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Practicing What We Preach

Last week, I wrote about the *The RFID Marketer's Handbook: Smart Strategies for Finding Potential Buyers and Converting Them Into Customers*, a guide we recently produced in order to help radio frequency identification solution providers understand the technology adoption life cycle, where RFID is in that cycle, and how best to market products today, based on that information (see *Who Is Investing in Radio Frequency*

Identification Today?). I know a lot of vendors ignore our advice, but I'm here to tell you that *RFID Journal* practices what we preach.

Over the past few years, since learning about Geoffrey Moore's views regarding the technology adoption life cycle, we have changed our marketing strategy. We previously spent approximately 50 percent of our marketing budget on end users researching RFID, and the other 50 percent reaching out to those not doing so. Now, we spend roughly 80 percent on end users researching RFID and 20 percent on those who are not. As a result, we've seen our direct-mail conversion rates increase.



We are also practicing what we preach by evolving the content at RFID Journal LIVE! 2013, our 11th annual conference and exhibition. According to Moore, during the early part of the technology adoption life cycle—specifically, the chasm, which is where we are now—the focus should be on the economic buyer. That is, new technology firms—as well as media companies focused on new technologies—should try to sell to businesspeople with a compelling need to buy.

I instinctively knew, when I launched *RFID Journal*, that we had to focus on RFID's business benefits, rather than provide detailed technical information about how to deploy it. After all, if there are no business benefits, no one will adopt the technology. As in past years, this year's LIVE! event—to be held from Apr. 30 to May 2, at the Orange County Convention

Center, in Orlando, Fla.—will feature more than 50 end users discussing their real-world deployments. I've learned from Moore that as a technology goes mainstream, solution—or media—providers need to change their marketing approach and focus on technical buyers who will implement the solution. We've begun that transition this year, by offering a greater number of technical sessions at LIVE! 2013. I realize that RFID technology has yet to cross the chasm and become mainstream, but there are clearly a small percentage of end users who get the business value of RFID and want more technical content.

Our annual survey of *RFID Journal* readers found that visiting vendors in the exhibit hall is now very important to many potential attendees. That's not surprising. According to the data contained in the *RFID Marketer's Handbook*, end users who attend RFID events are the most serious about investing in the technology. They have typically spent a year or more researching RFID, so they are usually convinced the technology can solve their business problems.

To meet their needs, we are introducing four post-conference seminars covering advanced RFID issues (see RFID Journal LIVE! 2013 to Feature Nine Preconference and Four New Post-conference Seminars). Three of the seminars—Benchmarking UHF RFID Readers and Tags; RFID and The Internet of Things: Delivering Data, Connectivity and Communication; and Advanced RFID Concepts—aim to help technical people understand more deeply the nature of RFID systems, as well as the standards that will allow companies to connect their products, tools and other moveable assets to the Internet. The fourth—the Strategic RFID Workshop—is geared to senior executives looking to learn how to deploy the technology enterprise-wide.

When RFID crosses the chasm and becomes mainstream, solution providers will also need to transition their marketing approach. Once that happens, they can tout their solutions' technical advantage over another vendor's products—which is

what most do now. Today, however, they must articulate the correct message (how their product can solve a company's problems) to the right audience (end users actively researching RFID). Then, once they have found interested customers, they can transition to explaining all of the great features their products offer.

Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal. If you would like to comment on this article, click on the link below. To read more of Mark's opinions, visit the RFID Journal Blog, the Editor's Note archive or RFID Connect.



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