As we complete 2015, the GS1 US Apparel and General Merchandise Initiative would like to recognize the contributions of our members and acknowledge the continued progress in driving efficiency and visibility improvements across the retail supply chain. Highlights of the key 2015 achievements are listed below.

Membership
The GS1 US Apparel and General Merchandise Initiative continues to draw leading companies, academic institutions, and industry associations, including the following new members who joined in 2015:

- INTTRA, Inc.
- Salsify, Inc.
- CYBRA Corporation
- Arizona State University
- Tillerman
- JDA Software Group, Inc.
- Tory Burch LLC
- Under Armour, Inc.
- Ohio State University, Fisher College of Business
- Carhartt, Inc.
- Global Brands Group
- R.R. Donnelley and Sons
- Enhanced Retail Solutions LLC
- Xepher LLC/Shoe.net
- Franklin Sports, Inc.
- Outdoor Cap Co., Inc.
- Dorfman-Pacific Co., Inc.
- Vera Bradley Design
- Sephora
- Herman Kay division of Mystic Inc./LF Outerwear, LLC
- Luxottica Group S.p.A.
- AIM INC./RAIN RFID
- Crocs, Inc.
- Fila USA, Inc.
- Whirlpool Corporation

GS1 Standards Adoption & Usage
- To help retailers, marketplaces, suppliers, brand owners, manufacturers and solution providers within the retail industry, we created the GS1 US Advisory Services program—a customized implementation support services offering that delivers a consultative approach to address the specific challenges an organization may face in integrating the GS1 System of Standards into their operations. In 2015, the program delivered support for more than 10 engagements (including, but not limited to, the following services: RFID education and/or implementation support; images and attributes education and/or implementation support; supply chain automation solutions; on-site GS1 Standards assessment, education and/or implementation support; data quality solutions; and GDSN implementation support).
- Conducted the third annual “Depth of Usage” study to assess how the industry is using order-to-cash automation (EDI) and EPC-enabled RFID for inventory visibility and accuracy:
  - Three-fold increase in response rate with:
    - Equal participation from the manufacturer and retailer communities,
    - Uniform representation across small, mid-level and large-scale partners, and
    - Increased engagement from the general merchandise community.
300%+ growth in RFID awareness, demonstrating that the retail industry continues to adopt, implement and use item level RFID to improve operations.

Strong usage of electronic transactions by retailers and manufacturers to drive their order-to-cash processes.

Increased use of core standards for purchase orders and invoices, as well as growth the use of Advance Ship Notices and GS1-128 barcodes.

Workgroup Activity
- Updated the EPC® Tag Placement Guidelines
- Rebranded and updated the Bill of Lading (BOL) Guideline
- Updated the Guidelines for Exchanging Extended Attributes for E-Commerce R2.0
- Updated the GS1 US Master Attributes Spreadsheet
- Updated the GS1 US Retailer Attributes Requirements Matrix
- Launched the GS1 US Solution Providers Finder for the Retail Sector tool
- Updated the BOL FAQs
- Updated the Tagged Item Performance Protocol (TIPP) Overview and Grade Definitions
- Created the GS1 US TIPP Grade Submission Procedure and Form
- Updated the Apparel EAN/U.P.C. Tag Format and Placement Guideline
- Updated the EPC Encoder/Decoder tool, an interactive application that translates between different forms of the Electronic Product Code (EPC) following the EPC Tag Data Standard 1.9.

Awareness & Education
- Completed 3 regional RFID Adoption Workshops with more than 300 attendees.
- Presented our annual Images and Attributes Roundtable at RVCF’s Fall Conference, drawing more than 50 attendees.
- Developed and launched the first targeted monthly industry-based education training brief. The new Retail Industry Education Bulletin features a selection of industry-specific educational resources to provide our community with the tools they need to increase the adoption and use of GS1 Standards and standards-based solutions.
- Published quarterly industry-specific news briefs and bi-monthly RFID newsletters to promote awareness of educational programs, tools and resources.
- Launched the Apparel & General Merchandise Industry News web area.
- Developed and offered 9 sponsored industry webinars with more than 750 live attendees and 200+ on-demand viewers on topics ranging from EDI omni-channel learnings, EPC-enabled RFID, best practices for exchanging product images and data attributes, Internet of Things in the retail sector, and the GS1 US Tagged Item Performance Protocol.
- Published two case studies:
  - Case Study: The Blessing Basket Project - The Blessing Basket partners with 3,000+ artisans in some of the world’s most geographically dispersed countries. With a supply chain so widespread and artisan suppliers difficult to reach, inventory management, quality control, on-time delivery, and cash payments were onerous for this non-profit organization. To uniquely identify each woven basket, Blessing Basket assigns a GS1 Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®), which is encoded in a Universal Product Code (U.P.C.) barcode that is printed on the label applied to the basket.
Case Study: The Neiman Marcus Group Creates a Seamless Shopping Experience with Supplier Enablement Solution - NMG wanted to offer its customers a seamless shopping experience. To do so, they needed better visibility across its many silos of inventory. With help from GS1 US and two GS1 US Solution Partners (InterTrade and DiCentral), NMG educated and supported its 2,700+ vendors—both large suppliers and small artisan companies—in executing NMG’s supplier enablement solution.

- Published the GS1 US Standards (RFID) Usage Survey infographic highlighting survey findings about apparel and general merchandise use of RFID to enhance inventory visibility and respond to consumer demands for omni-channel options, and the infographic entitled “EPC-enabled RFID: Delivering the Omni-Channel Experience” illustrating the benefits of the technology for retailers and suppliers.

- Developed the “See how EPC-enabled item level RFID delivers the omni-channel consumer experience” video, which illustrates how the GS1 US EPC Readiness program can help retail trading partners make a consumer’s life a whole lot easier.

- Continued growth in online presence and traffic:
  - 38%+ increase in Initiative web page visits
  - 15%+ growth in the GS1 US Apparel & General Merchandise Initiative LinkedIn Group
  - 130%+ boost in followers of the Initiative’s LinkedIn Company page

- Participated in more than 10 speaking engagements, including an enhanced presence at GS1 Connect™ 2015, NRF’s Big Show 2015, GS1 Industry and Standards Conference, RVCF, NEECOM, RFID Journal LIVE, RAIN RFID Alliance, GT Nexus Bridges User Conference, and RFID Journal’s RFID in Retail and Apparel event. Speakers included GS1 US and Initiative member representatives.

- Media coverage totaled 93 placements on topics ranging from how to leverage RFID to best practices for exchanging extended attributes, including 11 thought leadership features which helped to drive awareness of the Initiative’s goals. Article highlights included features in Supply & Demand Executive, Sourcing Journal, Apparel magazine, DC Velocity, Retail Touch Points, Chain Store Age, Ecommerce Bytes, RFID 24-7, FierceRetail IT, CIO.com, Small Business Opportunities, RetailWire.com, Package Printing, RVCF Link, Retail Integration Online, Vertical Systems Retailer, Inbound Logistics, RFID Journal, BizTech, Supply Chain Brain, and Business Solutions.

At GS1 US, we are committed to providing leadership to help industry identify business challenges and opportunities, and find GS1 Standards-based solutions. We are proud to provide a forum that helps the retail industry work toward an even more efficient and more innovative supply chain.