



The DATA CAPTURE Report

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Special SCAN: The DATA CAPTURE Report Reprint

TAGSYS Says Argue Performance—Not Technology

The company is offering a new “Six Sigma Performance Program” that will guarantee accuracy in pharmaceutical apps.

By now, most of our readers are well aware of the positioning going on in the RFID sector for which technology—HF or UHF—will predominate at the item level. Both sides in the arguing are going to great lengths to extol the virtues of their offerings. TAGSYS, a company that happens to hold patents in both the UHF and HF arenas, believes the industry is wasting its time. The focus should be on which technology performs better for a particular application.

Now, we realize that any argument about one technology over another ultimately will come down to performance. And, once again, both sides will try to demonstrate why their technology is the better technology for the app.



John Jordon,
*president of sales
and worldwide field
operations,
TAGSYS.*

TAGSYS' argument is that, at this time, there isn't much “operational data” on UHF—only “lab data.” HF has an abundance of field/operational data.

“What little operational data there is on UHF at the item level, isn't all that good,” said John Jordon, president of TAGSYS sales and worldwide field operations. “**Cardinal Health** did a study/test, and the data on UHF at the item level was poor. We offer both technologies at the item level, so we have no reason to promote one technology over another, except to push what works best.”

Jordon also noted that TAGSYS does not target applications at the carton and pallet level. “We focus on the item level only,” he told SCAN/DCR, “and we've been at it for a long time.”

The new program

By this point in the interview, it was clear that Jordon was, in essence, throwing out a challenge to players in the RFID sector: “Let me see you guarantee accuracy to your customers.” Of course, then, the old saying—Put up or shut up!—comes into play. Well, TAGSYS is ready to back up its words. The company is now offering a “Six Sigma Performance Program” for pharmaceutical companies. Six Sigma is a quality-of-service (QoS) performance guarantee of fewer than four failures in one million read opportunities in the item-level,

track-and-trace process.

TAGSYS also announced the Six Sigma Performance Program is available as a subscription service with an automatic technology upgrade feature called Tech Refresh. The Tech Refresh feature allows customers to take advantage of new reader and tag technology as it becomes available without costly upgrade fees. According to TAGSYS, these new offerings are all industry firsts.

"These are not pilots," Jordon emphasized. "Six Sigma and Tech Refresh are ready to roll, and we already have a substantial list of partners to help us take this program to market."

Broad industry support

As Jordon mentioned, support for the new program has been substantial. TAGSYS furnished *SCAN/DCR* a list of comments from major industry players:

"Having completed more than 100 RFID projects—from a single reader to hundreds of readers—the **ODIN technologies** team has realized that accuracy is a critical component to driving value," said Patrick J. Sweeney II, president and CEO of ODIN technologies. "The Six Sigma Performance Program addresses accuracy directly, and we are pleased to be joining TAGSYS in supporting this leadership initiative and offering higher value solutions to our clients."

"**SYSTECH** has invested the time and resources required to support the TAGSYS Six Sigma Performance Program," said Joe Ringwood, vice president sales and operations, SYSTECH International. "As a certified partner in this program, we look forward to supporting its implementation for our mutual clients."

"Shifting the debate from protocol or frequency to quality of service should release pent up demand in RFID adoption," said Drew Nathanson, RFID practice director at **Venture Development Corporation**. "TAGSYS is not only raising the bar with this new service offering and performance program, but is also reducing technology investment risks for end users in a rapidly evolving market."

"Joining the Six Sigma Performance Program is a natural extension of our successful partnership with TAGSYS," said Don McMillan, president, **North America, Pharmaceutical Systems Division**. "We now have the framework to extend our services and position in the market by delivering greater value to our customers who elect to use **West Spectra™** RFID for item-level tracking."

"**Alcan Packaging** is signing up as a certified Six Sigma Performance Program partner," said Larry Blake, director, marketing, for **Alcan Pharmaceutical Plastics Americas**. "Customers are searching for complete RFID solutions that offer a consistent level of performance backed by trained,

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qualified partners—the Six Sigma Performance Program is the answer.”

“NXP and TAGSYS work together to deliver an optimized ‘silicon-to-system’ solution for our clients,” said Jan-Willem Reynaerts, general manager of NXP’s RFID business. “We see the Six Sigma Performance Program as key to addressing client requirements for greater performance and value.”

These endorsements are impressive to say the least. TAGSYS will leverage these relationships to grow its partner list.

Who owns the system?

In our cover story, we discussed **Savi Technology’s** network service offerings. So, we thought it would be important to find out if TAGSYS is pushing hardware sales or transaction services. “We really don’t care who own the hardware—TAGSYS or the customer,” said Jordon, “as long as it is TAGSYS hardware that is being used. Obviously, we’re not going to guarantee someone else’s products. That said, we are working on interoperability with other vendors’ hardware. The technology must work properly regardless of whose technology is being used.”

Could there be a change to UHF?

Although TAGSYS is obviously convinced HF is currently better-suited for item-level tracking, the company isn’t ruling out a shift to UHF. “The only reason we are not going with UHF technology is there is no operational data to prove its accuracy,” Jordon told us. “When that type of data is available

and six sigma accuracy is proven, we’ll offer UHF. I can’t emphasize enough the importance of real performance data.

“Customers must be able to assume the technology works,” he continued. “And for the record, I would also like to state that I don’t believe RFID will be a one-technology-takes-all market. To survive, I expect there will be multiple frequencies in play.”

Playing the devil’s advocate, we asked Jordon how he thinks the industry should handle **Wal-Mart’s** apparent objections to combining UHF and HF technologies in its tracking operations. “The best way to handle their objections is to overcome them,” he answered. “Offer them dual-frequency readers. When it really comes down to it, Wal-Mart simply wants a system that is cost-effective and one that works. If you can provide that, and at the same time, make any complexities associated with the implementation transparent, they’re happy.”

QoS

Closing, Jordon returned to the subject of quality of service. “It is very important that a client can measure accuracy before being asked to accept a technology,” Jordon stressed. “And, it takes a process to get there. Do the necessary work to make the customer comfortable and then deliver on your promises. If we all live by those words, adoption will occur much more quickly.”

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