



Press Release

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GS1 Celebrates 40 Years of The Global Language of Business

BRUSSELS, Belgium, April 3, 2013 – GS1, the neutral, not-for-profit organisation that facilitates collaboration amongst trade partners with global standards across 150 countries is celebrating its 40th Anniversary.

On April 3rd 1973, leaders of the American grocery industry selected a single standard for product identification that the world now knows as the GS1 Bar Code. The decision created a global language of business that until today allows visibility in the entire supply chain in multiple sectors.

Just one year later (on June 26, 1974, at 8:01 a.m.), the first GS1 bar code was scanned for the very first time in Troy, Ohio. How could we even imagine that, forty years later, over 5 billion products would be scanned every day, all over the world? Product identification stands for more than marking goods and scanning them: it made a global market possible.

"GS1 has played a major role in shaping the landscape of the global market during the last 40 years because the organization's visionary leaders saw the huge potential of collaboration in the area of standards that the bar code made possible for the entire supply chain;" said Miguel Lopera, GS1 President & CEO. "

During the last four decades, GS1 identification solutions have become a foundation of business processes for close to 2 million users. These processes allow these users to speak a common language that not only connects their companies across geographical and cultural boundaries but also allows industry leaders to leverage the power of information to improve people's lives around the globe.

An omnipresent element of modern civilization, it benefits consumers because it facilitates the check-out process by reducing data entry errors and waiting time at the point of sale. It also benefits business owners because it increases sales due to better customer service and better tracking of stocks and store flows.

In France, for example, a study titled "17 billion reasons to say thanks" by Vineet Garg, Charles Johnes & Christopher Sheedy, found that bar codes lead to an annual savings of 6.59% of retail revenue. There are other interesting and little-known facts about bar codes. For instance:

- The GS1 Bar Code doesn't contain the price of the product. The lines and bars just encode a globally unique product identification number that enables information about it to be looked up in a database.

- Statistically, studies show that the typical typist will make one mistake in every 300 keystrokes. The chance of a misread bar code symbol is somewhere between one in a million and one in four trillion!
- Laser and image scanners that read bar codes work at a speed of about 40 to 200 scans-per-second.

From traceability to automatic restocking of store shelves to faster and more efficient export and import, GS1 has made a hyper-efficient supply chain possible through a global system of standards.

The GS1 Bar Code was the first of the revolutionary leaps GS1 has made and is now used globally. But today, the GS1 System of Standards also includes:

- GS1 DataBar, the tiny next generation of the GS1 Bar Code. Smaller than the original bar code but able to contain more information, GS1 DataBar can be placed on small individual items such as pieces of fruit. Using GS1 DataBar generates an annual operating savings at retail of more than \$2.32 million in produce and \$2.33 million in meats for an average 100-store chain, according to a GS1 study.
- The Electronic Product Code (EPC) using Radio Frequency Identification tags, increases visibility and efficiency throughout the supply chain and higher quality information flow between companies and their key trading partners. This helps companies all over the world to manage shipments, inventories and assets, reduce counterfeiting and medical errors and fight theft, creating more effective and streamlined processes in a number of different sectors.
- GS1 eCom Standards, which provide clear guidelines for creating electronic versions of all sorts of business documents so that trading partners can smoothly exchange information electronically no matter what language their internal hardware or software systems or their employees may speak. Electronic standards have allowed companies to move from manual paper-based processes that have resulted in shortening delivery times by 61 hours on average, cost savings of €12-18 per transaction and 5 percent fewer out-of-stock situations.
- GS1 Global Data Synchronisation Network, which provides a powerful environment for secure and continuous synchronisation of accurate data and enables companies who do business with each other to always have correct information in their systems.

GS1 brings full visibility solutions by providing a single traceability process to meet all quality and regulatory requirements. The GS1 standards help ensure food safety, which allows food and food ingredients to be traced on a global scale no matter how many companies or contract growers are involved or how many borders are crossed as items travel from the beginning of the supply chain all the way to the consumer. Coupled with the GS1 Product Recall standard, they ensure more effective and timely product recall processes and notifications.

GS1 is also playing a leading role in growing sectors such as in Healthcare. It brings together hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, transporters and others, many of whom are competitors, who work together under GS1's leadership to develop standards that will increase patient safety and improve patient care through reduced medication errors and improved product traceability. In the Transport and Logistics sector, companies gain competitive advantage by applying GS1 standards across their supply chain operations. Benefits can include improved efficiency, increased visibility of the flow of shipments, more efficient handling and inventory management, increased security of distribution and speed of operations.

GS1 is already looking ahead to its next 40 years of innovative leadership as the Global Language of Business: as consumers become empowered by the digital trend in social and mobile technologies, they increasingly require real-time product updates and the ability to scan bar codes to obtain “beyond-the-label” data, such as product origin, ingredients and manufacturing working conditions.

With this 40th Anniversary in mind, GS1 wants to look ahead to the next 40 years and build a world where things and related information move efficiently and securely for the benefit of businesses and improvement of people’s lives, every day, everywhere.

Read more about the 40th Anniversary at:

www.gs1.org/40thanniversary

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About GS1

GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit, international organisation that develops global standards and solutions to improve the efficiency and visibility of supply chains across industries. It engages a global community of trading partners, industry organisations and technology providers to understand their business needs and develops global standards in response to those needs. GS1 is driven by close to two million user organisations, in over 20 industries including retail & consumer goods, healthcare, transport & logistics, and more. Today, the GS1 System of standards is the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world. GS1 has local Member Organisations in over 110 countries and its head office is in Brussels. For more information, visit www.gs1.org.

Read more about GS1 at:

<http://www.gs1.org/services/publications/online>