



Bar Code strategy 2005

focus on Matrixcode for identification of smallest products



Looking back to a success story for the „Health Industry Barcode – HIBC“ after the majority decision for general use in 1997 it became obvious to day, that it was a good decision because HIBC solves the current labelling problems. In the meantime HIBC became embedded in the standard for product packaging ISO 22742 with acceptance by all market sectors. This gives HIBC a great future oriented aspect in an interoperable manner with EAN. More than ever the alpha numeric product code of HIBC is a key element to ease tracking and tracing concepts. HIBC carries the product data safely for data capture anywhere in a supply chain from manufacturer to doctors, dentists and Hospitals but even for recycling processes. Existing original numbering schemes with more than 5 digits and up to 13 alpha numeric can be carried by HIBC without mapping. This eliminates any pressure to change to other numbering schemes such as EAN.

Recently the HIBC task force released the extension of the HIBC standard for marking smallest products. This is the “Unique Identification Mark – UIM”. It enables solutions for unique identification of instruments, probes & pipes, etc. by a matrix code of 3.2x3,2 mm. To cope with new opportunities the HIBC task force met again March 3, 2005 in order to conclude how to promote the current trend to 2D and RFID and the benefit involved. The delegates of the different health care associations faced that Since the scanner prices for 2D codes sink down rapidly. They found that 2D is the missing link for full filling legal requirement and market requirements for tracking and tracing smallest health care products. Targeting to reach 100% marking of the variety of products from large to small and in order to bring the users in the position to gain an optimal benefit, the experts group posted the announcement:

- Every product package shall be marked with HIBC, larger products as before but smallest products shall get ISO-Matrix codes as Datamatrix or QR.
- Investing in new Bar Code equipment it is recommended to consider scanners featuring Matrix code and back ward compatibility with linear Barcode and stacked.
- Distributors, depots, hospitals, doctors are advised to adjust themselves for scanning linear and 2D codes because Matrix code is delivered on primary product labels as on packages already showing a strong trend to replace linear Barcode not only on small products.

Support for using 2D-codes is managed by EHIBCC under hotline@hibc.de or by phone +49(0)3445 78114 0. The hotline will respond on user questions to incorrect or absent HIBC with specific recommendations for the labeller.

ISO conform specifications for use of HIBC via smart RFID labels are available already for immediate use on request but default recommendation is for Barcode and 2D.

John-Marco Fader
Chair TF HIBC

Gregor Stock
VDDI

Marcus Wenzel
SPECTARIS

Heinrich Oehlmann
EHIBCC