

AIDC Memoirs

by

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Chapter I. - Introduction

It was 1975 when Jack Donnelly called me and tried to lure me away from ITT Europe. He knew why he needed my help because he had hired me into ITT Europe in 1970 when this European telecom giant was under threat from IBM with the introduction of the first digital PBX, the 1750 developed in IBM's labs at La Gaude on France's glorious Riviera. ITT's response was the creation of a business safeguarding operation, called the Voice Data Division, Jack's brainchild. He knew I could sell and felt that I would make a good addition to the team.

In 1975 however and after two years at Standard Electric Lorenz in Stuttgart, Germany and three years in Brussels with Bill Mainguy, ITT had developed its own digital switch and the Voice Data Division was about to be dismantled and the remainder moved to the UK. Jack asked me to join Plessey, the British telecom and electronics group that had set its sights on penetrating Continental Europe with a range of private communications products. Whilst staying in Brussels, I joined the company and a European sales team to market products ranging from police radios to library electronic article surveillance (EAS) systems and barcoding systems was formed.

The year 1975 was clearly a turning point in my career and personal life as I entered the mysterious world (at least that's how we looked at it then) of automatic identification. The experience was unique and so rewarding that putting these memories on paper is a way to share with others how pioneering in a new field can contribute to personal growth and satisfaction.

After graduating from Nyenrode University in Breukelen, the Netherlands (the original Brooklyn) and when most of my class mates joined packaged consumer goods or service companies, who would have thought that a career could be made in a high tech company? By coincidence I landed at Philips Data Systems in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands and "the rest of the story" as Paul Harvey would say, has been a wonderful and enriching experience, both career-wise and culturally. I hope to share some of the excitement associated with making a difference in what follows.

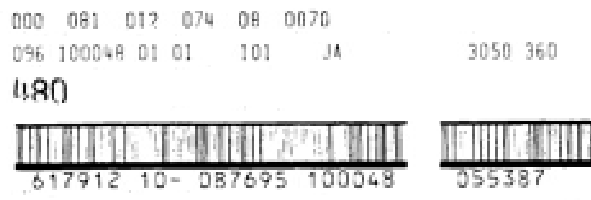
Chapter II. - The Early Days with Plessey, Europe's Barcode Pioneer

During my first meeting with Jack Donnelly after joining Plessey Telecommunications he told me to go and visit the Plessey facility in Poole, Dorset because "they have developed something with black and white stripes" and asked me to tell him what I thought about it. Poole is a beautiful harbor town, near Bournemouth on Britain's south coast. The Plessey plant in that town produced various products and systems from military electronics to (road) traffic control systems. John Reader was the General Manager in charge of a new development called barcoding.

Plessey got involved in this development because the UK Ministry Of Defense was "losing" files. The files were not permanently lost but often nobody knew where they were at a critical time. The MOD paid Plessey to develop a system to track the files as they moved from department to department. At the core of this system was a technology to identify each individual file by a set of black stripes on a white background self-adhesive label.

Plessey developed a Pulse Width Modulation code and called it the Plessey code. This symbology was secured with a Cyclic Redundancy Check digit. (See also page 334 of “Punched cards to bar codes” by Ben Nelson, published by Helmers Publishing Company in 1997) The code was so secure that MSI Data Corporation in California later adapted the symbology for shelf edge marking to enable inventory scanning and re-ordering. All is good and well to have a symbology and a wand with a spring loaded tip for balanced and even reading, but you also needed a printer to produce bar-coded labels. There wasn’t anyone around doing that, which is typical when you pioneer in a new field. One of the engineers knew of a company in the Northwest of the United States that could print marks on a paper tape for the programming of numerical control machines. This company, Interface Mechanisms (later to become “Intermec”) was willing to build an impact printer to print the Plessey code. Plessey paid them \$25,000 for the development of such printer and this is what put Intermec on the AutoID map. The printer has a rotating drum on which the various character images of bars and spaces were embossed. A hammer would hit carbon ribbon and a label onto the drum when the appropriate character appeared in front of the hammer location.

After producing a good number of these printers, Intermec tried to sell Plessey a UPC version of the printer but initially Plessey was not interested at all saying that “that symbology has no future”. How wrong one can be.



Anyway, to get back to the story, the MOD, after paying for the concept development, never bought any systems, so Plessey started to look for civilian document circulation applications and found in the early seventies that barcodes could significantly improve circulation control in libraries. This then became the target market for a number of years. Many European libraries implemented the Plessey system and some of them are still using at least the symbology, at the time of this writing (2003).



Figure 1 - Plessey Code samples

Plessey also discovered a market need for capturing data with a portable device, primarily for inventory purposes but also in mobile libraries. This resulted in one of the world’s first portable data capture devices, a shoulder strapped machine of approx. 4 x 14 x 8 inches weighing several pounds. Data were entered via a barcode wand or numeric keypad and recorded on a music cassette sized digital tape. MSI Data Corporation had developed a similar device but initially without wand input. By the late seventies however, Plessey was so involved with this development that it missed the early signs when the rest of the world started working with C-MOS chips. They never developed a truly handheld data capture device such as those that came to the market from MSI and Telxon. Plessey, having recognized that hand held devices were the trend of the future however, signed a pan-European distribution agreement with Telxon. Plessey colleague John Cribb negotiated the distribution agreement with Telxon and Telxon’s CEO Bob Meyerson was so impressed with John’s negotiating skills that when a few years later they decided to open their own European operation, John was appointed Managing Director.

On the Continent we felt that the products from Plessey in Poole were great, but we had the capability to sell much more than what was coming from the UK, so Plessey Europe created its own distribution organization for non-Plessey products. In this group we sold Intermec bar code readers and EAN/UPC printers, EPIC's networked data collection systems and Checkpoint Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) systems for libraries. Belgium was my territory but I was also member of a very tightly knit group of colleagues selling these same products in other European countries. This was a remarkable group and included people like Dutch bar code guru Sjoerd Wouda, Gilbert Warnan and Edouard David. These last two eventually left Plessey in the early eighties to form Bar Code Systems in France. This company developed its own bar code reader and although some might have recognized certain features from the Intermec product, it was a hit in the market because of its flexibility and programmability. On a different note, Bar Code Systems later merged with Swedot, a barcode printer manufacturer from Sweden, in the nineties to form UBS (United Barcode Systems). Ironically, Intermec bought UBS later in the nineties to strengthen its European presence, which proves that things that go around, come around.

Chapter III. – From Proprietary to Open Symbologies

In the mean time we were successfully selling these Plessey systems on the Continent. Having said that, Plessey management did initially not recognize the fact that barcoding could never take off in a significant way if we only focused on the Plessey code. Yes, it may have been very secure and easy to read, since there were only two different widths for bars and spaces, but retailers decided to go a different route and Plessey eventually disappeared as a player in the barcode market. I believe that the main reason was the lack of development funding coming from the private communications division, on which the Poole group depended completely. The lack of funding caused by overall disappointing sales, was the result of not following the market trend and new standards that were under development at the time.

Lesson learned:

Barcoding only took off in a big way when symbology and application standards were developed and adopted by entire industries and supply chains. Closed systems are great to get a new idea off the ground but do not lead to significant and profitable sales.



Picture 1 - Symbol's Laserchek 2711

We were also reasonably successful in selling a product for which Plessey had acquired the sole European distribution rights and that was made by a very small company on Long Island, NY, Symbol Technologies. By the end of the seventies, the UPC code had gained a foothold in the grocery world and Europe followed with the European Article Number or EAN code. The founders of Symbol, Jerry Swartz and his partner Shelley Harrison, both PhD's in laser physics, had developed the world's first laser based barcode print quality verifier. The principle for this device was the recognition that the earlier in the process

of printing a UPC or EAN symbol on a package or label one could discover a print defect, the smaller the cost would be to the printer and its customer. The worst scenario is the discovery of a non-scannable label at point-of-sale. The Symbol Laserchek 2711 was therefore designed to be used by commercial printers and at \$10,000 a pop this was not a gadget for everybody. Some retailers used the instrument for spot checks on incoming merchandise.

