

RFID Help for Companies Using SAP

Acsis, a vendor of supply-chain optimization software for SAP users, has launched RFID consulting services.

By Jonathan Collins

Aug. 22, 2003 - Ever since Wal-Mart announced that its top 100 suppliers would have to put RFID tags on pallets and cases shipped to the retailer's distribution centers and stores by January 2005, vendors have been devising new offerings to help the suppliers comply. This week, Acsis, a supply-chain systems specialist based in Marlton, N.J., launched an RFID consulting program to help Wal-Mart suppliers running SAP software.

"We believe at least 50 and probably as many as 70 of the largest consumer goods companies in that top 100 Wal-Mart suppliers run SAP," says Steve Brown, VP of business development at Acsis.

To target those companies, Acsis created a consulting program consisting of three separate, but related services. For the Product Readiness component, Acsis will study the configuration of a company's cases and pallets, the composition of its products and the type of packaging materials used. It will recommend the best type of tags to use and the best location for the tags to maximize the chance of getting an accurate reading of all cases on a pallet.

The second component is called Shipping Environment Readiness. Acsis will examine a company's business processes and environmental factors that can affect RFID systems installed in factory, warehouse and distribution shipping points. Acsis will recommend how best to mark, package, read and tag materials prior to shipment.

This component will review the impact of RFID on the SAP infrastructure and overall functionality, providing an analysis on the effect RFID technology may impose on other SAP supply-chain initiatives. Acsis will offer best practices on the integration of RFID into the enterprise's SAP system and can conduct the full-scale implementation.

For the ERP Readiness component, Acsis consultants will review the impact of RFID on a company's existing SAP infrastructure and the effect an RFID deployment might have on other SAP supply chain initiatives. Acsis will also offer best practices on the integration of RFID into a company's SAP system. Brown says he hopes customers will turn to Acsis when they need systems integrators for any following pilot or full-scale RFID rollout.

Companies can buy each offering separately, but the first two fit naturally, according to Brown. "Customers may wish to manage their own ERP integration, but we believe there is value in taking the entire turnkey solution," says Brown.

Acsis expects to charge around \$100,000 for all three of its consultation offerings, including a small pilot deployment. Brown says the company has worked with a number of RFID equipment vendors in the past, but

expects to recommend technology from its current partners—[Alien Technology](#), [Intermec Technologies](#) and [Matrics](#)—for most deployments. "The high frequency and EPC-compliant nature of these companies' technologies makes their offerings stand out," says Brown.

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