



# The Promoter's Guide to RFID Integration

6 Essentials to Rock RFID at  
Your Festival

# Redefine the Festival Experience with RFID

It's no secret that the rise of RFID technology is setting a higher standard for festival production. With RFID, festivals have become more than a concert, film viewing, or wine tasting; they're a personalized experience for each individual in the crowd. Instant secure access, cashless payments, and social media integration mean fans no longer have to worry about tickets, wallets, or phone reception. Everything is on the wrist - you can't get more convenient than that!

It all began in 2000 when PDC patented the first RFID wristband, SmartBand®, for secure access control and anti-counterfeit applications in the leisure and entertainment industry. In 2004, the SXSW music festival implemented PDC's Smart Band® wristband system during the week-long festival and ultimately eliminated counterfeits, increased ticket sales, and improved public safety. This ignited the new era of "smart" identification in the festivals industry. Over the last two decades, today's top music festivals, amusement parks, water parks, resorts, and brand activation events have trusted PDC's Smart® RFID wristband systems to deliver superb guest experiences.

Today, festivals continue to use RFID with overwhelming success attributed to two main factors:



- 1. Festivals Love The Performance:** enhanced revenue, fail-proof access control, maximized efficiencies, and instant data analytics for smarter, faster decisions



- 2. Fans Love the Experience:** convenience, security, and interactive features

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# How Does RFID Work?

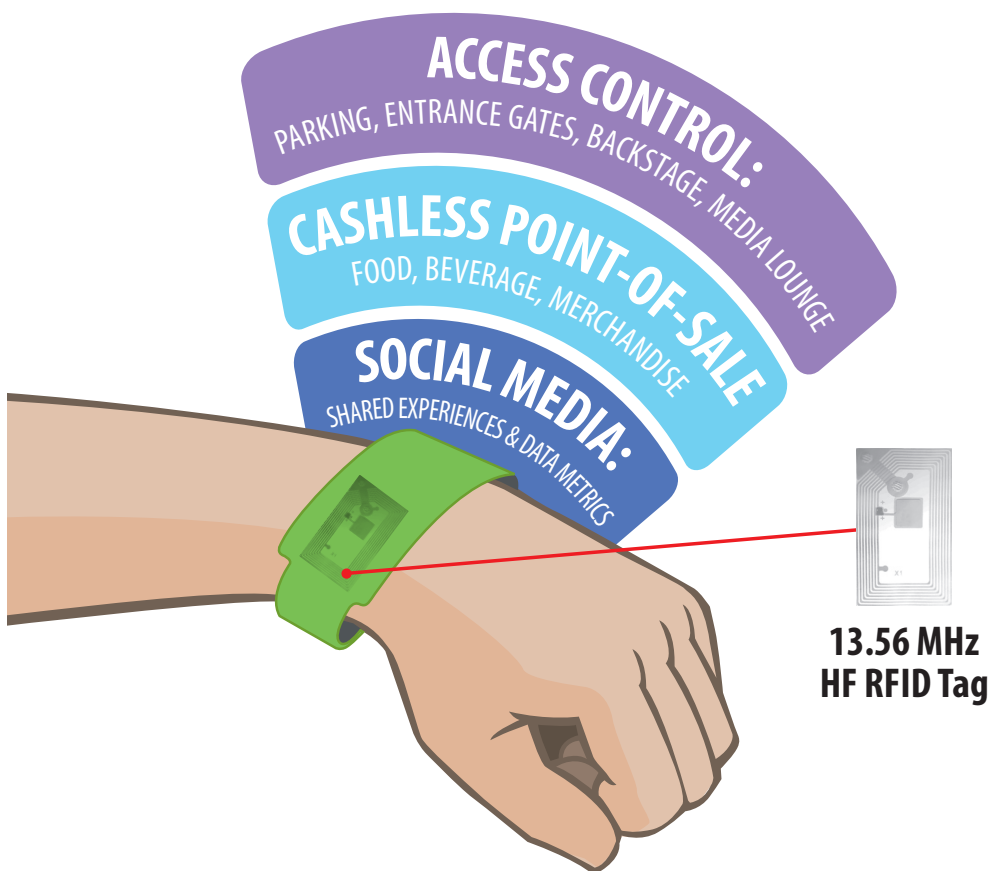
An RFID tag is comprised of two parts – an antenna for transmitting and receiving signals, and a microchip which stores the tag's ID and other information. Unlike a magnetic stripe or bar code, RFID allows for data transfer without the need for physical contact or line-of-sight reading. RFID is used in hundreds of applications worldwide.

