

Anticipating an imminent event can always be anxiety provoking, especially if you feel there is nothing you can do to prepare. We've assembled this RFID "to do" list based on our RFID implementation experience with current customers. Some of the action items may best be accomplished with the help of a consultant or technology vendor. Having these items completed before your RFID implementation will contribute to a smoother rollout.

Establish objectives and internal support

- **Outline and record clearly understood objectives and potential benefits of RFID within your enterprise.** You can do this by examining your current data collection application and asking the following questions: Is bar code failing? Do I need to collect data at a higher volume? Can I reduce labor expenses if my system didn't require direct line of sight to collect data? Is there an alternative approach or technology, such as bar code, that can better solve the business problem? It is important to know what RFID can and can't do and gauge your expectations accordingly.
- **Secure executive sponsorship, participation from warehouse and IT representatives and empowerment of the RFID Implementation Team.** The flood of ERP implementations prior to Y2K taught everyone the importance of establishing full support and participation in the project at every level of the company. Begin by recruiting a cross-functional RFID task team.

Evaluate the physical environment

- **Assess your existing infrastructure for RFID readiness.** A certain level of requisite infrastructure is needed to support an RFID system including: availability of power, use of a wireless local area network, redundancy of systems, host application readiness, data communications infrastructure and capacity, and network security. Gather documentation as to what extent this infrastructure currently exists. This may include blue prints of the facility and existing wireless site survey reports.
- **Locate sources of possible RF interference.** Common sources of interference may include but are not limited to microwave ovens, cordless telephones and other RF systems. Attempts are made during a site analysis to identify and accommodate these types of devices; however devices not in operation during the analysis may not be detected during the analysis process. Record the location of these types of devices and be prepared to do periodic checks for the introduction of new devices or a change in the location of existing devices. It is important to note that the operation or shielding of this type of equipment may invalidate the recommendations made in the site analysis report or completely prohibit use of RF equipment.
- **Determine the current products that will be tagged.** Radio frequency behaves differently around different materials. No single RFID tag will work on paper, wood, glass, metal or liquids. Assemble a complete, descriptive list of what you plan on tagging.

Documentation of current business processes

- **Document existing product storage locations and movements.** Your technology provider or consultant will provide recommendations for reader placement outlined in the RFID site implementation plan. These guidelines will be based largely on existing product and material flow patterns and layouts. Determine whether or not even minor changes to product storage or material handling are being planned or are a regular occurrence due to the seasonality of the manufacturing, warehousing or distribution process. Make the implementation team aware. These changes may not only invalidate the recommendations made in the site analysis report, but also adversely affect the performance of the system. It may then become necessary to purchase a new Site Analysis and, to either move installed equipment or to purchase additional RFID equipment.
- **Record predicted processes for movement of tagged items.** The overall accuracy of the RFID reader system can be positively or negatively impacted by the processes used to move tagged items through the facility. To limit the degradation of RFID performance, attempt to predict the following for your environment: the number of items being moved, the speed and orientation of the items moving passed the readers, the desired amount of tag data being read or written, and application software and database response times.

Locate sources of trusted information

- **You can never be too prepared.** The following are Web-based resources of RFID information.

AIM – www.rfid.org
ANSI – www.ansi.org
EPCglobal – www.epcglobalus.org
RFID Journal – www.rfidjournal.com
RFID Solutions Online – www.rfidsolutionsonline.com
UCC – www.uc-council.org

For more information, please contact us at:

Intermec Technologies Corporation

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Everett, WA 98203
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www.intermec.com/rfid

U.S. Professional Services Group: 1-800-755-5505 Option 4

U.S. service and technical support: 1-800-755-5505

Canadian service and technical support: 1-800-668-7043

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