

Tracking Everything?

Years ago, all we needed to use for tracking inventory were a pencil and piece of paper. A stock keeper would take this pencil and paper and after doing a manual count, would record how much of each item was available in raw materials inventory, in production, or in finished goods inventory. Well, we have come a long way from the pencil and paper method. The introduction of the Universal Product Code (UPC) helped us keep track of the movement of millions of "skus" (stock keeping units) as they travelled through the manufacturing and retail system. This innovative UPC technology was then diffused across many different industries, allowing us to keep track of many different types of items, such as airline tickets, employment applications, and tax forms.

The latest inventory control and information method is RFID--tiny radio frequency identification chips that can be placed in all sorts of products, including packages of razors, shampoo, paper towels, beverages, clothing, and even tires. The chip will provide information about when and where the product was made, what other colors or sizes are available, and so forth. Imagine these RFID chips even being implanted in baby chicks--providing the farmer and food processor with critical information, such as when the chick was born, what vaccines the chick has had, what food the chick has been fed, and when the optimal time to "process" the chick is!

Have you, as an Innovation Guru®, considered how this new RFID technology could benefit your product, service, or program?