

Using RFID to Track and Maintain Leased Laboratory and Test Equipment



Customer Background

Agilent Technologies is a leader in the life sciences, diagnostics and applied markets. The company provides laboratories worldwide with instruments, services, consumables, applications and expertise for the global food, environmental, pharmaceutical, diagnostics, chemical and energy industries. The laboratory equipment is leased to companies around the globe, while all the maintenance, inventory tracking and usage are managed by Agilent. This model enables their customers to concentrate on the important tasks at hand including ensuring that the global food supply is free of contaminants and enabling new medicines that cure disease to reach the marketplace — instead of maintenance and deployment of their lab equipment.

The Challenge

A variety of asset tracking solutions have been available for some time in the marketplace using a number of different auto-identification technologies. However, Agilent's unique business model for equipment leasing and maintenance has demanding and specialized requirements.

- **Secure:** As a provider to customer protected data, and tiered inventory and maintenance record visibility, the solution must limit data accessibility to specified end users (ensuring customer data security).
- **Value-add:** This service offering from Agilent to their customers generates additional revenue for their business and provides value to their customers.

- **Scalable:** Per asset based pricing model provided by Omni-ID ensures Agilent has flexibility to scale services as their business grows, instead of requiring a large upfront investment in solution development.

With only a manual system in place to inventory and record equipment usage for its customers, Agilent was looking for ways to help automate this process, to both ensure accuracy and create a speed to market.

- **Inventory:** Every piece of equipment has a serial number; however, inventory was still being executed manually, taking many hours to complete and enter into customer systems.
- **Regulatory & Safety:** Ensure maintenance is completed on a specified cycle, and maintenance and usage records can be centrally stored for easy access by each individual customer securely.
- **Equipment:** With multiple types, sizes and form factors (plastic and metal) of lab equipment, the selected auto-ID method must both fit on equipment and not interfere with its functionality.
- **Exposure:** Must be resistant to chemicals or other environmental conditions that before could occur in any number of different lab environments around the world.

An enterprise level solution combining both Omni-ID's passive RFID tags and ProVIEW™ software system for asset tracking was selected to meet this unique challenge. Beyond simple asset tracking, Omni-ID's ProVIEW system exactly addressed Agilent's requirements with a unique leasing management system solution to enhance their business model.

The Solution

Automatic identification solutions like barcoding would simply not meet Agilent's requirements for an automated, secure and durable solution. The team knew that passive RFID was a viable, global and widely accepted technology — along with one that would not interfere with the operation of its equipment. With extensive experience in tracking laboratory and small IT assets for companies and government agencies around the globe (including NASA), Omni-ID was well positioned to develop a solution that would meet their needs.



Rugged, Reliable and Diverse Asset Tracking

Omni-ID's team of experts surveyed Agilent's business to determine a solution to accommodate its equipment leasing/multi-site location model:

- Software must be simple enough to track, inventory and maintain asset records for multiple products, locations and customers
- Metal and plastic asset surfaces — tags must provide consistent performance across components
- With multi-site locations — compatible across global passive RFID regulatory bands
- Ability of tags to be read accurately in highly metallic laboratory environment
- Tags and labels must withstand consistent exposure to chemical wash
- Simple and cost effective enough to resell as a service to its customers

One Stop: SW + HW + Support = Immediate & Reliable Deployment



Omni-ID created a solution utilizing its ProVIEW software platform and a variety of its industry-leading passive RFID tags that can easily be sold, deployed and shipped as a

simple implementation kit to the customer location. These kits include:

- Omni-ID's Passive RFID Tags including low profile on-metal tags and easily deployable RFID labels for non-metallic assets
- Handheld Passive RFID reader to quickly inventory and track usage
- Omni-ID's ProVIEW Asset Tracking software solution
 - Structured, secure databases to accommodate multiple locations and input sources
 - Allows each customer site or location to have its own view of its data, and each corporate customer has an aggregated view of all of their locations, inventory and maintenance records
 - Maintenance records are directly linked to individual assets to ensure compliance
 - Provides administrative view for Agilent on usage and maintenance to ensure quality of service and accuracy of billing

The Results

Agilent has recently begun deployment of this solution to locations in Singapore, Switzerland and the United States (Boston). Agilent is pleased to have a simple, cost-effective solution to offer to their customers, as a service — driving additional revenue into their business. Agilent's customers are pleased to be able to have one vendor to provide an end-to-end solution that allows them to focus on their business.

To learn more about Omni-ID's asset management solutions, contact us today!