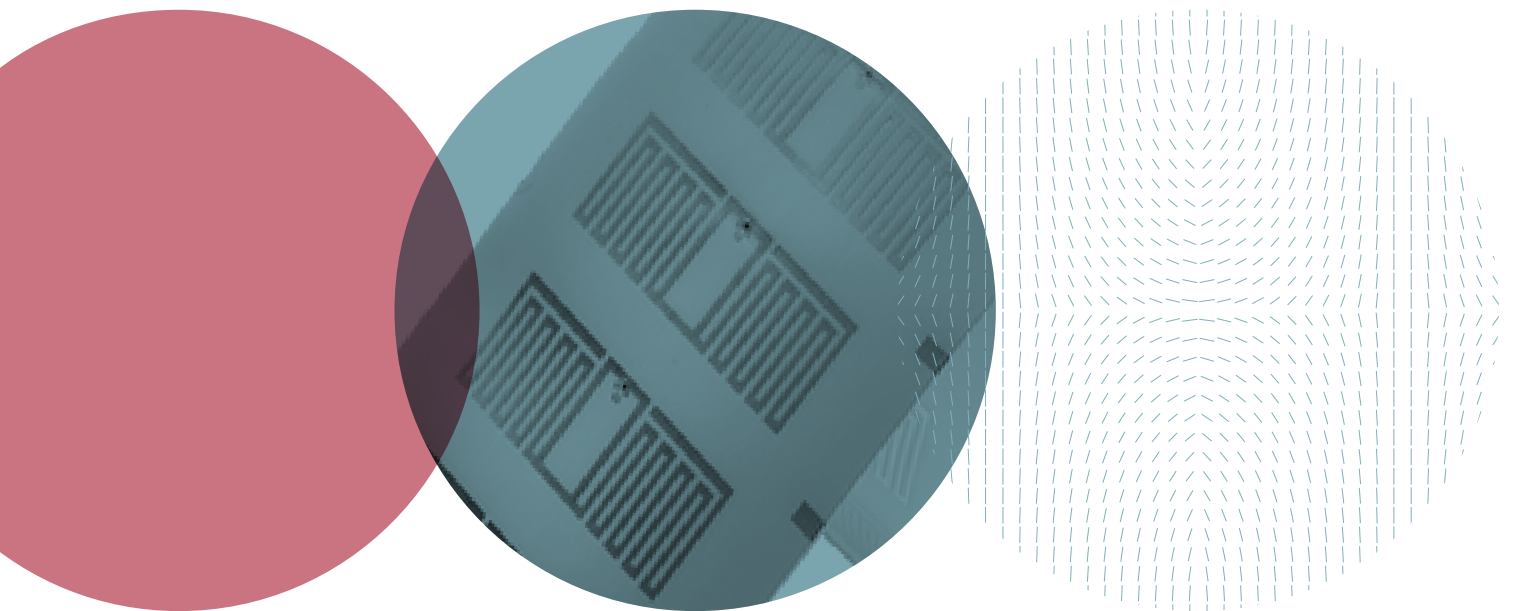


A CASE STUDY

RFID integration & project management helps to optimize platform lifecycle



COMPUTYPE®

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CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

A U.S. based fortune 500 company focused on software and services to healthcare and life sciences supplies reached out for our help in 2017. They supply a widely used PCR instrument which utilizes RFID-enhanced labels to provide easy access to, and the recording of critical information.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2017 we were asked to assist in a strategic RFID initiative by a contact who we already had a strong relationship with.

The instrument they offer had been launched nearly a decade earlier, and already utilized RFID labels to identify five different consumables associated with the instrument kit. They had previously been relying on a single supplier to provide their RFID labels, and this supplier relied on a single source to obtain inlays.

We were brought in for help when the inlay supplier decided to exit the inlay business. This ultimately left our customer in need of a new RFID inlay—which would need to be identified and thoroughly tested. With the currently specified product suddenly being discontinued we were essentially tasked with producing a product to meet existing platform specifications

OUR SOLUTION

As a result of their experiences, the PCR instrument supplier preferred to have dual suppliers in order to protect their product in the event of another potential discontinuation issue. As a result, Computype and another RFID label supplier worked alongside each other to ensure there was a back-up plan for our customer in the instance any RFID label component was discontinued.

Once tested and put into the field, our solution was proving to work a high percentage of the time, but not quite to the necessary specifications. In fact, we had received a large order for tags, and took initiative to stop production until we found a proper solution.

One of the challenges identified throughout our troubleshooting efforts was that the company wanted to use the same tag on all 5 consumables, even though the materials in the kit to be tracked weren't all the same in terms of material or construction. They knew this 'standard' approach would result in some scan failures, but the inlay construction from our source was surpassing even that.

After further investigation, our team visited the facility and met with the electrical engineer assigned to the project. After a long period of on-site testing and using our testing equipment in our own lab, one of our RFID specialists was able to identify why the high failure rates were occurring. We learned the scanning failures were the result of a polymer that sits in the pouch (one of the 5 consumables within the kit) in conjunction with an additional layer of material used in our label construction with the inlay. Essentially the margin for error was so small that the thin additional layer of material increased the scan failure rates.



Additionally, having identified different baseline electrical properties between our inlay and the inlays from the secondary source, we, alongside our customer had to make a tough decision. Eventually, we came to the conclusion that it would be best to go ahead and use the same inlay supplier as the other RFID label supplier with our previous inlay supplier being a potentially viable backup should a technology sunset event happen again.

We continue to have regular communications with this customer, focusing on how to keep the project moving forward. The next steps are to review specifications and ensure everything matches on all levels, then move to put the pilot program together—utilizing the new construction leveraging the new inlays.

HOW COMPUTYPE HELPED

While we certainly ran into a number of roadblocks during this project, we did everything in our power to find the optimal ==. Whether it meant stopping production, traveling for on-site testing or switching inlay providers—we worked to ensure the end product met our customer's expectations.

This of course, would not have been possible had we not kept in frequent contact with the company to ensure we were on the same page throughout the entire process.savings and reallocation of resources will realized in terms of value added research and a more reliable library of samples.

