

## CompuSystems Uses RFID to Provide Verified Attendance Figures

*“CompuSystems’ RFID solution enhanced the show experience by allowing people to enter the show floor quickly in order to connect with buyers and sellers.”*

*— Paige Cardwell, President of the Creative Solutions Group for National Trade Productions*

### Challenge:

Each year, Coverings brings together more than 37,000 people from around the world to showcase the latest trends in ceramic tile and natural stone. National Trade Productions (NTP), the Virginia-based trade show management company that manages the event, needed a reliable solution to quickly gather attendance data and accurately measure verified attendance on the trade show floor. For the 2008 event, they teamed up with CompuSystems to provide registration and attendance verification solutions.

### Solution:

CompuSystems utilized radio frequency identification (RFID) – a technology that uses radio waves to electronically pass data between a tag (microchip and antenna) and a reader – to validate attendance and accurately track entrance/exit patterns. The attendee badges were all embedded with these passive tags, each encoded with a unique identifier similar to electronic toll collection systems. Passive tags require no internal power source; they are only active when a reader is nearby to power them.

Antennas were unobtrusively set up inside each of the four doorways that provided access to the 2.1 million-square foot exhibit hall. Since the RFID chips utilized ultra-high frequency signals, the antennas could be mounted high enough above the floor to be out of the way and virtually unnoticed by the attendees.

### Results:

The RFID system at Coverings was designed to be efficient and robust. NTP was able to track a large number of people entering and exiting the show floor at any one time. In addition, by using a chip that was integrated within the show badge, this single-badge credential improved the efficiency of onsite registration and badge generation.

“The reason for choosing CompuSystems’ RFID solution was to keep the flow of attendees on to and off of the show floor as smooth as possible, while still accurately counting people as they enter and exit the show floor,” said Paige Cardwell, President of the Creative Solutions Group for National Trade Productions.

“RFID also reduced the costs we incurred in past years when we would follow up with attendees by phone who we may have missed with the hand scanners at the doors, or those who did not pick up badges at registration. Additionally, we were able to greatly improve the read rate of the badges over the course of all the show days compared to previous years’ rates,” Cardwell added.

By utilizing CompuSystems’ RFID technology, NTP also gathered valuable information for future use when laying out the show floor in 2009. With four separate entrances in use, they were able to gain a better understanding of the efficiencies in traffic entrance and exit patterns.

### Key benefits of CompuSystems’ RFID system include:

- 1) The system offers a long read-range, and does not require contact or direct line of sight, enabling attendees to enter without needing to stop to be scanned;
- 2) RFID tag integrated within regular badge stock, enabling the use of a single badge credential; thus eliminating waste during and after the show;
- 3) Accuracy of attendance figures improved over past methods of confirming which registrants actually entered the show floor.