

White Paper

Meeting The EPC RFID Mandates: Where To Begin

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in smart labels. Then you have to decide whether you are simply going to encode the tags or also include printed data; and then determine if you're going to apply them by hand or with automated equipment. There are systems available that will encode tags, print text and bar codes on the smart labels, and apply them in one integrated operation.

Decisions also have to be made concerning when and where in the packaging/identification process to generate the Electronic Product Code serial number which is the key to this entire undertaking. The serial number allows each case and pallet to be uniquely identified. Conveniently, many standard label formatting and printing software packages are being upgraded to add the functionality to encode RFID tags. This software often resides between the label printer-encoder or printer-encoder-applicator and enterprise software applications.

The good news is that you and your RFID team do not have to come up with all of the answers to meeting the daunting challenge of implementation yourself. There are numerous companies with automatic identification experience who you can consult with to help guide your effort.

The key is for your RFID team to come together with clear goals that will help foster RFID pilot projects and further testing that will put you on the proper path to complete integration. It can be a challenging path, with many twists and turns, but it's a path that promises to lead to logistical and economic improvements throughout the supply chain.

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Ann Marie Phaneuf began her career with Weber Marking Systems in 1987 as a technical support specialist. She subsequently held positions as national accounts coordinator and product manager for labeling systems until she was appointed to marketing director in 1997. Ms. Phaneuf is intimately involved with the development of higher-technology labeling and coding systems. She is past chairperson of the Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG) Automatic Identification Bar Code Symbology Work Group, a two-term member of the Automatic Identification Manufacturers (AIM) board of directors, and chairperson of numerous AIM work groups and committees. Ms. Phaneuf is a frequent speaker and editorial contributor on the subject of product identification, including labeling, radio frequency identification (RFID), laser marking, and ink jet coding.



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