

AS SEEN IN



DEALERNEWS

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

From chewing gum to vehicles, bar codes aid effective inventory management

BY IAN REILLY

In June 1974 at a grocery store less than 50 km from Reynolds' world headquarters in Dayton, Ohio, history was made when a customer bought a pack of chewing gum.

Instead of manually keying the sale into the cash register, the cashier scanned the gum's bar code to record the purchase. That was the first commercial use of the bar code. The first Canadian use came a month later.

Since those initial transactions more than 40 years ago, the bar code has helped transform retailing and has become the linchpin in the retail supply chain.

Across businesses of all sizes today, bar-code technologies help to automate manual functions, which can help employees work smarter and more efficiently.

In the dealership, there is one function that is ripe for implementing bar-code technologies for a smoother, more



Ian Reilly

efficient retail process. That function is vehicle inventory management.

Vehicle bar-code technologies can help retailers gain control of their inventory in a number of ways from the time vehicles arrive on the lot until they are sold.

First, dealership personnel can use

“The electronic inventory process can be up to 80 per cent faster than manually keying in VINs, so dealers often find they can perform more frequent physical inventories.”

bar-code tools to more quickly stock in a vehicle when it arrives on the lot, accurately adding it to DMS inventory and making it available for sale faster.

Second, for inventory audits, dealership personnel can scan each vehicle's bar code, upload the data to the DMS and run exception reports for management to review for discrepancies.

The electronic inventory process can be up to 80 per cent faster than manu-

ally keying in VINs, so dealers often find they can perform more frequent physical inventories. What's more, some solutions let personnel add comments about damage on vehicles during inspections. This lets dealers take care of issues before a customer finds them.

Finally, dealership personnel can use vehicle bar-code tools to easily update lot locations associated with the DMS inventory record when cars are moved.

This helps the sales staff accurately identify the exact lot location of a vehicle when a customer asks to see it.

As dealers continue to look for ways to run their retail operation more effectively and efficiently, vehicle bar-code technologies can be an important tool in helping dealership staff spend less time on administration and data entry and more time on selling cars.

Ian Reilly is the V-P of sales for Reynolds Canada