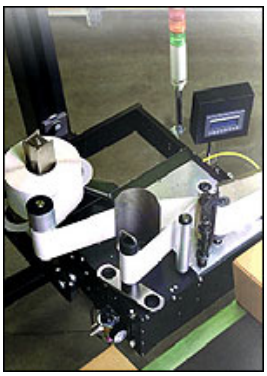
Paragon Adds Label Encoder

Paragon Labeling Systems, a maker of systems that print and apply labels to products, cartons, cases and pallets, has released a new modular system, the PLS-430, that automatically encodes and applies EPC-compliant smart labels.



Paragon's PLS-430

The system can be configured with various print engines and applicator modules depending on the needs of the user. For example, a company can use the system to create one kind of label for crates that includes any necessary routing or contents information, or use it to create another kind label for products that will be for sale on stores shelves.

The PLS-430 system is designed to be flexible. With the imminent changes in RFID standards, users will be able to update their systems to meet protocol changes or technological upgrades. Companies with the PLS-430, which comes with an Encode & Apply module, can migrate to Print, Encode & Apply as print engines become more available to go with the system. The current system will encode Class 0 and Class 1 tags. When further standards, such as Generation 2, reach the market, support can be added through firmware upgrades.

Another feature of the Encode & Apply system is the "Bad Tag Disposal" function. This function ensures that unverifiable RFID tags are not applied to boxes. While label-applicators from some competing vendors offer a similar feature (see Accu-Sort Devises Labeler and Markem Makes Smart Labeler), Paragon's VP of sales and marketing, Craig Blonigen, says that many other automated tagging systems apply encoded tags to boxes, then send the boxes on to be verified separately. When

the reader is unable to verify a tag, a company employee must come find the failed tag and box. In contrast, the Paragon system verifies each tag, encodes it and then reverifies it before releasing the tag to be adhered to a product or crate. In this way, if the system determines it cannot reverify a tag, the tag is not released from the tag roll and is not applied to anything.

The Paragon labeler is designed small enough to allow the necessary movement of crates and pallets in tight spaces on conveyors. The machine is about 28 inches wide by 14 inches deep and 26 inches tall. The machine can encode and apply about 60 tags per minute, according to Blonigen. The system was first presented on June 15 at East Pack (a Northeast packaging show) opening in New York City. Blonigen says his company is scheduled to begin pilot programs with several Wal-Mart top 100 suppliers. The program's goal is to allow these suppliers to finalize testing and planning for their RFID labeling systems to come into compliance with the Wal-Mart, DOD and other initiatives. The pilots allow the suppliers to simulate "real life" experience and to predict results when deploying system wide.

According to Blonigen, the PLS430 is planned for commercial release in September. The system, depending on configuration, is expected to cost between $16,000 and $18,000.

Paragon Labeling Systems, a division of Lowry Computer Products, is based in White Bear Lake, Minn. Since 1995, the company has been a maker of systems that print and apply labels to products, cartons, cases and pallets.

University

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