

WHAT IS GS1?

In today's world, goods and services are no longer just about the point of consumption itself. In times of globalisation and the networking of different countries, companies and people, other aspects of services, but especially of goods, are gaining in importance. The value chains are net-worked, which leads to bigger markets that are becoming more complex.

Everyday streams of goods and information are permanently flowing and the amount of big data is constantly grow-ing. However, not only the amount of information is growing, but also the need for information is becoming stronger – on every step of the supply chain.

Motivation

Consumers, patients, business partners and regulators are demanding more and better product data than ever before - but complex and costly data exchange infrastructure and processes are producing a surge in low-quality data. GS1 empowers industry's digital transformation by enabling businesses to create one widely accepted digital version of a product that is as good as the physical one. Ultimately, consumers and patients finally will benefit from increased product track and trace as well as the seamless experiences that this brings.

Solution

GS1 is a network of mostly non-profit-organisations that supports companies in all industries worldwide in applying globally valid identification, communication and process standards in practice and thus improving the efficiency of their business processes and leading to a common business sense of the four pillars: identify – capture – share – use.

More than two million companies are using GS1 standards nowadays. It is the market leader in the development and distri-bution of global standards. Transparent communication within the entire value chain and com-mon standards for the identification of articles are the aims of GS1 and are the basis for a suc-cessful business.

Benefits

By using the global GS1 system, unique identification keys can be generated across industries for almost all objects that are relevant in business-to-business, business-to-consumer and business-to-government transactions, such as products, locations, companies, assets or transactions.

The use of unique standards facilitates steps in the entire supply chain from producers over transport and logistics to retail sales. Another large area where GS1 standards are widely used and essential is the healthcare industry.

In this sector, GS1 is an Issuing Agency (IAC) designated by the European Commission and the FDA for the Unique Device Identification. This might be important for any producer of medical products, especially if they want to sell their products in the EU market.

The GS1 system is used in various industries and consists of different individual shapes of standards, depending on the industry. In retail, however, it is the unchallenged leading system. Particularly well known is the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) in the EAN barcode, which can be found on all retail products. It can be scanned to automate checkout and other back office processes.

Retailers can also track the product at any point in the supply chain. Furthermore, for example the Global Location Number (GLN) is widely used to identify locations, such as warehouses, shops, lay-bys, etc. The GLN is used to identify the location of a product or a partner.

Target Groups

Retailers can use GS1 standards for example to get accurate data and complete information about their products and respond to changing demand of consumers right in time.

The standards are nowadays the only established trusted data base for retailers across companies, supporting businesses, no matter whether they are small or large. However, not only retailers need GS1 standards for their efficient processes. Every **producer**, that is planning to sell their product worldwide, online or in their local country would benefit from the EAN barcode or the GTIN for example.

It not only opens new possibilities to every producer but sometimes it is regarded and used as entry key to commercial relations. For example, small coffee farmers would be able to label their product individually, e.g. coffee beans, to uniquely identify all each and every article they sell – different content, packaging, taste, promotion. Producers of medical devices even need it to fulfil certain legal requirements, especially in the European Union Market.

Another big part in every supply chain of a product is the **transport and logistics**.

The standards are needed to track and monitor the products all the way on the supply chain and to make sure, that there is no information loss from producers to retailers.

But also along its way across borders and the modal shift of transportation the consistency of the data encoded ensures their usage on the level of the transport units as containers or pallets but often also down the stream to the original level of the product batch. Moreover, GS1 standards besides business are necessary also in societal and environmental topics like circular economy, sustainability or traceability that are growing in importance as well. Those areas are always linked to information flows and thus without the right use of standards for interoperable exchange of data basically inconceivable, even if not totally impossible.

Call to Action

Now, as a producer/retailer/logistics company you might ask yourself: Where do you get GS1 barcodes, how to apply them, how to make your processes thus more efficient and how to enhance your business relations by doing so? Wouldn't it be awesome if all of this knowledge would be easily accessible right out of Rwanda? Wouldn't it be beneficial for all business partners in Rwanda to have their own representatives on the global level of GS1? And what about your commercial partner at your side when it comes to nationwide solutions with GS1 Standards?

Short distances, direct support, exchange of thoughts with a like-minded community, formation of opinions to address Rwandan business needs – all this is in the conjoint prospect for a GS1 Rwanda to become a local centre for training, capacity building and innovative, efficient business processes.

And the best: You could be provided with barcodes for your products directly from an GS1 organization in Rwanda. Rwandan entrepreneurs will thus have it easier to participate in the global value chain and thus strengthen trade. GS1 is not a company to be established, but a global organization.

To establish your own GS1 Member Organisation in Rwanda for the future progress, different stakeholders from manufacturing to the retail sector need to come together today as a community and jointly submit an application to the GS1 Global Organisation in Brussel, Belgium.

To ensure that this is successful, we are at your side as a project team and with our experts from GS1 Germany to support you throughout the entire process. To achieve our goal, we are holding several workshops and community breakfasts so that you, as entrepreneurs, can gather information and organize together.

Sources:

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