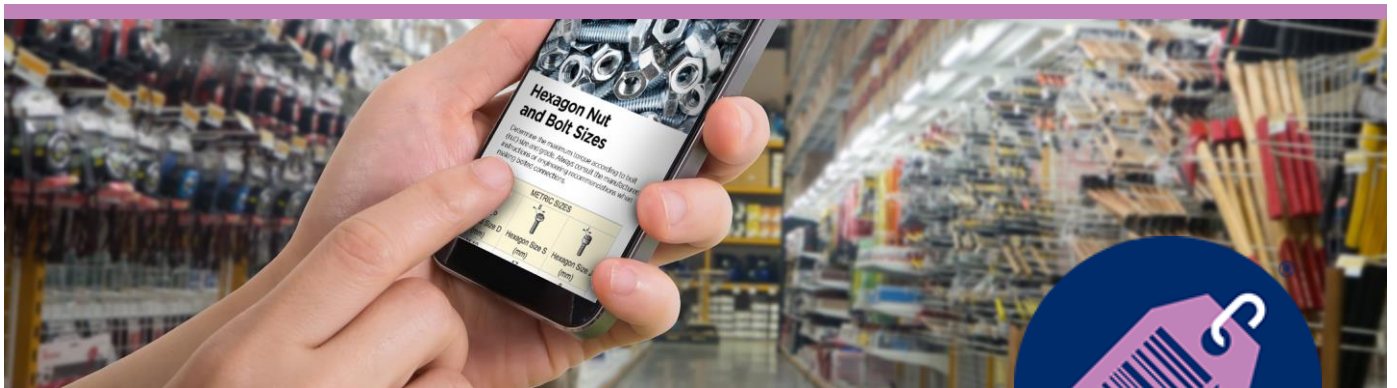# Apparel and General Merchandise

GTIN Adoption and Usage Model

Implementation Roadmap for the U.S. Retail Supply Chain

Release 1.0, Nov 26 2018

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About GS1

GS1® is a neutral, not-for-profit, global organization that develops and maintains the most widely-used supply chain standards system in the world. GS1 Standards improve the efficiency, safety, and visibility of supply chains across multiple sectors. With local Member Organizations in over 110 countries, GS1 engages with communities of trading partners, industry organizations, governments, and technology providers to understand and respond to their business needs through the adoption and implementation of global standards. GS1 is driven by over a million user companies, which execute more than six billion transactions daily in 150 countries using GS1 Standards.

About GS1 US

GS1 US®, a member of GS1 global, is a not-for-profit information standards organization that facilitates industry collaboration to help improve supply chain visibility and efficiency through the use of GS1 Standards, the most widely-used supply chain standards system in the world. Nearly 300,000 businesses in 25 industries rely on GS1 US for trading-partner collaboration that optimizes their supply chains, drives cost performance and revenue growth while also enabling regulatory compliance. They achieve these benefits through solutions based on GS1 global unique numbering and identification systems, barcodes, Electronic Product Code-based RFID, data synchronization, and electronic information exchange. GS1 US also manages the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code® (UNSPSC®).

1 Executive Summary

Standards-based numbering systems are essential for efficient and effective communication of product information in supply chains. Without a standards-based approach, supply chain partners often assign their own proprietary product numbers. This results in multiple identifiers to manage and maintain for the same product, which can be time-consuming, error-prone and inefficient. To address this issue, GS1 US recommends adoption of the GS1 Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®) throughout the U.S. apparel and general merchandise industries to help connect communities and resolve industry issues related to product identification and data.

Today, with the expansion of e-commerce, multi-channel fulfillment, and virtual marketplaces, GTIN adoption and use continue to grow across the U.S. apparel and general merchandise industries. Beyond complying with trading partner requirements, many manufacturers are looking to also leverage their GTIN implementations to realize the supply chain efficiency benefits that can be gained from using a GTIN within their internal business processes and across their trading partner network.

