

## EDITOR'S NOTES

BY MARK ROBERTI

**As the technology is adopted, companies will require a way to judge the skills and knowledge levels of potential hires.**

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**Aug 12, 2013** For the past 16 months, I have been working with a small group of radio frequency identification industry professionals to develop an RFID certification organization, the RFID Institute, which will create a variety of professional certifications for the industry (see [International RFID Institute Prepares Certification Program](#)). Recently, we expanded the board and brought on three new members, one of whom asked, "Do we even need a certification exam—and if so, what is the business case for it?"

I was a little taken aback by those questions. After all, we'd been working for more than a year with the absolute conviction that the industry needs certification exams. But these are valid questions that need to be asked—and answered.



At present, radio frequency identification technology is still in its infancy. The number of people with experience deploying an RFID system—whether employing passive ultrahigh-frequency (UHF), Near Field Communication (NFC) or active real-time location system (RTLS) technology—is small. That isn't a huge issue, because the number of companies deploying RFID systems is still relatively small as well. But at some point, RFID will cross the chasm and demand will soar. With it, demand for skilled technicians, and for those who can design a system and manage a deployment, will also rise dramatically.

In my mind, the industry will need a high-quality certification program. The Foundation Certification that the RFID Institute is currently developing will be designed to show whether someone has the requisite knowledge base to determine which type of RFID system is appropriate for a particular

application. Those seeking certification will need to understand the differences between high-frequency (HF) and UHF tags, how they communicate with readers and the implications for different applications.

In the future, the RFID Institute plans to create more detailed and technical certifications that would focus on determining whether a certification seeker has the requisite skills to perform the tasks necessary to deploy an HF system, a UHF system, or an active or hybrid system combining RFID with other technologies. Without such certifications, a company hiring someone to work on an RFID project would have to take that applicant's word that he or she had worked on RFID systems and possessed the knowledge required to do the job.

Is there currently a business case for an RFID certification program? Probably not. But as adoption picks up, there certainly will be. As more companies deploy RFID, demand for RFID skills will rise sharply, and having bona fide credentials will offer job applicants an advantage in the market—which will, in turn, drive demand for certification testing. I am sure of that, which is why I am donating my time to help create an RFID certification program. If you are a skilled RFID professional, consider joining the RFID Institute and helping us to build the future of the RFID industry.

*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](#).*