

Where RFID Is Happening

From March 29 to March 31, experts in the forefront of RFID adoption will discuss all the issues—cost of compliance, data integration, standards, privacy and more—at *RFID Journal's* executive conference in Chicago.

By Mark Roberti

Jan. 26, 2004—What a difference a year makes. As we prepared for our first RFID Journal Live! executive conference in June 2003, only a small group of thought-leaders were focused on RFID and most of the speakers we invited talked about the theoretical benefits of using RFID in open supply chains. Now, everyone seems to be concentrating on RFID. And a big topic at this year's event, which will be held at the Chicago Hilton from March 29 to 31, will be how to meet looming mandates and achieve internal benefits.

The interest in RFID has become intense, and many business executives have serious concerns. Those in retailing have to keep pace with Wal-Mart, Tesco and Metro. Suppliers have to find ways to meet RFID tagging requirements while off-setting the cost of the tags. As always, *RFID Journal* is striving to meet those needs. Our opening keynote address will be delivered by Michael Raynor, co-author of the best-selling book *The Innovator's Solution*. RFID is a disruptive technology, and Raynor will talk about how leading companies have embraced disruptive technologies to gain an edge on the competition.

Mike Di Yeso, chief operating officer of the Uniform Code Council, will explain the role of EPCglobal, the UCC-EAN joint venture commercializing Electronic Product Code technology. Mauro Benetton, senior VP of marketing at The Benetton Group, will talk about his company's pioneering use of RFID and why he decided to launch his own RFID systems integration company. Ed Coyle, chief of the U.S. Department of Defense's Automatic Identification Technology Office, will explain the military's RFID requirements and how it plans to use the technology to build a 21st century supply chain.

In keeping with this year's theme—From Promise to Reality—we'll have executives from companies that have deployed the technology present real case studies. Gerd Wolfram, director of IT strategy at Metro AG, will reveal what Germany's largest retailer learned from its Future Store project and how that will be applied as it rolls out an RFID system this year. David Mezzanotte, president of CHEP USA, and Steve Van Fleet, smart packaging project team leader at International Paper, will explain how their companies implemented RFID systems successfully.

And speakers from Accenture, A.T. Kearney, ePC Group, Forrester Research, Philip Morris, Procter & Gamble, Unilever and other companies will address a wide range of issues, including the cost of complying with RFID mandates, cultural change, integration challenges and privacy.

As with the *RFID Journal* Web site and print magazine, there will be no hype at the conference. We will deliver value to the audience and live up to the reputation we've built for providing objective, high-quality information. During the final session of last year's conference, a gentleman who had been instrumental in the establishment of the bar code 25 years ago stood up and said he'd been going to events for 50 years, but this was the best one he'd ever been to. This year's event will be even better. I hope to see you there.

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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