



The Foodservice Industry, Global Trade Item Numbers® (GTIN®) and Bar Codes

The use of GS1 System product identification numbers, bar codes and e-commerce standards enables companies to remove unnecessary costs from the supply chain. Products move from manufacturer to distributor to operator with a standard identification number; this standard product identification can be used in a bar code which can be scanned at any point in the supply chain. The information can be used to record items pulled from warehouse racks, taken off a truck or received by the customer.

The foodservice industry like many industries chose the GS1 System (formerly the EAN.UCC System) for its supply chain standards. Globally, over one million firms rely on GS1 System standards for their product identification and e-commerce needs to ensure more accurate and efficient information flow.

The foundation of the GS1 System is the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN). The GTIN is a globally unique identification number used to identify products at all levels (cases, inner packs and individual units) that are sold, delivered, warehoused and billed in distribution channels. The GTIN has three components: a company identification number (GS1 Company Prefix), a unique product identification number and a check digit to ensure accuracy. The GTIN can be used in bar codes to facilitate data capture and in e-commerce enabling trading partners to easily exchange accurate product, delivery, and billing information.

Creating Your GTINs and Bar Codes

To start creating GTINs and bar codes for your products (branded or private label), you must begin with the unique company identification number (GS1 Company Prefix) to identify your company as the manufacturer or label owner of the product. GS1 Company Prefixes are provided by GS1 US BarCodes and eCom™, the national implementation organization for the GS1 System in the United States.

Simply go to www.gs1us.org/joinpc and complete the **GS1 US™ Partner Connections** membership application. The information needed to complete the application includes your company's name, address, phone number, and staff contact information. You will also need your company's sales revenue and an estimate of the number of products and locations you plan to identify using the GS1 System. The GS1 Company Prefix is also used to create the Global Location Number (GLN) to identify your locations in e-commerce applications.



There is an annual fee for the use of the GS1 Company Prefix. The fee is determined by a company's revenue and the number of products and locations it plans to identify. In addition to providing your GS1 company prefix, **GS1 US Partner Connections** membership provides access to essential tools and exclusive resources including free online education, an easy-to-use, online tool to create and manage GTINs (*Data Driver*®), the Solutions Center online standards reference library, an e-newsletter, "*Between the Lines*" to keep you informed of new developments and applications, and priority access to GS1 US Customer Service who can assist you with any GTIN, bar code and e-commerce questions, and more.

Once the application is processed, you will receive a membership kit with your GS1 Company Prefix certificate and User ID and Password enabling you to start creating GTINs and bar codes for your products, either on your own or with *Data Driver*. Developed to ensure the quality and accuracy of your GTINs and associated bar codes, *Data Driver* requires no technical knowledge and helps you to:

- Easily create and manage your GTINs for individual products, cases, and pallets
- Ensure that product identification numbers are unique and conform to GS1 standards
- Generate a *Product Identification Detail Sheet* that your printer can use to create your bar codes

Data Driver is continually enhanced with new features in order to make it more valuable and useful.

Once you have assigned GTINs to your products, it is important to communicate the product identification numbers (GTINs) and descriptions to your customers and others in the supply chain so they can enter them into their systems. Also, when products change (i.e. weight or size) there are standards to guide you whether a new GTIN is needed or not. *It is highly recommended that you consult the standards before changing a GTIN.*

The GS1 System helps your supply chain become more efficient and responsive to your customers. These standards enable you to efficiently share business information with distributors, manufacturers and operators and to improve internal business processes, driving cost-savings into business practices.

IFDA, GS1 US and other members of the foodservice industry recommend you consider the adoption and implementation of the GS1 System to make yours and the industry's supply chain more efficient. To learn more, visit www.gs1us.org/barcodes