When the retailers started threatening the CPG manufacturers with returns of non-scannable packaging, print quality became a real concern. Why do I elaborate on this product? Primarily because the Laserchek, as shown in the picture above, consisted of a hand-held part and a desktop part. The hand-held part is in fact a laser scanner. This led to Symbol filing one of its many patents for hand-held laser scanning which eventually put that company on the AutoID map where it became the dominant force and an enigma for its competitors.

Chapter IV: A Tiny Long Island Company: Symbol Technologies

Going back to the Plessey – Symbol relationship, I was appointed as Plessey’s second or third point man to interface with Symbol. This gave me the opportunity to make my first transoceanic flight when I visited Symbol in Hauppauge, NY in early 1980 and met Shelley and Jerry in person. We had a great contact and when by mid summer that year I announced that after 5 years I was leaving Plessey to join DEC in Geneva, Switzerland, Symbol’s board met within a week to decide that this was the moment to become a multinational company and open an office in Europe. Not bad for a 50 people and \$2.5 million company! I was then offered the opportunity to start and manage that European office in Brussels, Belgium. An honor and a show of trust (at 3000+ miles distance) and the beginning of Symbol’s strong global reach.



Picture 2: Jerry Swartz - PB - Shelley Harisson in early 1980

Symbol Europe opened its office in Brussels on December 1, 1980. Marleen Vanderlinden joined me two weeks later as my first and only executive assistant. She also managed the company books and kept us all in line. Marleen stayed with Symbol until they decided to close the Brussels office in the mid nineties and move everything to the European headquarters in the UK, established as result of the MSI acquisition. Marleen was the most loyal person I have ever worked with.

It took a year before Michel Jacobeus joined us as the technical guru. When he came to work for Symbol we finally had the technical expertise necessary to support the distribution network that we had been building up since day one. The early Symbol distribution network consisted of the distributors Plessey had appointed. Most of these distributors stayed with Symbol when the agreement between Plessey and Symbol was cancelled following the opening of the Brussels office. Also included in that network were Plessey’s subsidiaries in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa and Australia, but more about that later.

Working for Symbol Technologies and contributing to its phenomenal early growth has been a fantastic experience for me. I saw the company grow from \$2.5 million to over \$500 million in the 15 years I had the privilege to be part of the team. The early days were difficult. The Laserchek had a limited market potential and the first Laserscan hand-held scanners didn't come to market until well into 1982. Growth really started taking off when Ray Martino became President in 1983 following the departure of Shelley Harrison in 1981. Ray recognized that the scanner side of the business was well taken care of by Jerry Swartz's scientific skills and focus on the laser, but that the best scanner is useless if it can't communicate with the outside world. Ray's focus in those days was on the development of a range of interfaces to communicate with computers, point-of-sales systems and hand-held devices. Ray came to Symbol from Mars Electronics. President of Mars Electronics was Fred Heiman, a long time friend of Jerry Swartz and board member when Symbol went public in the mid eighties. Mars played another important role in Symbol's early days. The transition from job shop making Lasercheks to a high volume manufacturer of laser scanners was difficult, but assisted by the fact that Symbol had outsourced the early manufacturing of the LS7000 hand held laser scanner to Mars.

Chapter V – The European Expansion and Down Under

In the early eighties Symbol's European business grew nicely and at about the same pace as in the US. Our distribution network included some great companies such as Bancolini in Italy, Medicion Y Control in Spain, Kontron in Germany, Zetes in Belgium, Numeric Arts in the UK and many others. Bancolini and Numeric Arts, a subsidiary of British Printing and Communications Company of Robert Maxwell, were different from the others because whereas many of our distributors had a background in computer peripherals or industrial sensors, Bancolini and Numeric Arts were suppliers to the graphic arts industry. They were suppliers to the printing industry and got involved in barcoding through the supply of film masters, printed labels and verifiers. These two companies however recognized the enormous potential of automatic identification and data capture and added the Symbol scanning line to their portfolio. Mark Marriott and Giampiero Castelli deserve great credit for their vision. We at Symbol were of course convinced that their product line switch was caused by our salesmanship! Bancolini

took the wise decision and created Bancolini Symbol, a subsidiary focusing on AutoID that allowed the parent company to continue to focus on the printing industry.

The original Plessey network gave us access to South Africa, Australia and South-East Asia. The Australian scene was particularly interesting because it typically is a country of early adaptors. When Symbol broke away from Plessey, local management in Australia wanted to disengage from selling Symbol products. A number of people involved in these products



Picture 3: It's far away from anywhere

however believed in the future of barcoding. After a while they teamed up and created a new company, Barcode Technology Pty Ltd. The only problem was that there were too many managers with very different opinions about how to grow the business and too few people actually doing it. It didn't take long for a shake-out to occur and Val Perera and his wife Julian survived the skirmish. Val was, and probably still is, a great salesman and Julian was the perfect administrator. A good combination for a new business venture. Val and Julian did an outstanding job for Symbol, whilst penetrating large retailers such as K-Mart, David's (Australia's largest wholesale club, comparable to Sam's Club and Costco in the US) and David Jones (Department stores). All these stores had check-out configurations that were not suitable for slot-scanners which gave Symbol and its hand held scanners a leg up over the competition.

My first trip Down Under in 1982 was a real eye opener. As someone who grew up in a rather flat country and in a boring and moderate climate, I will always remember the shock to my system when I deplaned for a brief stop in Singapore. The humidity made me almost faint. Well, I didn't but I clearly needed to pull myself together and move on. Not so difficult when you just step off the plane of the world's best airline (at the time). An interesting discovery, which I made in the following years, is that one gets used to hot and humid climates if you adjust your pace. Anyway, on to Sydney, one of the most beautiful cities in the world and one of my clear favorites. During the mid eighties I had the opportunity to travel all over Australia, from Cairns to Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide all the way to Perth, the world's most remote capital, but never to the center and I still want to see Ayer's Rock and Alice Springs, some day in the future. The landmass of Australia is practically as large as the 48 contiguous states in the US and in fact Perth is much closer to Singapore than to Canberra or Sydney for that matter. The good fortune allowed me to take Elisabeth on some trips and one of the best vacations we ever had was on Lizard Island, the northern-most island of the Barrier Reef. This fabulous island had one small resort and a marine biology research center. Total population around 100 plus a maximum of 50 resort guests and thousands of lizards, some as long as 5 feet!! No, that's not an alligator!

Back to Barcode Technology. One day in 1983 or '84, Val called me from Sydney and said that his technical support engineer, a German, was going back to Germany to convince his parents to emigrate to Australia as well and he thought that it would take him 4 months or so to do that. Val was now going to be without any technical support for that period and he called for help. I explained that this was difficult to do from Belgium and I thought that he could more easily find someone in Sydney than that I could find him someone in Europe. The story was so strange that I shared it with Marleen. That evening she shared the story with her neighbor, Eric Dereu who happened to be a technician at our Belgian distributor Zetes. His immediate reaction was "I'll go!" He did and the rest is history. Eric never came back to Belgium except to bring his fiancée after six months and for the occasional vacation, but they built a great life together in Sydney. Eric eventually left Barcode Technology after he moved from technical support to sales and then became sales director at Telxon Australia. More changes followed that episode.



Picture 4: LS700 in OEM disguise

It is astonishing to realize that in the mid eighties we did more business in Australia than in France and Germany combined. One of Symbol's largest customers was the warehouse club David's. They learned the warehouse club business in Europe from companies like Metro and Makro. John David was one of the most forward thinking retailers I ever met. He implemented systems that were ahead of the competition anywhere. He even impressed Jerry Swartz who was quite an innovative thinker himself. He also realized that traditional slot-scanners were not going to be suitable for the warehouse club checkout and so his company was the first to install handheld laser-scanners at point-of-sale thus enabling the operator to walk around the cart without having to lift the heavy merchandise. In today's world we are used to seeing such operations at Costco's, B.J's and Sam's Clubs, but John David was globally the first to install the LS7000 at point-of sale. Jerry Swartz doesn't like to be reminded that handheld scanning at POS was invented in Australia and not in the USA!

