

In the face of a spate of vehicle thefts in France, Renault turned to SBD - relying on the company's skill and experience to help them improve their key programming processes to deter the thieves.

The issue

While Renault was regarded as a technical leader for being one of the first manufacturers to use key cards as an alternative to the more traditional mechanical key and transponder method of starting the car, the increased level of theft amongst its best-selling Megane range of domestic models was cause for concern.

Their main issue was that thieves were programming new Renault key cards directly to vehicles and driving them away because there was no mechanical ignition lock to defeat. Recognising that they needed to improve the process for key coding, management, and replacement, Renault designed a new process and asked SBD to review whether it would adequately address the problem.

The approach

Assessing Renault's proposed key and component management process alongside those used by other vehicle manufacturers, SBD provided a comprehensive risk analysis, identified areas where the process could be improved and how to achieve the required performance. The target was to match or exceed the security offered by the Volkswagen group. This involved analysing the procedures to obtain a key card and verification code as well as the potential for thieves to bypass the whole process, or abuse the tools and systems available to authorised dealers.

The recommendation

SBD advised Renault on the strengths and weaknesses of their system, including all aspects of the process, from the supply of key-cards, the hardware and associated access restrictions required to program the key cards to individual vehicles.

While recognising that a realistic and cost-effective balance would need to be achieved between security and convenience, SBD also advised Renault that certain aspects of the new process did not increase the defence against thieves. In addition, some changes could be made that would improve the security without incurring significant additional costs.

The outcome

Immediately after implementing the process approved by SBD, a significant drop in the theft of Renault models was noted. Renault has observed increased key card traceability and all programming events are recorded against each vehicle on a central database.

Renault has achieved their target and continues to work with SBD to improve and maintain the integrity of the system as thieves develop new attacks.

To learn more about how SBD can help you with your business challenges contact Kavitha Kuppaswamy at kkuppaswamy@sbd.co.uk