

# Avery Debuts RFID Applicators

The leading maker of self-adhesive labels unveils two smart label applicators, including one that also encodes and prints.

By Jonathan Collins

Sept. 6, 2004—Avery Dennison is preparing to sell two new RFID label applicators for deployment at customer sites. Last week, the company's [Avery Dennison Retail Information Services \(RIS\)](#) division launched a service bureau that lets companies outsource smart label encoding and delivery so that they need only apply the labels to the shipments (see [Service Bureaus for Smart Labels](#)). Now, Avery Dennison Printer Systems, a division of Avery Dennison RIS, is introducing a machine that encodes, prints and applies smart labels, as well as a separate label applicator for companies that will buy smart labels that are already printed and encoded.

“There will be equal demand both for encode, print and apply and for apply-only machines, just as in the bar code label market. Companies labeling, say, 50 pallets a day will probably encode, print and apply themselves, while a company with 5 million will be more likely let a service bureau encode the labels and then just apply them, but it will be a mix of apply only and encode and apply,” says Mark Hansinger, marketing director for Avery Dennison Printer Systems.

To create the new encode, print and apply RFID labeling system, Avery took its ALX 924 printer-applicator and added an EPC-compliant RFID reader. The company says it has been developing custom adaptations of its existing ALX 924 bar code printer and label applicator, to include RFID capabilities for specific customer deployments, but the company decided to now sell the RFID version of the unit as a standard product. The unit has a single RFID reader and one or two antennas depending on the configuration and the tags being used. According to the company, the machine can print, encode and apply EPC Class 1 labels at a throughput of between 3 and 10 inches per second, down from the 16 inches per second when the same unit just prints a bar codes and applies labels.

“However, when the tags' chips move from 64-bit to 96-bit, we'll be able to run the machines closer to bar code speeds,” says Hansinger, who explains that the 96-bit tags will be more robust and less prone to failure, which slows throughput. The RFID-enabled ALX 924 is priced at \$10,995—approximately \$1,000 more than the non-RFID version of the ALX 924—and is available now.

The company is currently trialing a number of apply-only machines, each based on a different existing barcode label printer-applicator—the ALX 230, the ALX 350 or the ALX 720—and various configurations for different label sizes. The company says that it is still working with customers to determine which existing printer-applicator will be best suited as its RFID label applicator offering. The unit will have a throughput of between 12 to 20 inches per second. Pricing has yet to be set for the machine, which should be available sometime during the fourth quarter of this year.

Avery Dennison Printer System says it has yet to decide which RFID reader to use in either of its RFID-enabled units, although the company is currently testing EPC-compliant readers from AWID and SAMsys. “We are still waiting for reader technology to stabilize before selecting one or the other,” says

Hansinger.

Avery's two new machines join the company's RFID bench top printer-encoder, which can print bar codes on labels with embedded UHF Class 1 and Class 0 RFID tags and is now available for \$5,995 (see [Avery Dennison Steps Up](#)).

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