In the mid eighties I was invited for a lot of public speaking, around the world. I felt like a missionary on such occasions because we were spreading the gospel of these black and white stripes that can do magical things. One of these conferences was Scanning Technologies '88 in Melbourne, organized by AIMPAC who could not legally use the name AIM Pacific nor Scan Tech. (More about AIM later). Aussies are very good at registering trade names and trademarks



Picture 5: On Auckland, NZ dock

of products, events or things that are successful overseas, so that when someone wants to import these concepts into Australia they either have to use a less powerful name or pay up. A little bit like when in the nineties people started reserving Internet domain names of companies that later had to buy back their own corporate identity. Anyway, on several occasions New Zealand was included in my itinerary. During one of these trips I was invited to be the keynote speaker at the first automatic identification conference in Auckland. During a rare free moment my hosts invited me to go sailing once they learned that that is one of my favorite sports. Well, I was not prepared for this from the point of view of garments and although it was late summer it was a fairly cold day. I could fortunately borrow a yellow sailing suit to stay dry. So far so good. In the evening I was invited to a formal dinner for which I needed to change into suit and tie. The wind conditions were

however such that we were losing a lot of time in tacking, trying to get back to the marina. My hosts then decided to drop me off at a 20 ft high dock near downtown Auckland from where I could take a cab to the hotel. To get from the water level to the top of the dock I climbed steel steps that were normally used by seagulls to rest, fish and leave whitish droppings. In other words, I looked like a mess and by the time I got to the hotel, I was frowned upon by the staff, not to speak of the cab driver. Or was it the smell that surrounded me? This is one of the many experiences you never forget.....

Chapter VI – Joining forces in the industry: AIM Europe

The Materials Handling Institute (MHI) had a subsection that was started by some pioneers like Ed Andersson, Dave Collins, Dave Allais, Dave “Zap” Czaplicki, Ben Nelson, Chet Benoit, John Hill and many others, called AIM – Automatic Identification Manufacturers. In

1982 this group decided to hold a small first tradeshow and educational conference and called it Scan Tech. It may have been small, but the vision was big, so it was appropriately held in Dallas, TX – the state where everything is big. In combination with one of my regular trips to Long Island I attended the show and worked the booth, just in case there would be any foreign visitors. There were indeed a few, including Giampiero Castelli and I believe Heino Oehlman, but that was about it.

The concept of a trade association, particularly in a young industry, is to join forces to develop standards, provide advocacy and grow the market by education and promotion, whilst still competing with each other in the market place. This idea appealed to me because in Europe we clearly had to provide a lot of education for our customers and create awareness of the benefits of this new technology. The next Scan Tech was held in San Diego in 1983 and Jean Luc Bruno, who had joined the Symbol team in Brussels, went for booth duty. Upon return to the office he reported a slight increase in international visitors. Ed Andersson, the Viking, of Computer Identics, was chairman of AIM at the time and he and I met in the CI office near Boston in late 1983. Bill Hakanson, AIM's Executive Director was there, so were Dave Collins and some other AIM board members. The idea for a Scan Tech Europe was born in that meeting room. I had absolutely no clue as to how to put a tradeshow together, but I went back to Europe full of enthusiasm and energy and determined to pull this off. Ed was a tremendous motivator who always thought big.

The first step was to assemble an organizing committee and one of the first things I learned was that it had to be politically correct, because all aspects of the product palette had to be represented. In Europe that also meant that you had to find a balance between Nordic and Mediterranean countries and everything in between. So I started calling some people and US AIM members suggested other people from their European subsidiaries or distributors and we ended up with a diverse group of people that included Ole Hiden (Swedot), Gerhard Wippert (Meto), Wiegand Reimann (Visolux – AccuSort), Roger Lavery (Intermec), Tony Berry (Computer Identics) and Edouard David (Barcode Systems). After some preparation work we came to the conclusion that we needed professional help. We invited a few professional show organizers to submit a quotation for our first Scan Tech Europe, to be held in 1984. American



Picture 6: With Ian Smith in 1987

Express was one of the companies submitting a proposal and the other company was ISM (Ian Smith Marketing) from Halifax in the UK. We invited Mr. Smith to come to our meeting in the Sonesta Hotel in Amsterdam in the fall of 1983 and asked him to make a presentation about his firm's capabilities. American Express had not responded to our invitation although they submitted a good written proposal. Ian Smith showed up, made quite an entry and immediately caught our attention by his incredibly convincing style. We signed the contract with him and ISM at the advice of Ed Andersson and

went to work on what we felt would be an exciting trade show.

The first problem was that we had no money. AIM USA again under Ed's leadership stepped up to the plate and became our initial financial sponsor by sending us a start-up check of \$25,000. The next issue was that we had to learn to work together on a common project. We were competing with each other in the market place but all felt that once we were in a meeting room, planning this event, we had a common goal. Everybody recognized that if we were able to grow the market by increasing awareness and providing education, we would all benefit from this growth. How true that is still today in 2004 when the new exciting technology is RFID and many people are totally confused and in need of education. Next question was where to hold the conference and show? Ian had it already all worked out because we wanted to be in a central location that was easy to reach for all attendees. The selection fell on the RAI convention center in Amsterdam.

What happened in the 12 months leading up to what turned out to be a successful tradeshow and conference, is that we as the organizers became good friends and of course including Ian. He has some fantastic capabilities besides the usual shortcomings. He is a great raconteur who will break any ice. In his spare time he leads one of the most successful Gilbert and Sullivan societies in the UK and brings G&S productions to the stage on a regular basis. He is a great organizer and at the same time a skilled political operator. He is a great entertainer as we experienced on so many occasions when we were all tired and worn out, he would revive us with song, story and joke. After almost a year of regular meetings and a lot of hard work we pulled it off and Scan Tech Europe was born in the Fall of 1984.

It was a tremendous success and we were proud of what was achieved. The major achievement however was not the tradeshow itself, but the fact that we learned to work together, respect each other and in the process create something that was memorable. It was again Ed Andersson who suggested that we should build on this cooperation effort and create a European trade association following the US model and so AIM Europe became a reality in early 1985. Bill Hakanson, who at the time was Executive Director of AIM in the US, gave us a big hand in pulling this off. The first board of AIM Europe consisted essentially of the members of the Scan Tech organizing committee and these colleagues felt that I should be the first chairman which honor I gladly accepted. It was and is an honor indeed because recognition by your peers is powerful. I did not realize this at the time, but became very aware of that feeling later. One of the highlights following the first European Scan Tech and the creation of AIM Europe was when Scan Newsletter, the industry newsletter published by George Goldberg and represented in Europe by Paul Chartier decided to honor me with the Industry Achievement Award in 1985. At the time I considered this premature because we had not achieved all that much, but in hindsight, George and Paul were right in recognizing that Scan Tech '84 was the starting point for great cooperation within the industry. When we needed a secretariat it was logical to continue to work with ISM and Ian Smith. He was already running another association and we felt that there would be no conflict of interest



Picture 7: Doug Edgell, Ed and Angie Andersson in New York City

between Automatic Identification and Needlecraft.....

Scan Tech having been a success it was, we decided to do it again and Basel, Switzerland became the home for Scan Tech Europe'85. AIM Europe continued to flourish although we repeatedly suffered from lack of financial strength and although we never repaid the original loan from AIM USA, we had regular cash flow issues. Fortunately it was again Ian who came to the rescue and funded some of our activities.

