



The Future

While the UCC's RSS Pilot at Dorothy Lane was only a test, CEO Norman Mayne is excited about its eventual implementation in the grocery industry. "I remember when the U.P.C. was first introduced in the early 1970's. It revolutionized the way we did business. The RSS bar code has the potential to be the next revolution for identifying small products. It will help us build a better, deeper relationship with our customers."

According to Tom Rittenhouse of the UCC, Reduced Space Symbology will not be limited to grocery applications. The UCC is working with the leaders of the healthcare industry to bring the same benefits and efficiencies to the identification of small healthcare products. He said, "As a former retailer, I remember how the success of the U.P.C. quickly spread from the grocery industry into general merchandise and apparel and became a global, multi-industry phenomenon. We see the same future and global impact for Reduced Space Symbology. If any industry has a need for robust small item identification, this is the solution."

For More Information...

To learn more about the companies listed in this article, please visit any of the following websites:

Uniform Code Council
www.uc-council.org

Dorothy Lane Markets
www.dorothylane.com

NCR Corporation
www.NCR.com

BASS, Inc.
www.bassinc.com

Hobart Corporation
www.hobartcorp.com

Reduced Space Symbology™ Increases Efficiency and Customer Convenience at Dorothy Lane Markets



Challenge:

Develop a next-generation bar code that addresses the need for more product information in a limited labeling area.

Solution:

Responding to the needs of the business community for a global solution for smaller bar codes that carry more product information, Reduced Space Symbology™ (RSS) was developed by the Uniform Code Council in cooperation with user groups and leading technology providers. This small, breakthrough bar code enables complete identification for small products that could not utilize the larger size Universal Product Code (U.P.C.) or where existing labeling areas are limited in size.

Benefits:

Supermarket operators will be able to achieve full implementation of Category Management in produce and variable measure products (meat, poultry, deli, seafood). Greater information captured at the checkout counter will improve store-specific replenishment processes. Front-end speed and accuracy of transactions are increased, while spoilage and shrink are reduced.



Revolutionary small bar code from the Uniform Code Council brings robust identification to produce and meat categories. This innovative solution produces greater convenience for customer and cashier, and results in an improved bottom line for supermarket operators.

Since its founding in 1948, Dorothy Lane Markets has earned a reputation as a grocery innovator that extends far beyond the walls of their Dayton, Ohio supermarkets. With only two locations, this progressive, upscale grocer competes successfully against larger chains. Its reputation for innovation and outstanding customer service attracts visiting grocery executives from around the country and from Europe, Japan, and Australia.

Norman Mayne, the CEO of the family-owned and operated Dorothy Lane Markets, said there is no secret to the success of his two stores. The second-generation grocery owner said, "We have a real culture of innovation at our stores. Our associates are encouraged and empowered to find new ways to better serve our customers."

The organization-wide commitment to the needs of its customers has led Dorothy Lane Markets to become one of the industry's leading innovators. While the two stores succeed against larger supermarket chains, Dorothy Lane continues to seek new ways to improve the customer experience and the bottom line as part of its customer loyalty program. Mayne added, "We reward our customers for their loyalty and support. Anything that we can do to improve our operations is re-invested in our customers. It allows us to give them better prices, more selection and services, and greater rewards."

The Need for Increased, Accurate Product Data

The supermarket industry is built on a foundation of razor-thin margins. From small owners like Norman Mayne to national supermarket chains, operators are constantly challenged to find new ways to reduce costs and better respond to the needs of their customers.

One of the most important tools in reducing costs for both retailers and consumers was the development and implementation of the Universal Product Code (U.P.C.). Originally developed by the Uniform Code Council in 1974 as a domestic grocery solution, the U.P.C. has been recognized as one of the most important innovations in the history of commerce. Today, the U.P.C. is scanned in over five billion daily transactions around the world and has become the basis of the global EAN-UCC System that produces significant operational efficiencies for the grocery sector and 22 other major industries.

While the U.P.C. has revolutionized the checkout counter and generates billions of dollars in savings every year for the supermarket industry, the current bar code technology used for produce and variable measure grocery products did not provide full and detailed product information.

The size of the traditional U.P.C. made it impractical to be placed on loose fruit and other produce. The only option available to capture product information was a four-digit (regular) or five-digit (organic) Price Look Up number (PLU), which is hand-keyed by the cashier. This process is subject to human error and provides only generic and limited product information.

With variable measure products like meat, poultry, deli, or seafood, current U.P.C. capabilities could only encode the commodity code (such as a "T-bone steak") and price on the

bar code. Like produce, the information is limited and prevents supermarket operators from achieving full implementation of Category Management.

The Solution

Meat and produce categories represent untapped opportunities for supermarket operators to capture greater product information and eliminate costs. In 1997, the Uniform Code Council responded to this need and began to work with user groups and technology providers to develop Reduced Space Symbology™ (RSS), a new family of smaller bar codes that could be utilized for small item identification.

