



The DATA CAPTURE Report

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Special SCAN: The DATA CAPTURE Report Reprint

Intelleflex' Bravman Talks Market Strategy

Intelleflex President/CEO Rich Bravman spent years watching the development and growth of bar codes when he was at **Symbol Technologies**. He also helped steer the rise of IEEE 802.11 while at the Holtsville, NY-based company—now owned by **Motorola**. And today, he is a major player within the emerging RFID industry. In a recent interview, Bravman shared his thoughts about the rise of RFID adoption and how the industry should proceed.

As his peers undoubtedly know, Bravman is a big fan of Geoffrey Moore's best-selling book, *Crossing the Chasm*—a guide that created a new game plan for marketing in high-tech industries. *Crossing the Chasm* has become the bible for bringing cutting-edge products to progressively larger markets. According to Bravman, the RFID industry is at a point where it has one foot on each side of the chasm. Customers are beginning to ask for RFID systems. But, they're not talking technology; they're talking specific business problems and asking for solutions to their needs.



*Rich Bravman,
president/CEO,
Intelleflex
Corporation.*

"It's an interesting time," Bravman told *SCAN/DCR*. "We're past the stage where typical early adopters want to be the first on the block to try a new technology. Our prospective clients today are conservative, pragmatic buyers. It shows that the industry is maturing.

"There are other signs of maturity, as well," Bravman continued. "For instance, many vendors are finally admitting that their technologies aren't going to be the only answer to customers' needs. They know the ideal solution to supply chain or asset tracking will likely include a number of technologies, including bar codes, wireless devices, and all forms of RFID and sensors. It was actually amazing. For years, our industry has been fighting over what technology would dominate the market when there wasn't even a market to dominate. Just think of the wars over standards and IP."

The need to please

Bravman said he is keenly aware of the fact that Intelleflex' products are just a part of a system. He said the most important strategy is to solve customers' problems. "At times like this, it is important to focus on making sure a system works properly," he explained. "You have to successfully meet all of a customer's requirements. Reduce labor, cut inventory, save money...the bottom line is that you must show positive results in improving customers' businesses. And to do this, you must understand customer needs."

Burgeoning apps

Intelleflex has seen real success using its BAP (battery-assisted passive), extended-capability technology to track transport containers, racks, and totes. It has also had a fair amount of success in yard management applications, tracking high-value assets. Crowd management—people tracking—is yet another emerging application where BAP technology seems to work well.

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**Rich Bravman, president/CEO,
Intelleflex Corporation.**

“We strive to create success stories,” said Bravman, “and then get those stories out to our prospective customers. Often, we can identify the sweet spot in a sector and then look for similar applications where our systems are well-suited to meet market demands. We’ve had success in tracking the movement of trucks in the road construction and asphalt industry. Using what we learned there, we worked with **InCom® Corporation** to develop OnSite®, an automated tracking system for agricultural equipment. **John Taylor Fertilizers Company**, a unit of **Wilbur-Ellis**, recently purchased the OnSite system to track assets at its Yuba City, CA location.”

Commenting on the RFID system, Craig Niesen, service manager at John Taylor Fertilizers, stated, “We finally have a system that allows us to keep accurate track of our equipment. We haven’t lost visibility to a single piece of equipment since the system has been installed. Other benefits of OnSite include the ability to account for the usage of each piece of equipment, allowing more effective equipment purchase planning and an accurate calculation of return on our related investments.”

Produce tracking

Like so many AIDC leaders we speak with, Bravman believes produce/meat tracking will offer huge sales opportunities for our industry. And for the record, we share this sentiment whole-heartedly. However, our question is: “Why aren’t growers and grocers adopting tracking solutions more quickly?” Certainly, they’ve watched as public health scares have systematically shut down whole sectors of their industries.

We thought the answer might be that the industry is fighting

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over who should ante up for the cost of adopting tracking technology. Bravman felt differently. "I think people are naturally skeptical of a new technology," he stated. "It's natural. For growers to adopt, we have to show them our systems are a clear, no-brainer, business solution.

"Also, we haven't done the best job in instilling confidence. The industry made mistakes with all its public fighting, but we're in the right mode now."

Continuing, Bravman said BAP RFID, along with emerging sensor technology, is a great fit for produce tracking apps. It has lots of memory for recording data, tags can be read at long distances, and it can even increase top-line sales. "It's not all about making recalls easier," said Bravman. "With better tracking information, growers and their customers reduce spoilage and, in turn, sell more product."

Government support

Before we let Bravman off the phone, we asked him for his opinion on why the U.S. government isn't

more supportive of our industry. If you look at countries throughout Europe, you find that their governments are very supportive of tracking technology, especially when it comes to public safety issues. Certainly, our legislators realize the importance of eliminating outbreaks of e-coli and salmonella.

"I believe the answer is in the nature of our political system," Bravman replied. "We are a market-driven economy, not government-driven. The same could be said about socialized medicine. We just don't view this as the role of the government. But, if you think about it, the government does support our industry in other ways. The government—particularly the DoD—is often an early adopter of new technologies. It paves the way for the commercialization of emerging technologies. So, in that respect, our government is supportive of our industry."

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