Is RFID mature

for the Jewellery and Watch Industry?

Ferdinand Eisele GmbH unveils RFID technology for the luxury segment for the first time

Birkenfeld, February 2014. This question can be answered clearly with "yes" at Ferdinand Eisele GmbH. The specialist for identification technology from the Pforzheim area provides evidence with "smaRT)) connect", an RFID system which was developed specifically for jewellers in the high-class segment. It is to be presented for the first time to a broad audience on the Jewellery & Gem Fair in Freiburg.

"SmaRT)) connect" as RFID module for ERP systems

Ferdinand Eisele created the RFID system "smaRT)) connect" in collaboration with a high-class jeweller specifically for trading in the luxury segment. "SmaRT)) connect" is a software module that is coupled to an ERP system. "SmaRT)) connect" is therefore not an independent software but requires a professional inventory management system as a prerequisite for its use. Cooperation has been practiced successfully with SAP Business One so far. In principle, however, connection is possible with any ERP with openly accessible data, and it does not matter whether it is industry-specific or industry-neutral. Due to the modular character of "smaRT))

connect" no intervention in the goods sector itself is necessary, which keeps the cost of software integration manageable.

Understanding of the system as key to RFID success

The crucial condition for the success of an RFID project is not technology alone. The central factor is rather the ability and willingness of a prospective customer to innovate. Only when all the affected areas such as warehousing, presentation, sales and repair are willing to adapt their organizational structures to the level of an RFID system, the full benefits of this technology can develop inside the company.

Therefore, prior to each project, Ferdinand Eisele supplies detailed consulting involving all stakeholders. It provides participants with the fundamentally necessary understanding of the physico-technical background of RFID and the resulting work processes. This enables customers to weigh improvements achievable by RFID against the requisite organizational effort and so to come to a considered decision.

If the benefits of an RFID system clearly preponderate in the individual operation and if the company is ready for such an innovation step, a joint implementation concept is developed which implements the various functions of RFID in individually controllable steps.

Gapless monitoring for continuous inventory and more

The probably most important function - rapid inventory collection - is in the foreground. "SmaRT)) connect" basically checks the entire inventory in the ERP system. But also goods are monitored that are only temporarily in the responsibility of the jeweller, such as test samples from manufacturers for special occasions or pieces ceded by customers for repair:

Each time a product comes into the detection range of an RFID reader, this contact is logged and available for a variety of evaluations. Not only during the daily shifting of items between presentation, safe or sales, but even during the sales process itself "smaRT)) connect" observes the movements of an article. Thus, data on customer interest in a product are already available before it is even sold.

The tablet PC as a sales assistant

The use of tablet PCs as a sales assistant is integrated in "smaRT)) connect". In the context of sales presentation, the device follows the movements of the goods on the counter as an electronic companion of the staff. So it can - almost as if by magic - not only trigger functions but also provide targeted additional information on the products presented.

The subtle increase in safety

The RFID system creates virtually the motion profile of an article

during the presentation. This increases attention: "smaRT)) connect"

recognizes a critical situation faster than any salesperson being deep

in a client talk when too many pieces or too high values are openly

accessible. Alarmed by suitably subtle signals in the environment,

they can then discreetly restore product safety. In addition, all

detected movement and inventory data, if required, can be allocated

to the persons involved - a not uninteresting additional aspect for

internal security and quality control in sales.

Search faster - find more reliably

Quite often quality jewellery and watches come with clearly

identifiable cases for each individual part. These are also included in

the "smaRT)) connect" system. A handheld RFID antenna can

considerably speed up finding a specific packaging in a storage room

that way. As well in the field of repairs comprehensive monitoring

comes to the fore in an advantageous way thanks to RFID: with high-

quality pieces, especially watches, even the spare parts require an

accordingly individual inventory control. "SmaRT)) connect" provides

functions right where many ERP systems, particularly industry-

neutral ones, do not or only insufficiently meet.

Is the jewellery and watches world ready for RFID?

At Ferdinand Eisele, this question has been thought over for quite

some time. For over 10 years, the business has had the hand on the

pulse of developments in RFID and has dealt with the

implementation of this technology for the industry. Although today no one speaks of a Metro Future Store any more - the functionality of RFID is beyond doubt. This is confirmed by the successes in industry and trade in many industries, including retail. Only the jewellery and watches sector is struggling. Therefore Ferdinand Eisele sees development needs clearly on the users' side today. Alex Schickel, General Manager of Ferdinand Eisele GmbH, brings his knowledge to the point this way: "Only when the operation and especially the organizational effort - which is not to be underestimated - are known in all the details, and at the same time face a corresponding goods value to be protected, a prospective buyer from the jewellery and watches industry can soundly opt for the use of an RFID system."

RFID to touch

Therefore, the presentation of "smaRT)) connect" on the tradefair illustrates not only the functions of the software and hardware, but also the way the RFID system components are "installed" in the environment of the jeweller and integrated into the presentation. "On the JGF in Freiburg we want to show," said Schickel, "a system you can touch. We want to offer the opportunity to "understand" the fascination of RFID in the truest sense of the word."

Interested parties will find "smaRT)) connect" at the Messe Freiburg at the Marquee, booth MB01.   (7.128 Zeichen mit Leerzeichen)

Fig. 1: Logo of the RFID software module by Ferdinand Eisele GmbH

**Fig. 2: RFID for the luxury segment with smaRT))connect,
the RFID-Module for ERP systems**

Fig. 3: Alex Schickel, General Manager of Ferdinand Eisele GmbH