Tom Rittenhouse, the President and CEO of the Uniform Code Council,



said, "Our users told us they wanted smaller bar codes that carried more information. The collaborative development resulted in more than one solution, a family of bar code symbols that enable a broad range of applications."

Smaller Symbol, Bigger Features

Reduced Space Symbology was developed as a family of seven linear symbologies to provide users with features that address specific space-constrained applications and needs. The symbols include RSS-14™, RSS-14™ Stacked Omnidirectional (used for loose produce), RSS Expanded™, RSS Expanded™ Stacked (used for variable measure

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applications), RSS-14™ Truncated, RSS-14™ Stacked, and RSS Limited™. The new symbols are significantly smaller than the traditional U.P.C. and other related symbologies used in the EAN-UCC System.

Despite their smaller size, the RSS symbologies are deceptively powerful. Tom Brady, the Uniform Code Council's Vice President of Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) said, "While RSS is a breakthrough in theory and design, our user and technical committees did a tremendous job to address its real-world implementation. These new symbols print and scan well, carry more product information, and complement existing technologies and applications."

From Research Lab to Checkout Lane

Continuing the company's willingness to embrace opportunities for innovation, Dorothy Lane Markets agreed to serve as the initial host site for the Uniform Code Council's RSS Pilot Program. Joining in this historic, live in-store test was NCR Corporation, a provider of Point of Sale transaction solutions; BASS, Inc., a developer of supermarket software; and Hobart Corporation, an equipment manufacturer for the supermarket industry.

The in-store pilot began in February 2001 with the implementation and integration of hardware, software and

bar code symbologies. NCR upgraded Dorothy Lane's front-end hardware configuration with its NCR 7875 Bi-Optic AR scanner and new NCR 7453 terminal systems. BASS installed new releases of BASSpoint and MerchaNT to provide functionality to recognize, handle, process, and report meat and produce items marked with RSS. Hobart upgraded the software on the existing Hobart Ultima and Quantum scales used at the store in order to provide RSS capability for weighing and labeling meat products.

Faster, Accurate Checkouts

Once the equipment and software upgrades were installed, Dorothy Lane Markets trained its personnel on how to handle the new bar codes for the live test. Norman Mayne saw immediate changes, particularly at the checkout lane. He said, "RSS will bring greater speed and accuracy to the checkout process. It eliminates produce PLUs and enables us to capture more specific sales information."

RSS will give supermarket operators supplier-specific information on customer purchase patterns. This knowledge will enable them to manage their replenishment and inventory activities with more accuracy and efficiency. Implementation of this small - yet - innovative bar code will reduce shrink and spoilage, two crucial areas that impact margins and profitability. Suppliers will also benefit from RSS with the ability to build and monitor brand awareness at the store level.



According to Mayne, another important benefit of the new bar code was the enhanced speed of the checkout process. He added, "In the future, we won't have to train cashiers on PLU codes, nor will we have to worry about incorrect PLU entries. Most importantly, RSS helps get customers through the checkout lane faster. Your store can have great ambiance, prices, and selection, but if the checkout process is long and cumbersome for your customers, all that hard work is for naught."

More Detailed Information for Meat, Poultry, Seafood, Deli

For the sale of variable measure products, such as meat, deli, or seafood, Reduced Space Symbology means increased product information.

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While current bar coding of these variable measure categories is limited to a commodity code and price, RSS can encode the manufacturer's or supplier's information (i.e., brand), lot or batch number, package weight, and price.

With increased concern about consumer safety and product traceability, RSS brings new identification power to the meat, poultry, deli, seafood, and deli categories. Jack Gridley, the Meat and Seafood Manager for Dorothy Lane Markets, sees RSS playing an important role in food safety. He said, "With current technology, there just wasn't enough label space for the information we needed."



RSS lays the groundwork for accurate traceability of these products back to the specific supply source. It will help us close the information gap and ensure higher levels of consumer safety."

Greater Category Management

The RSS pilot test at Dorothy Lane Markets produced new streams of valuable information for the meat and produce categories. John Terwilliger, the Vice President of Global Marketplace for the Uniform Code Council said, "For years, the full power of the U.P.C. and the EAN-UCC System could not reach the meat and produce categories. RSS will allow supermarket operators to know exactly what their customers are buying in the produce and variable measure categories and enable them to improve replenishment and inventory management practices."

Amy Brinkmoeller, the Information Systems Manager for Dorothy Lane Markets, believes the added information RSS captures will improve margins and add profits to the bottom line. She said, "BASS, NCR, and Hobart made this a surprisingly smooth implementation. While this has been a limited test, we see enormous potential in terms of promotions and using the increased information to better connect with our customers. With better category management using RSS, we will definitely reduce shrink and spoilage in produce and meat."