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Making Informed Decisions

As companies plan their budgets, they look at a variety of projects to determine which will deliver the most benefits. They also look at what's happening in their markets—whether sales are rising or falling—and at what other companies are investing in. This is particularly true with emerging technologies.

If all of your competitors are investing in a technology, such as radio frequency identification, you don't want to be left behind. And if they're not, you might not want to be too far out in front.



To help you make informed decisions, we've identified the people, companies and organizations, and technology innovations that are most likely to influence RFID adoption in a wide range of industries—aerospace, consumer packaged goods, defense, finance, health care, logistics, pharmaceuticals and telecommunications. Sam's Club CEO Doug McMillon, for instance, has embraced an aggressive tagging initiative that could push many suppliers to adopt RFID. At the same time, the European Commission may soon issue privacy guidelines that could slow adoption, particularly in the retail sector.

It's unlikely that any one technology or technology company will produce a breakthrough that will transform the RFID market or propel adoption overnight. But we look at technologies that could lower the cost of deployment or increase the utility of RFID systems. And there are technologies, such as printed electronics, that offer a path to greater adoption by fundamentally changing the cost-benefit equation—that is, lowering the cost of tagging and, therefore, making it easier to achieve a return on investment.

One area in which advancements could drive adoption is sensor technologies—both cold-chain sensors and sensor networks are on our watch list. The packaged-food industry, as we report in

this issue's Vertical Focus, is eager to use RFID tags with sensors to monitor perishable foods. Already, Smith Brothers Farms, which wasn't under a retailer RFID-tagging mandate, decided to employ temperature sensors to optimize the shelf life of its milk. And the Auto-ID Lab Korea is developing an EPC sensor network to open up new business opportunities and services.

RFID is evolving rapidly, and advancements in hardware, software and applications are being introduced every day. One such innovation that could drive adoption in the pharmaceutical, high-end apparel and other markets is unclonable tags, which could enable companies to use RFID to reduce counterfeiting. End users have their own ideas about the innovations they'd like to see, and some shared with us the things that top their wish lists.

Anything can happen in the RFID market—and it probably will. You can rely on RFID Journal to tell you about it and what it means for your company and the future of RFID adoption.



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