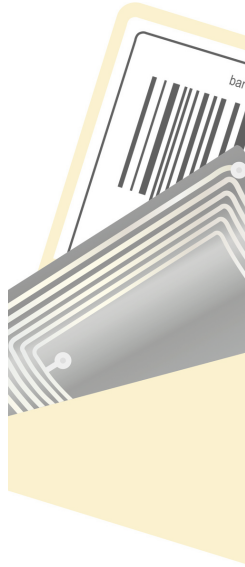


# THE 'WAVE' OF RFID IN FASHION SUPPLY CHAIN

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Radio-frequency identification (RFID) has long been recognized for its efficiency at retail point-of-sale systems. But less noticed is the potential to capture RFID efficiencies further upstream in the supply chain. TradeLink Technologies (TradeLink) built upon its vendor packing software to offer fashion vendors the **RF Scan & Verify** solution. Our vendors are now easily transitioning to RFID for packing optimization. This scalability has created a 'wave' of RFID adoption across Ralph Lauren, H&M, and Nordstrom vendors. Here's how we did it.



## A Little About Our Company

This wave started when Ralph Lauren began tagging their products with RFID for point-of-sale use. TradeLink had been providing packing compliance solutions to Ralph Lauren for over 15 years to help automate their supply chain. Naturally, Ralph Lauren vendors directly reached out to TradeLink with queries about these new RFID tags and if they could be leveraged for the packing process. Given the clear enthusiasm by vendors, we designed an RFID-enabled process for them.

"Since the RFID solution also supports serialization, this RFID enhancement was a no brainer."

— Daniel Entac, Managing Director  
TradeLink Technologies Inc.

At TradeLink, we had been working with RFID technology for years in terms of our WIP tracking solution. We were quickly able to apply that experience to the existing **Barcode Scan & Pack** software. As such, vendors who were already using our Scan & Pack could easily transition to RFID without having to worry about time-consuming or costly implementations.



## How does RF Scan & Verify Work?

Traditional **Barcode Scan & Pack** requires vendors to scan the items as they're packing them into cartons. Our software verifies each scan against the purchase order or packing plan and then prints the carton label automatically. With RFID, scanning doesn't have to be incremental.

**RF Scan & Verify** allows vendors to first pack a carton and then verify all the packed items as a single batch. Crucially, RFID tags do not require line-of-sight for scanning and dozens or even hundreds of tags can be scanned at the same time.

Our RFID solution also enables EPC communication between parties – greatly enhancing visibility and traceability back to source. EPC's can serve as a corroborating mechanism to settle disputes when discrepancies arise and increase certainty in the supply chain with unique identifiers/validation at the item level.



We tested and piloted with a number of vendors in 4 different countries. The packing time was reduced by 40-60% as compared to the conventional **Barcode Scan & Pack**. Normal packing audits of 10% further demonstrated significant improvements in accuracy. On the basis of these impressive results, the RFID-enabled packing process was greenlighted for a receptive vendor base.

Ralph Lauren now actively recommends their vendors to upgrade to this packing solution. With more than a third of their shipping volume RFID-enabled, TradeLink projects that the **RF Scan & Verify** solution will become the predominant packing process in the near future for Ralph Lauren.

*"It is the new Gold Standard for ASN compliance due to its numerous benefits and accuracy."*

– Jill Shokery, Sr. Director  
Ralph Lauren Global Vendor Operations

With a proven origin-based RFID supply chain established, the benefits for vendors and their importers are just getting started. TradeLink's RFID 'wave' now includes H&M and Nordstrom.

