

MICROSCAN®

Automated Clinical Diagnostics: Bar Codes on Specimen Tubes

TRACKING BAR CODES ON SPECIMEN TEST TUBES

A manufacturer of automated clinical laboratory equipment needed to track specimen tubes as they were transported to different parts of the instrument for various tests.

The scanner would be needed to read both the bar codes on the tubes themselves, as well as the bar codes on the tube carriers.

THE SYMBOL

Code Type: Code 39 and Code 128

Marking Method: Thermal transfer onto high-gloss label stock.



• Code 39



• Code 128 (7.5 mil)

APPLICATION:

The manufacturer's customers needed to read a wide range of bar codes from various facilities. As a result, the scanner needed to be able to decode a variety of code types accurately and efficiently.

Since the bar codes were often in poor condition by the time they arrived at the lab, the scanner also needed a robust read rate capable of reading even poorly printed and damaged bar codes.



MS-3 Laser at a Glance

- **Scans/second:** 1,000
- **Read range:** 2 to 10" (50 to 250 mm)
- **Light weight:** 2-oz. (57 g)
- Test Button and Read Rate LEDs

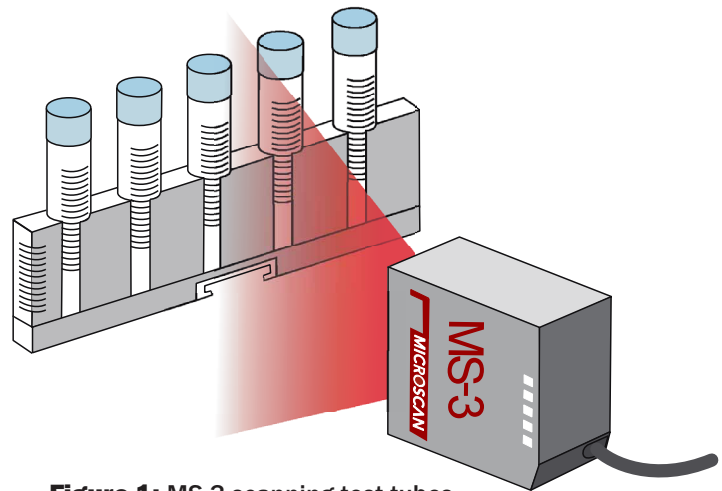


Figure 1: MS-3 scanning test tubes.

THE INSTALLATION

The MS-3 scanner was installed at the beginning of the transporting system (see Figure 1).

Four tubes are loaded into each carrier and then placed on a specialized conveyor belt. The conveyor then takes them to the "identification" station where the carrier slides past the bar code scanner, one tube at a time. The scanner reads the bar codes on each tube and the bar codes on the corresponding slot of each tube and logs the information into the system.

This enables the system to identify each tube. The operator then determines which test needs to be performed, and the system then sorts the tubes accordingly.

WHY THE MS-3

The MS-3 was selected because it provided the following features necessary for this application:

- Wide scan width
- Small size
- High scan speed

THE BOTTOM LINE

In the clinical industry, 100% data integrity is not a luxury, it is a necessity. For this reason, they needed a scanner with exceptionally robust read performance, capable of handling multiple code types within a very narrow read distance.

Since the MS-3 provided a wide scan width, small size, and an exceptionally small scan envelope, the scanner could be easily integrated into multiple points around the system.

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