

# Trendex Systems

## Asset management solutions



**T**rendex Information Systems Inc. has been driving software development for the distribution and manufacturing sectors for years, supporting compressed gas distributors and welding supply houses since 1981. The company is all about asset management and offers a broad range of software solutions for every aspect of the supply chain.

Asset management is a complex arena, comprised of many different levels of tracking. Trendex excels in cylinder tracking in particular, but this is just one element of the equation as the company offers a whole package of asset management solutions.

All of which are based upon bar coding technology rather than RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification) tags.

RFID typically consists of a small electronic chip and antenna that provides a unique identifier for the object or cylinder that it is tracking. While there is an argument that suggests an RFID device has the advantage of distance and can be read from afar, Trendex disagrees. In the company's experience, RFID tags suffer from something widely known as 'reader collision' and the advantage of distance is in fact countered by concerns of accuracy of tracking.

Trendex President Soumitra Mukherjee explains, "What we found with the RFID tags was that there is a problem with reading them from a distance, because if you are far away from the tags the reader will pick up other tags in the area and read them at the same time."

"You don't really know which one you're reading if they're too close together, because you don't have a line of sight.

Whereas with a barcode you can see the beam hitting that barcode, so you know exactly which one you are reading."

"So when it comes to cylinders and they're next to each other, it's a lot more difficult reading the RFID tags versus reading a barcode. The other issues with RFID tags are that they are unreliable when mounted on metal objects and the cost of the tags, which are still quite expensive compared to a bar code label."

### GASTREND™

Innovating from its head office in the hub city of Montreal, Canada, Trendex has just recently launched the latest incarnation of its GASTREND™ system, a complete accounting and cylinder control software package designed to meet the needs of all compressed gas and welding supply distributors, regardless of size.

Released in February 2011, the system builds on a successful legacy of cylinder control and tracking solutions and was implemented by a client for the first time in January 2012.

Trendex believes that a software package should be flexible in order to meet the requirements of an ever-changing environment, while maintaining its high level of integration. The company offers a wide range of systems, services and solutions to meet the needs of asset management and its ongoing collaboration with existing installations ensures that all Trendex software meets the day-to-day needs of the user as practically as possible.

As part of Trendex's bar coding module that is integrated into its GASTREND™ software, bar code scanners are used to

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generate invoices in a retail environment. Bar codes are also used to receive goods in the warehouse. Its mobile delivery module uses a rugged hand held computer with a bar code scanner built in that can be used to generate delivery notes right in the truck.

### Whole package

The company focuses on providing a whole package of tagging and tracking services. As Mukherjee explains, it's not just tracking that a Trendex system offers distributors.

"It does everything that the welding supply distributor needs to run the business", he says. "Everything from accounting, financial statements, counter sales, order entry, cylinder rental and yearly lease invoicing to the sales analysis."

"Hazardous material and fuel surcharge is automatic and recuperates the rising cost of fuel. Purchasing, quotation, and a kitting module to create welding kits are all part of the system. Invoices, quotes and other documents can be faxed or emailed out of the system to save on paper cost and the environment. It's a whole business system."

### Asset management

Trendex focuses on tracking all types of assets for the welding distributor. Cylinder tracking is just one aspect of the software; Trendex also tracks accuracy of inventory by using bar codes when items are sold.

Asset tracking involves many facets of your business and Trendex offers a complete asset management package. □



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