In order to coordinate and streamline efforts globally, AIM International was formed as a coordinating body. AIM UK (founded by Mark Marriott), AIM Japan, AIMPAC in Australia and several others were formed fairly quickly and coordination became a necessity if we wanted to be a truly global organization. Altogether a great family of very active groups promoting the use of automatic identification to improve productivity and accuracy of data capture. In the eighties one could clearly feel the energy that was created by all this activity around the world.

Chapter VII – Eastern Europe and China

As part of all this enthusiasm in Europe, AIM Europe started branching out towards the East Bloc in 1987, which made us feel like missionaries spreading the gospel. It became the year of the first Scan Hungary with Scan Moscow following in 1988. These were essentially table top displays and educational seminars in what were still communist countries, where data accuracy, efficiency and supply chain operations were not of anyone's concern, except for a few visionaries who knew that this technology could help them overcome inefficiencies in logistics in these countries. It was striking that people in countries behind the Iron Curtain absorbed everything they could learn about these new technologies even without being driven by the productivity needs of the West, but by sheer interest in what is new and promising.



Picture 8: With Gerhard Wippern and Ian Smith on venue selection trip in Moscow

Scan Hungary became a success thanks to the tireless help of Dr. Peter Glattfelder who at the time worked for the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. He later joined the staff of ISM to manage its Hungarian office. Peter also helped us in making contacts in the Soviet Union with the right people to help us organize the show in Moscow. These included Viatcheslav Teleguin of EAN Russia, who later also became General Director of AIM Russia. My memories of the time in the Soviet Union were too many to be captured in these memoirs and could probably fill an entire book, so let me stick to some highlights.

I personally became aware of any interest in automatic identification in the Soviet Union when at Symbol we once hosted a group of businessmen from Moscow who were all involved in the book publishing industry and trade. Book publishing was a huge business in the Soviet Union and still is in Russia. People didn't necessarily buy many books but libraries were flourishing. Library

circulation automation was also one of the first applications for bar codes in Europe and the US, so this was a logical place to start. The Soviet Union has also been a long time member of ISBN, so the book numbering scheme was in place. What I did not realize is that because of the enormous size of the country, transportation is a real challenge, also for the book business. Publishers early on recognized that bar codes could possibly help in streamlining distribution and they were so right!

Scan Moscow in 1988 was a success. About a dozen companies participated in the table top show and the number of visitors / attendees was reasonable, given the short notice. What was interesting was that people were told to go. It was not necessarily by choice. Most amazing however was how much people knew about the technology. They had certainly read about bar codes and tried to understand their use, but what was lacking was the exposure to real applications and examples from the West. Under the communist regime people only had limited entertainment and reading was a favorite way to pass the time. We at Symbol felt that we needed to be accompanied by an interpreter, which in hindsight was absolutely true. It so happened that several of Symbol's opto-mechatronics engineers were Russian or from Russian descent. They came to us through Israel because of their Jewish heritage. Mark Krichever was one of these engineers and he joined us for the show and to help with general interpretation tasks. I remember vividly the interviews conducted by George Goldberg for his SCAN Newsletter and for which Mark also provided interpretation services.

Mark used to work at an optical products company LOMO (Leningradskoe Optiko Mechanicheskoe Objedinenie - Leningrad Optic and Mechanical Company) in Leningrad before emigrating to Israel and eventually to the US. In fact it is the most advanced optics manufacturer in the Soviet Union, producing camera's, binoculars, microscopes but also space optics. Mark felt that if he was going to the Soviet Union, (this time as a US citizen!) he should visit his old company and see if they could produce parts for Symbol cheaper than where Symbol bought lenses and mirrors so far. So following Scan Moscow we went up to Leningrad. Moscow is a pretty ugly, gray and boring city, particularly in winter time, except for the beautiful buildings in the Kremlin and immediate surroundings. Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) on the contrary is a beautiful Baltic city with colorful buildings and canals and great museums including the Hermitage, which we had the privilege of visiting with a special guide who led us in through a backdoor, thus avoiding long lines at the ticket office. Memorable about the Hermitage is not just the incredible collection of art amassed by Catherine the Great, but also the beauty of the building itself. Elisabeth, who came along on this trip to the Soviet Union, was jealous because she had to stand in line and in the end saw far less than I did, thanks to our hosts. Before visiting the museum however, we had a meeting at LOMO and that was an enlightening experience.

Mark Krichever had brought a stack of drawings for lenses and mirrors to be manufactured and the LOMO engineers studied the drawings and then confirmed that they could easily make all these parts. It became interesting when we started talking about business aspects of a potential deal. My first question to them was how long it would take to make a quotation for us. Blank stares were the answer because they did not understand the concept of a quotation and competitive pricing. In a pure communist regime with its 5 year economic plan, there is no need for documenting commercial transactions as we know it in the West since everything is planned and scheduled before a fiscal year starts and companies know what to produce and in what quantities. Our reaction was along the lines of saying "we pay so much for these parts and if you can make them 25-30% cheaper



we'll buy from you". This was received with nods confirming that they could do this without a problem. The next cultural difference surfaced when they discovered that we wanted substantial quantities on a monthly basis. This is where a deal, that could have been profitable for LOMO, evaporated because they could not guarantee that they would have enough raw material to produce these parts on an ongoing basis. Another discovery of differences in business cultures, as there have been so many throughout my career and in doing business on all five continents.

I will always remember my days in the Soviet Union not so much for the cold winter days but because the country was so close to Western Europe, yet so far removed in ways of life and business. Last but not least I remember because of the camaraderie amongst all US and European participants for most of whom this was a new and first experience.

If the East Bloc experience was exciting, it fades somewhat in comparison to what happened next. In early 1988 I received a phone call from the United Nations International Trade Center (UNCTAD / GATT) in Geneva asking me if I was willing to do a series of lectures in China in the framework of the Export Packaging Development project. The other lecturer was Etienne Boonet, the Secretary General of EAN in Brussels. Etienne and I both agreed to go, pending approvals from my boss. My immediate boss at Symbol at the time did not see the benefit of my participation in such project, but this was not one where I would take "no" for an answer easily. I would have taken my two weeks vacation if necessary, but Jerry Swartz recognized the positive side of early exposure in an emerging market. In fact I did not represent Symbol officially but I went as an officer of AIM. Etienne and I prepared a two day seminar program that covered all aspects of bar code printing, scanning, verification and applications, and delivered that program five times. We left in early July 1988 for a two week – five city lecture tour of China. We started in Beijing, followed by Tianjing, Nanjing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. In each city we lectured for two days and in between we had time for some sightseeing, which was unforgettable.

The reason why the UN was involved in this joint program with the China Export Packaging Institute was the fact that China realized that in order to be a successful exporter it needed to improve the quality of packaging and it realized that barcodes were required by overseas customers. We must have accomplished something because following this trip, China became member of EAN. Besides everything I learned about China, its culture, its people and the state of technology, I also learned that visiting China to work in July was not a good idea in those pre-air-conditioning days. Our seminars were held in the regional offices of the Packaging Institute and these were not air-conditioned. Doing seminars is an intense business anyway and shirts were soaked by mid day, but we learned and borrowed towels from the hotels and took clean shirts for the afternoon sessions. It is obvious that we needed an interpreter and Miss Li Ying from the Packaging Export Corporation played that role for us. She did an outstanding job, because the questions we were asked to answer were of high caliber. She traveled with us and interpreted all five seminars. By the time we did the Guangzhou seminar she started to answer all questions without translating them for us, because after four cities she knew the answers.

It is wonderful to travel on a diplomatic passport, pass all airport checkpoints quickly and get special treatment but that was not what made this trip so special. What impressed me most was how different the country is, how differently business is conducted and how the people absorbed everything we taught them whilst they were trying to learn how things are done in the US and Europe. In hindsight I was most impressed to see the progress made when I returned on many trips between 1992 and 1994. ANCC (Article Number Center of China) had been established as

the EAN representative organization, people carried business cards with bar codes printed on them, each province had its own bar code verification and film master group and overall people had adopted the technology as if it had been there since the Ming Dynasty and all this in only 4-5 years. More about that later.

