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Simplify management of EPC numbers without locking into a single source.

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ENSURE RFID DATA INTEGRITY WITH OPEN EPC NUMBER MANAGEMENT

Apparel retailers and their suppliers increasingly are facing a critical challenge as they adopt Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for item-level visibility: Managing the complex morass of unique tag numbers required for every item in their inventory. Companies looking to take full advantage of the game-changing capabilities of RFID must maintain complete data integrity through unique EPC numbers, which integrate both Global Trade Item Numbers (GTIN) that identify a specific type of item, and serialization data, which uniquely defines the item.

Hundreds of millions of unique tag numbers are required to account for every single item in a retailer's merchandise mix. In addition to the sheer volume, challenges such as the need to account for multiple geographic locations of suppliers and service bureaus, a diverse product mix, unique encoding methods and compliance with critical RFID industry standards increase the complexity exponentially.

Some service bureau providers have attempted to take advantage of this problem by bundling EPC number management with tag printing capabilities. But this approach comes with a huge price – it locks in retailers and their suppliers to a single-source provider of RFID labels, causing them to rely on the service bureau for EPC number management, limiting the ability to obtain service bureau services and consumables from multiple providers. Even when retailers and their suppliers want to do their own in-plant printing, these vendors are requiring the use of proprietary encoding software, printer versions, and label formats to work with their number management systems.

Clearly, this approach is unacceptable to companies looking for maximum flexibility in sourcing from

service bureaus and tag vendors. However, without some way to manage this complex array of EPC numbers, retailers and their suppliers aren't able to enjoy the data integrity necessary to extract the full value of RFID, while at the same time maintaining flexibility to work with multiple service bureau providers.

Fortunately, there is a solution to this problem: Checkpoint's Open EPC Number Management Solution. This cloud-based application is easy to deploy for retailers and their suppliers, and enables them to manage that complex, growing array of GTIN and serialization data inherent in RFID labeling solutions.

EPC Number Management Challenges

- More apparel items becoming RFID-enabled

- Multiple facilities globally

- Ensure uniqueness by SKU and serialization by item across all facilities

- Need flexibility in sourcing RFID tags from multiple label suppliers

- Ensure flexibility to source service bureau services from multiple providers

- Ensure support for in-plant printing

AN OPEN SOLUTION FOR MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

But more importantly, Open EPC Number Management is designed with an open architecture, meaning it operates independent of any specific EPC tag vendor's products or service bureau's offerings, enabling retailers and their suppliers to buy service bureau services from multiple providers.

For instance, the solution's open design prevents vendor lock-in that ties retailers and apparel manufacturers to a single service bureau supplier. It also offers central management of EPC numbers by individual SKUs, as well as distributing those numbers to consuming applications both at retailers' locations and third-party organizations such as service bureaus.

The solution conforms to the essential standards established for RFID labels and number management by EPCGlobal, and it eliminates the risk of number duplication and other issues with data integrity, significantly decreasing error-related costs and reducing the likelihood of out-of-stocks.

The solution's flexible design allows apparel retailers and brands to configure all global sites where items will be tagged – an absolute requirement for retailers that increasingly source products worldwide. It also allows both Checkpoint and non-Checkpoint printing and encoding applications to receive EPC numbers.

The Open EPC Number Management Solution is built on the OAT Foundation Suite, one of the most mature and robust software platforms in the industry today, from OATSystems, a division of Checkpoint. The solution helps retailers and their suppliers achieve a wide array of impressive benefits to help them reduce out-of-stocks, decrease their working capital requirements and increase sales.
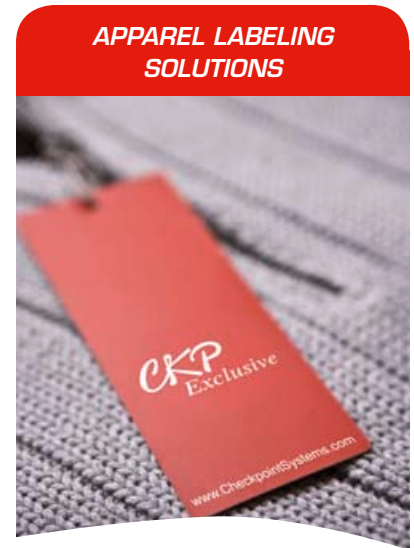
Finally, Checkpoint provides a rich technical legacy in Radio Frequency. For more than 40 years, Checkpoint has been at the forefront of RF product development, and has been an active participant in global efforts to create RFID standards that make deployment easier for customers and generate faster return on investment. Only Checkpoint gives retailers and their suppliers a full, end-to-end solution without locking the customer in to a proprietary software product tied to a specific RFID tag portfolio.

For apparel retailers and their suppliers, the Open EPC Number Management Solution is the most flexible and cost-efficient way to manage complex EPC number schemes, in order to harness the full power and capabilities of RFID for item-level visibility

Open EPC Number Management Benefits

- Flexibility in choosing label vendors without locking into a specific label supplier, encoding software, printer version or label format

- Support for EPCGlobal standards for RFID labels and number management

- Central management and provisioning of EPC numbers by SKU

- Global distribution of EPC numbers to consuming applications, including service bureaus and in-house printing applications

- Eliminating risks of number duplication

- Providing a standard interface for EPC numbers delivered to external consuming applications

Checkpoint Systems is a global leader in shrink management, merchandise visibility and apparel labeling solutions. Checkpoint partners with retailers and their suppliers to reduce shrink, increase shelf availability, ensure labeling consistency and achieve operational excellence. Checkpoint's solutions enable retailers to enhance the shopping experience for consumers, and grow their businesses profitably.

MERCHANDISE VISIBILITY SOLUTIONS

SHRINK MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

APPAREL LABELING SOLUTIONS

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