In today's omni-channel retail world, consumers are in control. They expect accurate, immediate product information and access to products. They will move on if they can't find the products they want when they want them. The apparel and general merchandise industries are most concerned with improving inventory accuracy and supply chain visibility capabilities to satisfy consumer demands, while still addressing expectations around product safety. Developing omni-channel fulfillment capabilities is another area of focus for brands and retailers looking to further streamline their business processes from sourcing products to getting them in the hands of consumers everywhere.

This document seeks to support companies with their initial implementation efforts, as well as efforts to expand or extend their implementations based on that work. To that end, this document provides:

- a GTIN Adoption and Usage Model,
- a detailed Implementation Roadmap for each level of maturity, and
- a list of GTIN implementation resources.

✅ **Note:** As with all GS1 Standards and solutions, this *GTIN Adoption and Usage Model* is voluntary, not mandatory. It should be noted that use of the words "must" and "require" throughout this document relate exclusively to technical recommendations for the proper application of the standards to support the integrity of your implementation.

The GS1 System

The GS1 System is an integrated suite of global standards that provides for accurate identification and communication of information regarding products, assets, services and locations. Using GS1 Identification Numbers, companies and organizations around the world are able to globally and uniquely identify *physical things* like trade items, assets, logistic units and physical locations, as well as *logical things* like corporations or a service relationship between provider and recipient. When this powerful identification system is combined with GS1 barcodes, eCom, EPC®-enabled item level /RFID, and the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®), the connection is made between these physical or logical things and the information the supply chain needs about them.

About the GS1 Apparel and General Merchandise Initiative

The GS1 US Apparel and General Merchandise Initiative serves as a strategic effort in which retailers, marketplaces, brand owners, suppliers, manufacturers, industry trade associations, solution providers and academia voluntarily join to assist in helping the retail industry drive the adoption and use of GS1 Standards.

The GS1 US Apparel and General Merchandise Initiative is an industry group that is committed to defining business challenges and opportunities and organizing members to explore solutions and create adoption plans. The members of our initiative represent a broad cross-section of industry trading partners, each of whom has agreed to adopt and implement global GS1 Standards to improve inventory accuracy and supply chain visibility.

To learn more about the Initiative, visit:

www.gs1us.org/ApparelGM

2 GTIN

GTIN is the globally unique GS1 Identification Number used to identify "trade items" (i.e., products and services that may be sold, delivered or invoiced at any point in the supply chain). GTINs are used to identify individual trade item units (like a 60-watt lightbulb), as well as all of their different packaging configurations (like a case of eighteen 60-watt lightbulbs). GTINs are assigned by the brand owner or manufacturer, and are encoded into data carriers (e.g., barcodes) and affixed to products, as well as used in business transactions (e.g., purchase order; invoice; etc.) to identify products. GTIN is a global standard utilized in more than 25 industry sectors to identify, capture and share precise product information.

3 Optimizing Your GTIN Implementation

GTINs offer a standardized approach to identifying, capturing and sharing precise product information across the U.S. apparel and general merchandise industries. An optimized GTIN implementation leverages the GTIN across systems and business processes. For example:

1. GTINs are assigned to apparel and general merchandise products.

2. GTINs are marked on appropriate packaging levels.

3. GTINs are used in business transactions.

4. GTINs are scanned at points-of-delivery to enhance the supply chain process.

5. GTINs are used in product returns and recalls.

6. GTINs are registered in a GDSN-certified Data Pool or made available via product catalogue services.

Benefits of Using GTINs

Brand Owners:

