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Event Spotlights the Business Benefits of RFID

It wasn't too long ago that many speakers at *RFID Journal*LIVE!, our annual conference and exhibition, talked about pilots or small rollouts. This year, many speakers described sophisticated projects that are delivering benefits in myriad ways. It was fitting that the event opened with a

keynote address by Carlo Nizam, head of value chain visibility and RFID at Airbus. The airplane manufacturer has many RFID projects delivering value today and has plans for future projects—all integrated into a carefully thought-out enterprise approach to RFID that will deliver increasing value.

Nizam started out by explaining the need to continuously improve operations and reduce costs. “To improve a process, we need to understand what’s working and what’s not working: measurability,” he told the audience. “But to actually measure something requires information, and that’s what we call visibility. We can’t improve what we can’t measure, and we can’t measure what we can’t see or what we don’t know. So visibility is the prerequisite for all process improvements and therefore a prerequisite for business savings.”



Nizam said RFID enables quick wins by automating the collection of data, but it also provides the visibility that enables the company to change and improve processes. “The level of measurability actually determines the maximum level of savings,” he said. “If you can only measure so much and see so much, you can only save so much. If you can increase what you can see and measure, you can increase what you can save. RFID is a very promising enabler to achieve that.”

Nizam added that the ultimate goal is “real-time, automated, accurate visibility,” and RFID is one of the key technologies enabling that. (To watch a video of Nizam’s presentation, [click here.](#))

Many other speakers described projects that, while not as extensive as Airbus' RFID program, were aimed at achieving benefits through the visibility and measurability that RFID provides. And many of the attendees understood RFID's potential to deliver significant benefits. Some came with photos of their facilities or items they wanted to track, and targeted specific exhibitors they thought could meet their needs.

Just about all the exhibitors I spoke to told me the same thing. The end users who came to their booths were well informed and serious about using RFID to deliver specific business benefits (as opposed to simply trying to learn where RFID might help them). That's no surprise. In this economy, no businessperson will travel to an RFID event if he or she isn't serious about deploying RFID.

We had about the same number of attendees as last year—2,500—but more of them were end users and fewer people representing exhibitors. Attendees hailed from 46 countries and from all major industries.

The exhibit hall was a little smaller than last year's, because some vendors had gone under and others chose to share a booth with larger partners, such as Microsoft and Motorola. But this year, we saw the emergence of more software solutions that leverage RFID data to deliver benefits to specific vertical industries. Both Motorola, our cornerstone sponsor, and Microsoft, our signature sponsor, hosted panels with partners that have created targeted solutions.

Many exhibitors told me their business is picking up, indicating that companies that had put projects on hold last year to conserve capital are now opening their wallets, reflecting greater optimism about the global economy. It's hard to say whether RFID is on the cusp of broad adoption—my sense is that in some vertical industries, it's much closer than in others—but clearly, our readers and event attendees understand what the technology can do for their businesses. As

more of them deploy and speak about their successful projects, other companies will gain confidence in the technology and begin to see the value of the visibility and measurability RFID provides.

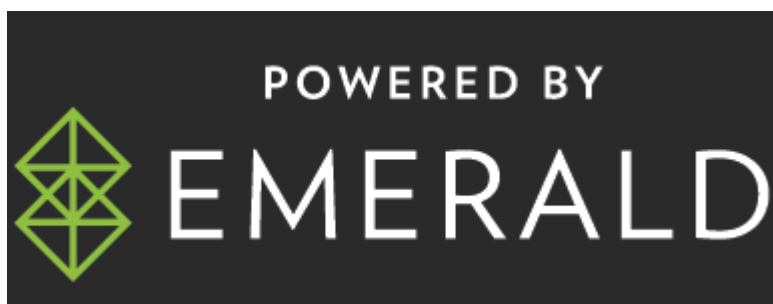
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