a feature within the CMS (Cloud Managed Services) that manages facial recognition (FR) biometric data and establishes personalized or group-based access control settings across the organization. Cosentino's uses i3Ai Sentry to achieve three main objectives:

1. Notify the corporation when a person of interest enters their facility.
2. Report on the number of clients entering the stores and their frequency.
3. Report on the number of contractors entering the stores, including date, time, and duration.
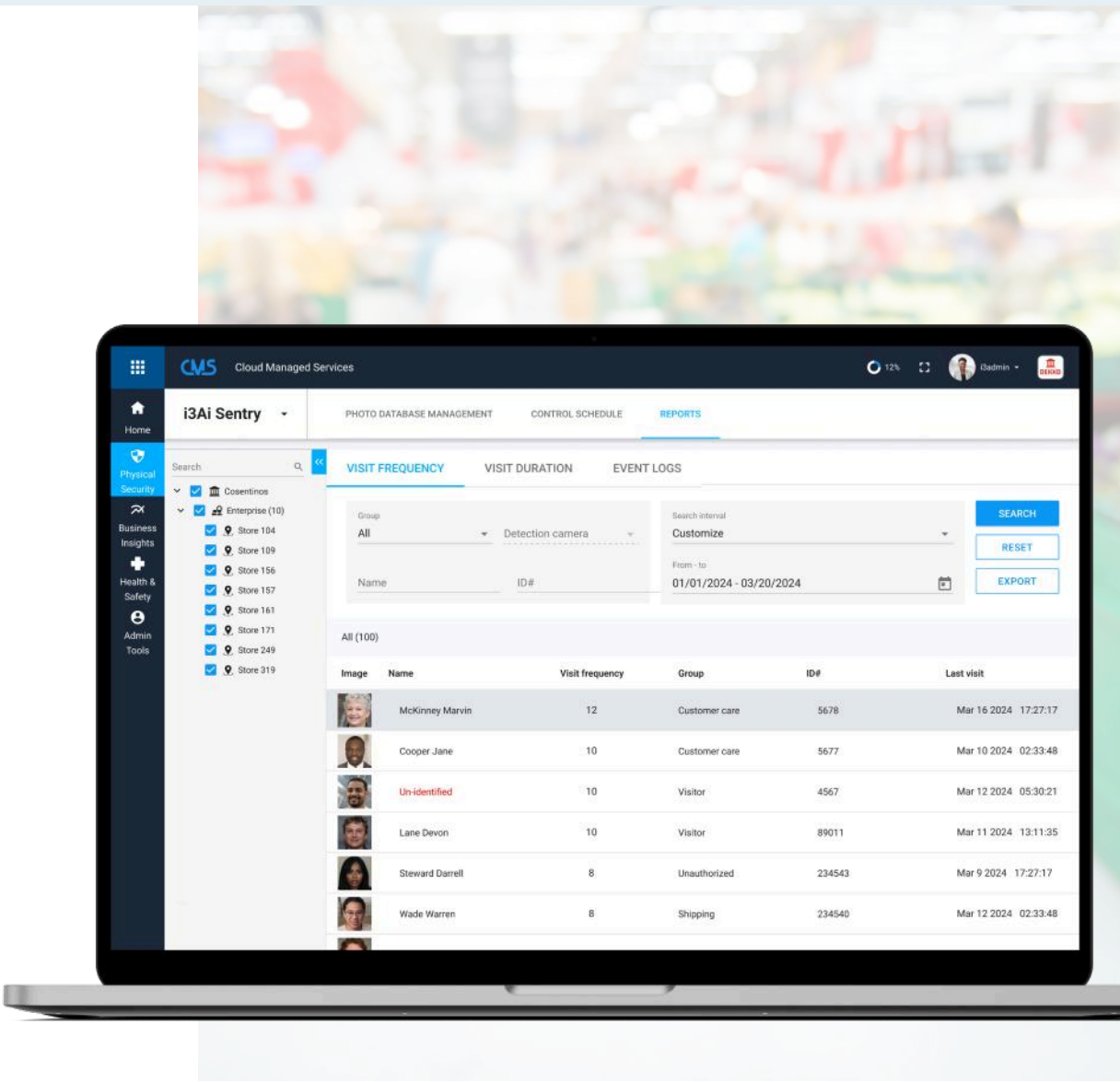

Implementation and Benefits

Since April of 2024, Consentino's had installed 85 dedicated cameras for the i3Ai Sentry face recognition solution across 27 locations. On average, 6,050 faces are captured per day. In one week, sample data shows 1 million faces detected, with 32 identified as persons of interest.

Cosentino's selected i3Ai Sentry for its cost-effectiveness and seamless integration with their existing camera systems. This "All-in-One" solution consolidates resources, saving time and labor by centralizing all necessary information for investigations. Chris Vandiver, Cosentino's Loss Prevention Director, noted that implementing i3Ai Sentry was straightforward, requiring only the addition of necessary components and optimal camera placement to ensure accurate results. However, challenges remain, such as ensuring the best camera placement, using the i3Ai Sentry program within evolving biometric data regulations, and preventing potential information mishandling to guard against libel lawsuits.

The benefits of this technology are substantial. i3Ai Sentry aids in investigations by tracking criminal activity on-site, assisting law enforcement in building cases that deter unwanted visitors from returning to the stores through successful prosecution. Additionally, the system enhances customer service by creating a safer shopping environment.

