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The End of Cynicism

I had an interesting conversation last week with the CEO of a company that makes RFID hardware. He's considering sponsoring our executive conference, RFID Journal Live!. But he said he was concerned that it would turn out, like so many other shows, to be a forum for vendors to make excessive promises and hype RFID.

Now, normally vendors like nothing more than forums that hype the technology they are selling. But this particular gentleman is smarter than that. He understands that despite all the hoopla about RFID recently, there is tremendous cynicism out there about claims made by technology vendors. He understands that creating expectations that can't be fulfilled will only lead to more cynicism. Which, in the end, will make it harder for him to sell his products.

I've talked about the credibility gap in the RFID industry before, and there's no need to rehash it here. But I would like to take the opportunity to explain *RFID Journal's* editorial philosophy. We believe that RFID can deliver tremendous benefits for companies. Personally, I'm absolutely convinced that one day it will be used throughout the supply chain. Why? Because companies desperately need a fast, efficient – and, of course, cost-effective – way to collect accurate data.

RFID Journal tries to show the many benefits of using RFID in the case studies we publish. But we also strive, in our editorial coverage, to present a fair and accurate picture of what's possible and explain how hard it is to create a completely integrated system that delivers information companies can act on.

Last week, we ran a case study on the CD.id project in the UK (see *The Key to Tracking Unique Items*). After it was posted, I got a note from Stuart Dean, who led the project for e.center. He said: "May I congratulate you on an excellent article; it is very pragmatic and provides a realistic view of the likely issues one might expect to face when implementing RFID systems. This is exactly the message we are trying to convey to our members and for this I thank you."

Warms the cockles of my heart when I get an e-mail like that.

We have another case study this week on a project at a Procter

& Gamble facility in Spain (see RFID Speeds P&G Plant's Throughput). It shows that RFID enabled P&G to load more pallets on trucks with greater accuracy and fewer forklift truck drivers. But there were problems getting the system to work properly. Some were as mundane as finding the right converter to get power from the battery of the forklift truck to the RFID reader. We include such details in our stories because these are the things that you are going to be dealing with if you launch a pilot in your warehouse.

Our executive conference will take the same kind of approach. It will provide executives with an understanding of the strategic benefits of RFID, but also offer a realistic perspective on what's needed to implement the technology successfully. We'll have lectures from numerous companies that have already implemented RFID systems. We'll have experts from Accenture to offer advice on developing complete systems. And we'll have representatives from responsible vendors to inform attendees about what can and can't be done using RFID.

We decided to launch this event because there really was no executive conference aimed at educating businesspeople about how RFID systems can be deployed successfully. We wanted to bring the *RFID Journal* editorial philosophy to a live event. And that's why we'll be providing plenty of opportunity for the attendees to ask the presenters, experts and the vendors questions directly.

I'm excited that people are starting to learn about RFID and reading the *RFID Journal* in ever larger numbers. But like my friend at the hardware company, I'm concerned about the hype because hype is a double-edge sword. Nothing bombs faster than a movie that doesn't live up to the buzz created by a studio.

RFID Journal's goal, simply put, is to provide companies with the unvarnished information they need to make smart decisions about using RFID technologies. We strive to do that in the articles we publish every day, and we will strive to that at

our event. Because in the end, truth is what readers value and only truth can bring an end to the cynicism that plagues the technology sector today.

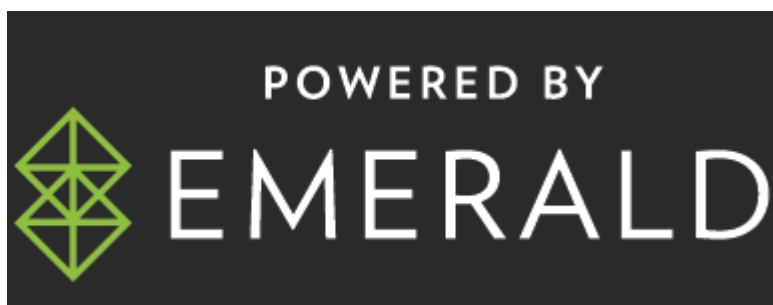
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