

replenishment stock to the “spokes” which are DDC’s other 24 DDC distribution centers around the world that will be stocked with items to support their local customers.

She also discussed the importance of inactive items, space and storage management reviews. She concluded by providing an update on each of DDC’s Forward Stocking locations (distribution centers in Hawaii, Guam, Japan, Germany, Italy, Kuwait and Korea) and how the appropriate range and depth of stock at these sites is determined.

After all, as Stinson told the audience, “Stock positioning is a result of a successful collaboration with our customers.”



Stinson explains new DDC stock positioning initiatives during the first session of the Lunch & Learn series that aims to keep DDC headquarters employees informed.



Raising the Bar Code

DDC’s RFID experts give an update on emerging product identification technology

By Jessica Walter, DDC Command Affairs

In 1974, the first product with a barcode to be read was a pack of Wrigley’s Juicy Fruit gum at a grocery store in Ohio. Since then, both the commercial industry and the military have looked for ways to advance the uses of automatic product identification technology to improve asset visibility and inventory accuracy.

During the May session of the Defense Distribution Center’s (DDC) Lunch & Learn program designed to keep employees informed, DDC’s RFID experts — Supply Management Specialist Mark Lieberman and Wireless Technology Team Leader Larry Loiacono — gave the group an update on the uses of radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, the modern product identification technology that is quickly replacing barcodes.

“The purpose of barcodes, RFID or any automatic identification technology is to give us the ability to get product information instantly and accurately,” said Lieberman.

DDC is currently using two types of RFID tags: passive and active. “Active RFID tags have a built-in battery and constantly emit a signal that can be picked up by a reader,” Lieberman explained. “Passive tags need to pass through an RFID portal for the information on the tag to be read.”

Lieberman told the group of DDC headquarters employees that they are likely to come in contact with passive RFID tags all the time. “You’ve seen them used as anti-theft devices on items such as clothing, CDs and video games.”

Although passive RFID technology has received a lot of attention recently due to the Department of Defense (DOD) requirement for DoD vendors to attach passive tags on each level of packaging in the near future, DDC has been involved

in exciting recent advancements in active RFID technology.

DDC’s East Coast strategic distribution platform, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, PA (DDSP), recently tested a prototype of a new generation active tag that contains a transmitter that communicates with a global positioning system to give DOD transportation network users the ability to pinpoint the tag’s location anywhere on the globe.

The current active RFID tags work by holding shipping data such as the stock numbers for the contents, the original order and the quantity of items in the container. When it passes by an interrogator, the data is sent to a server where the military customer waiting for the shipment can watch the materiel as it passes through various points along the delivery route.

Active RFID tags not only allow the customer to track the shipment, but they also save the customer time. Instead of having to open each container to find out what is inside, the customer can simply use a hand-held RFID tag reader to find out the contents of the containers, raising the bar not only on shipment tracking but also on the Warfighter’s mission readiness.



DDC Supply Management Specialist Mark Lieberman explains recent advances in automatic product identification technology to a group of DDC headquarters employees during a recent DDC Lunch & Learn session.