

REAL DIGITAL TICKETING

By Jean Bodart

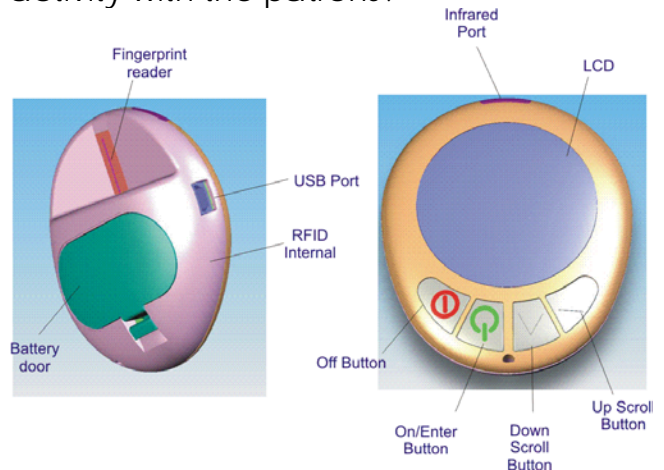
Linda Deckard's article **CONCESSIONS : FAST Track** in the January edition of *Venues Today* was a very comprehensive synopsis of the state of the art in contactless payment for concessions at venues in the US. Well...almost. Dave Hoffman of Micro Systems hit the nail on the head when he said *"People...are looking at...how they can bring the entire solution under a single umbrella"*.

Bar Code solutions still require expensive handhels and suffer from problems of automated payments. Smart cards with built-in RFID are a step ahead, but suffer from the dilemma of who foots the bill for the RFID readers at concession stands. Cell phones (viz. Philips Arena experiment) are being touted as the "universal device" but have the same business model problem: who pays for the readers and who pays for the SMS communications required for ticket download, payment authorizations etc...And how many people own these expensive handsets anyway?

So here you have it...there seems to be no viable business case for the introduction of contactless technology.

But pause a moment... a young upstart company, **Sentegra Corp.**, has designed an independent smart device with the built-in revenue-generation potential that will fund its introduction within a few months.

Their "**I-DISC**" is a low-cost handheld device that fits in the palm of your hand and has built-in USB, RFID and Infrared ports, as well as an LCD screen for interactivity with the patrons?



So where's the beef?

Well firstly, with the I-DISC's USB port, you will now be able to download to it tickets bought at your favorite online ticketing network, in the comfort of your home. No lines, no waiting. And when the tickets are downloaded, you will also receive coupons and promotional offers that suit your profile. And all this is visible to you at any time on the I-DISC's LCD screen.

The story gets better...when the patron goes to the game, it's real fast-tracking: The I-DISC's RFID (or Infrared) transmitter ensures that he gains fast access to his seat, whizzing through RFID-equipped turnstiles. And when he points his I-DISC at the turnstile, more targeted coupons and offers will be loaded to his I-DISC.

At any time, he can redeem a coupon from the sponsored coupon concession holder by just pointing his I-DISC at the reader at the concession stand. With the optional prepayment module, his pur-

chase can also be paid for automatically.

So we still need readers ? Who pays for them?

According to Jon Shore, President and Founder of Sentegra Corp., the I-DISC and associated **meWallet™** system is not just an “elegant, state of the art, electronic ticketing system. It is designed to increase your bottom line”.



Shore points out that the multiple new revenue streams that can be generated by the Sentegra system will have the Ticketing Companies clamoring to “give away” the I-DISC hand-

helds to their patrons. Firstly, the cost of the handheld (less than \$20), can be easily subsidized by the potential logo advertising revenue on the two surfaces of the I-DISC. This is not so easily achieved with branded cell phone handsets. Secondly, the interactivity of the handheld, makes it possible to use it as a marketing device for coupons, loyalty programs or any other direct marketing campaign. These generate revenues for the Ticketing Companies, Venues or Teams, in the form of commissions on coupons or cross marketing opportunities.

Shore adds: “there is also the possibility of interactive advertising throughout the venue. Every time a patron swipes his handheld past a wireless terminal, new

interactive advertising messages can be transmitted (and paid for!)”.

Real Digital Ticketing

Sentegra’s VP Business Development, Jean Bodart claims that the I-DISC / meWallett solution is the first REAL Digital Ticketing system on the market: No paper tickets, fingerprint recognition, contactless venue access, instantaneous electronic ticket downloads... All that translates into the real benefits of lower fraud costs, lower labor costs, no hard ticket counts, no cash handling costs and an increase in customer loyalty. In addition, since the central server keeps track of all ticket, coupon and promotion activities, eCRM and demographic analyses become a reality.

Is this what Dave Hoffman had in mind when he said: *“People are looking at how they can bring the entire solution under a single umbrella”?*

Sentegra have offices in Golden, Colorado and in Sophia Antipolis, France. They can be contacted at info@sentegra.com