Chapter VIII – AIDC’s first merger: Symbol and MSI Data Corporation

By the late eighties the AIDC market consisted of a number of small to medium sized companies that were ready for some consolidation. Rumors had been flying around, but then some time in 1989 Telxon made a hostile bid for MSI Data Corporation. We have to remember at this point that Telxon was a company founded by a few MSI alumni such as Ray Meyo and Bob Meyerson. This goes back to the mid seventies and these two companies had been going at each other’s throat in the market for years. Both companies were customers of Symbol Technologies. Symbol had also just developed a version of its successful LS8000 scanner that incorporated memory to capture and store scanned data. It was clearly Symbol’s intention to play in the handheld data capture market and rather than developing a range of handheld terminals, the smart decision was made by Ray Martino to try and hit the ground running by acquiring one of the two. In the middle of the Telxon – MSI hostilities, Symbol jumped in as the white knight and negotiated an agreement in 3.5 days.

Whereas this was strategically the right decision, all one can do in a few days is some basic due diligence and then pray that the rest will work out. In the early days this merger was not a success. No or too little attention was paid to post merger integration of this now \$180 million company. One company being a typical East Coast company and MSI clearly being a typical Southern California company, there were serious differences. The sales forces were not integrated immediately but that was not the biggest problem. In Engineering both groups had big egos and cooperation was practically impossible in the beginning. The manufacturing sites remained untouched and this was a complete waste of money since both plants did not run at capacity and were making rather similar products. All of this becomes obvious when looking at Symbol’s results in 1990 and ’91, clearly two disappointing years. In the end though everything worked out for the better. The manufacturing facility in Costa Mesa, CA closed down, sales teams were fully integrated and engineering eventually found a common ground. Everything related to wireless systems moved to the San Jose, CA facility which had just been opened by Fred Heiman.

As a result of this acquisition Telxon decided to no longer buy handheld scanners from its new competitor and started buying from PSC. What is the saying? What goes around, comes around? In 2000 Symbol bought Telxon Corporation to eliminate a competitor and capture certain market segments it did not yet serve well. Unfortunately for Symbol, Telxon had already sold its wireless division, Aironet to Cisco, but that’s a whole different story.

Since these are my memoirs I should mention how I was affected by this merger. In late 1989, Symbol Technologies International in Brussels had grown to a 25 people team which included people like Robert Romain, Mike Portsmouth and of course Mark Marriott who had joined us from Numeric Arts, our UK distributor. MSI on the other hand was a larger organization out of an European HQ office in Wokingham, England and was managed by Roger Vanstone. MSI had 6 subsidiaries in Europe and employed about 150 people in the UK and on the Continent. Whereas the integration in the US was not handled very well, the European integration went

quite smoothly after Roger was put in charge of the entire operation and Jerry Swartz asked me to start replicating the success we had in Europe, in Latin America and Asia Pacific as VP of International Marketing. Bob Holloway was my boss at the time. As we saw earlier, my involvement in Asia Pacific was basically a continuation of what I had started from Brussels. Although I saw no need to move to the US, Jerry eventually convinced me that I really needed to be at corporate HQ on Long Island to be effective. In early 1990 Elisabeth and I packed up, left good old Europe for a totally new adventure on Long Island. Paul Kemp, who was the global head of sales and marketing had in the mean time hired Tomo Razmilovic to run Symbol Europe. In hindsight it is my humble opinion that Tomo convinced Paul Kemp that I should no longer reside in Europe if he was going to be successful, since the old Symbol crew had much loyalty to me notwithstanding my new responsibilities and there could only be one boss.

The Symbol MSI merger was really the end of my life in Europe, a great time for me personally and a great time for my family. We achieved a lot, put Symbol solidly on the global AIDC map, brought competitors together to “grow the pie” and educate the market and generally had a lot of fun doing this. It also was an incredibly enriching experience whilst traveling the world, meeting and doing business with people all over the world. Writing about this period would not be complete without the mention of the crowning honor my peers bestowed on me in 1989. I certainly did not expect this honor because it is one thing to be successful in business, it is quite another to be recognized by your friends and competitors in the industry for what you did for the greater good. So I was very surprised when Elisabeth told me she had received a phone call from AIM asking if we could come to the annual meeting on December 7, 1989 in Naples, FL to receive the 1989 Richard R. Dilling Award (lovingly called the Dick Dilling Award). It is humbling when you are the first non-US recipient of this award, for what we did with Scan Tech and AIM in Europe, was recognized by peers in North America. What an honor! Of course we went! The beautiful Steuben Glass eagle still sits proudly in our living room.



Picture 9: Chet Benoit presenting the 1989 Dick Dilling Award

On to a new adventure which I could have never done without the support of Elisabeth and her courage to begin a new life on a new continent. It was tough on her, also because we left our son Alexander in the Netherlands at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam and our daughter at the Hotel Management School in Crans Montana, Switzerland..... Coming home for a short weekend became a real challenge.....



Picture 10: Previous recipients of the Dick Dilling Award: (left to Right) Chet Benoit ('87), Rick McDonald ('86), PB ('89), Al Wurz ('90), Ed Andersson ('84), Ben Nelson ('85) and David Allais ('88)

Chapter IX – Latin America and Asia

Having already spent so much time on Long Island during the many trips over a ten year period, made settling down there not very difficult. Symbol colleagues went out of their way to make us feel at home which we did very quickly. We loved being relatively close to New York City with everything it has to offer in culture, great food and entertainment.

For the next two years my entire focus was on building the business in Latin America and in Asia. This involved extensive travel throughout both regions. In Brazil, SEAL was appointed as distributor and because of complex and high import duties they started assembly of scanners from knock-down kits we supplied. SEAL became one of Symbol's most successful distributors under the leadership of Moisés Skitnevski and his technical partner Fernando Claro. We also had great distributors in Mexico, Chile and Argentina and many became personal friends. Of course some of these companies were originally MSI distributors and others had a Symbol background. Traveling throughout South America had its challenges sometimes. Safety was always a concern but it never was on top of my mind. You intuitively know not to do certain things such walk the streets of Rio de Janeiro alone at night or wearing jewelry and carrying lots of money. Visiting our friends from Brussels, who were transferred to São Paulo because of his new appointment as

president of American Express Brazil, was quite another experience. They lived in a sophisticated, yet walled and heavily guarded neighborhood called Chacara Flora. After passing an armed checkpoint we proceeded to their home to find other armed guards in front of their house. I guess I'd prefer to visit rather than live in such conditions.

The situation in Asia was a little different. My friend Peter Chan, who had been running the Asia/Pacific region for MSI, continued doing the same job for the combined company. He had established a number of distributors and there were some that had been established by Symbol. We were doing some business, but the Symbol board decided that more could be done if we had the right approach for Asia. We all felt that in order to be successful in Asia, we had to have a strong foothold in Japan, the most advanced AutoID market in Asia at the time. We also knew that we did not have the stamina nor the patience to build this up from scratch. The logical solution seemed to be a joint venture with a strong Japanese company. The mistake the company made at this point was to look for an optical products manufacturer, because Jerry Swartz and Fred Heiman felt that a scanner being an optomechanics product, the likes of a Canon would be a great partner.

Well, Canon was too big a fish and not interested to talk to such a small (SBL: \$450M company at the time) company. Neither were Nikon and a few others interested in Symbol. The smaller company Olympus however was willing to entertain a dialogue and almost a year later we signed a JV agreement with Olympus Optical of Japan. It was in fact a three part agreement that included technology transfer by Symbol to Japan so that Olympus could start manufacturing certain products such as the LS 2000 under license, a technology transfer agreement from Olympus to Symbol, so that Symbol could benefit from Japanese miniaturization and optical design skills of the Japanese, and the sales and marketing agreement to sell Symbol products throughout Asia. I alluded earlier to the fact that we should not have picked an optics manufacturer for our purposes and the reason for this comment is that what we needed was a partner with a strong Auto ID sales and marketing presence in Japan and Asia, and Olympus was not that company. There are a lot of companies in Japan that would have satisfied our need, such as Nippon Denso or Fuji Electric, but that was not to be.

