

RFID Phased Approach Needs Improvement

Adi Tedjasaputra,
RFID Asia Founder

The use of phased approach for the organisational adoption of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology is no longer adequate in today's rapidly changing business environment and technological advances. Companies need to think big, start smart and scale up with agility to integrate RFID solutions that resonate with organisational business goals and needs.

Different Industries have started to consider Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology as an enabler to achieve business goals.

Various RFID applications are increasingly developed to improve business processes, transform user experiences and provide a peace of mind. The recent patent application for multimedia mobile personalization system is an example of what RFID can offer to enable multimedia devices to sort, display or restrict multimedia content based on user preferences.

Nevertheless, it is still difficult for many companies to adopt the RFID technology due to the reasons such as high investment, long-term return and high failure risks. Unfortunately, many companies often jump into such pessimistic conclusions before doing any RFID technology SWOT and stakeholder analysis for their organisations.

RFID myths and hypes even make the situation worse. For example, an article written by one of the largest information technology company in the world cites that RFID is the next-generation barcode technology. The fact is that the RFID technology uses a different identification technique or protocol from the barcode technology. The RFID application as a data capture technology is complementary to the barcode system. Even if the RFID technology would replace the barcode technology completely, it would not work the way barcode technology works because the RFID technology does not need to have any visual information representation for the purpose of data capture.

Phased Approach

Many companies suggest the use of phased approach to their clients for assessing and implementing the RFID technology. A phased approach is a modular approach consisting of several distinct phases that intends to guide a company in designing and implementing an RFID system.

Despite their many "brand names", the characteristics of phased approaches are similar:

- Progression through several distinct phases
- Uni-directional forward process flow
- Forward-thinking attitude

The strengths of the phased approach are related to its rigid structure, which include the followings:

- Distinct deliverables in each phase
- Distinct checkpoints
- Gradual progression
- Immunity from changes

On the other hand, the rigid structure of the phase approach has the following weaknesses:

- Inflexibility
- Heavy up-front resources investment
- Susceptible to "one size fits all" attitude

Think Big, Start Smart, Scale Up with Agility

Offering a phased approach to assess the potential of RFID technology and its business impact is no longer adequate to assess and harness the RFID technology potentials in today's rapidly changing business environment and technological advances. The impact of RFID technology upon organisational business can go beyond a better visibility for supply chain and asset managements.

In addition, RFID is not a silver bullet. As an enabler to achieve business objectives, RFID technology usually requires an integration with the existing infrastructure, business processes and often with some other technologies. However, the need to consider many factors in an RFID system integration does not necessarily mean that the technology is immature. RFID has been around for many years and improved substantially due to the rapid technology advances.

A holistic understanding of RFID technological strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) and stakeholders for specific applications and organisations is the key adoption success. Companies need to **think big, start smart** and **scale up with agility**.

RFID Agility Programme

Understanding the need to improve the phased approach, TRANSLATE-EASY has developed the RFID Agility Programme that supports organisations in understanding the RFID technological SWOT and stakeholders with agility during an RFID system integration. The programme focuses on improving **business processes**, transforming user experiences and catering to **privacy** and **security** issues, while at the same time fulfilling any **technical RFID requirements**.

If you are interested in designing and implementing RFID solutions that resonate with your organisational business goals and needs, the programme can guide your organisation in a customisable activity-based structure.

The characteristics of the programme include the followings:

- **Greater flexibility** compared to the traditional phased approach due to its activity-based structure
- **No reinvention of the wheel** due to the rapid and accurate feedback gathering and redundancy avoidance mechanisms
- **Built-in checkpoints and deliverables**
- **Agility** to move forward between process transitions swiftly
- **Optimisation** for resources utilisation and allocation
- **Decision** making support mechanism
- **Priority** definition support mechanism

By the end of the programme, a company can expect specific reliable and sustainable results that can minimise the dependency on third party and reduce the maintenance cost substantially.