4 Areas of Shopping Mall Management That Can Benefit from People Counting Systems
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As a shopping mall operator, your tenants, upper level management — even the local news — often come to you for the answer to the question, “How many people are in the mall?” People counting systems can provide you with an accurate answer.

Beyond just determining how large the crowd was for a sale weekend or a special event, people counting systems allow you to drill down into the data to examine traffic patterns and crowds in particular areas — data that can help you operate more efficiently, cost effectively, and in a manner that keeps your tenants and shoppers happier and more likely to return.

Here are four areas of shopping mall operations that can benefit from the data people counting systems provide:

- **Leasing Valuation**
- **Security Department**
- **Custodial and Maintenance Management**
- **Advertising and Promotional Activities**
1. Leasing Valuation

When you are showing available spaces to potential tenants, having hard data about foot traffic can support your lease offer. This data can help justify the price you are asking — or justify a higher price to lease a store near a prime location, popular entrance, or attraction versus a store in lower traffic areas of the mall.

You can also report the amount of traffic on a daily, monthly, or seasonal basis. Solid customer traffic data can show potential tenants their potential for success in the location, and you and your tenant can enter the deal with realistic, fact-based expectations regarding traffic.

Traffic data is also valuable information for you to provide to upper level management, giving them insight into high traffic areas to estimate lease values for different parts of the mall and how much revenue they can expect from tenants. Traffic data also shows low traffic areas — also valuable information for management tasked with making changes to maximize profits.
2. Security Department

People counting systems can also optimize your security department. The merchandise on display in shopping malls — as well as the amount of cash transactions that take place on a daily basis — are tempting to criminals. In addition, the high percentage of young female sales associates may make shopping malls a target. Having the proper number of security personnel, both inside and outside the mall, is vital. A security presence helps prevent theft, vandalism, and damage to mall property and helps keeps shoppers and store employees safe.

Busier times require more security to help control crowds and traffic. On the other hand, you don’t want to bring in more security than is needed during slow times, which would mean unnecessary labor costs — you need the proper ratio of security personnel to the amount of mall traffic.

People counting systems collect data that you can study over time to help plan for busy days, nights, weekends, and seasonal events. Furthermore, people counting systems can show you where people tend to congregate, which will help you determine where security personnel should patrol or be stationed.

As you continue to monitor mall traffic data over time, you can watch for changes in trends and adjust your staff accordingly, always ensuring you have adequate, but not unneeded, security personnel on the job.
3. Custodial and Maintenance Department Management

With a clear picture of how many patrons are entering your shopping mall, you can also make more informed business decisions regarding your custodial and maintenance departments.

Busy days and times will require more staff on hand for tasks such as cleaning, emptying trash cans, and attending to restrooms. In addition, more custodial staff at work will mean a greater need for supplies like industrial cleaners, hand soap, and paper products. Your people counting system can provide insights into the traffic you can expect based on historical data and help you make good business decisions when it comes to staffing and stocking the right amount of inventory. This will contribute to a good customer experience — and happier tenants — creating a clean, comfortable environment for shoppers.

Understanding traffic patterns can also allow you to make better decisions when it comes to scheduling cleaning and inspections, which are better handled during slower traffic times so they don’t disrupt shoppers’ access to particular areas.

Maintenance staff, too, can be scheduled based on historic data from your people counting system — making sure you have enough people on hand to deal with emergencies such as an electrical failure or malfunctioning elevator, but planning routine maintenance for slower times. Data from your people counting system allows you to schedule maintenance when it makes the most sense.
Foot traffic data is also valuable as you prepare your maintenance budget. Understanding the most popular entrances and where people tend to congregate, can help you make more accurate predictions about where maintenance repairs and renovations will be required. When you take your budget to upper level management, your people counting systems will provide you with the data to back up your requests and management will have the justification they need to allocate funds.

4. Advertising and Promotional Activities

People counters can also help when it comes to your advertising and promotional activities. Two examples include helping you to determine the effectiveness of displays and to evaluate the ROI of special events.

Displays

Your shopping mall features a number of signs, product displays, kiosks, and other advertisements. Data from people counting systems can help you:

Select display locations
Areas with the heaviest foot traffic are good potential display locations. Data from your people counting system can take the guesswork out of determining the best place for advertisements. This data can also help you sell the space to an advertiser or get the most ROI for mall promotions such as letting people know they can purchase mall gift cards or join a mall walkers’ club.
**Determine conversion rates**
You can correlate the data from your people counting system with conversion rates based on sales or opt-ins to gauge the ROI of the campaign.

**Determine the most compelling display designs**
With a people counting system, you can gauge interest in a display by counting the number of people who walk up to it. This can help you determine what performs the best in your particular shopping mall — which is good information to share with advertisers. For mall displays, it will allow you to keep the most effective displays and pattern others after them.

You could also run two ad campaigns to compare results. Although there are other variables to be considered, you could set up two versions of an ad concurrently in two areas that get comparable foot traffic to see which ad gets more interest. Another option is to use the same location, but run the second ad for the same period of time on a different week. You could make this data a value-add to businesses that advertise with you.

**Special Events**

Shopping malls are great venues for special events, for example, welcoming the holiday shopping season with the arrival of Santa Claus, Easter egg hunts, veterans celebrations, charity fashion shows, and youth organization events. It’s important for you to know, however, which of these events have an acceptable ROI based on traffic numbers so you know which are worth investing in again. People counting system data will let you know not only how much foot traffic there was during the day of the event, but also specifically around the event venue itself.

If you are looking for event sponsorships, historic data on the success of the event or a similar event in the past can be a compelling selling point.

For outside promoters looking for a place to hold a book signing, performance, or a meet-and-greet with a celebrity, showing the amount of foot traffic they can expect based on historic data can tip the scale in your favor as the preferred location for the event.
Fact-Based Decisions

To stay competitive, it's necessary to base your decisions on data, not anecdotal information or intuition. People counting systems provide quantitative data that, when monitored over time or analyzed against sales or other data, can help you make smarter business decisions that will keep you operating more efficiently while providing a better customer experience.

About Traf-Sys

From our headquarters and data center in Pittsburgh, PA, Traf-Sys Inc. provides people counting systems, software and support to more than 7,000 locations. We offer a broad range of traffic counting solutions that deliver unparalleled accuracy and reliability. Our people counting solutions solve a variety of traffic monitoring challenges for all types of organizations, including some of the largest shopping centers, retail store chains, universities, libraries and casinos in the United States.

Whether you are trying to measure traffic to support project funding, optimize labor, determine advertising effectiveness, or increase conversion ratios, Traf-Sys provides the tools to leverage key metrics to improve the performance of your business. Our people counting solutions provide actionable information that helps organizations increase profitability and optimize operational efficiency by analyzing visitor traffic to make informed business decisions.

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