- Simplifies product identification with a single identifier used across all supply chain partners
- Enables retailers to access and utilize manufacturer-defined product information to promote accuracy
- Provides an accurate view of the products to support correct representation on websites
- Reduces mis-shipments and time spent resolving order and invoice errors
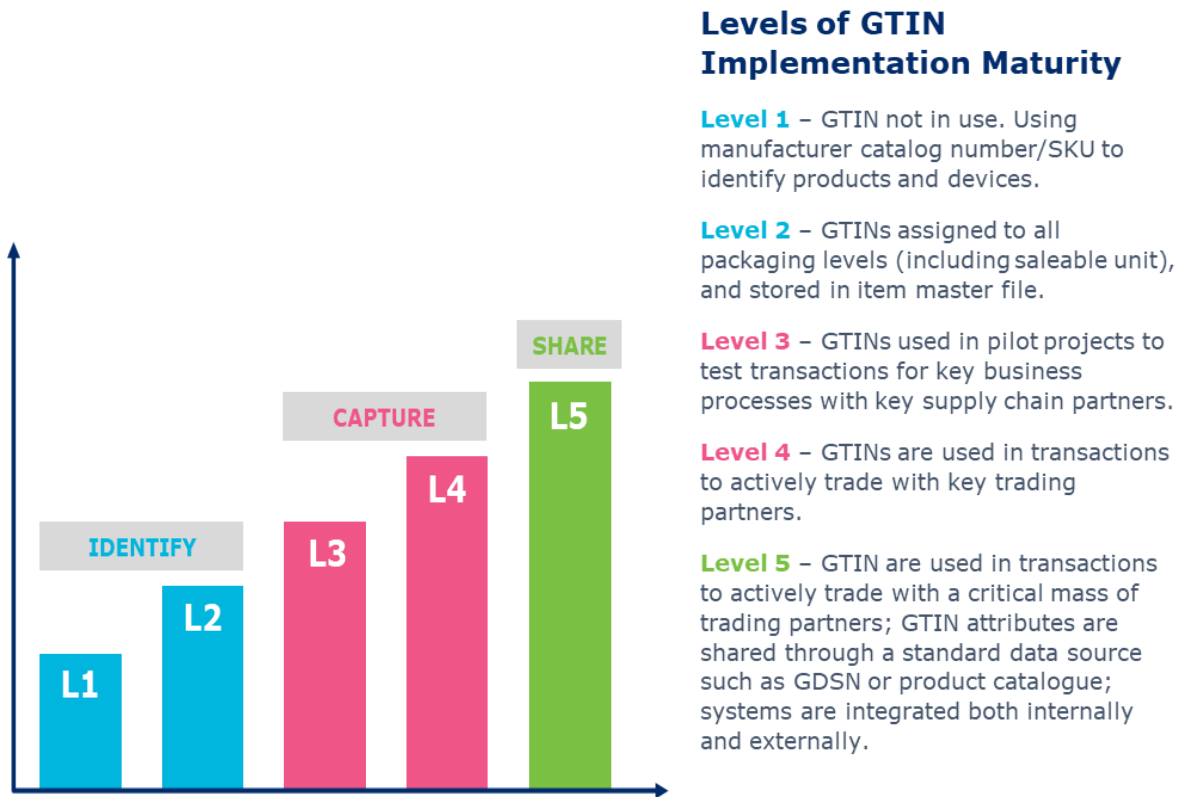- Provides the foundation for traceability to improve product recall processes

Retailers:

- Improves product management processes
- Streamlines sales, ordering, invoicing, receiving, and expense offset processes
- Reduces time spent resolving order, pricing and invoice errors
- Improves customer satisfaction by enabling a smooth purchasing experience with complete product data available
- Provides a competitive advantage in meeting customer contract requirements
- Provides the foundation for traceability to improve product recall processes

4 GTIN Implementation Maturity Model

The GTIN Adoption and Usage Model defines five progressive levels of implementation capabilities from no use of GTINs through to fully-integrated use of GTINs across internal and external systems. These levels represent increasing sophistication and increasing levels of benefits that can be realized.

Figure 4-1 GTIN Implementation Maturity Model

Levels of GTIN Implementation Maturity

Level 1 – GTIN not in use. Using manufacturer catalog number/SKU to identify products and devices.

Level 2 – GTINs assigned to all packaging levels (including saleable unit), and stored in item master file.

