

# A Vision for Property Management

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Today we are on the threshold of unlimited possibilities for advancement of our profession. In the past twenty years we have progressed from manual index card record systems to automated transactions tracking and posting, with the computer being the catalyst for the advancements we have achieved to date. Look at the past to see the future. Somewhere in our ancient history man began making manual records of property transactions. This system has changed little over the evolution of record keeping until the final quarter of the last century.

Manual property tracking systems, for both material and assets, were formulated from card files to data base systems that provided us with lines of data which were displayed in sorted sequences of endless part numbers, noun descriptions, and quantities marching on in endless columns. This system went on in the eighties to become more user-friendly with Windows-type screens that displayed all the fields for a single part on one screen with addendum screens to provide history and links to other important aspects relating to that part. The next advancement led to linking the history of that part to the screen displaying the basic data, thereby giving us a useful analytical tool. In the nineties we acquired ad-hoc reporting, forms generation, automated signatures, and automated approvals, to name a few.

Our own peers initiated all of these system improvements. There was a property professional behind each of these innovations. System programmers did not create the requirement for these systems. Property people conceived the requirements and had the vision to see what the end result should look like. Then the technicians applied their programming skills to create the systems.

At the same time our property systems were evolving other disciplines were undergoing similar advancements. Simply marking items in retail sales with barcodes, for inventory purposes, has evolved to waving products past a reader on the way out of a store and having the reader debit your checking account for the price of the items, including tax. Radio Frequency Identification Systems have evolved to meet not only the need for identification and records keeping, but also to provide secure identification without a visible marker. Radio Frequency has also



provided us with the ability to inventory an item without line of sight.

Almost every profession has seen very rapid changes brought about by tremendous advancements in computer technology. In the late nineties anyone could purchase a program to design his/her own home. Little icons of chairs, sinks, lamps, fireplaces, beds, or almost anything you would use in a home was available to be located anywhere you chose to put it in the house you could

build. These programs permitted you to create your dream and then back off and view it from different angles in three dimensions.

Another significant advancement has been made in the field of photography. We have often used photographs to point out damage to products or to make points in presentations about how disorganized a warehouse was found. Digital photos can now be taken and downloaded into a property file to actually show the condition or to describe a piece of property.

Now that I have described all of these wonderful advancements that have come about of late, I will suggest to you the next advancement in the world of property management systems.

My vision would have the property manager monitoring assets by viewing a series of windows that would display the basic data backed up by follow-on windows of history. Another window, displayed at the same time as the basic data window, would display a three-dimensional view of the asset (or the asset identifier) location showing the asset, within a room, on a specific floor, within a building. This would be accomplished by imbedding a Radio Frequency transmitter in each asset that carries the asset identification number. Each room and every entry point into a room, floor, and building would have a locatable Radio Frequency Receiver/Transmitter that would be keyed on command for inventory or inquiry and automatically keyed when an asset passed a Receiver/Transmitter. When I described the Radio Frequency Identification system I said that it was secure and needed no line of sight to be activated. Secure in the sense that the transmitter is placed in a very small cavity drilled in the body of the asset. An epoxy seal is placed over the hole to deny anyone the location of the imbedded transmitter. "No-Line-of-Sight"

means that assets could be detected without being exposed to the eye. An asset could be in a drawer or in a cabinet and still be detected by a Receiver. The Transmitter activates the Receiver and the opposite is possible also.

This system would require that assets be fixed with RF Transmitter/Receivers or Transmitters at the point of acceptance into the property system. A digital photo of the asset would be taken at this same time and entered into the electronic record. The identifying chip would carry the number that ties the asset back to the record and to the digital photo. The location would be recorded automatically as the asset is placed in a room monitored by a RF Transmitter/Receiver.

Inventory could be conducted by query of the system (turning on all Transmitters by Group, Location, Type, and Individual Number). Exceptions would be noted and verified as such.

The Receivers in each exit would record movement of any asset automatically. Unauthorized movement and/or theft should be reduced significantly. All movement would alert the Property Management Department and establish a flag with the Security Department to stop the asset from leaving the facility.

The "Who" has the asset is already available today and

used throughout the corporate and government world. Employee Identification Cards that are bar-coded or contain chips to identify employees as they enter or leave exists. An asset moving without corresponding employee identification would certainly be subject to the possibility of theft.

Records and Reports would be generated by the system as they are today.

The creation of a system like this would require an upfront investment that would be recovered in a few short years based on the savings on inventory alone.

My objective has been to stimulate the system and make an impact on the bottom line by added value to the world of property management and to create new business opportunities for the future.

That is my vision. You can go out and generate your own visions. I'm sure that they will all be winners. ♦

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