

TIBCO Integrates Alien Readers

The company that built the software infrastructure for NASDAQ wants to do the same for companies building high-volume RFID systems.

Feb. 17, 2004—[TIBCO Software](#), a Palo Alto, Calif.-based business integration software company, has announced that it is integrating its middleware platform with RFID readers produced by [Alien Technology](#), a Morgan Hill, Calif.-based maker of Class 1 Electronic Product Code tags and readers. TIBCO and Alien were brought together by Procter & Gamble, a mutual customer that wanted to take RFID data from Alien readers, filter it and route it to its warehouse management, inventory management and other enterprise applications.

TIBCO created a software "adapter" that converts the data into the formats needed for applications from SAP and other enterprise resource planning vendors. The two companies demonstrated the RFID solution at a gathering of Wal-Mart's top 100 suppliers in November 2003 and will release it in the first half of 2004.

"We can take scans off the Alien readers and contextualize the data," says Tom Laffey, vice president at TIBCO Software. "You can't just take the 96 bits of data from the tag and pass it to the application."

If a pallet about to be shipped is missing two cases, that information has to trigger several sophisticated events, Laffey says. Employees need to be alerted to the problem. Inventory needs to be checked to see if the items are in stock. Messages need to be conveyed to employees in the warehouse to bring out the cases. TIBCO's middleware offers companies a platform for creating these capabilities.

Laffey says TIBCO is well placed to win a share of the increasingly crowded market for RFID market because of its experience supplying software for the NASDAQ stock trading system. "We have overcome the issues related to building a high-volume transactional system," he says, referring to TIBCO's success in creating a coherent infrastructure for NASDAQ that can handle billions of real-time transaction and route them to the proper applications. "As RFID rollouts expand, [companies] will encounter similar problems of infrastructure, scale and speed."

TIBCO joined [EPCglobal](#), the nonprofit organization commercializing EPC technology, in April 2003. Laffey is a technology board member and chair for the Software Action Group of EPCglobal's EPC Information Service.

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