Level 3 – GTINs used in pilot projects to test transactions for key business processes with key supply chain partners.

Level 4 – GTINs are used in transactions to actively trade with key trading partners.

Level 5 – GTIN are used in transactions to actively trade with a critical mass of trading partners; GTIN attributes are shared through a standard data source such as GDSN or product catalogue; systems are integrated both internally and externally.

Companies are encouraged to review the model to understand the full spectrum of GTIN maturity. With that understanding, companies should use the model to assess where they are with GTIN implementation and use as a company. This knowledge provides the starting point for the company to continue its journey to advance its GTIN implementation and use.

Once a company has determined this starting point, they can use the Implementation Roadmaps provided throughout the remainder of this document to examine and understand the capabilities and effort needed to achieve and/or progress through the various maturity levels.

5   Contextualizing the Effort

The GTIN implementation roadmap provided in this document focuses on the key target areas of product identification, master data, order management, and GDSN/Catalogue Services. There are three internal factors that are critical to successful GTIN implementation and use: People, Process and Technology.

Figure 5-1 Key Elements of the GTIN Adoption and Usage Model
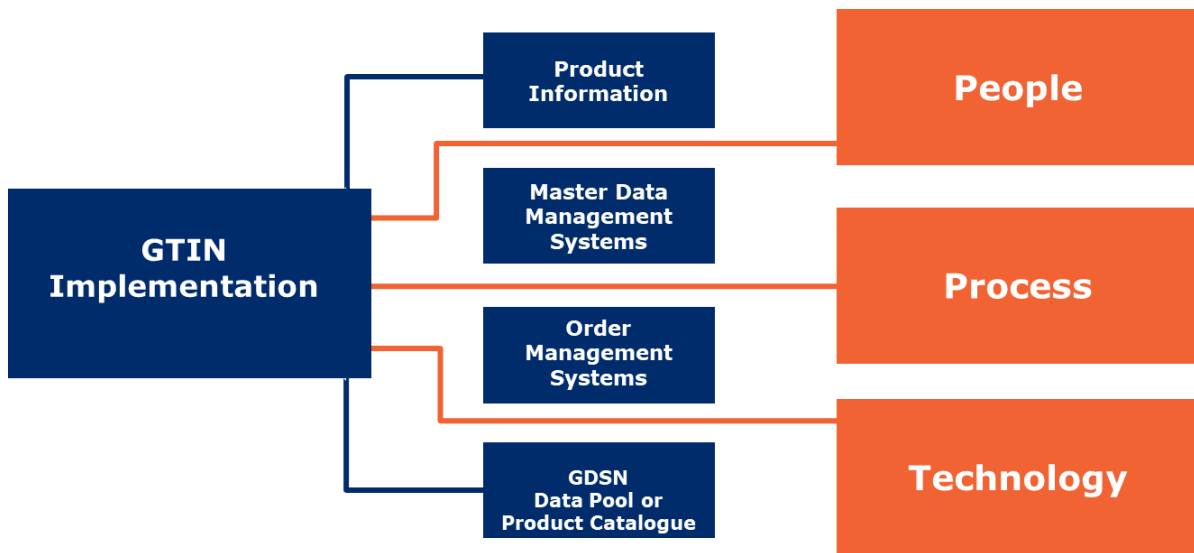
The roadmap presented below identifies actionable tasks for GTIN implementation in each maturity level around People, Process and Technology. Using this approach and focus can play a major role in helping to move a company along the continuum of GTIN implementation maturity to achieve an optimized integration of the standard throughout the company and its trading partners.

6 GTIN Roadmap

Once a company has identified where they are in the GTIN Adoption and Usage Model, they can use the Implementation Roadmap provided throughout the remainder of this document to continue their journey to advance GTIN implementation and use within the company.

The figure below presents a high-level overview of the GTIN Roadmap and reflects the progression of capabilities a company should consider when developing a GTIN implementation plan. This high-level view is provided to help companies understand the capabilities and effort needed to achieve and/or progress through the various maturity levels.

