

# A Reasonable Suspicion Questionnaire Case Study

## How Maggie's Seafood Restaurant Recovered Its Money

Maggie Martin was miffed. One of her seven managers had just stolen an \$8,500 cash deposit from her restaurant's safe. So, she searched the internet for information about employee theft.

She found [www.TheftStopper.com](http://www.TheftStopper.com) and called us. During our first conversation with Maggie, she told us she wanted to give polygraph tests to all seven managers, since that seemed "the only fair way to do it."

We explained that the law requires her to provide a basis for "reasonable suspicion" to believe that every manager she wanted to polygraph was the one who probably stole the missing money. We further explained that, based on our experience, if each manager completed a Reasonable Suspicion Questionnaire™, two or three of them would likely qualify as reasonable suspects. And the thief would almost certainly be among those two or three.

Maggie made her purchase and we e-mailed her the RSQ™, along with complete instructions. Maggie had all seven managers fill out an RSQ and then returned the completed questionnaires to us via overnight mail.

RSQ responses of the seven managers suggested that two of them were reasonable suspects to have stolen the deposit:

1. Amy was the newest manager. Some respondents suspected her just because she was new and they didn't know her very well. One claimed he saw Amy steal a waitress's tip.
2. Edward's co-workers gave some interesting answers to this RSQ question: *"Have any of the suspects said anything or done anything before or after this theft that make you think they might have committed this theft?"* One manager claimed *"Edward is a highroller wanna-be."* Another said Edward *"brags about attending coke parties of the non-cola kind."* A third reported that Edward *"just leased a new Jaguar. Instead of parking his new car in Maggie's free parking lot, he's been parking it in a pay lot three blocks away."* Finally, a fourth said *"It was Edward who discovered the money missing from the safe on Monday morning. Before calling Maggie and reporting the deposit missing, he left the restaurant without telling anyone and stayed gone for a good while."*

Surprisingly, Edward agreed to take a polygraph test about the missing deposit. He flunked the test and eventually confessed to stealing the missing \$8,500.

Why did his co-workers so readily offer information about Edward - one of their own? Maggie's Seafood Restaurant has a profit-sharing plan that includes every management employee. The managers realized that some of the \$8,500 loss would be coming out of their own pockets.

The Reasonable Suspicion Questionnaire™ gathers information from all the suspects. This information becomes pieces of the theft puzzle. The investigator puts the puzzle pieces together to solve the employee theft case. A polygraph test is used to verify the investigator's conclusion, if necessary.