Returnable container management for automotive

There are millions of containers in automotive supply chains. Lack of disciplined processes and poor visibility create waste in container management. Most OEMs still employ manual methods in the entire process, leading to tracking errors and mishandling. IBM offers a robust, standards-based platform for container tracking to meet the needs of manufacturers.

Steer efficiency into container management

Most members of the automotive supply chain currently have some form of container tracking process in place, but often these are not consistent and do not connect trading partners to one another. Current systems do not address the central goal of container management, which is total visibility and transparency throughout the supply chain.

Typically, containers are tracked via attached barcodes, which require line of sight to capture the serial number. While far more efficient than manual, paper-based tracking, barcodes are limited when compared to radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, which enables non-line of sight read validation.

The returnable container management solution for automotive from IBM enables more effective container tracking to improve the availability of your assets.
This solution includes RFID technology that allows OEMs to create visibility and thereby establish a sense of ownership for containers throughout the entire cycle. RFID also decreases tracking errors with a consistent reading of where your containers are at any given moment in time. In addition, the solution helps you collaborate with suppliers to drive efficiency into the automotive manufacturing and distribution process.

Our solution can help you:

- Gain a faster, more accurate account of containers, even without line-of-sight access.
- Accrue information with rewriteable RFID tags that have the potential to hold extra data.
- Track container movements centrally for tight management and consistency of information.
- Automate container check-in, checkout and accounting processes to avoid human error.
- Eliminate the need for expensive, one-way, disposable packaging with better planning processes.
- Synchronize operations with suppliers to satisfy just-in-time manufacturing.
- Increase collaboration by enabling suppliers to book containers in advance, using a Web-based booking system.
- Leverage historical data to estimate the requirements for each supplier with manufacturing resource planning systems.

IBM is an early adopter of RFID with ongoing research at IBM Watson Labs and the experience of implementing the technology in our own semiconductor manufacturing plant. We support our clients with an extensive network of 13 RFID solution, research and test centers around the world.

We are also a member of the Auto-ID Center Technology Board and EPCglobal™, as well as the author of leading industry white papers and studies on RFID.

For more information
To learn more about returnable container management, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit: ibm.com/automotive