Introduction
This document is a compilation of questions, and their associated answers, relative to the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative (Initiative). It pertains to manufacturers, distributors and operators in the foodservice industry who have questions on the initiative and how to get involved.

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I. Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative

1. What is the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative?

The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative facilitates the voluntary adoption and implementation of GS1 global standards by individual foodservice companies through implementation of Global Trade Item Numbers (GTIN) and Global Location Numbers (GLN). These companies wish to achieve and maintain complete and accurate data with their trading partners to benefit the United States foodservice industry. It is a strategic effort open to any foodservice company and their trade association to engage GS1 US to assist their company’s adoption and implementation of GS1 standards.

2. Which GS1 Standards have been identified for this Initiative?

The GS1 standards identified for adoption and implementation for this Initiative include:

- GS1 Location Identification - Application of the Global Location Number (GLN) for manufacturers, distributors and operators for unique location identification.
- GS1 Product Identification - Application of the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN®) to foodservice products to ensure unique identification of individual products.
- Access to standard product information through the GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®).

3. What is the objective of this Initiative?

There are three main objectives:

- Drive waste out of the foodservice supply chain
- Improve product information for customers
- Establish a foundation for improving food safety and traceability

4. What are the benefits of joining this Initiative?

Improved Data Alignment with Trading Partners

- Data is the foundation of everything we do; Data Alignment provides one source of truth for a product
- The data source communicates all product information and changes about the item; single point of control. Allows for collaboration of multiple initiatives

Improved Top Line Sales Growth

- More robust product information to increase sales
- Less sales time spent on updating item information = more time with customers

Enables Product Visibility/Traceability

- Establishes a common foundation for improving product tracing

Better Inventory Management

- Reductions in receiving mistakes, credits and improved inventory turns

Enhanced Business Processes

- New item set up
- Item Maintenance: real time and continuous product information updates = improved accuracy throughout the supply chain
- Improved asset utilization
FAQs

Leverages Existing GDSN Investment

✔ For companies synchronizing product data through the GDSN for their retail trading partners

5. Who are the companies driving this Initiative?

The initiative members are shown on the Foodservice GS1 US webpage at: http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/foodservice_initiative_members

6. Who is GS1 US?

GS1 US is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the adoption and implementation of standards-based, global supply chain solutions. They achieve this through GS1 US solutions based on GS1 global unique numbering and identification systems, bar codes, Electronic Product Code-based RFID, data synchronization, and electronic information exchange. To read more about GS1 US, please reference the GS1 US website at: http://www.gs1us.org/

GS1 US brings industry communities together to solve supply-chain problems through adoption and implementation of GS1 standards. More than 200,000 businesses in 25 industries rely on GS1 US, a not-for-profit organization, for benefits based on GS1 global unique numbering and identification, barcodes, Electronic Product Code-based RFID, data synchronization, and electronic data interchange.

7. What is GS1 US’s role in supporting this Initiative?

GS1 US supports the initiative by providing dedicated management and resources to lead the foodservice industry through education, implementation, reference guides, business cases, best practices, facilitating working groups, marketing, and community communication.

8. What role are IFDA, IFMA and NRA playing in this Initiative?

The International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA), the International Foodservice Distributors Association (IFDA), and the National Restaurant Association (NRA) endorse and support this important industry initiative. Each of the associations work closely with their respective communities and GS1 US to create awareness and drive adoption.

9. Is it compulsory for all foodservice companies to adopt these standards?

This is a voluntary, strategic effort open to any foodservice company who wants to achieve and maintain complete and accurate data with their trading partners.

10. When does this Initiative start? What is the goal?

The Initiative officially launched in October 2009 with a goal to encourage voluntary, individual company adoption of GS1 Standards by foodservice manufacturers, distributors, and operators by 2015 (representing 75% of foodservice revenues). The Initiative roadmap can be found on the GS1 US website in the Resource Library, under “Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Overview and Elements”. http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library
11. Who will monitor progress of this Initiative?

This initiative is governed by the Leadership Steering Committee composed of Senior Executives from a representative cross section of foodservice manufacturers, distributors, operators, trade associations, and GS1 US. The purpose of the Leadership Steering Committee is to manage the Initiative, monitor progress and results, and resolve issues and/or barriers to success.

The use of GS1 global standards can help establish, through visibility/traceability, improved food safety standards for the industry. See the answer to Question 4 (Section I) which highlights other business benefits for operators.

12. What are the expectations within the Foodservice Industry to be GS1 compliant?

Foodservice industry expectations for GS1 system compliance are shown on the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Roadmap at www.gs1us.org/foodservice, under the Foodservice Resource Library, under Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Overview and Elements for the “GS1 US Foodservice Roadmap.”

13. What do I need to do to get started?

Familiarize yourself with the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative at www.GS1US.org/foodservice including:

- Overview of the Initiative
- Initiative Roadmap
- GS1 Standards that are being supported through the Initiative
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 Data Attributes
- Foodservice-specific Tools and Guidelines to help enable adoption and implementation

If you would like to get started with the adoption of the GS1 Standards that are the foundation for the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative, click below:
http://www.gs1us.org/barcodes_and_ecom/gettingstarted

Contact any of the resources listed in the Contact Information section of this document if additional information is required.

