

The company's Fashion Item Tracking System (FiTS) is a fully integrated solution for retailers and garment suppliers, including hardware, software and maintenance services.

By Claire Swedberg

Apr. 5, 2011—Item-level RFID technology provider [Tagsys](#) is offering an end-to-end RFID solution for the fashion and apparel market that includes hardware, software, integration and maintenance services, with a return on investment (ROI) that, according to the company, averages one year or less. The ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) EPC Gen 2 RFID solution, known as the Fashion Item Tracking System (FiTS), is one of a kind, says Alain Fanet, Tagsys' CEO, since it provides all of the necessary hardware and software, along with integration, in a single package—in addition to such services as maintenance and the initial modeling of the proper solution to meet a company's particular needs, and to yield the greatest return for the user. The company offers a choice of two software options: either a FiTS software platform installed on the user's database and purchased by the user, or a leased software solution located on a Tagsys-hosted server.

Most retail solutions, Fanet says, are still pieced together to include readers, tags and software provided by multiple vendors. In the four years that Tagsys has been providing integration services for fashion retailers, he finds there is a growing need for a single solution that would include not just the technology, but also knowledge of how to customize the system in order to achieve the greatest ROI. While other RFID vendors may also offer an end-to-end solution, he says, Tagsys' FiTS is unique in that it is focused on solving an apparel company's supply chain business-process issues, beginning with modeling prior to installation. What's more, Fanet adds, the company also provides a wide variety of RFID reader station options (such as a desktop device in a warehouse, or a fixed portal at a dock door), as well as the ability to implement the system with service bureaus, and software that is scalable to accommodate a growing number of stores and distribution centers or new uses cases, such as installing RFID hardware for use at the point of sale, or at security gates located at exits.

Typically, there are two types of apparel companies investing in radio frequency identification, says Doug Karp, Tagsys' VP for North America: those that employ RFID to meet tagging mandates from companies like [Wal-Mart Stores](#), and those interested in utilizing the technology to improve their own supply chain efficiency. FiTS, he says, is a solution for the latter category. Since Tagsys began offering RFID technology to the apparel industry four years ago, Fanet reports, its clients have been asking more frequently about how RFID could increase their efficiency.

According to Karp, a common scenario is that a customer approaches Tagsys with a business problem, such as how to use RFID to improve supply chain efficiency while ensuring the technology's cost is quickly recouped. Those in the apparel industry, he says, "are under severe pricing pressure," and thus can not afford to pass on such expenses to their customers in the form of higher-priced products. As part of the FiTS system, Tagsys' team spends approximately a week reviewing the company's business processes, in order to determine how RFID data could be most valuable and provide the greatest ROI for that customer. This includes evaluating the kinds of reader stations that might be deployed, where to

install those devices within the firm's facilities, whether data should be managed by an end user on its own database or on a server managed by Tagsys, and the types of tags that would be best employed for that company's specific use case. As it provides all of these services, Tagsys will focus on making sure its customers can recoup costs quickly. "We're defining the project's scope," Fanet states, "and typically can provide an ROI within 12 months."

In addition, Tagsys offers maintenance services, such as checking with its customers to ensure that the software provides the data required; visiting a client's site if necessary, in order to resolve any problems; and advising ways in which customers can optimize the solution.

The FiTS software includes a dashboard on which customers can view the supply chain processes and identify chokepoints. With its Total Managed Services (TMS) function, the software enables users to run business reports indicating ways in which they can improve their logistics and shrink-management processes.

Tagsys will showcase the FiTS system next week on the show floor as part of the [GS1 US RFID Apparel Demo](#), at [RFID Journal LIVE! 2011](#), being held on Apr. 12-14, in Orlando, Fla.

Several fashion apparel companies have begun using the FiTS system, all based in Europe, but with manufacturing facilities and retailers located worldwide. These firms have asked to remain unnamed.