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## Tessy Plastics' Bar Coding Project

*Each quarter, we'll feature a Q & A on opportunities or challenges that affect your business. This issue, join us as Diane Ramaglia talks about Tessy Plastics' Bar Coded Data Collection project.*

### Services Summary

- ◆ Wireless Networking
- ◆ Bar Coding
- ◆ Automated Data Collection
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is your solution.  
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commitment  
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satisfaction.

**Q:** What was the initial situation at Tessy and how did you decide on a solution -- did you already know how you wanted to solve the problem before IMS became involved?

**A:** Gary Staab had already written a few custom reports for us. We ran into some issues as we were in the process of implementing our bar coding project, so I contacted IMS, and they mentioned that they had already helped other customers with bar coding projects. We had some ideas established when we started on the project, but with the experience that IMS had, they helped Tessy come up with an even better solution.

**Q:** Why is bar coding important? How competitive is your industry?

**A:** Our competition is both domestic and international. Bar coding is very important to Tessy because we are a plastics manufacturing company: inventory accuracy is critical so that MRP is accurate. We managed to improve our accuracy from 70% to over 98%.

**Q:** As the decision maker, you identify a problem and then choose a solution. But working with a new company is always a bit of a risk. What were some of your concerns going into this project?

**A:** We were concerned with support, but

we contacted other customers of IMS and all they had was praise. We were under strict deadlines, and IMS managed to write the programs we needed so that we could stay on track with our timeline, even though IMS came in at the last minute.



Tessy Plastics' Elbridge, NY facility

**Q:** Did this project need to enlarge over time?

**A:** Of course! We started off with just basic programs, but as the users began to work with the bar coding system, they came up with more ideas and reporting needs. This is an on-going project: we are now in the process of working on Resin Receiving and Transfers with DTR.

**Q:** Were there any special challenges, any major disruptions? Any surprises? Were other people involved in the process and were they comfortable with the implementation?

*(Continued on page 3)*



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**Bar coded labeling insures that the right product is shipped to the right customer.**

## Bar Coding 101: Labeling

Are you being asked by your customers to provide product labeling? Do you need to improve your shipping accuracy and have better control over your inventory? A bar coded labeling package can help.

Label Generation is the first step in any bar coding project. Label Generation is the creation of labels, containing a great deal of information, some of it in a bar coded format. That bar code can be in a number of different symbologies. UPC, the bar code used on most consumer goods, is familiar to most of us. Other examples are 2of5 Code 39 and UCC128.

Labels often contain bar coded information. Customers are usually looking for the following product information: their internal part number; product description, purchase order numbers, and box quantity information. In the more controlled industries of medical or automotive, they are looking for revision, lot, or serial number information. Many times the information you provide on the label is dictated by an industry standard, such as AIAG for automotive (see photo), UCC-128 / SSCC-18 for retail or packaged goods, I-2of5 for retail merchants such as Kmart/Lowes, and the ubiquitous UPC code. You will also need bar code labeling if you are doing serialized ASN's for EDI.

There are two ways of obtaining these labels. You can buy them from a supplier, preprinted — depending on volume, this can be more cost efficient. However, this does limit you to fixed information on the label: you need to know up front exactly what is going to be printed on the label. Plus, you need to know your quantity requirements up front as well. Or you can print labels as needed, on demand. This allows for a larger amount of flexibility, as you can control the content of the label and only print the quantity you need immediately.

Why do so many companies use labeling? It's usually a combination of external and

internal requirements. Externally, your customers may be requiring you to meet their own labeling specifications. We mentioned symbology in the paragraph above; it's your customer or the labeling standard that will probably determine which symbology you use. Industry standards sometimes establish a format that the customer is allowed to partially modify. This option may also be bundled with an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) requirement.

All companies need labeling for their internal requirements.....you need to know what's in that box sitting on the warehouse shelf. You need a way of identifying Raw Materials, Finished Goods, and Work in Progress. You also need to know the same things your customer wants to know: i.e. product numbers, descriptions, box quantities, etc. Labels with the right shipping information insure that the product gets to the right customer. And last but not least, you need labeling if you want to do bar coded data collection, the next step in your bar coding project.