HF tags at 13.56 MHz are most commonly used in the festival industry with a read/write range of just a few inches, high storage capacities, and fast data writing. These advanced capabilities make RFID extremely quick and accurate, requiring little to no effort on the part of staff or fans to use it effectively.



# What Makes SmartBand<sup>®</sup> Smart?

PDC Smart<sup>®</sup> wristbands revolve around a tiny flat RFID chip securely sealed inside a non-transferable wristband, which is programmed with a unique identification number (UID). The tag requires a signal from a reader to activate the tag and authorize access, payment, or a social media post. PDC Smart<sup>®</sup> wristbands replace traditional forms of identification and tickets that get lost or can easily be counterfeited.



# 6 ESSENTIALS TO ROCK RFID AT YOUR FESTIVAL

## STEP

# 1

## Identify the Right Applications that Support Your Festival's Goals

*RFID is not one-size fits all. Start by defining your festival's goals and objectives to determine what RFID applications are the best fit. Do you want to simplify and streamline festival entrance, parking, and campground admissions? Do you want to gather data about your attendees? Do you want to increase sales and sponsorship revenue? The beauty of RFID is you can start small and add new applications from event to event.*



## Access Control Applications:

- **Eliminate Ticket Fraud:** Counterfeit tickets = lost revenue + damage to your festival brand. The unique identifier of each RFID wristband makes it the ultimate anti-counterfeit credential! Since every wristband is registered to a specific fan, you have the power to investigate and take action if credential abuse arises.
- **Streamline Admissions:** Festival entrance portals can validate over 2,000 RFID wristbands per hour, drastically reducing queuing times and number of employees needed. Get your fans in quicker, get them engaged, and spending money.
- **Reduce Overhead Costs:** RFID eliminates the headaches of manual access verification, resulting in fewer staff needed to oversee entry locations, parking, and camping grounds.
- **Increase Security:** RFID access control eliminates unauthorized access to restricted locations like backstage, VIP areas, and media lounges. Staff members will have the upper hand when being pressured by guests for special access.
- **Gain Real-Time Traffic Flow Insights:** Real-time data capture helps employees manage available parking spaces and monitor access locations and crowd capacity to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources needed to manage each on-site location.

THE ULTIMATE  
ANTI-COUNTERFEIT  
CREDENTIAL!

VALIDATE  
**OVER 2,000**  
RFID WRISTBANDS  
PER HOUR

REAL-TIME  
DATA  
CAPTURE



photo credit: Intellitix

## Cashless Payment Applications:

- **Maximize Food, Beverage & Retail Revenue:** The easier it is for guests to spend money, the more money is spent. On average, festivals can expect to see an increase in food and beverage sales between 15-30% and a decrease in shrinkage when RFID cashless payments are implemented.
- **Create Safer, Secure Payment Transactions:** Eliminating the need to carry large sums of cash makes your event more secure for vendors and customers. Plus, RFID cashless payments provide an easier way to reconcile transactions with your vendors.

- **Decrease Purchase Wait Times:** Long lines = less spending. RFID enabled cashless payments are nearly 50% faster than cash or card transactions, allowing fans to quickly get what they need, and spend more time enjoying the event.

