



RFID Solution Implemented by Vector Networks Automates IT Asset Management for Federal Agency

Access International Successfully Protects Assets while Saving the Government Time and Money

As the business world becomes more portable with laptops and other lightweight equipment, the constant movement of assets complicates the task of manually inventorying them. Administrators who stop their regular jobs on a given day to begin counting and identifying valuable inventory return to work the next day only to discover the inventory has moved. The futility of the daunting task accounts for the vast majority of those people throwing their hands in the air and quitting fifty to eighty percent of the way through the process. Who could blame them? But how can a company protect personal information on equipment if they don't know where it is?

A *ComputerWorld* article stated that eighty-one percent of the nearly 500 information security professionals surveyed reported the loss of one or more laptops containing sensitive information in 2007. Although the loss is staggering, less than half the companies had conducted an inventory of sensitive consumer information. This leads one to ask: How much more unreported loss exists because the loss is unknown?

With the alarming increase of loss and theft of personal information, more and more companies are requiring asset tracking on a regular basis. With it no longer being practical to expect people to track assets manually, many corporations and agencies are turning to system integrators like Atlanta-based Vector Networks to identify wireless solutions.

In one such case, a large government agency housed in a multi-story building contracted Vector to help them identify the best solution to address a memorandum that mandated they conduct monthly inventories of all their assets valued at more than \$500. The customer wanted a solution that could track the physical location of tagged devices and provide that information within Vector's asset management solution that has complete software and hardware capabilities. Vector recommended Access International because of its proven record in the RFID field, and together they successfully automated the agency's process of tracking assets and provided realtime reports.

The Challenge of Tracking Assets on Multiple Floors

Not only was the government agency being required to conduct monthly inventories of thousands of owned and leased assets, but also laptops and other assets were constantly being moved between floors. Most wireless systems determine location on distance. They do not differentiate between up, down or across directions. Vector needed to find a wireless partner that could identify the location of assets by floor.

Say Goodbye to Manual Counts and Stacks of Outdated Papers

Prior to using Access' RFID technology, the government agency, like many organizations, was attempting to count their valuable assets manually. This meant teams of employees armed with paperwork crawled on the floor to check serial numbers as they tried to account for all assets on every floor. With the movement of assets, the paperwork was in a continual state of

obsolescence, and the next cycle of inventory control began before the previous one was completed.

Vector Identifies Axxess International as Ideal for the Job

Vector assessed the government agency's needs, and then evaluated wireless companies to find the one that could help them solve their customer's problem. After reading publicity on the success of Axxess' technology, Vector contacted them. Axxess discussed the strategy behind their unique RFID solution, demonstrated its capabilities and provided examples of many successful implementations and results. Vector knew Axxess was an ideal partner for the job because of its reliable technology, small form factor and low-cost tags.

Say Hello to Automated Asset Inventory and Realtime Reports

Vector presented the Axxess solution to the government agency, and they agreed that it offered all the features they needed and then some. Four areas of particular interest to the agency are the following:

- Control Point Architecture – A common problem for wireless solutions is that readers pick up signals from asset tags on the floor above and below them. You know how far from the reader the asset is, but a laptop may be in the cubicle near you or it may be in the conference room directly below you. That discrepancy is not accurate enough when it comes to valuable assets, some of which contain personal information. "One of the reasons we selected to work with Axxess is because their control point architecture is more reliable than other methods," said Kevin Kiley, vice president sales at Vector Networks. The movement and location of assets was determined automatically by setting up control points at the stairwells and elevators. The control points logged assets as they exited or entered that floor. Kevin said, "Axxess' location precision was critical in providing accurate reads on identifying the movement of assets from floor to floor."
- On-Demand Tag Activation – Axxess' ActiveTags™ are activated on-demand by a low frequency signal as they pass through an antenna's field of coverage. Once the tag is identified as "on the move," micro-wireless messages are transmitted typically from 30 to 100 feet to hidden palm-size receiver. This on-demand feature extends the life of the tags' batteries to five years or longer. System alerts are then sent to responsible personnel on an exception basis. This happens without human interference and allows government employees to spend time on other critical tasks.
- Automated Asset Inventory – Small tags were easily affixed to thousands of laptops, computers, printers, projectors and other assets. Instead of employees attempting to track the assets and crawling on the floor to read serial numbers, each tag is wirelessly and automatically assigned a unique identification that provides precise location information on assets as they move through an antenna's field. The diameter of the activation field is set up strategically in various areas from a few feet to tens of feet. Tags can be removed from leased equipment without damage, but if one is removed without authorization, a beacon alarm signals.
- Realtime Reporting – Kevin said, "It was easy to integrate Axxess' software with ours to offer a solution that saved our customer much time." Vector's software and hardware asset management solution imported Axxess' data on business rules, device connections zone logic and alerts into their software to generate and display easy-to-ready reports. Instead of looking through reams of paperwork with outdated reporting, the government employees could then view and print realtime reports detailing the physical locations of each tagged asset.

The Result

Kevin said, "With Axxess' RFID solution, the government agency will be equipped to meet the administration's mandate of tracking their valuable assets on a monthly basis. The system is expected to save the employees a significant amount of time by automatically and accurately tracking the assets for them."

Based on industry standards, the government can be expected to save a great deal of money each year as Axxess' system automates what was a time-intensive project, prevents the loss of assets and locates leased equipment needed for replacement or renewal.

The ActiveTags equip the agency to locate the whereabouts of all assets, and therefore, the personal information on those assets.

Vector Networks

Based in Atlanta, Vector Networks specializes in solutions for desktop asset and service management. Its solutions have been installed and supported in over 20 countries since the company's inception 15 years ago. With development teams in Montreal and Russia, and a highly mobile sales and support team, the company understands the needs and challenges of multi-site organizations. Working with Axxess International, Vector Networks has developed solutions for integrating RFID-based location tracking with IT asset management, effectively forming a bridge between asset security and asset management functions.