



TSI

Customer case study

TECHNOLOGY/PRODUCTS

- Fargo DTC300 Direct-to-Card Printer/Encoder
- SmartLoad Ribbon Cartridge
- SmartClean Card Cleaning System
- SmartScreen LCD Control Panel

TOP REASONS WHY TSI CHOSE FARGO PRINTERS FOR THIS PROJECT:

- Small size and ease of use
- Convenience of a SmartLoad ribbon cartridge, making loading and changing the ribbon easy

“Just having the Fargo printer available is a competitive advantage for TSI.”

*Jeff Weed
TSI Product Manager*

TSI: Making it Easy for Customers by Offering Fargo Printers

The Challenge

Respirators and gas masks save lives. They protect health care workers from agents such as tuberculosis and SARS. They shield emergency service personnel from fire and smoke. They guard industrial employees against airborne contaminants. They protect soldiers from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. But they have to fit correctly in order to do their job.

TSI Incorporated (www.tsi.com) designs and manufactures precision instruments, such as the PORTACOUNT® Plus Respirator Fit Tester, to measure how well a respirator fits a person’s face by comparing particle concentrations inside and outside the respirator. This super-sensitive technique measures leaks that cannot be detected by the wearer. In the United States, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require all persons using tight-fitting respirators to be fit tested by their employer on an annual basis.

Recently, TSI began offering ID card printers as a unique way to help its customers verify that employees have been fit tested. “We try to make compliance easy for our customers,” said Jeff Weed, TSI product manager. “People want to perform the fit test correctly. Otherwise respirator wearers may be at risk, and the employer may be liable.”

During a 7-minute series of exercises performed by the wearer, the fit test instrument measures any leakage into the respirator. The goal is to maintain a tight seal to the wearer’s face, providing maximum protection against unwanted airborne hazards. Fit testing is conducted for two reasons. First, it assesses the type, model and size of respirator that is right for each person. And second, it ensures that the individual knows how to put on and wear the respirator.

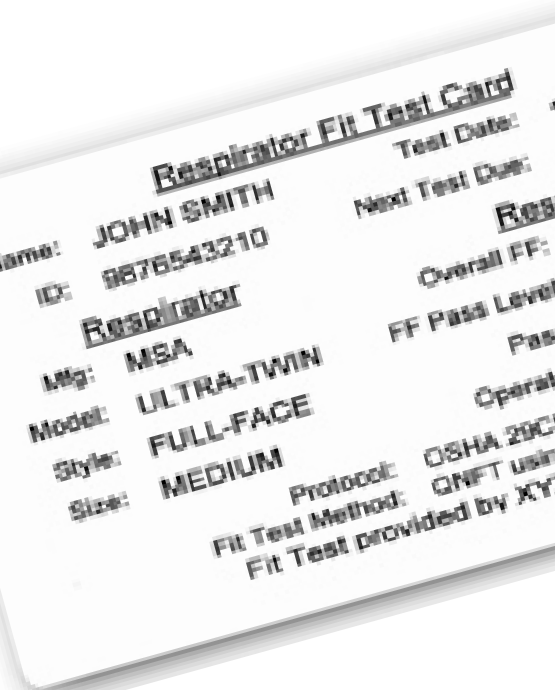
Solution Found

In 2004, TSI began selling Fargo ID card printers as an optional accessory to the PORTACOUNT, giving customers the ability to print ID cards for individuals who are fit tested. “An ID card (TSI calls it a Fit Test Card) gives an individual a handy document to verify that he or she has been tested,” said Weed. “It also indicates when the next fit test is due and documents the respirator for which a person has been tested. Respirators come in different sizes and brands, but individuals are only allowed to wear the respirator for which they were tested.”

Violations can lead to overexposure if the employee wears the wrong respirator, as well as fines and negative publicity for the employer. Employers like the fit test cards because they allow a supervisor to monitor employee compliance at any time, which helps to keep employees safe. “Some companies have been making ID cards by hand,” Weed added. “Other companies rely on a person to remember which respirator he or she was tested for and when a new test is needed. The Fargo ID cards are a better solution.”

TSI is using the Fargo DTC300 direct-to-card printer and encoder, one of Fargo’s newer models, introduced in 2004. “This printer is small and easy to use,” said Weed. “I especially like the SmartLoad ribbon cartridge, which makes loading and changing the ribbon very simple. TSI sells the printer as a kit with 500 cards, ribbon and a USB cable in order to make the installation as easy as possible.”

“Fargo has done a very good job with the DTC300,” said Angie Lueschen of Identisys, a Fargo





solution provider. "Customers like the easy-to-use features, such as the all-in-one print ribbon and SmartClean card cleaning system. The DTC300 also features an exclusive SmartScreen LCD control panel with prompts that are easy to understand. The machine is simple to operate and easy to integrate with existing systems."

TSI's PORTACOUNT comes with proprietary software that automates the fit test and maintains the database of individuals and results. The software integrates with the Fargo printer, so a card is automatically ejected at the end of a test. Users can print cards on the spot or wait and print them later.

Results

"Our cards are very standard," said Weed. "They contain information from the database, including a person's name, ID number, respirator, and date and results of the test." Today, all cards are printed in black and white, despite the fact that the printer is a color printer. "Down the road we may add enhancements," he explained, "and we don't want people to have to buy another printer."

"Everyone likes to automate," said Weed, "so whenever we suggest the card printer to customers, they almost universally say, 'Gee, that's just what we need.' The benefits are pretty obvious to them." Weed said TSI often raises issues customers don't consider. For example, with ID cards, they can perform impromptu audits of their personnel. At some companies, employees need to requisition a respirator from the storeroom for a day. ID cards can ensure that the person gets the right respirator or deny a person from getting a respirator if he or she hasn't been tested in the last year.

"Just having the Fargo printer available is a competitive advantage for TSI," Weed said. "Even if customers don't buy it today, they know they can get it later. Just having it available is an asset. We want to make compliance easy for our customers," he added. "We want them to have confidence that the testing is being done correctly, with no room for operator error. We make it easy for them to do it right."

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