**NOTE: Success of your RFID Cashless program is dependent upon your cashless provider and proper execution and contingency plan.**

INCREASE FOOD  
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photo credit: Intellitix

## Social Media Applications:

- **Capture Powerful Fan Data:** Nearly half of fan data goes uncaptured during the ticket sale process. Requiring fans to register their RFID wristband pre-event will help you gain powerful fan demographic data. Additional real-time social engagement data capture provides the most intimate look into fan “likes” and event behavior to bolster future event marketing efforts.
- **Increase Sponsorship Revenue:** Large sponsors have more to spend, but they need to show ROI. Offering sponsors RFID-powered fan engagement with instant data analytics provides stronger negotiating power for sponsorship revenue. RFID provides meaningful connections between a sponsor and fan through instant purchases, coupons, or product reminders, and any variety of social engagement including Facebook check-ins, contests, scavenger hunts, and photos.

Since RFID tracks social engagement before, during, and after your event, you’ll be equipped with valuable data when pitching to potential sponsors the following year.

- **Spread the Word:** There are 20 million online conversations about festivals every year. Improve your event’s reach by allowing your fans to become brand ambassadors through social media applications. Each on-site social media interaction is proven to result in up to 1,000 virtual page impressions, boosting your brand and increasing your marketing ROI.

GAIN  
POWERFUL FAN  
DEMOGRAPHIC  
DATA

STRONGER  
NEGOTIATING  
POWER FOR  
SPONSORSHIP  
REVENUE

EACH POST  
CAN GENERATE  
**1,000**  
IMPRESSIONS

# 6 ESSENTIALS TO ROCK RFID AT YOUR FESTIVAL

## STEP

# 2

## Select an Experienced RFID Partner

*Your ticketing, access control, and POS partners are vital to the success of RFID at your festival. There are many solution providers to select from, but take the time to do your research to select a provider you trust with the experience to back it up!*



## **Do They Have Experience You Can Trust?**

Overall cost can have a major influence on the solution provider you choose, but don't make your decision based on price alone. Who are their best clients? Can they help you build a successful RFID plan? Go ahead and test their platform to ensure transactions are easy. Your choice in a partner can have a substantial impact on the success of the program and end-user experience.

## **Do They Offer On-site Training and Support?**

Implementing any RFID application at your festival is not plug and play. Your RFID partner should be able to provide staff training, on-site technical services, and support to ensure an efficient and functional RFID solution. Make sure your partner has a back-up plan to alleviate any issues that may arise.

# 6 ESSENTIALS TO ROCK RFID AT YOUR FESTIVAL

## STEP

# 3

## **Establish Your RFID Equipment & Infrastructure Needs**

*All RFID applications will require special equipment and internet connectivity to operate. You should work closely with your RFID providers to make sure the solutions will work within the unique environment of your event. This should include an on-site assessment to determine the network and infrastructure needed to support your RFID applications.*



RFID Admission Entrance Portals

photo credit: Intellitix

## Access Control Applications:

Handheld readers or entrance portals should be positioned at each festival gate, parking, and camping entrance location. A stable internet connection is needed to read and verify the access credentials against your database.

## Cashless Point-of-Sale:

Cashless Point-of-Sale systems depend on how many vendors and locations will be set up for cashless payments. Your cashless provider should assess your festival to determine the equipment and internet infrastructure requirements. It's also imperative that your cashless provider provide a contingency plan for any system downtime to ensure transactions run smoothly throughout the course of your festival.



Point-of-Sale RFID Payment Reader

photo credit: Intellitix



Social Media RFID Kiosk

photo credit: Intellitix

## Social Media:

RFID readers and internet connectivity will vary based on the needs of the applications featured throughout your event. Your social media provider should help build a strategic map of social engagement points throughout your festival to support your goals and objectives. Public Wi-Fi zones are also recommended to allow fans to post their own social media updates—these fans will become your own 24 hour PR team!