II. Global Location Number (GLN)

1. What is a GLN?

GLN is an acronym for “Global Location Number” and refers to the globally unique GS1 System identification number for legal entities, functional entities, and physical locations. A GLN is comprised of 13 digits that together represent a GS1 Company Prefix, Location Reference, and “check digit.” Supply side trading partner locations generally include corporate headquarters, regional offices, warehouses, plants, and distribution centers. Demand side trading partner locations generally include corporate headquarters, divisional offices, stores, and distribution centers. For more information on the GLN go to:
2. **What are the benefits of utilizing GLNs?**

GLNs enable trading partners to accurately share location and entity information. GLNs provide the following business benefits:

- Employs globally-accepted GS1 System standards and is globally unique allowing any location to be identified for any company, anywhere in the world.
- Identifies locations and entities in electronic commerce transactions.
- Allows accurate machine read (scanning) identification of locations and entities when encoded in data carriers, bar codes, and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags.

### III. Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)

1. **What is a GTIN?**

GTIN is an acronym which stands for Global Trade Item Number. It is used to identify any trade item (product or service) upon which there is a need to retrieve pre-defined information for any product or service that may be priced, ordered, or invoiced at any point in any supply chain. This covers services and products, from raw materials through end user products, all of which may have pre-defined product characteristics. The GS1 US Foodservice Resource Library has a document titled “The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative – Product and Location Implementation Guide” that discusses the details of GTIN implementation in Foodservice. The guides can be found on the GS1 US website at [www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library](http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library) under “Tools and Guidelines Implementation” click on “Foodservice Product and Location Implementation Guide” and “GS1 US Foodservice Implementation Guide V1”.

2. **What data is required to be shared on my products?**

The Initiative has detailed recommended product attributes in the Phase 1 (Transactional) and Phase 2 (Marketing and Nutritional) Foodservice Data Attributes documents, some of which are mandatory for GDSN functionality, and others which are recommended but optional. Link to the documents: [www.GS1US.org/Foodservice](http://www.GS1US.org/Foodservice) and click on “Resource Library” and look for folder entitled “Tools and Guidelines Implementation.” In this folder, “GDSN Foodservice Phase 1 and Phase 2 Data Attributes”, are defined. Here is the link: [http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library](http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library)

3. **In the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative, at what level of packaging are GTINs required (cases, inner packs, pallets, etc.)?**

In the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative it is recommended that GTINs be assigned at the case level.

4. **Do I have to identify cases with GTINs in foodservice?**

The assignment of GTINs at any packaging level is determined by the needs of your trading partners including: Will the trade item be priced, ordered, or invoiced at any point in the foodservice supply chain?
5. In the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative do I have to identify inner packs with GTINs in foodservice?

No. The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative addresses case level identification only. However your trading partners may require the identification of inner packs if the inner packs are sold separately (i.e. bottles of spices).

IV. Data Synchronization/GDSN

1. What is Data Synchronization?

Data synchronization is the electronic transfer of standardized product and location information between trading partners and the continuous synchronization of that data over time. When this data is exchanged via a central global repository - GS1 Global Registry™, it is referred to as Global Data Synchronization.

2. What is the GDSN?

GDSN (Global Data Synchronization Network) is a network of databases built around the GS1 Global Registry®, GDSN-certified data pools, the GS1 Data Quality Framework and GS1 Global Product Classification, which when combined provide a powerful environment for secure and continuous synchronization of accurate product data.

3. What are the benefits of synchronizing data through the GDSN?

There are several benefits, including:

- Allows real-time item maintenance for specific product data fields by the product owner
- Provides accurate, standards based, synchronized data that reduces inefficiencies in the supply chain
- Ensures dimensions are correct and stored at the various levels of a product hierarchy.

4. I do not need the GDSN, since I only publish data to certain customers. Why do I need to join the GDSN?

The GDSN was created based on requests from industry to eliminate the need for proprietary trading partner file formats, attributes, and methods of transmission. It enables members of the foodservice industry one point of connectivity to all trading partners in a simple, straightforward process which enables all members of the industry to access the most current and accurate product information available.

5. We sell a case comprised of 24 ice cream sandwiches. The individual ice cream sandwiches are not labeled for individual sale and do not have a UPC-A barcode on them. Do I need to identify the individual sandwiches?

No, in the foodservice Initiative we are only identifying the case. The industry practice for foodservice items in the United States has been to assign GTINs to the case level of a product’s hierarchy. The case is the most common unit of measure for commerce within the foodservice supply chain. Users can indicate the quantity of the items below the case level in the GDSN by populating the following fields “QtyofInnerPak” and “totalQuantityOfNextLowerLevelTradeItem” at the case level to indicate the quantity of the items below case level.
6. We sell 3-gallon tubs of ice cream and are having an issue with how we should define the item. Is it a Case or an Each?

