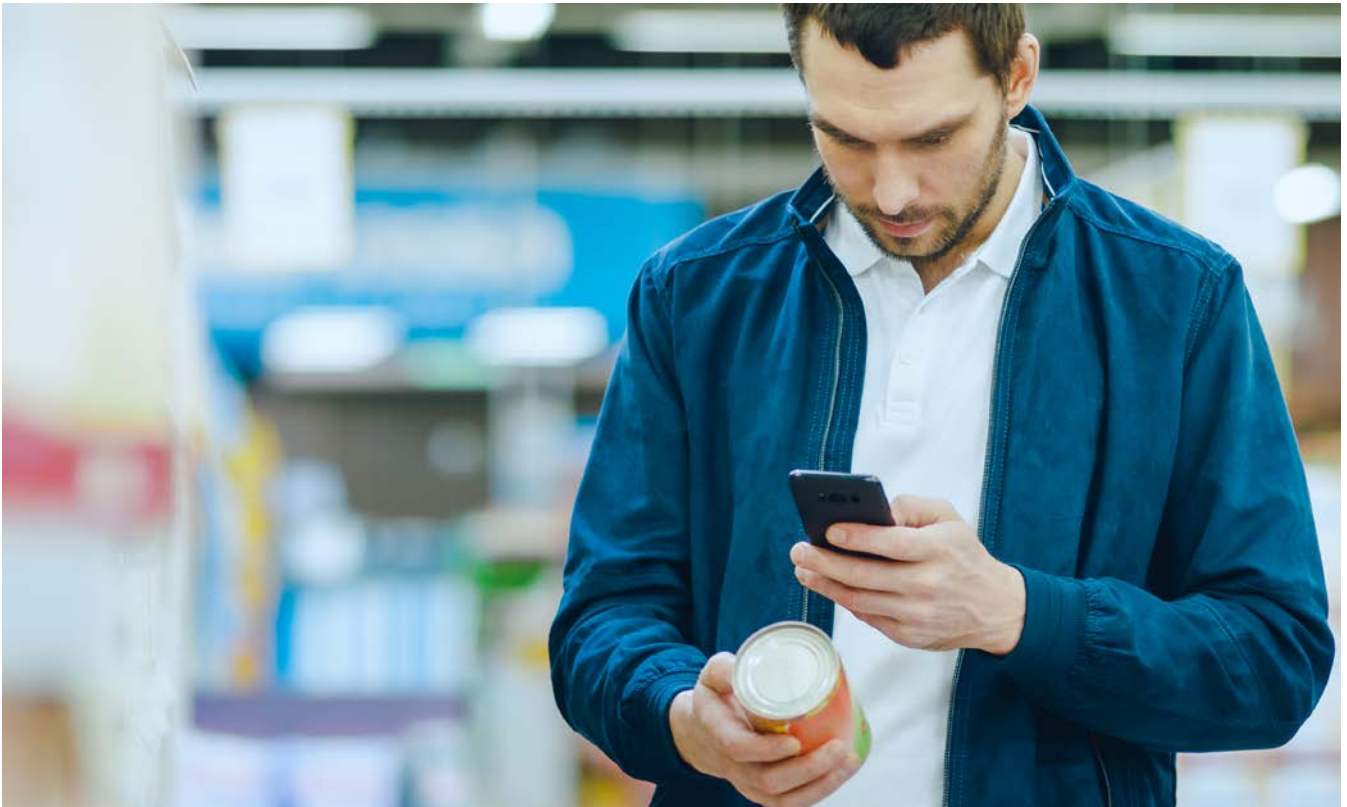For GS1 Member Organisations

Verified by GS1

What you need to know about this solution

Summary

More than ever before, consumers expect easy, convenient access to brand-sourced and consistent product information. Across channels, they want to feel confident that a product is what it says it is. At the same time, companies are working to build connected and enriched consumer experiences that drive satisfaction, loyalty and growth. Such experiences hinge on unique product identification and the ability to provide trusted product information.

Until now, there has been no single platform for brand owners to share their basic product data globally. Nor has there been a way for retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces to verify the product identifiers and data in their systems. Also, app developers and solution providers have had to assemble data from multiple, questionable sources.

The GS1 Registry Platform and Verified by GS1 is changing this.

The vision for the GS1 Registry Platform is to include every Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®) along with a core set of attributes. The registry will contain as much legacy GTIN data attributes as possible and, in the future, all new GTINs as they are allocated.

The responsibility of populating the registry belongs to the respective brand owners of each product since they are the most appropriate source to provide the highest quality and most complete set of core product data. This registry subsequently enables solutions like Verified by GS1.

Verified by GS1 is a global business solution that allows GS1 members to verify the identity of a product by querying the GS1 Registry Platform via a GS1 Member

Organisation (MO). Responses to a query for a given GTIN include information about the:

- Validity of the GTIN
- Company that owns the GTIN
- Presence of the GTIN in the GS1 Registry Platform
- Core product attributes available for the GTIN

Ultimately with Verified by GS1, companies can gain access to a neutral, trusted source of brand-authorised product data and have the foundation they need to deliver confidence to their consumers.

