

What is Verification

Bar code verification is more than simply scanning a bar code as it comes off the printer. Because you are only testing that one code with one model scanner in a fixed environment, scanning the bar code tells you very little about how that code will perform in the field. Verifying a bar code symbol tells you virtually everything about how that specific code, and those printed in the same lot, should perform in any environment, with a wide range of equipment. While scanning is simply machine recognition of encoded data, verification is an analysis of the encoding of that data.

Verification is so critical that National and International Standards organizations have developed specific guidelines or methodologies to measure bar code symbol print quality.

Verification is a process of:

- Measuring the print quality of a known symbology against the symbology specifications or standards.
- Decoding the bar code symbol.
- Ensuring correct data structure and content.
- Visually inspecting the code to ensure proper layout.

Verification takes time, but it represents much more than just an extra step in the process. Verification is a process that actually helps reduce steps down the line. We have all seen frustrated cashiers who try to scan an item multiple times only to have to key the number in by hand. How much productivity is lost by a failure to read the bar code symbol with the first pass? How about the second, or the third attempt? What if the number the cashier enters is incorrect? If you consider the costs associated with lost productivity, verification becomes a very reasonable investment.

Adding verification to an AIDC program will:

- Improve first-pass accuracy.
- Increase database integrity through reduced operator error.
- Ensure the correct structure of data on the bar code symbol.
- Accelerate return on investment of AIDC program implementation.

Verification does more than improve your bottom line. Every day, more and more companies are using AIDC processes to improve productivity and reduce cost. The bar code symbols you print and distribute to your customers – either on your products or their packaging – are a statement in black-and-white of what quality means to your business. Consequently, you need to ensure that every bar code symbol is high quality and the data it holds is accurate and structured correctly.

Verifying the quality of the bar code symbols you send to your customers will:

- Improve your value to your customers.
- Demonstrate your commitment to their business.
- Reduce rework costs, fines, and productivity losses for you and your customers.

Verifying bar code symbols before they leave your facility and get into the material flow is critical, but the goal should be to verify printed bar code symbols as soon as they are generated. The best verification programs include testing right at the printing stage either with an integrated, on-line verifier or a handheld unit. This helps ensure that any irregularities or printing errors are corrected before substandard bar code symbols get mixed with other lots. The further away from bar code symbol generation you go before verifying, the higher the risk that the data integrity and productivity of your entire operation has been compromised.

Selecting Verification Equipment

Once you have decided to start a verification program, you must choose equipment that is appropriate for your business. The fact is that every business is different, and you probably didn't start your business because of your vast knowledge of the bar code. Fortunately for you, Hand Held Products has been the leader in bar code symbol verification and scanning products since the industry began more than 25 years ago. That means that you can count on us to guide you through the development of an appropriate compliance program and a successful implementation. Hand Held Products offers a wide range of verification hardware and accessories for your next verification project. Hand Held Products verifiers can measure and grade a bar code symbol against all major industry group and government standards, and our devices meet National, International, and Industry guidelines. We also offer a wide range of N.I.S.T. (National Institute of Standards and Technology) traceable verification devices.