Figure 6-1 GTIN Roadmap

	Level One **Awareness**	Level Two **People and Process**	Level Three **Systems and Partners**	Level Four **Transact and Extend**	Level Five **Optimize**
	Communicate and Educate	*Enumerate and Develop Accuracy Processes*	*Align Systems and Attributes*	*Use GTINs instead of Proprietary Numbers*	*Maintain and Share*
People	▪ Commit to implement. ▪ Inform organization and supply chain partners.	▪ Educate Customer Service, Sales Reps, and Procurement teams on GTIN as well as company requirements and capabilities.	▪ Prioritize trading partners for implementation of standards in transactions.	▪ Identify any new skill sets required and include in succession planning and hiring. ▪ Develop Subject Matter Experts and transition skills appropriately.	▪ Tie KPI's to standards adoption / utilization in respective area of responsibility.
Process	▪ Understand the benefits beyond complying with trading partner requirements.	▪ Enumerate all products. ▪ Develop and maintain SOPs for master data management.	▪ Include a call for GS1 Standards on all products in your trading partner requirements.	▪ Use GTINs and other GS1 Standards in a majority of, if not all, transactions.	▪ Maintain, share, and access products and attributes via a shared data catalog (e.g. GDSN or Product Catalogue Services).
Technology	▪ Assess current technology capabilities for standards usage.	▪ Develop process to promote accuracy and usability of GTIN at all packaging levels.	▪ Align IT capabilities internally and externally.	▪ Assure technology infrastructure and plan can support standards across various systems.	▪ Develop and integrate systems to synchronize product master data using GTIN.

The remainder of this document provides a detailed Implementation Roadmap for each individual maturity level. These Implementation Roadmaps detail key capabilities for each level of maturity and for each supply chain partner. The Roadmaps help companies to understand the level of effort that may be required to achieve each level of maturity in GTIN implementation and use.

The Roadmaps are intended to support companies in creating their individual implementation plans, highlighting key target areas and providing recommendations about the specific capabilities that should be mastered. This helps companies understand what capabilities both they and their key trading partners should have accomplished at various maturity levels. Armed with this knowledge, a company can collaborate with key trading partners to assess readiness and make implementation projects more efficient.

7   Level 1: Awareness

- GTINs are not being used. Technology and system capabilities for GTIN are being assessed.
- There is a basic understanding of the GS1 System of Standards.
- Company commits to implement and communicates their commitment internally and externally.
- Organizational capabilities and benefits of standards are being assessed.

Level 1 Awareness: Communicate and Educate

	Manufacturer/Distributor	Retailer	Solution Provider
People	- Have a basic understanding of GS1 Standards for Apparel and General Merchandise. - Commit to implement identification standards. - Assemble a project team. - Develop communication plan (internal & external) and share with all responsible departments.	- Have a basic understanding of GS1 Standards for Apparel and General Merchandise. - Develop communication plan (internal & external) and share with all responsible departments. - Commit to implement identification standards.	- Have a basic understanding of GS1 Standards for Apparel and General Merchandise. - Develop communication plan (internal & external) and share with all responsible departments. - Commit to implement a solution that includes identification standards.
Process	- Assess organizational ability to meet trading partner requirements. - Assess and understand the benefits beyond complying with trading partner requirements. - Understand how standards will be used by downstream business partners.	- Trading partners are identified and notified of need for GTIN. - Determine trading partner ability to meet the need. - Develop metrics to track % of items with GTIN in Item Master. - Specify requirement for GS1 Standards (specifically GTIN) in contract terms and conditions.	- Have a basic understanding about the use of standards by trading partners. - Capture customer requirements at a high-level.
Technology	Assess current technology capabilities for implementation and use of identification standards (e.g., ERP, EDI, Inventory Management, etc.).	- Assess systems (e.g., ERP, EDI, , billing, etc.). - IT staff begins aligning internal systems to GS1 Standards.	- Assess technology solutions to understand capabilities about supporting standards. - Align IT capabilities internally and externally.