The JV opened in 1991 and fairly early on things did not go the way we had all hoped. Peter Chan was sent to Tokyo to build the sales team and in 1992 Jerry Swartz asked me to move to Tokyo as well, to try and bring the JV back on track. With the wrong fundamentals as explained in the previous paragraph, it was impossible to make this venture a huge success. It is a known fact in Tokyo that only 10% of all US-Japan joint ventures are successful. Great examples are Shin Caterpillar, Fuji Xerox and several others, but Olympus Symbol was unfortunately not one of them. In addition to the incompatibility, there were other factors such as the different business cultures and expectations. When the JV eventually broke up in 1995 Olympus kept the rights to the Symbol products in Japan and Peter Chan opened an Asia office for Symbol in Singapore. Two years later, Olympus recognized that this was the wrong business for them to be in and sold



Picture 11: Opening ceremony for Scan Tech Japan in 1991 with Chikara Ishiguro of Denso Corporation to my left. He was one of the godfathers of the AIM movement in Japan

the Japan rights back to Symbol whilst continuing to manufacture and design certain products for Symbol. In the end Symbol did get a strong position in Asia and I was proud to have been instrumental in that success, but the road to get there was somewhat convoluted.

The JV was managed by Takashi (Tom) Nozumi, an Olympus old-timer and someone who had lived and worked in the US for 12 years, so he understood the cultural differences between Japan and America. Tom was a great guy to work with, although he never considered me a close friend with whom he would go out and party at night. He must have felt uncertain or threatened by the gaijin, “the foreigner” who might not know how to behave in a Japanese environment. Tom did go out of his way to teach me the intricacies of the Japanese business culture. One of these things was that when asked how long I would be stationed in Japan, I would always answer that I was not sure but certainly “a long time”, because if I mentioned the three years of my contract, it would not be worthwhile for the Japanese to put an effort into developing a relationship. Relationships is how business is done in Asia.

One of the great lessons learned in Japan was the thoroughness and attention to detail with which Japanese companies make sure that products are of superior quality. Olympus Symbol tried, and succeeded to get Denso Corporation to resell the Symbol LS2000 handheld laser scanner in OEM and under their own label. It took a total of two years for Denso to evaluate the product, suggest some (minor) changes and approve new color of the plastic housing.

Given my lack of knowledge of Japanese, we decided that my time would be best spent by focusing on the development of other Asian markets, and leave the Japanese market to my colleagues. This created a fantastic opportunity to travel extensively throughout the region and I spent a lot of time in China, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia. There are so many experiences and anecdotes that I could fill another book with these stories. Let me just tell a few.



Figure 12: Introducing PDF417 to the Chinese police forces for people ID - 1.3 billion people to identify!

One evening, during the first Scan China, we attended a large banquet at the original Peking Duck Restaurant in Beijing. After dinner we decided to visit the Hard Rock Café that had just opened that day. First of all it is really strange to see a half ‘58 Cadillac sticking out of a Beijing building. Once inside at 10:00PM we discovered that they had run out of beer!! Clearly a supply chain problem caused by not using barcodes! It was easy to decide to make it a Scotch night, for which there was ample supply. The next day we returned for a good old hamburger and beer and Stuart Itkin tricked me into celebrating a birthday, 5 months early but that is what the waitress

believed. There is a first time for everything! Blowing out the single candle on the piece of cake through a three foot straw whilst standing on a chair is a challenge!

In mid '93 we received a delegation from Vietnam, headed by Professor Hang Duu, minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, who visited Olympus and other companies. As a result of this visit I was invited to lecture on barcodes in Hanoi which I did later that year. What an experience! I discovered quickly that it was easier to communicate in French and that helped a lot, but unfortunately all my slides were in English. We were late in making reservations and the

Sofitel hotel, which was the only western style hotel in Hanoi at the time, was normally fully booked three months ahead of time, so I stayed at a hotel that only had one phone, at the reception desk. Forget doing email!! I met several people from the Standards Institute and as a result Vietnam became an EAN member. One of the lasting impressions of that trip was the beauty of the Vietnamese women, clearly the most attractive in all of Asia, at least in my humble opinion. The other memory was walking in front of the “Maison Centrale” or the famous prison that our GI’s referred to as the Hanoi Hilton and where so many heroes, including John McCain suffered or died. Two months later that historic building was destroyed to make space for a new multi-story shopping mall, a development by Singaporean investors.

People who know me also know that I will eat everything.....at least once. Admittedly this character trait was really put to the test by several of our distributors and other business associates during the many dinners and lunches in places like Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. I would eat most items on the menu more than once, but I obviously have favorites, such as “drunken prawns”, the preparation of which is rather cruel when live shrimps are cooked in water mixed with lots of alcohol in a Pyrex bowl. At least they were very happy just before getting ready for consumption, I presume. I also loved the stuffed cabbage leaves and Japanese Shabu-shabu. In fact in Japan, I liked everything.

My time in Japan was a phenomenal experience so full of memories. I know I grew as a person by gaining so much experience in doing business in the culture of yet another part of the world, an enriching experience I will never forget. There is a big difference between flying in to do business somewhere and then to leave again, and actually living in a country with a different culture and doing business there. The same is obviously true for my experience in the US after spending most of my business life in Europe.

Here is a picture of a large part of our Olympus Symbol (OSI) team in Tokyo. Jim Mcfarlaine in the back row is an Aussie who came to OSI with lots of networking experience and he was a great asset to the company. Peter Chan, sitting next to me on the front row is a great friend and an outstanding business man who was successful in any part of Asia. Jim eventually moved to Singapore to join the Symbol office there.



Picture 13: Left to right, Front row: Horiguchi, Y Yoda, Peter Chan, PB, Takashi Nozumi, K Ito, A Sodomoto, W Kojima. Second row: S Ogawa, N Matsuhashi, S Umetsu, N Nanai, M Goto, K Ando. Back row: Y Chiba, Jim Macfarlane, O Yamaguchi, M Kobayashi, S Koda, K Seki, T Kaneeda, H Goto

Chapter X – The Japan Experience

That was the business side of the story but there is also the personal element of our move to Tokyo in March 1992. What a great personal experience our stay was for the three years we lived there!! We had the chance to live in a beautiful apartment in Aobadai in Meguro-ku. Like everywhere we have moved, I was immediately involved in work but the same was not true for Elisabeth. Fortunately she was invited to become member of the International Ladies Benevolent Society and for the next three years this became one of her two anchors in Japan, the other one being the Tokyo American Club which provided us with an active social life.

Did we learn Japanese? Not really! I took eleven two hour introductory lessons from a teacher who came to the office once a week. All I learned was how to count, ask for directions and 17 polite phrases to use when being introduced or in other circumstances. Of course in 3 years you pick up other words as well, but as the saying goes “you come to Japan to do business or to learn the language, doing both at the same time is impossible. We knew several “gaijin” people (=foreigners) who spoke Japanese quite well but it took them a full year of total immersion to learn. When living in Tokyo though, English works well, as most street and subway signs have Western subtitles. Of course very few streets have a name as the postal addressing system is based on a numerical system and the use of City – Township – Ward names and then block numbering. The house numbers are sequential around the block, not along a street! We lived on 401 1-4-7 Aobadai, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153. That was apartment 401 in house #7 on block 4 in section 1 of Aobadai, which is a Ward in the Meguro-ku township part of Tokyo. If you could not read a Japanese map, you could not find an address, unless you had directions. That’s one of the reasons everybody has a fax machine so that you can receive directions instantaneously. You also needed that for the taxi drivers as they would never understand what you said, but they could read directions and simple, often hand-drawn maps. Elisabeth had a very busy life whilst

attending all sorts of classes such as for sumie, ink brush painting or ikebana, the art of flower arranging, all of this in addition to her social life at TAC or with ILBS friends.

