



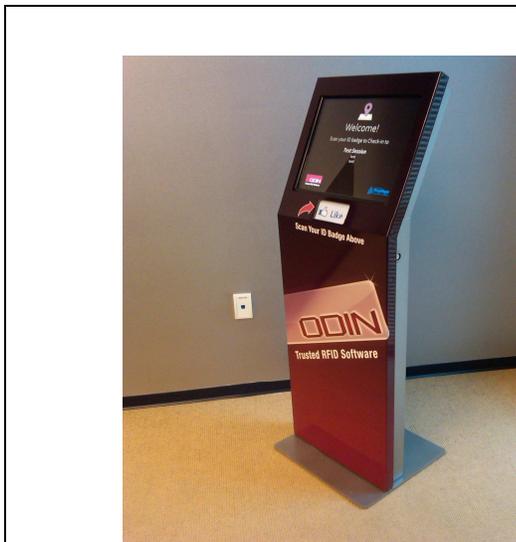
Building Brand Loyalty and Reach through RFID and Social Media

Overview

At this year's RFID Journal LIVE! conference, leading RFID innovators got together to create a fun and informative attendee experience by combining two fast-growing, far-reaching technologies: Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and Social Media. Individually, these technologies can be extremely valuable to organizations and the casual user alike. By many accounts, RFID is in its 'break-out' year, with more Fortune 500 companies benefiting from the use of RFID than ever before. Similarly, social media engagement is at an all-time high with 'wall updates,' local 'check-ins,' and photo sharing becoming part of our everyday lives. Now fast forward and consider the future of an RFID-enabled *Internet of Things* combined with the reach of Social Media and the possibilities seem limitless.

RFID + Social Networking = Reach

These days, it's not easy finding travel budget to leave the office for a conference, no matter how insightful the sessions and presentations look. The real attraction to technology buyers is usually seeing and touching innovations in a working environment – not a mock-up demo in a trade show booth. Because of these challenges, it was important to the trio of companies, including ODIN, RFID Journal and ThingMagic to encourage attendees of RFID Journal LIVE! to engage more deeply while at the conference, and actually try out a breakthrough application in the real world. In doing so, attendees would not only gain a more valuable on-site experience, but also get a better sense of how RFID combined with social networking could help them achieve their business goals, far after the event had concluded.



RFID-powered Facebook 'Check-in' kiosk



RFID-powered Facebook photo and 'Like' kiosk

The solution implemented at RFID Journal LIVE! included Facebook 'Like', 'Check-in' and photo kiosks developed by ODIN. Each kiosk included ODIN's Facebook-ready software known as EasyConnect, which is integrated into Facebook's RFID presence modules, and ThingMagic ultra-high frequency (UHF) RFID readers. Check-in stations were strategically placed throughout the conference areas, allowing attendees to update their Facebook profiles by checking in via Facebook Places. Similarly, 'Like' kiosks located on the exhibit floor and in major speaking sessions helped build Facebook audiences for RFID Journal, ODIN, ThingMagic and other event sponsors.

"RFID can bring personal experiences from the physical world to the online world in real-time, extending influence well beyond the boundaries of a conference, entertainment venue, retail store, or enterprise. Additionally, few mediums allow for such segmented marketing. RFID combined with social media lets you easily identify and market in a unique way to each person who has opted-in." - *Patrick J. Sweeney II, founder, ODIN*

Attendee interaction with the kiosks was fully automated through the use of RFID badges, which were distributed upon registration and used for other event purposes including personalized communication via smart signs and conference session attendance monitoring. Attendees received an email in advance of the show and, in less than 30 seconds, could connect their RFID badge information with their Facebook account. There were also on-site registration kiosks for late registrants. By waving their conference badges in front of a kiosk screen - outfitted with ThingMagic's UHF [USB RFID Readers](#) used in conjunction with [ODIN's EasyConnect](#) Software - conference attendees were able to connect with and update their Facebook accounts in real time, successfully merging their real-world and online communities.

Benefiting from ODIN's system development expertise and ThingMagic's high-performance RFID technology, the solution was highly accurate, scalable and very easy to integrate.

"ODIN's system approach makes sure our software, hardware and product marketing teams work together to deliver ultimate solution performance. The ThingMagic RFID reader form factor worked very well with our design process and requirements. Having a small flexible form factor was critical, but making sure it provided 99.9% tag read accuracy was equally important. The ThingMagic USB reader delivered," added Sweeney about the development process.



