

Mikoh's Smart & Secure Retail Tag Addresses Consumer Privacy Concerns



Balancing the need for RFID tagging in the retail environment with the need for customer privacy, MIKOH Corporation, a leading company focused on ensuring the physical security of RFID tags, has developed the Smart & Secure Retail Tag.

The use of item-level RFID tagging in the retail industry is a means to provide dramatic improvements to inventory management, specifically by reducing out-of-stock levels and streamlining product replenishment — resulting in increased efficiencies around tracking, ordering and storing inventory. However, because an RFID tag can be read from as far away as 20 feet, consumer advocates have raised concerns that RFID tagging could be used to invade consumer privacy by tracking shopping habits and gathering other information that could then be sold to marketers and other groups.

MIKOH's Smart & Secure Retail Tag solves the consumer privacy dilemma by allowing customers to decrease the read distance of a tag after purchase, essentially eliminating the possibility of reading the tag from a distance greater than a few inches. Unlike other RFID retail tag technologies, retailers can reactivate the read distance of a MIKOH Smart & Secure Retail Tag if the product is returned, allowing products to be reintroduced into inventory and tracked in the same way as an unsold item.

"The benefits of item-level RFID tagging are lost if the item has to go back into inventory and the read distance of the tag can't be restored," said Dr. Peter Atherton, CTO of MIKOH Corporation. "The ability to restore the read distance without applying a new tag and reentering the associated data maintains the efficiency of item-level tagging while MIKOH's design also addresses consumer privacy concerns."

Further improving the integrity of the merchandise in the supply chain, the Smart & Secure Retail Tag includes MIKOH's patented Smart & Secure tamper evident technology, which confirms the RFID integrity of the tag. Smart & Secure disables the RFID tag if it is tampered or moved, preventing the tag from being placed on a

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counterfeit item that is then returned to the store. This ensures that a functional tag indicates a genuine product and that stores do not unknowingly reintroduce compromised or forged items into store inventory.

"The potential to return counterfeit and fraudulent items puts retail establishments at risk and can be very costly," said Matt Blomfield, CEO of MIKOH. "Protecting inventory from this type of malicious behavior creates substantial benefits previously not available in retail RFID tag technology. As the requirement for secure RFID tags penetrates the retail market, we anticipate rapid adoption of the Smart&Secure Retail Tag."

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