

# CASE STUDY

## CARD FACTORY



cardfactory

Position in the Organisation:

Head of Loss Prevention

Services Delivered:

Key Holding, Alarm Response, Property Inspections

**54 Minutes**

Average alarm response time

**550**

Inspections completed in 3 weeks

**705**

Locations mobilised in 2 weeks

**24/7**

Reassurance provided

**The greeting card industry plays a big part in the UK's employment numbers, economy and high street vitality. According to figures obtained from the Greeting Card Association (GCA), the public spends about £1.7 billion on greeting cards each year, buying more cards per person than any other nation.**

In a fiercely competitive retail environment, one retailer has carved out a dominant position in both brick-and-mortar and online retail operations – Card Factory. Founded in 1997, the company has developed quickly to become the UK's leading specialist retailer of greeting cards, dressings, and gifts, with an estate of over 1,000 operated stores throughout the UK and Ireland.

Card Factory's property portfolio spans various settings, from typical high street shops and open-air retail parks to stores within enclosed shopping centres. With a national

footprint, 9,400+ employees and ca. £450 million of revenue to protect, loss prevention and safety management are critical to maintaining Card Factory's business-as-usual state.

However, with the emergence of COVID-19, additional pressure was placed on Card Factory's security operations, with an unprecedented requirement for interim security from a provider it could trust. With store managers unable to hold keys and respond to alarm activations, in April 2020, Mitie's dedicated Mobile Response division was asked to step in and help.

Mitie was tasked with providing a combination of key holding, alarm response and property inspection services across a national portfolio of 705 Card Factory stores. This assignment required focused mobilisation support, the unbridled help of our mobile operations management team, and our network of local providers to **ramp up service in record time**. These services were required for two months, as non-essential retail could begin opening from 15th June 2020.

Mitie operates a **dedicated Mobile Services solution across the UK**, with a dedicated management team and highly trained, SIA licensed security officers. The team is strategically placed in some of the UK's largest population centres and is well-versed at performing large-scale mobilisations of this type. This capability provided Card Factory with the peace of mind that their directors were looking for and enabled Mitie to deliver against the project objectives from the get-go. With experience of conducting large-scale and fast-moving mobilisations, we knew how to avoid certain pitfalls that if neglected, could easily derail a project of this size and leave a client's estate vulnerable.

A **watertight Mobilisation Plan** was developed by Mitie's Regional Operations Director for the South, providing Card Factory with a central point of contact and oversight of milestones, timescales, and resources for the project. He also facilitated efficient internal communication between Mitie's branches and a network of local providers. The speed at which Mitie mobilised the required services enabled Card Factory to concentrate on other areas of concern during the COVID-19 period. Open dialogue was maintained throughout the process via weekly and ad-hoc Microsoft Teams calls, which presented a unique situation of supporting a client Mitie had never met!

A significant challenge for Card Factory was the initial key collection process. However, with Mitie's national coverage, we provided a collection process at various locations around the country and thus ensured a seamless transition from Card Factory's original model. The same process was used following the announcement about the re-opening of non-essential retail, with Mitie able to work around a tight timetable to ensure the keys were back in their original locations. By owning the key return process, Mitie's operation enabled the Card Factory team to confirm that their employees and stores were ready to trade on time, all the time.

Card Factory required property inspections to ensure compliance with insurance guidelines concerning vacant properties. Through Mitie's reporting platform, Servicetrac, we provided Card Factory with real-time reports as and when inspections were completed, giving complete oversight of the status of Card Factory's estate, including the early detection of adverse events including water leakages. Given the challenges faced with re-opening an estate of this size and diversity, property-related issues needed to be dealt with swiftly and professionally.



The following quote from Card Factory's Head of Loss Prevention is a testament to the quality of our work:

*'Given the multiple challenges we faced in preparing for the COVID-19 shutdown, we needed a professional partner to work with us in maintaining the security of our properties nationally. In working with Mitie, we were supported every step of the way by a committed operational management team, from initial inception to project completion.'*

*Mitie provided a blended mix of mobile security solutions that not only delivered peace of mind but also kept us compliant with our insurance requirements. We were extremely happy with the service provided.'*

**Head of Loss Prevention, Card Factory**

