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It's All About the Problem

On May 4, Geoffrey Moore, best-selling author of *Crossing the Chasm* and *Inside the Tornado*, discussed the technology adoption life cycle and how it applies to RFID in a one-hour webinar hosted by *RFID Journal*. The technology life cycle was described in "The (RFID) World According to Moore," in our March/April issue. If you missed the webinar, you'll find a recording in our video library. Here's a brief excerpt focused

on issues that affect adoption for both RFID solution providers and potential end users.

How should vendors find—and address—the people for whom the status quo is unacceptable?



Geoffrey
Moore

You have to talk to your customers and find a problem that is truly compelling for that industry. Build the message around the problem, not around RFID. Eighty percent of the messaging is you describing the problem and why existing technologies have not been able to solve them and why this new technology called RFID should be able to solve them. Then the last 20 percent of your messaging is “here’s how we would go about it.” If you express an understanding of the problem, it resonates with businesspeople.

RFID went through a rough period after it didn’t live up to the early hype. Now, some vendors feel that if they don’t call the technology “RFID,” they can avoid any negative associations.

It’s a mistake to abandon the category name once it has become known, just because the category has fallen into disrepute. It is easier on everyone if you rehabilitate the category because, frankly, having the name being known is a much harder problem to solve than having the name being respected. As our politicians and sports heroes have shown us over and over, you can fall into the ditch and pull yourself out. We still know the names of these people and they get reelected or re-

anointed.

RFID vendors often attack another company's technology. The result is pragmatists think RFID is not ready for adoption.

If you are in the middle of a tornado [a period of rapid growth], then knocking your competitor works. Prior to the tornado, it slows adoption for everyone, and everyone loses. A much better tactic is to say this is a rich and wonderful technology with lots of great applications. You pick an application where your competitor is good and that you don't want to go after and you say, "Those guys are great for that application, but we're great at this application."

A few early adopters mandated the use of RFID for their suppliers long before there were complete solutions available. How do we recover from those failed mandates?

You can do that by finding high-value applications in the sectors where these mandates occurred. Then go back to crawl, walk, run.



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