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Zebra Technologies Selected by Wilson Sporting Goods to Implement its RFID Compliance Labeling Project

Zebra’s high-performance RFID printer/encoders enable Wilson to comply with retailer Gen 2 mandates

Vernon Hills, IL, May 6, 2008 – Zebra Technologies (NASDAQ; ZBRA), a global leader in specialty printing and automatic identification solutions, has announced that Amer Sports selected Zebra’s EPC Gen 2-standard labeling system for its RFID compliance labeling project for shipments of its Wilson Sporting Goods brand. Zebra’s best-of-breed RFID printer/encoders help manufacturers and distributors comply with UHF Gen 2 mandates while providing superior track and trace capabilities for total asset visibility throughout the supply chain.

When Wilson Sporting Goods, the world's leading manufacturer of ball sports equipment, needed to implement an RFID compliance system, Ed Matthews, director of information technology for Wilson turned to Zebra Technologies, a proven solution provider. “I had worked with Zebra before and knew their equipment was very reliable,” said Matthews. “So, we moved right past that concern and got down to the project details.”

The team at Wilson installed four Zebra R110Xi printer/encoders to label shipments that require RFID compliance tagging. “The R110Xi is ideally suited for use in harsh shipping environments due to its unprecedented level of reliability, flexibility and ruggedness,” said Steve Park, Zebra vice president and general manager for RFID. “Additionally, organizations looking for high-volume labeling will benefit from some of its unique features such as flexible inlay placement, automatic calibration, multiple power levels and easier RFID programming.”

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The Zebra R110Xi is XML-enabled, so it allows for seamless integration into existing enterprise systems. At Wilson, the R110Xi printer/encoders interface directly with applications running on an SAP Auto ID Infrastructure (AII) via an IBM AS/400 host to receive the order information necessary to produce the shipping labels. Wilson was able to create XML smart label formats and load them onto the R110Xi printer/encoders. The AS/400 applications push the deliveries to SAP AII and then SAP AII pushes XML to printer/encoders, which process the information and create the smart label. Each label includes human-readable text, a bar code and an EPC number encoded in a Gen 2-standard tag. The labels are hand-applied to the cases and pallets, which are then routed past fixed-position RFID readers to capture the shipment information.

Another challenge for Wilson was that the company was undergoing a major change of their systems to SAP’s enterprise resource planning system. Because the compliance system had to be running before the SAP migration would be complete, Wilson chose to run its RFID labeling system independent of SAP with plans to migrate to the new infrastructure upon its completion. Since the Zebra R110Xi printer/encoders support AII and have exclusive features that allow them to connect directly to SAP systems, Wilson will be able to integrate the printer/encoders to the SAP system following the upgrade.

When the new SAP system is complete, Wilson plans to integrate RFID data further into its operations so that it can encode additional information into its shipping labels, such as ship-to address, SKU number and item quantity. “As the system grows and we make additional use of the RFID data that is captured, we plan to install more Zebra printer/encoders at other facilities,” said Matthews. “We’ve had a good relationship with Zebra and excellent support, so I am confident that the products will be seamlessly integrated into any future RFID protocols we implement.”

About Amer Sports Corporation
Amer Sports (www.amersports.com) is the world's leading sports equipment company with internationally recognized brands including Salomon, Wilson, Precor, Atomic and Suunto. All Amer Sports companies develop and manufacture technically advanced products that improve the performance of active sports participants. The Group's business is balanced by its broad portfolio of sports and presence in all major markets.

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About Wilson Sporting Goods
Chicago-based Wilson Team Sports Company, a division of Amer Sports, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of sports equipment. The company designs, manufactures and distributes advanced equipment that helps players improve performance. Wilson's core categories include Football, Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Bats, Volleyball, Soccer, Youth Sports, Uniforms/Apparel, Golf, Footwear, and Racquet Sports (Tennis, Racquetball, Squash, Badminton and Platform Tennis).

About Zebra Technologies
Zebra Technologies Corporation helps companies identify, track and manage assets, transactions and people with on-demand specialty digital printing and automatic identification solutions. In more than 100 countries around the world, more than 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies use innovative and reliable Zebra printers, supplies, RFID products and software to increase productivity, improve quality, lower costs, and deliver better customer service. Information about Zebra and Zebra-brand products can be found at http://www.zebra.com.

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