ThingMagic USB RFID Readers are used to power ODIN Facebook Kiosks

Based on ThingMagic's best-in-class M5e-Compact UHF RFID module, the USB RFID Reader is controlled and powered by a host PC or laptop through a USB interface. The ThingMagic USB RFID Reader is compatible with application development tools, including ThingMagic Reader Assistant, enabling rapid creation of RFID-enabled solutions to support a wide range of applications.

Business Value and Results

The combination of RFID and social networking allowed conference attendees to share their experiences in real-time. "If they needed to log-in to a laptop, enter a password or go back to their hotel rooms to post comments and Likes to their Facebook pages, it's hard to imagine that we would have seen as many interactions as we did," said Mark Roberti, Founder, Editor, *RFID Journal*.

RFID + Social Networks can extend reach, awareness and brand loyalty for:

- Conference managers and venue owners
- Hospitality, Sports & Entertainment venues
- Consumer goods manufacturers
- Retail stores
- Restaurants
- Enterprise organizations
- Amusement Parks
- Cruise Ships
- College and Universities

One of the major keys to success was that it all worked very efficiently. Marketers know how important it is to create a positive experience, which was made possible by a 99.9% tag read accuracy at the conference. It was also very easy to change what appeared on the kiosk screens, such as information about presenters, various conference sessions and other interactive messaging, making the initiative very low maintenance.

The goals set out by ODIN, RFID Journal, and ThingMagic were achieved, and with very little pre-event advertising or promotion of the social networking element. Key achievements include:

- Approximately 24,000 interactions between attendees and the RFID Journal LIVE! Facebook page; equating to 10 interactions per person
- More than 150,000 post views of the event on Facebook coming from less than 10% of the attendees; illustrating the reach of the event extending well beyond the 2,500 registered attendees
- Attendees who used the EasyConnect site had on average 162.7 friends; more than 25% the Facebook average
- Participants who used the photo booth and were tagged on their own homepage with a picture drove seven times the post impressions as a simple 'Like' or 'Check In'

The buzz around the conference was that the RFID-enabled social media kiosks made the conference more fun and interesting, allowing for a new personal and virtual interaction and creating a unique way of communicating with colleagues, friends and family. The kiosks were such a draw, and the business value so apparent, that several exhibitors requested kiosks for their booths at future conferences. In addition to enhancing the attendee experience, implementing a working solution as part of the conference infrastructure attracted interest from major entertainment companies that are now spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on Facebook ads. Witnessing first-hand how capturing the live event experience could help further segment customer demographics to deliver individual-based targeted messages, led several of these companies to request proposals on the spot.

Extending Marketing and Sales Reach

Since the 35 year and older demographic makes up over 30% of Facebook's 600 million users and is growing rapidly, it is anticipated that more technology conference attendees will be Facebook users by next year. This provides a significant opportunity for conference organizers and exhibitors to extend their marketing and sales reach. For example *RFID Journal* management is thinking about forming social network groups with similar interests, such as retailers using RFID, and then making it easy for them to find each other at the conference. This could be made possible by having RFID readers at the entrances of various rooms or other designated areas, so the arrival and locations of group members would be made known to each other.

There is also an opportunity to incorporate keyboard functionality into the kiosks so people can submit comments along with sessions they 'Like.' With the growing adoption of Twitter in the business world, Tweets could be integrated into the communication mix to further expand upon the social networking interaction that was seen at this year's RFID Journal LIVE! show. "We're always looking to push the envelope," said Roberti. And it doesn't end there. ODIN confirms they are working with LinkedIn to look at specific ways that EasyConnect can be used as a business networking tool as well.

The experience at RFID Journal LIVE!, combined with customer implementations of RFID, leads many to believe that the real future of RFID is when the disposable RFID-enabled badge or bracelet is replaced by UHF RFID embedded into smart phones and other personal communication and computing devices. In some applications it may eventually replace or co-exist with Near Field Communications (NFC). Because NFC has only a centimeter or two of read range, it requires people to stop what they're doing and take an extra step, like tapping a screen. A UHF enabled device, on the other hand, could read from several feet, even if a user was engaged in a fast moving experience like a roller coaster or walking by the 18th tee.

The possibilities seem limitless. With RFID integrated into mobile devices, smart signage, kiosks and other elements of the physical environment, access to the virtual world becomes seamless, delivering reach, brand loyalty and interaction otherwise not possible.

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