Just before leaving for Japan we bought a Japan Rail pass and used that during Golden Week, when the whole country basically shuts down for religious celebrations and people visit relatives in the countryside. It was May 1992, just one month after arriving in Tokyo, giving us the opportunity to discover the central part of the country. We took the Shinkansen bullet train and worked our way south to Hiroshima. We wanted to experience that city and become more aware of what happened at the end of WWII, particularly after having visited Pearl Harbor on our way to Japan. We were subdued when we left the city, because of the impression it left on us as we realized the incredible power of an atomic bomb and destruction it can cause. That trip also included a visit to Kyoto where we collected more temple stamps than our little booklets could hold and Pearl Island where Mikimoto in the late 19th century developed the technique for culturing pearls. This trip provided an excellent introduction to the real Japan outside Tokyo.

Other excursions we made included the Snow Festival in Sapporo on Hokkaido Island where we admired the snow and ice sculptures, Nagasaki on Kyushu Island and the adjacent Holland Village “Huis ten Bosch”, a theme park where several full size replicas of well known Dutch buildings built in brick, made us a little homesick (but not for long). It was unreal though to walk up to “Nyenrode Castle” a copy of my alma mater. The reason for this theme park, which opened in 1993, was to remind the Japanese people of the time when their country was closed to the outside world, until it reopened under Captain Perry in the 19th century, and when a small town on this island, called Dejima was the only gateway to the outside world. Dejima was managed by the Dutch (who else??) thus providing for a way to still get spices in from Indonesia and silk from China. Unfortunately the park went into bankruptcy after about ten years.

The Japan experience was clearly one of the absolute highlights of my life. In 1995 however, the JV was dissolved and I had to look for another position within Symbol since career planning was not one of Symbol’s strengths. The president at that time was Jan Lindelow and it is with him that I started a dialogue about my future in the company. It quickly became clear that what he had in mind and my ambition were not aligned at all and this gave me the opportunity to start doing what I had been dreaming about for a number of years, to start my own consulting business. This was the time to do it.

Chapter XI – Back To Reality And Going It Alone

After a career in international business development for large corporations, I was attracted by working for a smaller company and joined Symbol Technologies, a small start-up. By the time we left Japan and 15 years after joining that small company, it had grown to be a substantial \$650 million player with all the associated company politics which I have always detested and I was longing for something smaller. It seemed to make a lot of sense that I should be able to make a living out of helping smaller companies to become more successful overseas by combining my international business experience, language skills, the founding of AIM Europe and involvement in the AIDC community. I also felt that the US market was probably in more need of what I had to offer than Europe, so I applied for a green card in the US. Our immigration attorney managed to secure that visa within six weeks by applying under a category not normally used for business

people, but one where the fact that I had promoted US exports during most of my career, tipped the balance.

Elisabeth and I have always enjoyed being near New York City. Long Island was not all that attractive, New Jersey an unknown territory so we picked Connecticut to settle down. Little did we know about the high taxes in that state, particularly along the coast. Anyway, we found a lovely new home in Wilton, CT and started the company in May 1995. Starting a company is easy, at least if it is a LLC. All it takes is an attorney to file the necessary papers with the correct authorities and you are up and running. Starting a business is a different story and I sought the advice of many people. Dick Meyers, who had started Delta Services after a corporate career, gave me many tips and ideas. The best advice he gave me was that a sole proprietor consultant easily falls in the trap of spending all his time on consulting and thereby neglecting to sell his services. I discovered that I was pretty good at helping clients, but pretty lousy at selling myself. Notwithstanding Dick's advice I learned the hard way. Another big help was Bob Gattie, a friend from the time in Brussels who had become a headhunter in Singapore. Bob simplified my agony of trying to create a clever name for the company, by suggesting that I name it after what I sell, which I did.

Lesson learned:

As a sole proprietor consultant you have to spend as much time selling yourself as the time you spend on consulting, otherwise your prospect pipeline dries up.

Dick Meyers, 1995

Symbol had agreed to support my new activity as part of how we parted ways, by giving me the assignment to investigate the RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) market and to make recommendations for Symbol's possible role in that market. That report was delivered on time and surely formed the basis for Symbol's foray into that business a few years later. After an initial mailing announcing Paul Bergé International LLC, I landed my first client within a week. Accu-Sort asked me to guide them through the process of doing a joint venture with Visolux, their European master distributor. If one has never been in business for oneself one misses the tremendous joy and satisfaction of receiving that first check for services rendered. Accu-Sort and my friend Jack Householder gave me that thrill, for which I am eternally grateful. From that moment on I was so fortunate to attract other clients in the AIDC market place and things went well for about 18 months. One client assignment brought me back to Tokyo and Bangkok, a very enjoyable return to a part of the world Elisabeth and I love. Another client brought me back to Europe. Helping companies in their overseas efforts is something that gives me great personal satisfaction and of course it is good for business if that is your business.

One of PBI's prospects in 1996 was Monarch Marking Systems in Dayton, OH, a well established and respected manufacturer of label supplies, printers, price marking tools and data collection terminals, and known in the AIDC world as the inventors of the Codabar symbology. President at the time was John Paxton who had joined the company from Intermec after Paxar Corporation and Odyssey Partners bought Monarch from Pitney Bowes. John was brought in to turn the company around and awaken it from its dormant state. He listened to my sales pitch, but not for long because John knew what I was capable of and told me that he did not want to pay my fees for what I could do for the company. After explaining that I loved what I was doing and that fees were what keep me alive, he gave me the assignment of finding a VP of international operations. That was more easily said than done because I had no experience as headhunter but

John felt that there should be no problem since “I know so many people in the industry”. After presenting a number of candidates, John kept insisting that I should be the one to join the company rather than any of the candidates.

Chapter XII – Monarch Marking Systems and Paxar Corporation

Did I make a mistake in finally giving in to John Paxton’s insistence to join the company? I have learned to not look back, because it really doesn’t help as you go forward (see comments below about Shimon Perez). The job of VP of International Operations was a big job that came with 6 overseas subsidiaries, 25 distributors a great staff in Dayton and \$90 million in annual sales. A job that had been neglected for a number of years and a job that was certainly attractive. So we sold the house in Wilton with a tear in our eyes, packed up and left for Cincinnati, Ohio to settle yet again into a new life.

Paxton had put a great new management team together that included great guys like Dan Bishop and Ken Cassidy. I was the last member to join. There was a lot of work to do including turning around the subsidiaries in France and Mexico. These turn-arounds were successful and the international division started making money again whilst business grew profitably. The job obviously involved extensive travel to Europe, Australia, Singapore and Latin America. There is always so much to remember from these trips, many subtle nuances and happenings. One of the more exciting moments was when during one of my trips to Medellin, Colombia where we had an excellent distributor Disisit, I had agreed to meet with two individuals who wanted to sell our products in Equador. The way the meeting was set up was suspicious and when I was picked up from the hotel in a Chevy Suburban with darkened windows to go to the meeting place, it turned out to be a villa in a residential area. The reason I agreed to this meeting in the first place was that our distributor Rafael Jaramillo insisted on following the Suburban in his own car. I felt quite safe but still somewhat apprehensive. After two hours we did not come to any agreement and I was taken back to the hotel. I sensed that this was a money laundering operation and wanted no part of it. Two weeks after returning to the US, John Paxton received a call from the State Department questioning why I had visited Colombia twice in one year and had we asked the embassy in Bogotá to check out our distributor etc.... Ironically, Colombia was an excellent market for Paxar and it had been served by the same distributor for 20 years. I have no urge to go back in a hurry, but it is a beautiful country with lots of very nice people and a climate to grow anything year-round, including lots of flowers for the US market.

