

RFID Gathers Momentum in Europe

Airbus, Metro and others are moving forward to deploy RFID on a large scale, while many companies across Europe are finding vast benefits in a wide variety of applications.

By Mark Roberti

Oct. 22, 2007—A couple of years ago, we ran a cover story in *RFID Journal* magazine entitled "[Europe Finds Its Own Path to ROI](#)." Basically, the article said European companies were not mandating that their supply-chain partners use radio frequency identification. Instead, we noted, they were moving forward in a more collaborative manner. Now, that approach is beginning to pay off.

[Metro](#) has taken the lead in this regard. For three years, the Dusseldorf-based retailer worked with large suppliers to assess the benefits of using RFID based on the Electronic Product Code (EPC) standard developed by [EPCglobal](#). The first-generation EPC air-interface protocol was a bust, and just didn't work well in Europe. But Metro didn't quit there. Instead, the forward-thinking company continued its pilots, testing and analysis, and now Metro is rolling out the technology in a big way, to its own benefit and to the benefit of its suppliers.

[Airbus](#) took a similar approach. Three years ago, [Boeing](#) and Airbus announced plans to work together to ensure there would be one single RFID standard in the aerospace industry. The companies both appeared at [RFID Journal LIVE! 2005](#) to explain the benefits of creating such a standard. But while Boeing focused largely on the benefits of parts marking, Airbus has taken an enterprise-wide approach to RFID and has spent several years examining the benefits of using RFID in its logistics, manufacturing and other operations.

I'm excited that both Metro and Airbus will be speaking again at [RFID Journal LIVE! Europe 2007](#), to be held in Amsterdam on Nov. 6-8. Attendees will benefit from hearing specifically how and where RFID is delivering benefits in retail and manufacturing, and large and small companies will gain insight into where RFID can be applied to improve business processes.

RELATED_ARTICLES Our European conference is not just about EPC technologies, however, nor is it just about retail and manufacturing. The event covers a wide range of applications of a variety of RFID technologies. [DHL](#), for instance, will explain the benefits of using RFID-based sensors to better monitor the temperature of pharmaceutical drugs. The Jewelry Store will explain how it is using passive HF tags to reduce risk in the jewelry supply chain. [Vaicama](#), a Portuguese manufacturer of wooden doors, will discuss the benefits of using passive UHF tags to track work-in-process. The Danish military will reveal how it is employing active RFID technology to better manage shipments to NATO operations. And that's only a small sampling of the European end users that will speak objectively about what RFID is doing for their businesses today.

RFID Journal LIVE! Europe will be an exciting event, because there is so much going on in Europe right now. More companies are using the technology in more applications than perhaps anywhere else in the world. This is the one place where European companies can learn how they, too, can achieve substantial benefits from RFID—and I say that not just because my company is running the conference, but because there simply

is no other event where so many end users and experts have chosen to share what they've learned.

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