The core responsibility of GS1 is advancing both brand owners' use of the GTIN to identify their products, and retailers use of the GTIN to merchandise and sell their products. Reciprocity and support across industry stakeholders, (e.g., brand owners, retailers, solution providers and GS1) can deliver results for product identification and data similar to what the industry delivered over 40 years ago with basic barcode scanning at point-of-sale.

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Product information challenges

All stakeholders in the product ecosystem face challenges based on the lack of access to consistent, consolidated product information. Many of these challenges arise from GTIN misuse across demand platforms, especially in marketplaces.

In one U.S. marketplace, an average of 15 percent of GTINs had duplicate listings. While some of the duplicate listings were the same accurate item, many were listings where a seller had "hijacked" another seller's GTIN. Additionally, 23 percent of products on this same platform were identified by more than one GTIN—the same product had multiple GTINs.

This was caused for two reasons: The seller did not know its product needed a new GTIN and/or the seller identified the same product multiple times with different GTINs to improve visibility and search placement.

In short, dilution of GTIN integrity creates more confusion for partners and consumers, making it nearly impossible to identify, authenticate and verify product information.

These challenges can be addressed by leveraging a system where brand owners can easily assign product identification and attribution in accordance with GS1 standards and where retailers can subsequently verify that a product is what it says it is.

Consumers are frustrated by poor data quality.

Consumers expect more product information than ever before. They want to feel confident in the information they are relying on to make purchase decisions. And they expect product information to be accurate, complete and consistent across all channels.

Today, however, these expectations for reliable product information are not being met. The information is often unavailable, incomplete or questionable. When consumers receive products that are different than what they thought they were buying, the resulting dissatisfaction can lead to loss of loyalty, negative reviews, increased return rates and loss of future sales for both the brand and retailer.

Retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces are uncertain about the data in their systems.

Creating stronger, better consumer engagement is top of mind. Reliable product information is a critical prerequisite to reaching that goal. But today, there is no way for retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces to verify product identification and data in their systems.

In fact, according to an analysis conducted by UK firm Pricesearcher about how the GTIN is actually used in the market today, there are approximately 2.5 billion products sold in the world today and less than 1 percent of these products are identified with a GTIN. Moreover, of the products that have a GTIN, a majority of these GTINs are invalid or misappropriated.

If consumers don't trust the information about a product, they are unlikely to buy that product and, potentially, will not trust the store. Retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces can help mitigate this risk by including a simple check of the validity of the identifiers that are used on the products that they're selling. Verified by GS1 can help enable this verification.

App developers and solution providers are wasting time and money.

Mobile devices are the portal to everything. Consumers naturally expect that the barcode can connect them to rich, reliable product information and verify that the product is indeed what they think it is. However, this works only when trusted product data is provided at the source. Connecting to Verified by GS1 to ensure that basic product data is being shared with consumers is critical to harmonising data from various sources.

The mobile app phenomenon means that consumers can now purchase a product wherever and whenever it is convenient. There is no physical or digital version of a product; it is all part of one experience, one search for consumers to find the product that works for them.

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Consumers expect shopping apps to deliver the full range of features around the purchase: exclusive offers, loyalty programmes, store locators and reserve-and-collect. Beyond the purchase, consumers can tap into product information in diverse ways—from tracking their diets to engaging with other users. All of this is made more possible with a single source of brand-originated product data.

So, what solutions have been filling this need?

Dozens of "free barcode lookup" services rely on crowdsourcing or scraping the data from other websites. Even with these services improving every day, more than half of consumer scans receive incorrect data.

Remarkably, there has been no efficient, reliable mechanism to get product data from the original source—the brand owners. What's more, companies have been cautious about sharing their product data as they try to control its distribution. In the face of consumer demand for information, this vacuum has been filled by other, less reliable sources.

Bad data is damaging brands.

Untrusted product data isn't just a nuisance. The prevalence of untrusted product data is damaging manufacturer and retailer brand value overnight and is a driving force for increasing the rate of returns and the associated costs. Many brands understand that having defective digital product data is the same as having a defective product.

The solution

GS1 has been a neutral and trusted industry partner for more than 45 years—and has developed Verified by GS1 at the request of industry.

Verified by GS1 is to products what an identification card is to people—trust and efficiency start with valid identification. With Verified by GS1, brand owners uniquely identify each product with a GTIN and each product identification "card" includes six, additional core product attributes: brand name, product description, product image URL, Global Product Category (GPC), net content and unit of measure, and country of sale.

These attributes have been identified by industry as the minimum set of core attributes needed to uniquely identify a product in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) sector. Together, these seven attributes establish the full digital identity of a product and enable product identity verification. The product data in Verified by GS1 is "trusted" because it is supplied by the brand owner and submitted for several data quality checks.

With Verified by GS1, companies can access basic brand-sourced product data and establish the foundation they need to deliver confidence to consumers. The principles of data quality and data completeness are crucial to establishing this foundation and ensuring the adoption of Verified by GS1.