The Foodservice Initiative addresses the movement of cases/cartons. A 3-gallon tub of ice cream should be considered a case. Cases can also be sold at retail and have UPC-A barcode on the item; which is the case with your 3-gallon tub of ice cream.

7. Are there standards for images specific for foodservice?

A Task Group is being formed to address standardization of images used in the foodservice industry and transmitted through GDSN. A call to action is being prepared, outlining the objectives and deliverables for this task group.

8. How do I handle a request that came from my trading partner asking me to send GDSN attributes, which are not yet part of the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Phase 1 and Phase 2 attribute lists?

Members of the Foodservice Initiative have agreed to transmit 45 Phase 1 and 14 Phase 2 attributes at this time (April 1, 2011). This message has been communicated to the Foodservice Community with the expectation that all members of the community will comply with the P1 and P2 attributes and not request additional attributes until vetted and added to these lists by the community. However, the Initiative cannot tell companies what they can and cannot do and some companies will, and are, asking for additional product attributes. It is a trading partner to trading partner decision as to whether or not these additional attributes will be provided.

The members of the Initiative would like all additional attributes requested outside of GDSN, to be submitted to the GS1 US Foodservice team at foodservice@gs1us.org so that we can analyze and address these additions.

9. What if I am unable to supply all of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 attributes to my trading partner?

Twenty-one of the Phase 1 attributes are mandatory to load any item into the GDSN. The community has agreed to use additional attributes for the Foodservice Industry. These are outlined in the Phase 1 (transactional) and Phase 2 (marketing and nutritional) attribute listed (available on the Foodservice website - LINK).

For suppliers who choose to exchange foodservice data through the GDSN, they should strive to populate all of these attributes to the best of their ability. If you are unable to send any of the “Foodservice Recommended” attributes through the GDSN, suppliers should be aware that your trading partners may ask your company to share this information through other means. These alternate formats are defined by each trading partner, based on their capabilities.

V. Data Pools

1. What is a Data Pool? What is a GDSN-certified Data Pool?

An entity that provides its customers’ data synchronization services and a single point of entry to the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) is called a Data Pool.

Data pools must be certified per GS1 System standards to operate within the GDSN. Data Pools interoperate with the GS1 Global Registry and each other.

See link for a list of GS1 certified data pool providers: gs1.org/docs/gdsn/gdsn_certified_data_pools.pdf
2. I am a supplier, and I am receiving conflicting directions regarding my company's involvement in data synchronization. One customer is asking us to use a particular Data Pool while another customer is asking us to subscribe to a different Data Pool. What should I do?

The GDSN is structured to allow a trading partner to join any single Data Pool they choose. As long as you select a certified GDSN Data Pool you will be able to synchronize data with any trading partner in the GDSN, regardless of the GDSN Data Pool they have selected. Additional information can be found on the GS1 US website at - http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library, under “Tools and Guidelines Implementation” click on “GS1 US Foodservice Implementation Guide V1” and “Selecting a GDSN-Certified Data Pool”

3. Another Data Pool is telling me they are the only Data Pool that can communicate our information to any customer. Is this true?

No. Under the GDSN, all certified Data Pools can connect to other GDSN Data Pools and exchange data.

VI. Miscellaneous

1. What is the difference between a UPC code and a barcode?

Think of the U.P.C code as the data (Global Trade Item Number) and the barcode as the carrier of the data for capturing by a barcode scanner.

2. Will the GS1 standards work for my non-food items?

Yes – some of the data attributes as part of the GDSN may not be applicable, but the benefits from adopting GS1 standards would certainly be relevant in improving supply chain efficiency and increasing visibility of your products throughout the supply chain. GS1 Foodservice Initiative Phase I and II Attribute examples, shown at: http://www.gs1us.org/sectors/foodservice/resource_library, provide guidance on non-food and food item attribute usage.

3. Is price synchronization a component of the Foodservice Initiative?

No, price synchronization is out of scope for the Foodservice Initiative.

4. There’s a lot of good information on the Foodservice Initiative website. What documents should I start with?

Some of the key implementation documents can be found on the GS1 US Foodservice website under “Tools and Guidelines Implementation:

- Foodservice Product and Location Implementation Guide
- GS1 US Foodservice Implementation Guide V1 Selecting a GDSN-Certified Data Pool
VII. Contact Information

GS1 US Resources:

Julie McGill, Industry Relations Director, GS1 US
312.463.4032
@gs1us.org

Dennis Harrison, Senior Vice President, GS1 US
609.620.4522
@gs1us.org

Susanna Valerius, Marketing Director, GS1 US
312.463.4097
@gs1us.org

Media Inquiries:

Jon Mellor, Director, External Affairs, GS1 US
609.620-4656
JMellor@gs1us.org

Foodservice Industry Association Inquiries:

Mark Allen, President, IFDA
703-532-9400
@ifdaonline.org

Larry Oberkfell, President, IFMA
312-253-4694
@ifmaworld.com

Hans Lindh, SVP Membership & Industry Relations, NRA
(202) 577-5746
@restaurant.org