Best Practices: Awareness

As implementation plans are highly dependent on technology capabilities, companies should consider aligning with their technology teams to understand their technology capabilities and timelines when developing their implementation plans for the use of GTINs in various operational areas.

8   Level 2: People and Processes

- Staff and project teams are educated on relevant trading partner requirements and GS1 Standards.
- Products are enumerated, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for data quality and master data management are being developed.
- Data sources are identified and vetted, and metrics are being developed to measure accuracy and penetration.

Level 2 People & Processes: Enumerate and Develop Accuracy Processes

	Manufacturer/Distributor	Retailer	Solution Provider
People	▪ Inform organization and trading partners of standards strategy. ▪ Educate implementation team and relevant staff on GS1 Standards specifically within the context of meeting trading partner requirements. ▪ Align resources to GTIN development and use. ▪ Identify trading partner resources and develop engagement plan.	▪ Educate internal staff on GS1 Standards (e.g., buyers, IT, supply chain, expense offset, etc.). ▪ Identify supplier partner resources and develop a plan with key suppliers. ▪ Educate customer service, sales representatives, and account management teams.	▪ Educate sales staff and solution development team on GS1 Standards basics (GTIN, Global Location Number (GLN), GDSN). ▪ Align resources to develop solution systems within the context of standards. ▪ Identify trading / implementation partner resources and develop a plan with key accounts.
Process	▪ Understand the benefits beyond complying with trading partner requirements. ▪ Begin enumerating all products and all packaging levels. ▪ Develop master data management strategy. ▪ Review, develop and maintain SOPs for GTIN assignment, master data management and data quality. ▪ Begin initial testing with key trading partners.	▪ Assess use of GTIN in internal supply chain processes (e.g., purchasing, supply chain, item set-up, etc.). ▪ Assess existing Item Master mapping process and use of GTINs. ▪ GTINs not yet used in transactions with suppliers but process has been established for sourcing.	▪ Develop project plan including basic requirements, capture, and technology roadmap. ▪ Work with key accounts and industry leaders to document detailed requirements.
Technology	▪ Identify data sources (internal & external). ▪ Develop reporting metrics to self-manage implementation efforts (accuracy of data, penetration of portfolio). ▪ Add available GTINs to item master file.	▪ Identify data sources for obtaining GTIN data (Product Catalogue / GDSN / Supplier portal or spreadsheet). ▪ Obtain GTINs as part of sourcing process and store in item master. ▪ Develop MDM strategy. ▪ Begin initial testing with select suppliers and product categories.	▪ Develop and implement with select key accounts for functionality related to GTIN and GLN storage and transactional capabilities.

Best Practices: People and Processes

- Declare readiness for GTINs and ability to trade in transactions manual or electronic.
- Understand GTIN packaging levels and pack factors associated with GTINs.

- Understand if GTIN will replace existing cross references that identify product differently.

- Understand the GS1 GTIN Management Rules.

- Identify where GTIN is used throughout your organization.

9 Level 3: Systems and Partners

- Trading partner standards resources and initial plans are aligned among key trading partners.

- IT capabilities and systems assessments are complete and upgrade plans in place.

- Initial testing has begun with select trading partners.