# 6 ESSENTIALS TO ROCK RFID AT YOUR FESTIVAL

## STEP

# 4

## Select the Right RFID Credentials:

*Your credentials provider should be able to help you select the right wristband and other access credentials to meet your event's requirements and budget. Depending on the size of your event and complexity of your RFID credential order, make sure you **begin the order process three-to-six months in advance**. This will give you time to design your artwork and have the inventory in hand for pre-event fulfillment.*

**NOTE:** *It's highly recommended to bring your security team into the credential design process. They're your internal customer who may need to visually identify fan credentials in both fair and low light conditions. You'll want to make sure colors are bright enough and there is enough visual differentiation between every access level.*

# Attendee Credentials

The festival wristband is the first impression you will make with fans. It's your fans' badge of honor. A comfortable wristband with a cool custom design ensures proud fans will wear it long past the event date as bragging rights among friends and co-workers. While RFID wristbands come in all shapes and sizes, most festivals choose soft, comfortable fabric wristbands with a locking closure to prevent transfer.



PDC Smart® Woven Wristbands

When choosing the design of your wristband, think about your festival's brand and what will resonate with the demographics of your audience. Your festival logo should be prominently displayed along with a design, slogan or words that support the brand. Many festivals will also create a separate design for each level of access as an added layer of security.

# Camping & Parking Credentials

Parking windshield decals and hang tags are the perfect complement to your RFID wristband program. They provide streamlined parking management for large events where security and manual traffic directing can be complicated and difficult to control. Decals are available in two versions: tamper-evident and static cling, and affix to the inside of the windshield for easy scanning and visibility.

The design of your camping and parking decals can complement your wristband artwork and festival theme. Create separate designs for visual verification of parking, camping, and other access permissions.



PDC Smart® Windshield Decals & Hang Tags



PDC Smart® Badge & Lanyard

# Staff & Media Credentials

RFID cards and badges provide seamless integration for employee access control, attendance, and timekeeping. Using a single RFID credential to power these functions simplifies festival staff management through automated reports and unique access control assignments, including different levels and hours of access per employee.

# 6 ESSENTIALS TO ROCK RFID AT YOUR FESTIVAL

## STEP

# 5



## **Set Your RFID Credential Fulfillment Strategy:**

*There's no right or wrong way to fulfill RFID credentials for your festival. Your strategy will depend on your pre-sale plan and your ticketing companies service offering. Be sure to keep the fan's experience in mind, as the process should be as hassle-free as possible to keep fans coming back.*



# Pre-Event

Mailing wristbands pre-event helps reduce wait times and accumulated crowds at entrance locations. The less time fans spend waiting in line, the more time they have to spend money at your festival. During the ticket sale process, your ticketing company will need to capture your fan's mailing address for fulfillment prior to your festival. Your package should include online registration information and specific instructions on what fans need to do before they arrive. Customizing a credential mailer envelope is an easy way to build fan excitement and distribute unique credentials and instructions.



Registration Kiosk

## Show Site

Since wristbands are the revenue source for your festival, you'll want to have a system in place to ensure tight controls for distribution. Your box office manager should inventory the wristbands at the beginning of each day and make sure inventory matches actual distribution at the close of each day. Use on-site kiosks to allow fans to register their wristband, apply funds or credit card information, and link social media credentials.

## RFID Wristband Registration

After your fans receive their RFID wristband/credentials, you'll need to provide a way to capture all information necessary to work with your event's applications before they enter the event. Your ticketing partner should be able to set up the online platform for pre-event and kiosks for show site wristband registration. Information capture should include:

- Name, sex, age, and any other key demographics you or your sponsors want to capture
- Credit and debit card information for cashless payments, ensuring encryption and security
- Social media credentials for posting permission (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)



Wristband Registration Form

# 6 ESSENTIALS TO ROCK RFID AT YOUR FESTIVAL

## STEP

# 6

## Create a Roll-Out Plan

*Creating a robust roll-out plan, in partnership with your RFID ticketing company, is critical to the success of your RFID program. Here are a few steps to consider for the big event.*



## Pre-Event:

### Inform Your Audience



Build a communication and marketing plan to promote your event's RFID program. Use your festival's app, website, email, and social media outlets to let fans know what's new and how they will benefit from your event's new RFID applications. Provide a map indicating where wristbands can be used to buy food, beverages, and souvenirs. Highlight all your sponsors' locations and promotions to get fans engaged before they arrive. Your integrated marketing communication strategy should generate excitement about the festival and prepare your fans for the experience.