Automotive AIAG label

*This article is an excerpt from our presentation at the annual DTR Users Group meeting. Please visit our web site to obtain the complete PowerPoint presentation in the download area, or call Gary Staab to find out if your company would benefit by initiating a Labeling project.*

## Software – Labeling Tools

A turnkey bar coding and data collection system requires a variety of software, equipment and services to be seamlessly integrated. In an effort to de-mystify the process, our newsletters will be providing a series of articles designed to familiarize the non-technical user with the workings of such a system. This issue introduces barcode labeling and the software that is used to create it.

Labeling software, such as Loftware Inc.'s LPS2000, makes label deployment much faster and much simpler. These products consist of a design tool and a print engine.

The design tool is used to create a template of the label. This template describes the position and sizing of all the elements that make up the label. A good analogy is a mail merge. The label template is like the stock letter. It describes the fixed elements visually and keeps place holders for the data to be inserted at printing time.

A Progress program is responsible for

collecting the data that gets sent to the Print Engine. The Print Engine, a program running under Windows NT™, performs the mail merge and printing functions.

We gain tremendous flexibility by separating the design and print functions. For instance, we can create a library of different shipping labels by customer. At run time, the user selects which template they want to print. The data to print, as well as the template name, is sent to the Print Engine. Customer specific labeling requirements are easily handled with a single Progress program.

Our next issue will discuss printers and their various configurations.

*Bob Brennan will be a featured speaker at this year's **World Wide Progress Users Exchange** held on June 3rd—7th in Washington, D.C. He will be presenting a technical session on Wireless Networking.*



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**A:** We seemed to address most items in the project plan, and if we ran into a program issue we contacted IMS and they resolved it within an hour of our call. We had a good training plan in place, and when we turned on Location and Serial Tracking, we were very surprised by the smooth transition. I must admit, we had the employees that were going to use the programs involved throughout the whole process, and that allowed each of them to become a part of the team (very important when implementing such a large project). We welcome new suggestions our employees have to improve the programs or system. If it sounds reasonable, and it cuts down on labor hours, we usually change the programs to handle the request.

**Q:** What would you say were the most important results of this project? Do you feel the expense was justified?

**A:** Inventory Accuracy is the most important result, but I would like to add that the employees enjoy using the programs, as well. It's easy for anyone to use, and when we show off our system, we have the people that actually use the program be the ones to demonstrate it. We justified the cost of this project by increasing our inventory accuracy. Also, we had someone who entered shift reports each shift, which took over two hours, and now it takes this person 15 – 20 minutes to check the data and post.

**Q:** Even a successful project can eventually fall apart if a support structure is not in place. How important was support to you for this project?

**A:** Support is of the highest importance. We needed to know that there would be someone available if a program failed. We got that support from IMS.

*We'd like to thank Diane for sharing her experience with our readers, and congratulate everyone at Tessy Plastics for being awarded Plastics Processor of the Year by Plastics News.*



*Next issue! Look for more information on*

### **IMS WORKSHOPS**

#### **ODBC Connectivity**

15 June 2001  
Bedford, Massachusetts

#### **Results & Report Builder**

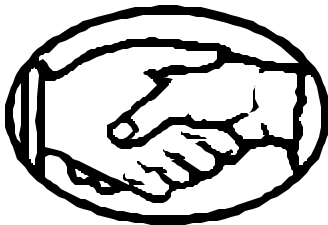
20 July 2001  
Bedford, Massachusetts

#### **Executive Reporting**

17 August 2001  
*to be announced*

#### **Bar Coding 101**

21 September 2001  
*to be announced*



IMS, Inc. and DTR Software International announce the co-development of e-TMM, your e-Commerce solution.

DTR's **e-TMM**: Electronic Commerce is one of the most important benefits of the internet. **e-TMM** allows customers to enter orders, check status of previous orders, verify shipments, view statements, and more—at any time of the night or day, and with no barriers of time or distance.

- ? Sales Representatives save time with **e-TMM**
- ? Representatives can enter orders and confirm status of existing orders
- ? Password security to ensure customers access only their data

e-Commerce is becoming a daily way of doing business in the world of manufacturing.

Beyond DTR's standard offering, IMS, Inc. provides custom e-commerce and business to business web solutions, along with customizations and extensions to **e-TMM**.