

An Award for Leadership in RFID

Why you should enter our award competition before the deadline on Wednesday.

By Mark Roberti

Jan. 29, 2007—We have received a number of good entries to our RFID Journal Awards, but not as many as I'd like, given how many interesting projects are out there. I'm not totally surprised. Many end users are reluctant to talk publicly about their projects because they believe there is no benefit to doing so. One of the main reasons we created the award, in fact, was to encourage end users to come forward.

So why should you come forward? Several reasons. If you've done a successful implementation of any kind with radio frequency identification technology—whether passive HF or UHF, active, real-time-locating systems and so on—you deserve recognition for being a leader in an emerging field. Your company deserves recognition for being a leader and using technology to improve its operations. And, I would bet, your technology partners deserve recognition for working with you to solve a real business problem.

Those companies that are committed to using Electronic Product Code (EPC) technologies in the open supply chain have even more reason to submit. They are trying to get supply-chain partners to go along with the concept of tagging millions of boxes in the supply chain, and they need to show that doing so can deliver real benefits.

In most cases, talking about a project doesn't compromise any competitive advantage. Such advantage comes from execution, not technology. Some early adopters understand this, and they also understand that they need to drive adoption by sharing their successes. That brings down prices for hardware.

Procter & Gamble/Gillette, Kimberly-Clark, Boeing and others presented the results of their RFID projects at RFID Journal LIVE! last year, and more companies will do the same this year. A few years ago, Simon Langford of Wal-Mart took me into the back of a store and showed me exactly how the retailer was using RFID. Any competitor could read the article I wrote about what Wal-Mart was doing. But Wal-Mart realized it had more to gain from everyone using RFID than to lose from a competitor knowing how it tracked tagged cases.

Some people might ask why we haven't created an award for systems integrators and hardware and software providers. The answer is, we'd love to recognize the RFID technology and service providers for the great work they are doing, but we haven't found a credible way to do that. Perhaps there are research organizations or consulting firms that we could work with to fairly and objectively evaluate the best middleware, the best tag, the best reader and so on. But until we find a way that is credible, we'll continue to recognize end users who can demonstrate how they are using RFID today. And by doing so we will likely shine a light on the technology hardware, software and service providers that helped them achieve real business benefits.

So I ask all of our readers to participate in our awards program. The deadline is 5:00 pm EST on Wednesday, Jan. 31. Go to <http://www.rfidjournalawards.com/> and download the entry form today.

Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal. If you would like to comment on this article, click on the link below.

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