One of the greatest opportunities for me personally and for Elisabeth was to participate in the 1998 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland where Monarch was a member, represented by John Paxton and where Monarch supplied the label printers for the registration areas that year. What a fascinating experience to industry, government and with Newt Gingrich, shared lunch John Kerry, Christie Todd Michael Dell, Bill Gates and listened to great speeches by cuff), Nelson Mandela and too

rub shoulders with the leaders of academia. We had a fireside chat and dinner tables with notables like Whitman, Michael Bloomberg, Shimon Perez, and where we Hilary Clinton (45 minutes off the many others to remember. The topic for the dinner where Elisabeth was sitting next to Shimon Perez was to discuss “can we learn from history for the benefit of the future?” The general consensus was that we can learn from the



past to be better prepared for the future and to avoid making the same mistakes. Perez was of a diametrically opposed opinion and claimed that the past had no relevance for the future. He then took the microphone to report on the findings of our table to the other tables and defended his position as one that represented the whole table. I guess in his position he could afford to do this and we did not mind because of the solid argument he built. Needless to say that his opinion was completely tainted by Israel's history.

Approximately 3 months after I joined Monarch Marking Systems, Paxar decided to buy out the 50% owned by Odyssey Partners to become the sole owner of Monarch and closed on that deal about six months later. This move certainly made sense for Paxar and Arthur Hershaft, its Chairman and CEO; it made even more sense for Odyssey who made a nice profit on its investment because Monarch started doing quite well. Like in every merger, not everyone was pleased with what happened to individuals on the side of the acquired company. I was immediately involved in the integration of Paxar's and Monarch's European operations under Paxar's European CEO James Wrigley. This integration cut my territory in less than half, but Arthur offered me "the rest of the world" namely Latin America and Asia / Pacific, except Mexico and Hong Kong, the two largest money makers for the company outside the US. This job was however not challenging enough for me and I left the company. For this to happen just 18 months after joining Monarch was a little too soon for my liking.

We were now committed to life in Cincinnati and after 23 years in the AIDC industry I left that familiar playing field and ventured into the exciting world of mergers and acquisitions, but not in the AIDC industry. I did seven deals in Europe, Asia and South America for a total value of well over \$500 million, for two different companies. This adventure came to a grinding hold when the world telecom market virtually collapsed in 2001 compounded by the general downturn in the economy.

It then took some time to decide what to do next and finally decided to go back in to consulting, but that is what happened in 2002 and although my first client was in the business of composite materials, my other and current clients are all in the AIDC industry and quite frankly that's where I belong and where I can be most effective for my clients.

Chapter XIII – Back In The AIDC Saddle

After five years on the other side of the fence, it is great to be back amongst friends and in a familiar environment. The industry has changed, for sure, but many players are still there in 2004. Symbol Technologies is certainly not the same company anymore after having been indicted in and accused of accounting fraud, it now has a new focus on "enterprise mobility". Welch Allyn acquired Hand Held Products and re-branded into HHP. PSC acquired Percon and Spectra Physics and has since come out of chapter 11. Intermec acquired Norand and UBS in Europe. Other companies have changed and many for the better. Further consolidations have taken place and the new game in town is RFID. Radio Frequency Identification is certainly not new, but the current hype is not unlike what we experienced in barcoding in the seventies and early eighties: New players in the market, competing standards to be agreed on and market pressure from early adopters like Wal-Mart and the Department of Defense. These are exciting times again!



Picture 14: George and Teddy Goldberg, Elisabeth and PB on Long Island in 1995

It is also exciting to a member of AIDC100, a group of movers and shakers who have “made a difference” in the world of Automatic Identification and Data Capture. Back in 1997 George Goldberg, Ben Nelson and Chet Benoit took the initiative to create this by-invitation-only group for the purpose of continuing to make a difference. As a result we now have an AIDC100 special collection and archive at SUNY at Stony Brook on Long Island, NY, thus safeguarding the history of what became known as the automatic identification industry. Quite a few members have contributed their archives and working papers like I did and others

have expressed their intention to do so when they are ready to say goodbye to their treasures. For a number of years not much else happened but in 2003 the group was revitalized by George Goldberg and Dick Meyers by creating a Leadership Council and by actively organizing events and otherwise beating the drum.

Over the years we developed a great friendship with the Goldberg’s. George always had a wise and encouraging word when I sought his knowledge of the industry as I started my own business in 1995 and then again in 2002. His passing away in December 2003 left us and the AIDC industry with a void that cannot be easily replaced.

It’s an honor to have been asked as one of the charter members of AIDC100 and I take great pleasure in giving back to an industry and group of friends that have been very good to me throughout my career in AIDC.

More than 25 years in one industry has given me the opportunity to develop as a person and as a businessman for which I am eternally grateful. Without the unwavering support of my wife Elisabeth and our two children Alexander and Pauline this would never have been possible.



Picture 15: Connecting the dots. World travels.... Business & Pleasure

Chapter XV - Special Recognition

- Elisabeth Bergé:** My dear wife who so much loved the environment and atmosphere of the early days in AIM Europe and who has had the courage and willingness to follow and support me in the many physical and career moves we made around the world. “Behind every successful man stands a strong, supportive and exhausted wife”
- Alexander & Pauline Bergé** Our two children who managed to grow up to be the adults we are so proud of notwithstanding the fact that their father was “on the road” so often to spread the barcode gospel.
- Edmund Anderson:** For stimulating the creation of Scan Tech Europe and the formation of AIM Europe (AIDC100 member)
- Norman Bartlett:** The no-nonsense Aussie who took 4 months off from Monarch to explore his own country “as all Australians are supposed to do”
- Dan Bishop:** A great counsel(or) and supporter in difficult times.
- Etienne Boonet:** The great fellow lecturer and travel companion on our UN trip to China.
- Rich Bravman:** A great and fun colleague who made outstanding contributions to Symbol and AIM (AIDC100 member)
- Yoshiyuki Chiba:** For being such a loyal Olympus Symbol colleague and mentor in Tokyo
- Peter Chan:** The guy who taught me about Asian business cultures and who was a great person to work with in Tokyo for three years.
- John Cribb:** My ex-colleague from the days at Plessey who became my fiercest competitor but also customer when he joined Telxon and who later became a staunch ally in AIM Europe.
- Jack Donnelly** For talking to me about these “black and white stripes”
- George Goldberg:** A superb leader and commentator who founded AIDC100 and started the special collection at Stony Brook. (Passed away in December 2003)
- Bill Hakanson:** For helping us to get AIM Europe off the ground
- Jack Householder:** A loyal friend and the first client for my own business.
- Stuart Itkin:** Friend, colleague and client. He also is one of the best AIDC marketing minds (AIDC100 member)
- Michel Jacobs:** A great technical mind with an unusual marketing twist. For keeping me on the straight path when “sales” slang needed a technical correction or scientific underpinning.
- Ray Martino:** The man who really turned Symbol around in the early eighties
- Paul Kemp:** For being an excellent mentor and supporter whilst Sr. VP of Sales and Marketing at Symbol
- Dick Meyers:** Owner of Delta Services and my mentor in the early days of Paul Bergé International LLC. He is also the driving force behind AIDC100 after he took the helm of that organization in 2003.
- Takashi (Tom) Nozumi:** For teaching me Japanese business culture, and for keeping me from making “faux pas”
- John Paxton:** For his leadership, notwithstanding the fact that he got me to stop my consulting business. (AIDC100 member)

- John Reader:** My boss at Plessey who really lit the fire under my fascination with barcodes.
- Ian Smith:** Always a friend and a great organizer of events and associations. Some of our memories are better not repeated
- Jerry Swartz:** For giving me a chance to grow the business. Also for his vision as founder of Symbol. (AIDC100 member)
- Marleen Vanderlinden:** For sticking with me for 10 years as we were growing Symbol Europe to be the force it became. The most loyal person I ever worked with.
- Sjoerd Wouda:** The Dutch bar code rebel and interface guru.