Developing an RFID Strategy for Manufacturing

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Infrastructure vs Point Solution

• A point solution solves one problem:
  – Controls access to restricted area, speeds up payment, automates a specific task

• Infrastructure can be used for many applications
  – Think of cell networks (calls, texting, web surfing, etc.)
Think infrastructure

Each company’s goal should be to build an RFID infrastructure that:

– Enables collection of data on everything mobile within the enterprise (tools, people, containers, etc.)
– Supports multiple applications and integrates into multiple backend systems
– Enhances the company’s overall goals (such as to be the low-cost provider)
– Is able to scale and adapt to changing needs
Create a cross functional team

- All stakeholders must be involved to ensure that the RFID infrastructure meets their needs, including
  - Manufacturing
  - Operations
  - Engineering
  - Supply chain
  - Sales and marketing
  - After sales support
Educate stakeholders

- Providing an understanding of the following will help committee members make better decisions:
  - What are others in our industries doing with RFID?
  - What other industries are employing RFID in similar ways and what benefits are they getting?
  - What types of RFID are available and how do they match up with our requirements.
Map out common processes

• What are the processes in our manufacturing facility from receipt of materials to shipping of product?
• Ask stakeholders to identify problem areas
• Consider whether RFID can help solve those problems or whether other technology is needed or would be more effective or cheaper
Draw up a list of key requirements

• What data needs to be collected and where
• Who needs to have access to the data?
• What alerts need to be sent and to whom?
• How much, if any, customization of backend systems is needed?
• Are additional applications needed?
Focus on the data

• Does your company have master data files?
• Does product data need to be cleaned?
• Get all departments to on a single identifier, regardless of the specific provider’s part number
• Consider rationalizing procurement
Choose the right technology

• Select the RFID, bar code or GPS technology that will meet the vast majority of your requirements.

• You will likely need one active system and one passive system

• For global tracking, RFID systems will need to integrate into GPS tracking systems
Split the cross-functional team into working groups
Each group should focus on 1 of the following:
• IT issues
• Prioritizing pilots/deployments
• Vendor selection (primary and secondary)
• Creating a global RFID policy
• Managing change (including training)
• Tech support
How to prioritize projects

Create criteria for prioritizing, including

- Relative ease of the project
- Potential return on investment
- Importance of project to company’s primary goals
- Regulatory compliance
- Safety and environmental issues
Begin the rollout in one location

- Make sure the technology works
- Get the integration piece right
- Get the business process change right
- Quantify the benefits
- Document the deployment
- Roll out the application to additional sites
- Repeat until the infrastructure is complete
Questions?

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