### Train Your Team

Make sure every employee, vendor, and sponsor is adequately trained on how your festival's RFID program works. All stakeholders should fully understand the applications to ensure guest admission and transactions are a seamless experience. Your RFID partner should be able to provide staff training before program roll-out.



photo credit: Intellitix

## During Event:

### On-site Education



Now's the time to create prominent signage and educational brochures to help fans get the most out of their new festival experience. Provide a map to let them know where they can take advantage of cashless purchases, or instructions on how to load funds to their wristband. Send notifications through your event's app about on-site sponsor promotions, contests, and scavenger hunts using RFID wristbands.



## Post-Event:



### Thank Your Fans

Send a personalized email with a summary of their experience including transactions, stage visits, and sponsor social interactions. Give them a keepsake they'll love. Provide opportunities for your audience to engage with sponsors, or purchase merchandise and tickets for your next event.



### Provide a Balance Refund

If you chose pre-loaded wristbands for payment, providing a balance refund is a great way to gain trust with your fans. In fact, if your customers know that they'll get a refund for any leftover balance, they may be encouraged to spend more during the event! Your RFID provider will need to help facilitate a timely refund through your point-of-sale system.



### Measure Success

What worked well? What lessons did you learn for next year? A post-event session with key stakeholders is a great way to develop key learnings and identify improvements to make next year's event even better.

# Why Partner with pdc®

A BRADY Business

*Experience & Service You Can Trust*

As the innovator of the RFID wristband system, with over two decades innovating and deploying PDC Smart® RFID systems worldwide, PDC has earned its reputation as the leader in RFID wristband solutions. Our dedicated and experienced RFID Solutions team is here to offer any range of services you need to get your festival RFID program up and running— from ticket partner sourcing, to credential consulting and design, and on-site training.

*As Seen at These Popular Festivals:*



*"We had two major goals – facilitate crowd control at the gates and decrease unauthorized resale. Both objectives were resoundingly successful. If wristbands had gone missing, we could have easily deactivated them and flagged them as stolen to prevent unauthorized access to the venue. Media monitoring showed that unauthorized resale via third-party websites went down dramatically."*

Tara Ferguson  
Ottawa Blues Fest RFID Project Coordinator

Over  
**37 MILLION**

RFID Wristbands &  
Credentials Sold!

Over  
**400**

Customers Across  
the Globe.

## *Supporting Festival Promoters Every Step of the Way*



### **Partnerships with Top Ticketing Companies**

PDC credentials can integrate with any ticketing company's RFID software. However, if you need help sourcing a ticketing partner, PDC has built a reliable partner network with the world's top ticketing companies. These relationships allow us to help develop and properly implement your customized solution.



### **Dedicated Project Management Team**

With multiple levels of access for fans, sponsors, and vendors, festival credential orders can be complicated. Your dedicated account manager will make sure you order what you need and it's delivered on time. Depending on the size of your event, PDC's project management team is also available to help on-site during installation, staff training, and during the event to ensure your RFID applications run as smooth as possible.



### **Complimentary Artwork Services**

Need help designing your event's custom credentials? PDC also offers complimentary artwork services for RFID products. Just let us know what you're looking for and provide your logo in AI (Adobe Illustrator) or EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) format and our creative team will manage the rest.



### **Secure Shipments**

PDC keeps complete confidentiality of our clients' wristband order and artwork from start to finish. Standard QA measures check the product for accuracy before it leaves the factory. When it's time to ship, all boxes are sent unmarked to keep complete anonymity of their contents. This process guarantees the order meets the highest quality standards and provides an extra measure of security to ensure 100% of the order is delivered to your business or venue.

# Want to Know More?

If you have any additional questions or want to speak with a member of the PDC RFID Solutions team, contact us today:

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