



# BAGS OF BENEFITS WITH RETAIL SCANNING TECHNOLOGY

TIME TO STOCKTAKE CUT BY FIFTY PER CENT



Strandbags Group Pty Ltd consists of two chains: Strandbags, retailers of quality bags, suitcases and wallets, and eQUIP which retails fashion accessories. Both chains perform stocktakes and process markdowns during sale events. As stocktakes take place at least twice a year and markdowns when necessary in their 400 plus stores, this accounts for a large amount of staff time.

With a scanning solution from Motorola Solutions and Sonar Technologies, data from stocktakes can be quickly and simply scanned and uploaded, so that head office has the required data within minutes. Markdowns are performed by scanning items and marking down the items indicated by the scanner.

Compared to the “olden days” of paper processes and manually counting items, which used to take two staff members up to six hours, the same function can be completed in just over three hours. Once completed, the results are delivered in a matter of minutes – rather than days later.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

**Strandbags Group Pty Ltd**

### Industry Name

Retail

### Technology Partner

Sonar Technologies Australia

### Product Name

- MC3190 handheld bar code scanner

### Solution Features

- Fast and accurate read rates
- Audible alerts
- Rugged design

### Key Benefits

- Improved productivity
- Better data accuracy
- Better customer service
- Enhanced stock visibility
- Increased efficiency
- Faster access to data
- Suitable device ergonomics

## CASE STUDY

Strandbags Group Pty Ltd



### THE CHALLENGE

As one of Australia's largest and most successful specialty retailers, Strandbags have been delivering quality products since 1927. Its stores across Australia and New Zealand stock an extensive range of handbags, suitcases, travel bags, business bags, school bags, backpacks and wallets. eQUIP, a fashion accessories business founded in 2004, is another chain owned by the Strandbags Group.

Strandbags had been using scanning technology for many years, however, a new device was required in both its Strandbags and eQUIP stores for stocktakes and markdowns.

David Munro, group IT manager of Strandbags, says that the experience of working with Sonar Technologies and Motorola had proven very successful in a previous project. The project involved the implementation of state-of-the-art hardware and RF infrastructure at Strandbags' 8500 square metre warehouse, located at Erskine Park in Sydney's west.

"The reason I use Sonar? Reliability. We found that the combination of Sonar Technologies and Motorola was perfect for our needs," says Munro.

"Sonar Technologies was way out in front in terms of information, helpfulness and its association with Motorola. It has always been very supportive of our business. We had a good experience with Sonar through the warehouse system, and it didn't make sense to have the new equipment from a different source to the warehouse," explains Steve Kelly, stock control manager at Strandbags.

### THE SOLUTION

Strandbags rolled out the MC3190 handheld bar code scanner, which are used for the two main functions of stocktakes and markdowns. Currently there are 300 devices operating across Strandbags and eQUIP.

The MC3190 handheld bar code scanner provides rapid and simple scanning for the retail or healthcare environment. While retail staff may not subject the

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Steve Kelly, stock control manager, Strandbags Group Pty Ltd

**“The data accuracy is now miles in front. We can now guarantee the accuracy of stock on hand, which is important because we work on a replenishment system. Without accurate data, stock on hand can’t be replenished accurately which would prevent us from maximising sales. If the system is working from a flawed base, then we are not putting in required stock, or we’re sending stock that’s actually needed elsewhere.”**

Steve Kelly, stock control manager, Strandbags Group Pty Ltd

device to the rough treatment common in the warehouse or transport industries, the device can still withstand the knocks and spills of everyday business.

With a scanning solution in place, staff simply scan the SKU number of every item in the store to carry out a stocktake, and the data is uploaded to head office as soon as the device is connected to the store’s point-of-sale (POS) system.

To mark down stock – an event which occurs throughout the year in every store – a staff member will scan items in the store. When the scanner detects a discounted item, an alert tells staff that this item must be marked down.

## THE BENEFITS

### Improved productivity

Scanning technology has been in place for 13 years at Strandbags, and Kelly describes the technology as a “massive innovation that has revolutionised the process”. He says he couldn’t imagine going back to “the old way”.

The old way means manual processes for both stocktakes and markdowns. Stocktaking used to be a two-person job: one person to read out the SKUs, and the other to write them down. Once this process was finished, the paper lists went to a data processing bureau for data

entry. This added even more delay to the process, before the data was eventually relayed to Strandbags’ system to calculate the results.

Kelly compares this process with modern scanning: “Now one person can do it all: they just turn the scanner on and simply scan each item in the store.”

“While it’s hard to pin down a financial figure I know that with paper it used to take approximately six hours to stocktake. Whereas now we have trimmed this time to just over three hours.”

“Because of the benefits we have increased the scanner fleet to enable every store in the company to have a scanner when processing markdowns.”

The technology enables staff to spend more time on the sales floor assisting customers and making sales rather than counting merchandise or tracking down items to markdown.

### Data accuracy

Scanning provides accurate data, which leads to increased stock visibility, accurate stock levels and reduction of stock being sent to the wrong location.

“Before electronic scanning, you could never guarantee accuracy of the data, as there were mistakes at the store and mistakes at the data processing bureau.”





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### Fast access to data

In the days before scanning technology, data took days to arrive at head office. Now it’s a matter of minutes after the device is connected to the store POS system.

“And when we have a sale, the preparation time has been drastically reduced,” adds Kelly.

### Better customer service

With a scanning solution, staff can concentrate on customer service rather than counting or managing stock. Stocks levels are accurate so that the customer can find the item they need. Marked down items are all priced accordingly, maximising sales opportunities. A sale item is not on sale unless the customer can see this actually reflected on the price tag!

### Positive staff response

“The process is very simple so it doesn’t need a lot of training,” says Kelly.

“Staff feedback has been very positive, partly because the new scanners are very similar to what they had been used to. My responsibility was not introducing anything that was radically different to what they had been using, especially as some of our store workers are not as technically-savvy as others. The touch screen is certainly an advantage as people are used to using this on their personal devices.”

Given the benefits in the retail environment, scanning technology is well entrenched as the ideal solution for managing stock and meeting customer requirements.

### About Sonar Technologies

Sonar Technologies Australia Pty Ltd, formerly Trans Data Communications Pty Ltd, has been providing enterprise technology solutions to customers in Australia and overseas since 1991. The company specialises in providing mobile task and resource management solutions to businesses of any size, targeted at field service, logistics and supply chain, assets management and healthcare in both the government and private sectors.

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