Level 3 Systems & Partners: Align Systems and Attributes

	Manufacturer/Distributor	Retailer	Solution Provider
People	■ Internal staff are assigned, educated, and know GS1 Standards. ■ Collaborative relationships with trading partners to align and manage GTINs are intact.	■ Internal staff is educated about GS1 Standards and engaged in transactional testing with key suppliers. ■ All departments (e.g., supply chain, IT, buying offices, etc.) champion GTIN use.	■ Sales staff is actively discussing standards capabilities with key accounts to establish further adoption and use of functionality. ■ Development team has a prioritized roadmap for product development to meet needs for GTIN storage and transactional functionality.
Process	■ GTINs are actively managed. ■ GTINs are used in some transactions with major customers as a result of pilots. ■ SOPs are updated to include new use case scenarios as they become known. ■ Basic implementation metrics are established (e.g., % of item master enumerated; % packaging level enumerated)	■ GTINs are actively managed in the Item Master. ■ Metric of "% of total item master with GTIN" is used to drive further adoption. ■ Systems assessment is complete and partners identified of status. ■ Pilot projects are executed with key suppliers and metrics to quantify ROI.	■ Product development is working directly with key accounts to understand potential gaps in functionality or potential enhancements based on user acceptance testing results. ■ Basic implementation metrics are established (e.g., % of transactions using GTIN).
Technology	■ Systems are upgraded (as needed) and ready to transact using GTINs. ■ Testing continues/expands around using GTINs in a majority, if not all, transactional areas internally and externally (e.g., EDI, Order to Cash, Inventory Management, Supply Chain, Expense Offset).	■ Systems are upgraded and ready to transact using GTINs (e.g., inventory, recall, EDI, point-of-sale systems, etc.) ■ Testing continues to use GTINs and other GS1 Standards in a majority of transactions.	■ System integration between key functional areas (e.g., ERP, inventory mgmt., POS scanning) has started. ■ Steps have been taken to make standards functionality readily available (e.g., patches, partial upgrades, enhancements, etc.).

Best Practices: Systems and Partners

- Identify all downstream processes where product code is communicated internally or externally, begin to add GTIN to the processes and have added to reporting.

- Initially, the actions in Level 2 and Levels 3 & 4 should be able to align with many trading partners at the same time once data is identified and submitted via GDSN.

10   Level 4: Transact and Extend

- Required skill sets are understood and standards education is part of on-boarding.

- GTINs are used in transactions in lieu of proprietary product numbers.

- Technology infrastructure and plan supports standards across multiple systems.

- Companies use GTINs in transactions to identify products at all packaging levels, replacing the use of proprietary product numbers. (Recommendations for how to prioritize EDI transactions for GTIN implementation are provided on the next page.)

Level 4 Transact & Extend: Use GTINs Instead of Proprietary Numbers

	Manufacturer/Distributor	Retailer	Solution Provider
People	• Continuing education / certification of assigned resources. • Strong cross-functional knowledge of GTIN strategy and use in various functional areas. • Standards training is an established part of employee on-boarding in key areas.	• Continuing education or certification of assigned resources. • Standards training is an established part of employee on-boarding in key areas.	• Continuing education or certification of assigned resources. • Knowledge transfer process is in place to support standards focus. • SOPs and resources are defined to assure awareness of trading partner requirements that may impact solution provider technology development roadmap.
Process	• GTINs are stored in item master. • Proprietary numbers are becoming obsolete both internally and externally. • GTINs are used in transactions with critical mass and key trading partners.	• GTINs are stored in item master. • GTINs are used in transactions with critical mass suppliers in POs and EDI transactions. • ROI metrics now include discrepancy tracking so that manufacturers and product accuracy can be managed.	• Actively driving the need for standards adoption and utilization within strategic accounts. • Several key accounts using system standards capabilities in key functional areas. • An SOP and process exists to train implementation partners on GS1 Standards and the solution's capabilities around those standards.
Technology	• Systems are integrated internally and externally with respect to GTIN in key functional areas. • Systems are becoming integrated across multiple standards (GTIN and GLN).	• Scanning technology is in place for GTIN capture at POS and distribution centers.	• Technology solution is well established and meets the needs of the industry with regard to its capabilities around standards. • System integration is established across key functional areas. • A majority of key accounts are using system versions with full standards capabilities.

Best Practices: Transact and Extend

- Providing GTIN training for customer service, procurement personnel, and others is an important success factor.

- Companies should use GTINs to identify products at all packaging levels, replacing the use of proprietary product numbers.

- GTINs should replace product identifiers for both electronic and EDI transactions. This should be your first priority as it is scalable and repeatable.

