

RFID-Enabled Linen Tracking for Hospitality Operations

Improving Inventory Accuracy and Operational
Efficiency in Hotel Linen Management

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1. Executive Summary

Hotels rely on accurate linen inventory management to maintain operational efficiency and ensure a consistent guest experience. Managing large volumes of linens—including sheets, towels, and pillowcases—can be time-consuming when inventory must be counted manually.

Many hotels track thousands of linen items moving between guest rooms, laundry facilities, and storage areas. Manual counting methods often require several hours each day and may still produce inaccurate results.

An RFID-enabled linen tracking solution was implemented using washable RFID tags embedded directly into linen products. The system allows staff to quickly count thousands of linen items using RFID reader infrastructure and cloud-based inventory software.

With this solution, staff can track the number of linens on-site, determine how many items are currently in cleaning, and verify that tagged linens leaving the facility return after laundering.

2. Introduction

Linen inventory management is a critical operational function in hotels and hospitality facilities. Hotels must maintain sufficient supplies of clean linens to meet daily guest demands while ensuring used linens are efficiently collected and returned to service.

Large hotels may manage thousands of linen items per day. Keeping track of these items using manual counting methods can be labor-intensive and time-consuming.

In many hotels, staff must count approximately 3,000 linen items or more per day to maintain accurate inventory records. This process can take several hours and must be repeated frequently.

Manual counting introduces several operational challenges including staff workload, inconsistent accuracy, and limited visibility into linen movement between hotel facilities and external laundry services.

3. Operational Challenges

Before implementing RFID technology, hotel staff faced several operational difficulties.

Time-Consuming Manual Counting

Counting thousands of linens manually each day requires significant staff effort and can take several hours.

Inventory Accuracy Issues

Manual counting increases the likelihood of human error, particularly when large volumes of linens must be counted quickly.

Lack of Visibility Into Linen Movement

Hotels frequently send linens to external laundry facilities. Staff often lack visibility into how many linens are currently in cleaning versus available on-site.

Difficulty Tracking Individual Linen Items

Without unique identifiers, it is impossible to determine whether the same linen item leaving the facility is the one returning after cleaning.

4. Solution Overview

To improve linen inventory management, an RFID-based solution was implemented.

The solution integrates RFID-enabled linens, reader infrastructure, and cloud-based inventory software to automate counting and tracking.

Key components include RFID-tagged linen, fixed RFID readers for counting areas, and cloud software to store and analyze inventory data.

5. RFID-Enabled Linen Tags

The linen used in the system includes embedded RFID tags supplied by RFRain.

These tags are designed specifically for textile environments. They are washable and capable of withstanding high temperatures used during commercial laundry processes.

Each tag contains a unique identifier allowing the system to track individual linen items throughout their lifecycle.

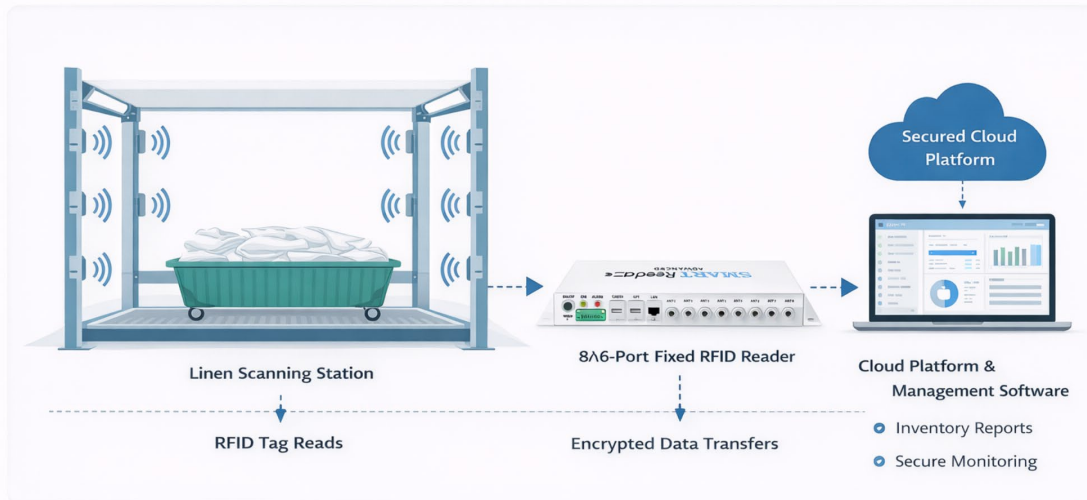
6. RFID Linen Counting Process

A designated linen scanning area is created where linens pass through RFID reader infrastructure.

Fixed RFID readers equipped with 8 or 16 antenna ports allow large quantities of linen to be scanned simultaneously. The system can read approximately 1,000 linen items within a few seconds.

RFID readers capture tag data and transmit the information to the central cloud system for processing.

RFID Linen Counting Station Architecture



1. Linen Scanning Station

Linens can

Figure 1 – RFID Linen Counting Station Architecture

7. Cloud-Based Inventory Management

All RFID data is transmitted to the RFRain Warehouse Software (RWS) platform hosted in the cloud.

The system stores tag data, maintains inventory counts, and tracks linen movement to and from dry cleaning facilities.

Staff can determine how many linens are currently available and how many are currently in cleaning.

8. Operational Benefits

RFID linen tracking provides several operational advantages.

Linen counting can be completed in seconds rather than hours. Automated RFID scanning improves accuracy and eliminates manual counting errors.

Staff gain real-time visibility into linen inventory levels and can quickly determine the number of items currently on-site or in cleaning.



Figure 2 – Handheld RFID Linen Inventory Scanning

9. Conclusion

RFID technology provides an efficient solution for managing hotel linen inventory.

By embedding washable RFID tags into linen items and using automated reader infrastructure, hotels can significantly reduce the time required to count inventory while improving accuracy.

The RFID-enabled system provides better operational visibility and supports more efficient linen management across hospitality operations.