Network Structure:
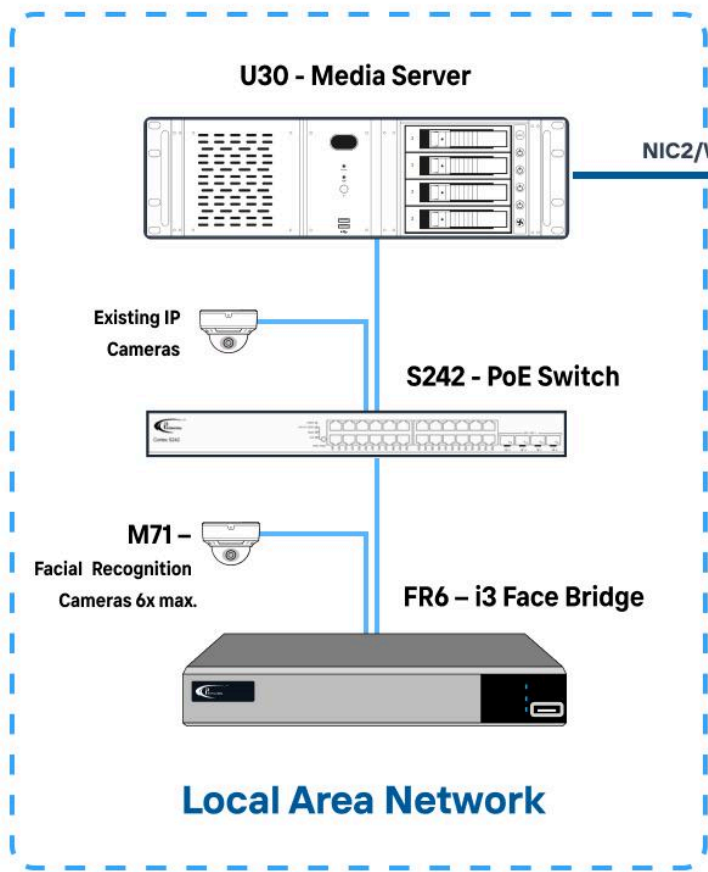
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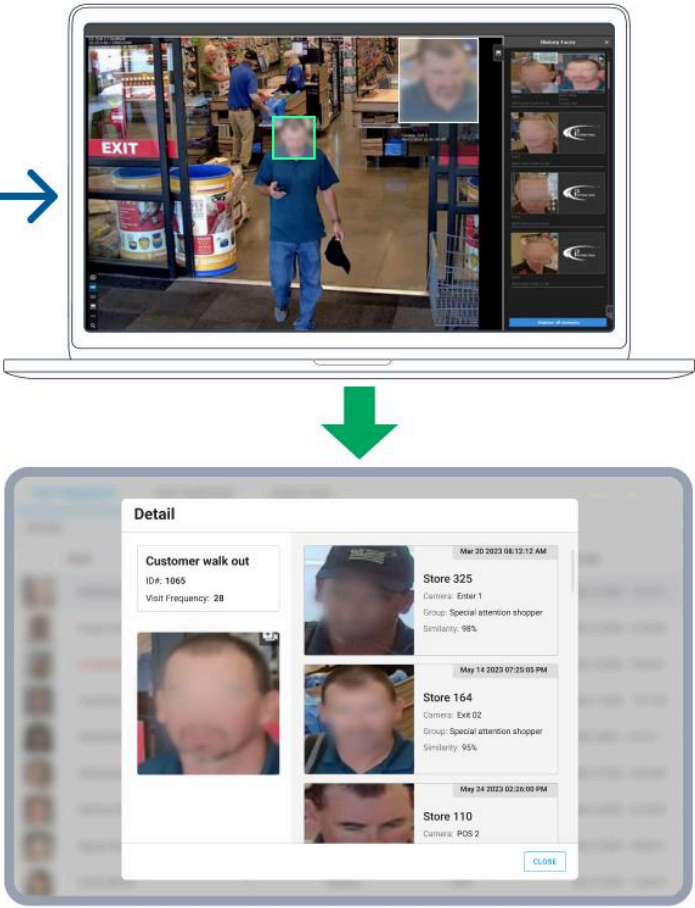
Future Directions

Looking ahead, Chris Vandiver plans to enable real-time alerts for store management and security teams when persons of interest enter the store, enhancing vigilance. The company is also considering using the i3Ai Sentry program to add a biometric element to employee timekeeping, reducing time fraud, and monitoring DSD (Direct Store Delivery) vendors to ensure they fulfill their contractual obligations.

Conclusion

i3Ai Sentry delivers an effective solution for the grocery industry. It helps reduce ORC, enhancing customer service, preventing losses, and supporting law enforcement efforts. i3Ai technology creates a safer environment and increases operational efficiency.

i3 International is a 35+ year-old family-owned and operated technology company. We provide affordable, integrated Ai solutions that deliver actionable business intelligence designed to change behavior in 4 key areas of your business: Loss Prevention, Safety, Customer Experience, and Operations. We leverage decades of expertise and cutting-edge technology to enhance your business outcomes.

About Chris Vandiver:

Chris Vandiver is currently the Director of Loss Prevention for Cosentino's Food Stores, overseeing the safety and security operations for their 31 locations in the Kansas City area. With 27 years at Cosentino's, Chris has worked in various retail loss prevention roles throughout his career, gaining valuable experience in risk management, asset protection, and team leadership.