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The Year of Enterprise Deployments

On Jan. 23, I wrote that 2012 would likely be the year of enterprise deployments of radio frequency identification (see [Enterprise Deployments Gain Momentum](#)). I can now say, definitively, that the era of the pilot—which lasted eight years—is finally over.

The reason I can say that with confidence is that I've been reading this year's RFID Journal Awards submissions, and they are extremely impressive.



I don't want to give away too much information before we announce the winners, but here is a description of just a few entries that caught my eye (if your entry is not listed here, don't worry—it doesn't mean you don't have a chance of winning):

- An aerospace manufacturer is tagging parts, and tracking when they leave a central distribution center and arrive at any of nine production facilities. The system, which automates and error-proofs the process of receiving goods, delivered a return on investment in less than a year.
- A meat processing and distribution company is tracking raw meat products. Before implementing an RFID system, the products were bar-code-labeled, weighed and placed on pallets that were then moved into a large freezer. To fulfill orders, the firm had to locate the correct pallets within the freezer, and then interrogate the bar code of each case on those pallets. With RFID, the company no longer must stop production or deliveries for stock-taking and control, and the time required to process an order has dropped from 30 minutes down to only 30 seconds.
- A business that runs power plants has deployed a personnel-tracking system for safety purposes. The solution tracks more than 2,000 individuals—including staff members, visitors and

contractors—entering and exiting the power stations through multiple entry points, as well as on buses between facilities. What's more, the system tracks each person's safety-competency qualifications, verifying whether he or she meets a particular area's requirements.

- An electronics assembly company is embedding RFID transponders in printed circuit boards (PCBs), so that they can be tracked through the manufacturing process. The system has boosted productivity by 20 percent, by reducing the amount of bar-code scanning, and has also improved the accuracy of work-in-process tracking, the location of specific PCBs in real time and the inventory at each workstation.

I could go on, but you get the point. These are not pilots—these are significant uses of RFID that are having a major impact on the way each business operates. As I stated in my Jan. 23 column, it is great to see the technology delivering the benefits that many of us had envisioned years ago.

You will be able to hear presentations from the award winners, as well as many other great end-user case studies, at RFID Journal LIVE! 2012, which will take place on Apr. 3-5, at the Walt Disney Swan and Dolphin resort, located in Orlando, Fla. This will be a great opportunity to learn from those who are already achieving tremendous benefits from RFID, and I hope to see you there.

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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