Together, complete product records with high quality data will deliver the most value to industry. Ultimately, all companies across the commerce ecosystem will benefit operationally as the distribution of trusted product data becomes more efficient and seamless.

Data completeness measures the availability of all seven core product attributes for each product record. Qualitative data means that the data in each field is (as close as possible) to being accurate, consistent and up to date. Accuracy (or correctness) and timeliness can only be confirmed by the brand owners, while GS1 can help and report back on the consistency of product data, (e.g., brand name consistency, product description consistency across items/countries, correct GPC code versus the generic 99999999).

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How Verified by GS1 works

The GS1 Registry Platform is the backbone of the Verified by GS1 solution. It provides a single, central place where data is stored. The Verified by GS1 solution will enable manufacturers and other supply-side parties to provide information about their products to the GS1 Registry Platform, using the tools made available through their local GS1 MO.

Verified by GS1 uses a global set of validation rules to check the quality and integrity of the GTIN structure, and to check for data completeness. Ultimately, brand owners and manufacturers are responsible for the quality and accuracy of the data content they provide for their products.

Users of Verified by GS1 can verify that each product in their catalogues and systems has a valid GTIN and that the product attribute information for a given GTIN matches what the brand owner has uploaded into Verified by GS1.

Verified by GS1 will be available for retailers, e-tailers, marketplaces, app developers, solution providers, brand owners and manufacturers to query through an online portal and via application programming interfaces (APIs). Users of Verified by GS1 can verify that each product in their catalogues and systems has a valid GTIN and that the product attribute information for a given GTIN matches what the brand owner has uploaded into Verified by GS1. All users of Verified by GS1 must have a relationship with a GS1 MO to gain access.

Stakeholder benefits

Verified by GS1 offers benefits to everyone in the product information ecosystem, especially the ultimate data user—the consumer.

Brand owners and manufacturers

Verified by GS1 provides brand owners with global reach for their consumer-facing data. They'll be able to see and validate their data, with new products instantly visible to potential customers anywhere in the world. All data users—from retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces to app developers and solution providers—can be confident they're accessing the right information. Delivering brand-sourced product information will lead to greater consumer confidence, satisfaction and loyalty.

Retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces

Verified by GS1 enables retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces to validate their product listings to ensure that products in their systems are properly identified with valid GTINs—a crucial preliminary step in data quality governance. GTIN verification can be used to accelerate product attribute accuracy, completeness and availability for consumers and businesses.

It also enables increased interoperability for industry, reduces cost, and provides accurate, persistent identification to power analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Other practical uses of Verified by GS1 data include:

- Identification of products without a valid GTIN

- Identification, confirmation and communication with the authorised owner, reseller or distributor of a given GTIN or GTINs

- Compliance with product listing on search engines that mandate the use of a valid GTIN, (e.g., Google Merchant Centre)

GTIN verification can be used to accelerate product attribute accuracy, completeness and availability for consumers and businesses.

Ultimately, users of Verified by GS1 gain faster, simplified access to brand-sourced, high-quality and consistent product data.

Moving to this trusted, foundational data set will significantly reduce the time and cost associated with gathering and verifying data. But most importantly, the ability of retailers, e-tailers and marketplaces to build rich consumer experiences that deliver trusted product data will help drive confidence, satisfaction, loyalty and, ultimately, improved competitiveness and growth for their businesses.

App developers and solution providers

These stakeholders work at the cutting edge of consumer experiences—dreaming, inventing and building new ways to bring value to people's lives. New apps are continually delivering information and connection, automation and convenience, entertainment and community—all at consumers' fingertips. Until now, developers have been forced to assemble data from multiple, often questionable, sources.

With Verified by GS1, app developers and solution providers can rely on one source of brand-sourced product data to fuel connected consumer experiences. Verified by GS1 easily integrates into mobile apps or other solutions via a simple API so that standardised product data can flow seamlessly into systems. By getting trusted product data from brand owners, app developers and solution providers can improve the experience for their users. When data is accurate, consumers can find and buy products more easily—and app developers can focus on growing their apps without worrying about the product data.

Conclusion

The success of Verified by GS1 relies on brand owners of all sizes to provide their legacy GTIN listings and basic attributes, using GS1 tools, rules and services. This applies to new GTINs created in the future, as well. Demand-side partners will drive the value of Verified by GS1 to consumers, by using this information as part of the listing process and to authenticate the products they accept in both brick-and-mortar locations and marketplaces.

GS1 is committed to making the investments necessary to scale Verified by GS1. This encompasses the backend work necessary to connect GS1 tools, services and platforms to data pools, catalogues and other partner systems to collect GTIN and attribute data. Operationalising Verified by GS1 first across the fast-moving consumer goods industry is a top priority, as well as investigating the attributes required in other industries for widespread adoption.

You've heard about it. Now be a part of it.

Whether your MO has already taken the first steps—or has not yet begun the journey—the Verified by GS1 Deployment Kit has something for you.

For more information about Verified by GS1 and going to market, please visit the Verified by GS1 deployment kit available at *mozone.gs1.org/verified-by-gs1*.

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