CLAIMS

1. A method for processing a transaction via a transaction device (12) in communication with a server, the method including the steps of:

providing a supply chain management device comprising:

a product identifying device, the product identifying device including at least one of a barcode scanner and an RFID reader; and

an operator identifying device for identifying at least one operator handling a product, the operator identifying device comprising a biometric identifying component and a secondary identifying component, the product identifying device and the operator identifying device being disposed in a shared housing, the secondary identifying component including a first card reader configured to receive and read a first identification card of a supplier and a second card reader configured to receive and read a second identification card of a recipient;

obtaining, via the product identifying device, an identifier of the at least one operator handling the product;

authenticating, via the operator identifying device, the at least one operator by using the at least one operator identifying device;

obtaining an identifier of the product using a product identifying device associated with the transaction device (12); and

updating a record to associate the identifier of the at least one operator with the identifier of the product;

transmitting data from the transaction device to the server, the data including the identifier of the at least one operator and the identifier of the product;

cancelling the transaction if the step of obtaining the identifier of the product does not occur within a predefined transaction time interval that is negligible such that the identifier of the product is obtained with the step of obtaining the identifier of the at least one operator from both the biometric identifying component and the secondary identifying component while the first identification card of the supplier is received by the first card reader and the second identification of the recipient is received by the second card reader such that physical possession of the product by the at least one operator is tracked through a supply chain and inextricably links the operator and the product.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the updating of the record includes storing at least one of:

the identifier of the at least one operator; and

the identifier of the product in at least one of a digital storage of the transaction device (12) and a credential storage device.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the data transmitted is operably encrypted.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the step of obtaining an identifier of a recipient includes obtaining an identifier from a credential storage device of the operator.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein:
the step of authenticating the at least one operator includes:

obtaining biometric information from the at least one operator; and

comparing the obtained biometric information to biometric information stored on at least one of the transaction device and the credential storage device.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein:

the at least one operator is a supplier of the product and further wherein the method includes the steps of: obtaining an identifier of a recipient of the product; and, authenticating the recipient.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein:
the step of obtaining the identifiers of the supplier and the product include obtaining within the predefined transaction time interval the identifier of the recipient.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein:

the step of obtaining the identifiers of the supplier and the product further includes: obtaining an identifier of a transaction device, the identifier of the transaction device being at least one of:

a unique number associated to such transaction device; and

a specific location of such transaction device at which the transaction device is located when the transaction is processed, wherein the step of obtaining the identifiers is timed by a timing means.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein:

the step of obtaining an identifier of a recipient includes obtaining an identifier from a credential storage device of the recipient; and

the step of authenticating the recipient includes obtaining biometric information from the recipient and comparing the obtained biometric information to biometric information stored on the credential storage device of the recipient.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein:

the step of obtaining an identifier of a transaction device includes obtaining an identifier from

a credential storage device of the transaction devices; and

the step of authenticating the transaction device includes comparing the obtained transaction device identifier of a transaction device information stored on the credential storage device of the transaction devices.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein:

the step of updating a record includes associating the identifier of the product with at least one of the identifiers of the supplier, the recipient and the transaction device.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein:

the step of updating a record includes associating the identifier of the product with a status from a group of statuses including: product received; product dispensed; product sold; and product returned.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein:

the step of obtaining an identifier of the product includes a step of authenticating the identifier of the product thereby to authenticate the product.

14. The method according to claim 13, further comprising:

a step of associating a successful transaction with the identifier of the product such that a downstream transaction is allowable only upon successful completion of an upstream transaction.

15. The method according to claim 14, further comprising:

a step of receiving diagnostic information relating to the recipient, wherein the diagnostic information is capable of being inputted by the at least one operator and for the received diagnostic information to be stored on the credential storage device of the recipient.

16. The method according to claim 15, wherein the step of receiving diagnostic information includes receiving such information from a credential storage device of the recipient.

17. The method according to claim 16 further comprising:

based on the received diagnostic information, identifying a product to be provided to the recipient; and responsive to identifying the product, granting permission for release of the identified product.

18. The method according to claim 17 further comprising:

a step of determining whether the identified product is available; and: (i) if the identified product is available, granting permission for release of the identified product, and (ii) if the identified

product is not available, identifying an alternative operator able to release the identified product.

19. The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of updating a record to associate the identifier of the at least one operator with the identifier of the product further includes associating the identifier of the at least one operator with additional information, the additional information includes one or more of:

biometric information of the at least one operator, supplier and/or the recipient; a time at which the identifier of the product was obtained;

a time at which the identifier of the at least one of the at least one operator, supplier and the recipient was obtained;

diagnostic information; and

at least one of a time at which the at least one operator, supplier and/or the recipient was authenticated; the date and time of concluding the transaction; and the monetary amount associated with the transaction.