- GTINs in paper transactions should follow as business partners are technically capable.

- Key EDI transactions on which to focus are:
  - 850 [Purchase Order (PO)]
  - 855 (Reply to PO)
  - 860 (PO Change)
  - 810 (Invoice)
  - 832 (Product Catalog)
  - 852 (Product Activity Data)
  - 856 [Advanced Ship Notice (ASN)]
  - 867 (Sales Reporting/Product Transfer/Resale Report)

- The recommended prioritization of EDI transactions for GTIN implementation is as follows:

Table 10-1 EDI Business Transaction Priority

First Priority		
850	Purchase Order	Purchase order submission from buyer to seller; also accommodates stand-alone, consignment and blanket order business scenarios.
855	Purchase Order Acknowledgment	Response from seller to buyer on processing of the purchase order.
860	Purchase Order Change	Change to purchase order.
Second Priority		
856	Advance Ship Notice/Manifest	Identification of product in a pending shipment from the seller to the buyer.
810	Invoice	Request for payment from seller to buyer.
852	Product Activity Data	Exchange Point-of-Sale data from seller to brand owner; may also be used to send inventory availability or demand information from brand owner to seller.
867	Sales Reporting/Product Transfer/Resale Report	The transaction set can be used to: (1) report information about product that has been transferred from one location to another; (2) report sales of product from one or more locations to an end customer; or (3) report sales of a product from one or more locations to an end customer, and demand beyond actual sales (lost orders). Report may be issued by either buyer or seller.
Third Priority		
832	Price/Sales Catalog	Exchange of product and product price information from the seller to the buyer; may also be used to load a product catalog.

11 Level 5: Maintain and Optimize

- Performance indicators of assigned resources include standards use and adoption.
- High level of awareness of the standards strategy.
- GTINs are maintained, shared and accessed with a high level of accuracy and in real-time via shared data catalogs.
- Systems are developed and integrated to share and synchronize master data using GTIN.

Level 5 Optimize & Maintain: Maintain and Share

	Manufacturer/Distributor	Retailer	Solution Provider
People	- Internal resources are well versed in GS1 System and embrace use of standards. - KPIs are tied to standards use in respective areas of responsibility. - There is a high level of awareness of the organization's standards strategy. - Standards use and management is part of "the norm."	- Internal resources are well versed in GS1 System. - Staff use GTIN at point-of-sale, supply chain, and analytics.	Sales, marketing, development, and implementation staff see standards as part of "the norm" and as a strategic advantage/differentiator when facing new business opportunities.
Process	- GTINs are used in transaction with >75% of trading partners. - GTINs enumerated, stored and shared is >75% and covers all packaging levels. - Enumeration and attribute accuracy is >75%. - GTINs and critical product attributes are available via a data sharing service (e.g., GDSN, product catalogue). - SOPs are well formed, inclusive and followed.	- GTINs are used in transactions with >75% of products. - GTINs % of item master is >75%. - GDSN or product catalogue used to receive GTIN attributes for all packaging levels. - MDM strategy and SOPs are in use and maintained. - GTINs are captured at point of sale.	Adoption and utilization of standards is evident in a majority of accounts.
Technology	- All products and packaging levels are marked in accordance with GS1 Standards. - GTINs are actively passed to relevant systems for inventory management, order to cash processes, invoicing, expense offsets.	GTINs are actively passed to relevant systems for inventory management, order-to-cash processes.	Technology solutions are readily available through cloud-based version updates.

12   Additional Resources

Additional Resources	
GTIN Management Standard	*www.gs1us.org/documents?Command=Core_Download&EntryId=1087*
GS1 US Get Started Guide	Looking to sell a product in stores or online? Create Barcodes and U.P.C.s with the GS1 US Get Started Guide. *www.gs1us.org/upcs-barcodes-prefixes/get-started-guide*
Tools and Resources	*www.gs1us.org/industries/apparel-general-merchandise/implementation-resources*
Educational Offerings	*www.gs1us.org/education-training*

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