

Optimising The Textile Supply Chain With GS1 Standards



■ ■ ■ ■ In 2009, Gerry Webber, a world-renowned clothing company took the decision to put into place a ground breaking project for the entire international supply chain. They implemented EPC/RFID to optimise logistics procedures, processes in retail and at the same time they used it as a new form of retail security. During the development process a new innovation was also developed: the "normal" care label was extended to textile EPC/RFID tag combining functionality for anti-theft, manufacturer's instruction for care and the Electronic Product Code.

Increased Sales, More Channels

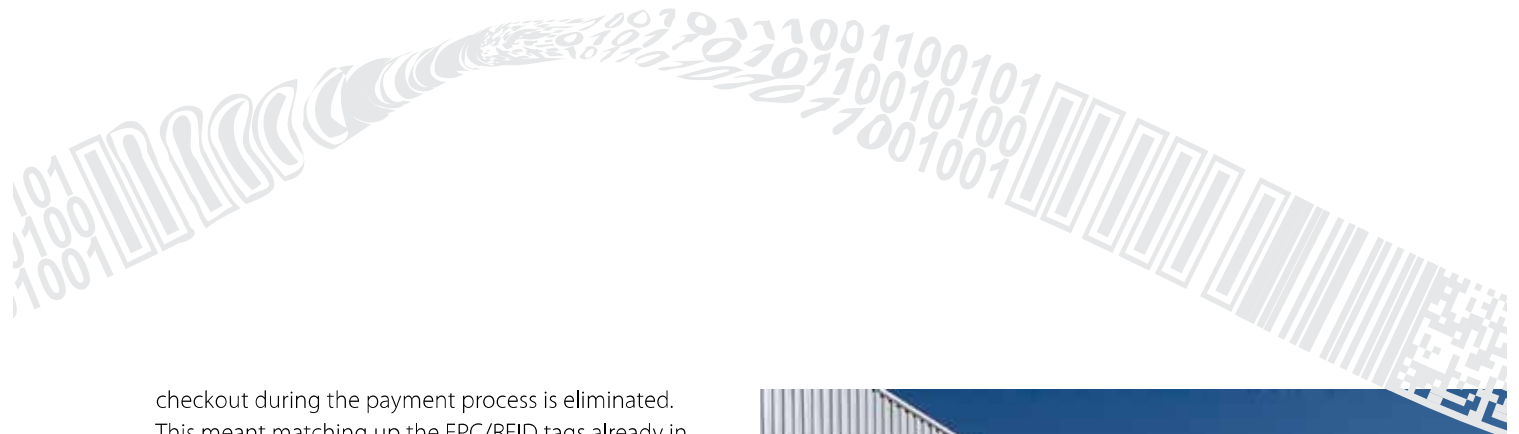
The number of textile articles sold at Gerry Weber was continuously increasing every year and they also increased the number of channels through which the products were sold. For this reason it became necessary to optimise the production and logistics processes at Gerry Weber but also at their stores and those operated by their franchise partners.

The test phase with the new EPC/RFID system in Gerry Weber stores were so successful that in the meantime the solution has been implemented in all the HOUSES OF GERRY WEBER in Germany and abroad. More than 26 million garments annually produced along the entire value chain are equipped 2011 with EPC/RFID technology. Together with renowned partners including Meyer & Meyer, Deutsche Post DHL, Avery Dennison and Deutsche Telekom, Gerry Weber AG created a groundbreaking project in the textile sector.

Tackling The Issues

Through the use of EPC/RFID technology, the following issues were uncovered and resolved:

1. The EPC/RFID-tags should be used as security tags that allow a large reading distance so that the unattractive security equipment from the entrances of stores become redundant. At the same time the need to install separate anti-theft devices in logistics and remove them at the



checkout during the payment process is eliminated. This meant matching up the EPC/RFID tags already in production with the items, physically and logically. This also resulted in financial benefits over the recent theft devices.

2. With the possibility of bulk reading, processes such as goods entry or inventory recording in stores or warehouses can be improved. These processes are prone to error, especially when carelessly implemented and given the wide number of variants that are usually found in the textile industry. With the EPC/RFID technology, each textile article (piece of clothing), is allocated a single serial number which can be read via radio waves. This enables quick and safe reporting and establishes the link to the production lot. The EPC/RFID tag label should be securely attached to the textile care label. It is also important that the tissue between the EPC/RFID tags does not affect the reading rate.

3. There were also challenges for the partners of Gerry Weber. The logistics service provider Meyer & Meyer, one of the leading service providers of textile logistics who handles about 19 million textile items for Gerry Weber at different storage locations per year, took on the task of checking the quality of EPC/RFID tags and replacing them if necessary. This is the only way to ensure that 100 % of the articles are equipped with a readable tag in the store. For this purpose, Meyer & Meyer equipped barcode based systems handling hanging and lying garments with RFID-functionality to allow for a secure reading of the EPC-tags (without affecting the cycle times and avoiding additional product separation activities).

Benefits

There have been a number of clear benefits to the new system, including:

- Better control of deliveries of logistics service providers
- Acceleration of returned deliveries
- Faster processing of incoming goods and dispatch processes
- Reduction of out-of-stock situations by providing better inventory visibility
- Faster and more accurate inventories
- Recording of carton contents within seconds



MEYER & MEYER
since 1902

The approaches of this project are transferable to other textile projects. The consistent use of GS1 and EPCglobal standards is an important prerequisite for the efficient use of this new technology.

In September 2010, Gerry Weber International AG and their project partners including Meyer & Meyer, Avery Dennison, Fiege, Hellmann, Deutsche Post DHL won the coveted German ECR-Award in the category Corporate Cooperation – Supply Side for successfully implementing their innovative “EPC/RFID for the Textile Supply Chain” project.

