As we complete the first full year of the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative, we would like to recognize our members and acknowledge their contributions and participation in establishing the workgroups to meet the goals of the Initiative. The aim is to improve product information (including images), supply chain visibility, and operational efficiencies. The community has made great strides not only in identifying the specific objectives in each of these focus areas, but also in mapping out the resources needed to benefit individual companies and our industry as a whole.

Within each of our Initiative workgroups, we recognize the impact consumers have on the marketplace, and how trading partner expectations, as well as regulatory requirements, for complete and accurate product information are driving the retail grocery industry. To remain relevant and be competitive, more and more, companies are looking for quality information to enhance supply chain visibility, consumer confidence in food safety, on-shelf availability, and inventory efficiencies.

Our Initiative is hard at work developing best practices to support these needs – and member participation in this work is critical. Unlocking the full value of GS1 Standards for fully optimized supply chain operations takes the expert stakeholder input provided by our members.

**Product Information and Image Workgroup**

The Product Information and Image Workgroup has been working to provide guidance as to how product data and images for items sold in retail grocery can be best used by trading partners and shared through the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®). This group is working to address the challenges of diverse demands for product information and images by various stakeholders to meet the needs of retail grocery and to align with requirements of other industry verticals (e.g., foodservice industry).

The Product Information and Image Workgroup is finalizing guidance documents, including the Image Guideline and Attribute List for Retail Grocery. In 2016, the workgroup will be focusing on the education and guidance needed to help companies implement the industry roadmap developed by stakeholders and to support growing adoption and usage of GDSN.

**Supply Chain Visibility Workgroup**

The Supply Chain Visibility Workgroup is developing industry specific guidance and best practices for managing supply chain visibility and leveraging them for key business processes like inventory management, on-shelf availability, and recall readiness. This group is looking to address challenges related to accurate product identification, and the delivery and tracking of safe foods and other products in the supply chain.

One of the priorities the Supply Chain Visibility Workgroup has identified is case-level packaging in which Global Trade Item Numbers (GTIN®) and production data (e.g., Batch/Lot or Serial Number, Product Dates, etc.) are encoded into GS1-128 barcodes. The next steps for the group are to define the details for these efforts and the roadmap for community implementation.
Operational Efficiencies Workgroup

The Operational Efficiencies Workgroup is identifying gaps and opportunities where leveraging GS1 Standards can lead to operational efficiencies, and evaluating the best approach for utilizing new technologies and specific business practices to fill those gaps to promote cost reduction and business growth. For example, the group continues to explore these topics to address operational inefficiencies in Warehouse Delivered and Direct Store Delivered networks. In addition, the group is looking to share the learnings from their discussions about best practices for using pallet labels in conjunction with Serial Shipping Container Codes (SSCCs) and sharing the information with Advance Ship Notices (ASNs) via EDI. In 2016, the group will examine how the misinterpretation of GTIN Allocation Rules can cause inefficient practices throughout the supply chain.

Membership

At the end of 2015, the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative grew to include 55 companies representing all segments of the supply chain. You can see our full list of current* initiative members here.

We thank everyone that joined the Initiative, helping to drive broader adoption of GS1 Standards in our industry. Stakeholders’ ongoing input over the last year has been invaluable in articulating a common vision for the Initiative.

* This membership list includes current member companies regardless of their initial date of joining the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative.