



## The Case for APICS Involvement with Auto-ID Technology

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For the most part, APICS missed the big revolution that resulted from the adoption of bar codes during the 1980's. Part of the reason traces to a historical lack of involvement from the food industry in society matters. With the formation of the Process Industries Specific Industry Group (SIG) during the 1980's, along with the involvement of several software companies and others from academia, APICS began to address the issue of greater involvement from the food industry. Before efforts reached operating potential, other groups such as the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) and the Uniform Code Council (UCC) had formed to initiate bar codes in practice. Subsequently, APICS lost a great deal of influence concerning the emerging area of bar codes.

Both the GMA and the UCC were very successful. Today, the UCC has over 250,000 US-based members. The establishment of industry standards for the Universal Product Code (UPC) is a major reason so many organizations belong to the UCC. Though APICS is not in a position to develop industry standards for product identification, the organization does have the opportunity to establish educational standards for the emerging area of Auto-ID technology.

Now we have a new development, the Electric Product Code (EPC), that holds every bit as much potential as the bar code did during the 1980's. With an EPC, products can not only be identified, but also identified uniquely. The EPC has many advantages and will serve as an alternative to established bar code technology during the coming years.

In recognition of the EPC, Walmart, the Department of Defense and the Food and Drug Administration have all announced plans to utilize this new technology for internal operations and with external vendors.

APICS is in a critical position to take advantage of these developments by providing research and educational programs that benefit practitioners.

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