



U.S. Adidas Licensee Adds Item-Level RFID Tagging in Just One Afternoon

AGRON MEETS DEMAND RAPIDLY, RELIABLY WITH ZEBRA R110XI4™ PRINTER/ENCODER

Los Angeles-based Agron, Inc. is an official licensee for Adidas, manufacturing accessories such as headbands, wristbands, hats, t-shirts and socks for the sports brand. In business for more than two decades, the company supplies Adidas-branded products to major department stores and sporting goods retailers.

Challenge

In recent years, several major retailers have announced plans to improve efficiency and profitability by tagging many, if not all, of their inventory with radio frequency identification (RFID). With item-level RFID, they hope to boost inventory accuracy, reduce out-of-stock items, improve loss

prevention and fraud, and eventually enable self-checkout.

When one of Agron's major customers adopted the new approach, the manufacturing company had to begin adding RFID tags to all items for that customer, amounting to about 30,000 units every week. Agron had to implement the new process quickly.

SUMMARY

agron, inc.

Customer
Agron, Inc.

Industry
Manufacturing

Challenge

When one of the company's major customers required item-level RFID tagging from suppliers, the sole licensee of Adidas in the U.S. had to find a high-performance, reliable and cost-effective way to comply.

Solution

Zebra R110Xi4 RFID Printer/Encoder

Results

- Agron set up and went live with the printers in an afternoon.
- Implementing RFID printing/encoding added zero time to the company's supply chain process.
- The company creates 30,000 encoded RFID tags in one morning.
- The Zebra R110Xi4 demonstrates high reliability, reducing downtime and maintenance requirements.

Solution

Agron partnered with MSA Systems to deploy the infrastructure for item-level tagging and other warehouse automation. The manufacturing company implemented MSA's QStock Inventory Software to control inventory and manage the serial numbers associated with each RFID-tagged item.

For printing, MSA pointed Agron to the Zebra® R110Xi4 RFID printer/encoder to meet the company's needs for high performance and reliability.

"From many other implementations, Zebra's track record gave us high confidence in its performance and durability," said Majid Jalalian, president of MSA Systems.

With RFID inlays spaced closer together than other printers, the R110Xi4 provides a lower cost per label, fewer media-roll changes and fast throughput. As the printer prints the human readable text and barcode on the face of the label, it also encodes the RFID inlay embedded in the label, providing an integrated solution with built-in error handling.

MSA Systems assisted with setup, configuration, label formatting and training on the R110Xi4 printer/encoders. A number of built-in features save MSA and Agron time in initial configuration and when making any changes. In fact, the printers were up and running in one afternoon.

To ensure that tags are encoded accurately, the printer/encoder technology checks that the blank tag is valid, encodes the tag and then validates that the encoded tag is readable —

giving Agron and its customer peace of mind that tags are scannable. Additionally, Zebra's patent-pending Adaptive Encoding Technology enables smart inlay detection and calibration, saving time in positioning new labels.

Results

With the Zebra printer/encoder, Agron meets its customer's new RFID directive without having to change its supply chain process or incur cumbersome maintenance requirements. The new printer/encoders simply take the place of previous tag printers, which added zero time to the tagging workflow.

"From the point of view of our users, it was very smooth adding leading-edge technology to our existing process," said Marc Hernandez, director of service and distribution for Agron.

Each week, Agron receives orders from the customer, typically for more than 1,000 store locations. Pickers gather products and move them to printing/encoding stations for RFID tagging. The company prints all 30,000 tags in five to six hours — or just one morning — helping Agron easily meet its turnaround times for the customer. Additionally, Agron finds the Zebra printer/encoders run without the regular outages and maintenance the company has experienced with previous printers, lowering the cost of ownership.

"We process thousands of cartons a day and needed something that could keep up and encode tags reliably," Hernandez said. "Zebra provides the industrial printer/encoder we need for high-speed RFID printing."

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Director of Service and Distribution

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