Without a Trace

ACSIS

With the growing number of product recalls, industries such as food and beverage have been under intense scrutiny like never before. Recent years have involved a number of serious — and even deadly — safety incidents, which means the need to protect your supply chain is key for survival. Any weak link in the supply chain, no matter how obscure and (seemingly) insignificant, can inflict million-dollar damage, not to mention threaten public health.

“We are in an age when consumers are too savvy to rely on brand loyalty anymore,” said John DiPalo, Chief Technology Officer for Acsis, Inc. “People want more than just reassurances that their medicine and food products are safe. They want to know where their food originated and are demanding a safer drug supply chain. Companies who fail to answer this call will ultimately get left behind as consumers turn toward those can give them access to this precise type of data.”

Lack of Accountability Is a Killer

An estimated 76 million Americans are sickened each year by foodborne illnesses, with 5,000 fatalities annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This costs the U.S. economy $152 billion a year in health care and related expenses. In fact, 94 percent of large food and beverage companies (revenues greater than $2 billion) put "health and well-being" at the top of their consumer trends list. This suggests that anything that even smells of a food quality issue is one of their biggest nightmares. “Freshness” is the next issue on the list of

what matters. Although the food industry has started to take steps to implement new technologies to reduce the impact of issues caused by a comprised supply chain, there is still more to be done.

“The simple truth is that current ERP systems do not give manufacturers and distributors the whole picture,” DiPalo said. “Often, there is no true visibility of any given product within the supply chain, leaving these outdated (and usually manually-processed) traceability systems wide open to errors. Mistakes with improper or no serialization can lead to an unrecoverable breakdown in a supply chain that can have far-reaching and long-lasting consequences.”

With more companies outsourcing for raw materials and distribution, having end-to-end visibility in a supply chain is an absolute necessity in order to ensure public safety, as well as brand protection. While branding is the proven means of gaining consumer loyalty, there is downside — the stronger the brand, the greater the risk. A global brand's strength can become a liability overnight if tainted with a product quality issue such as a food or medication scandal. That’s why many organizations are evaluating how item-level serialization can benefit their traceability initiatives to support return and recall management in order to reduce lost revenue.

Transform Your Purchase Order into the Perfect Order

“A traceability solution is only as good as the data it provides,” DiPalo said. “The data itself is an integral part of the product quality, so it needs to provide an accurate picture of where your products are at any given time in your supply chain. A food traceability system is effective in mitigating risks only if it meets specific requirements — both technological and regulatory — meaning it can track and trace every component of every product.”

What companies need is complete product traceability, from source to store. Acsis’ comes in with its Enterprise Serialization Solution (ESS). Acsis’ ProducTrak solution suite links valuable production data, such as ingredients, production batch, etc., with the ability to deliver real-time product visibility — anytime, anywhere.

As we’ve seen with recent demands from consumers, the challenge for companies is clear: focus on product traceability systems that protect both the public and the brand. Acsis’ products were designed with these goals in mind. ProducTrak provides the infrastructure so that in the event of a food crisis, such as a recall, the process is streamlined.

“One of the major short-comings with many traceability solutions today is the lack of ability to provide technological compatibility among different systems, especially within a specific supply chain,” DiPalo continued. “Acsis ProducTrak brings real-time connectivity to every point in the supply chain, from incoming materials, through processing, warehousing and distribution. It does this by providing the infrastructure to manage any number of monitoring sensors, label scanners, PLCs, label printers and a host of other real-time devices where the action is, on the shop floor and in the warehouse.

“With ProducTrak, the enterprise gets the second-by-second data it needs for effective management: what went where, how much of it went there, when, and what exactly was going on in the plant at the time,” DiPalo continued. “This is truly granular data, the key to quality assurance and damage control, brand image and corporate performance.”

For more information, please visit www.acsisinc.com *[1].*

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