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Tag: You're It!

Take advantage of asset tagging to keep track of equipment.

By Karen D. Schwartz

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Photo: Brady Fontenot/Redux Pictures

Chad Penny of HRI Properties turned to asset tags to track IT gear.

time.

"We have a lot of employees who travel from property to property and use a variety of equipment, and it was getting out of hand," says Chad Penny, the company's IT director.

"We were at the point where we were relying on a dry-erase board and a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to keep track of things, and things were falling through the cracks."

HRI Properties decided to use asset tagging services from CDW, which tagged all purchased equipment and provided it with internal codes, barcodes and tag numbers. Penny's team is also working to retrofit existing equipment with asset tags. Eventually, however, Penny wants to add the tagging information to an internal system with additional capabilities, such as property name and location.

"We want to track all inventory at all times," he explains.

A Sense of Security

For Paladin Private Security, a Sacramento-based professional patrol service, the need to tag essential assets — in this case, mobile computers, tasers, keys and other patrolling essentials — derived mostly from the company's explosive growth. Paladin's 130 employees, up from about 85 last year, patrol hundreds of properties 24 hours a day, with each shift consisting of dozens of officers and hundreds of pieces of equipment.

"Before we started asset tagging earlier this year, the process of assigning equipment to officers was very labor-intensive, and we often didn't know that something was missing until the next shift,"

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The amount of money spent

said Vice President Matthew Carroll.

With the older manual system, the process of assigning equipment took about 45 minutes and resulted in chaos, while today's streamlined barcoding process — with the **Wasp MobileAsset System** — takes about 15 minutes. Instead of dealing with five to seven equipment-related issues during a typical shift, today's shift commanders typically don't have any such issues to address, Carroll says.

to track IT assets using asset tags will grow from \$660,000 in 2008 to **\$4.35 million** in 2013, a compound annual growth rate of nearly 45 percent.

Source: ABI Research

Other Uses for Asset Tags

Although asset tagging is most often used for typical IT equipment, there are many types of items that can be tracked. Take, for example, the radiology practice in California that tracks X-ray machines; the brewery in North Carolina that tracks kegs; the bank in Texas that tracks deposit slips, banking forms and office supplies; or the Army Depot that tracks front-line gear.

Every organization has assets, and not just IT assets, says Laurie McCabe, a vice president at consultancy AMI Partners. "Asset tags help track whatever assets have an impact to the organization if they are lost or stolen," she says.

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