



Case Study

Georgia-Pacific

Georgia-Pacific Proves the Value of Where and Who;

Adding GS1 Global Location Numbers to its data set adds efficiency

Challenge

Georgia-Pacific is expansive by nearly every measure. It is a world leader in consumer package goods, building products, chemicals as well as bath tissue and household paper products with such well-known brands as Brawny®, Quilted Northern®, and Dixie®. It is also involved in the aerospace, mining, and facilities management industries, making it a global giant. With a customer base of both horizontal and vertical reach, it has made it a practice to meet its own and its customers' technology needs with forward-leaning digital solutions. When a customer asked for Georgia-Pacific's involvement in a traceability study, the company was well-equipped to oblige.

Solution

Georgia-Pacific has had a decades-long relationship with GS1 US and has used GS1 identifiers as a foundation for its divisions, systems, and processes to seamlessly interoperate. In fact, Georgia-Pacific has a centralized data management and governance structure based on GS1 Standards and maintains strong data quality governance, making it an ideal candidate for collaboration with any customer interested in end-to-end traceability. A traceability initiative mounted by a foodservice customer required Georgia-Pacific to assign GS1 Global Location Numbers (GLNs) to facilities not previously identified as using them.

Benefits

- **Customer satisfaction.** Georgia-Pacific believes in “meeting its customers where they are” when it comes to technology and was ideally situated to help its customer meet traceability objectives using GS1 Standards.
- **Efficiency.** Georgia-Pacific made the decision to use GLNs internally as the preferred location identifier for the efficient transaction of traceability information. Combined with the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN®), a complete “what and where” can be communicated on widely accepted electronic channels.
- **Future-proof.** As more and more trading partners adopt GS1 Standards, Georgia-Pacific offers a richer set of standards-based solutions to reciprocally optimize operations more seamlessly.
- **Scalability.** By adding GS1 GLNs to its mix of identifiers, Georgia-Pacific has expanded beyond legacy systems to assign location information that allows for operations to scale with other GS1 Standards used throughout the worldwide supply chain.

Knowing Where

GS1 identifiers have been firmly embedded in Georgia-Pacific (GP) operations for decades; its leadership serves on the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative's Executive Leadership Council that steers the not-for-profit membership organization on behalf of the foodservice industry that rely on its supply chain solutions. GP's professionals are regular attendees at conferences and frequent participants in workgroups for the collective benefit of commerce.

Based on GP's comprehensive experience with GS1 Standards, a foodservice distributor and end-user approached GP as the natural choice to participate in a traceability initiative it wished to conduct.

"You can't tackle traceability without GS1," says Ardetha Bradley, senior manager for Business Systems, Digital Operations & Enablement, EDI¹, Content, & Data Syndication at Georgia-Pacific.

Traceability is of paramount importance in the foodservice business, where the potential for product recalls specifically and food safety in general is required and regulated. Although GP does not produce foodstuffs, its products – such as napkins and paper towels – are foodstuff adjacent.

"You can't tackle traceability without GS1."

Ardetha Bradley

Senior Manager, Business Systems, EDI & Content Syndication, Georgia-Pacific



GP took a subset of the customers' products it managed in one of its manufacturing locations and assigned a GS1 Global Location Number (GLN) to the facility. Each time the customer placed an order, an EDI transaction (Advanced Ship Notification) containing the GTIN and GLN was sent to track its movement. A third-party logistics provider that is responsible for shipping and shipment information – and all traceability participants – communicate using GS1 Standards, identifiers and transactions as the common language.

"The foodservice traceability project became the catalyst for GLN assignments," says Bradley. "We have a few customers who use GLNs within their internal supply chains and in their EDI documents. We were not going to adopt GLNs just for a single initiative or for just a few customers; GP took a broader approach to leverage GLNs to the fullest extent."

Being as large an organization as it is – and wishing to remain as agile as possible – GP sought to leverage its use of GLNs widely. GLNs can be used for entities, locations, and parties [see *sidebar*]. GP uses them in all three ways: corporate headquarters has an "entity" GLN, and the retail, commercial, and building product teams each identify their unique roles within the organization with their own "function" GLNs. Facilities such as warehouses and manufacturing facilities have GLNs assigned to identify their physical locations. GLNs

can be especially important to large organizations like GP that have two distinctly different facilities on the same street. Each GLN is recognized within the company's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system as a unique location.

What Gets Assigned a GLN?

 <h4>Who?</h4> <h4>Party</h4> <p>An entity that needs to be represented in a business-related transaction. A GLN identifying a party answers the question of <i>who</i>. This may be a legal entity or function.</p> <p>Legal Entity Any business, government body, department, individual, or other institution that has standing in the eyes of the law and has the capacity to enter into agreements or contracts.</p> <p>Function Refers to a department that performs specific tasks, such as accounting department, purchasing, pharmacy, human resources, etc.</p>	 <h4>Where?</h4> <h4>Location</h4> <p>A particular place or position. A GLN identifying a location is used to answer the question of <i>where</i> something has been, is, or will be, and can be physical or digital in nature.</p> <p>Physical Location A tangible place that may be represented by an address, coordinates, or other means. Examples include a manufacturing facility, distribution center, dock door, farm, or bin location.</p> <p>Digital Location An electronic (non-physical address) such as an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) gateway.</p>
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Same Location, Different Efficiency

GP assigns GLNs as an internal means of pinpointing inventory location. Because GP offers vendor-managed inventory relationships, the company works very closely with those customers, exchanging information as it pertains to sales movements, promotional activity, inventory status, and more. GLNs are exceedingly useful in these instances by providing visibility, throughout the supply chain. GP GLNs are most commonly found in EDI transactions such as purchase orders, on invoices, and on Advance Shipping Notices (ASNs), to alert customers of the shipping points of stored products, confirm ship-to destinations, as well as the location of stored products.

For customers also utilizing GLNs, the GLN would appear on customer purchase orders telling GP where to ship the requested merchandise. Using GS1 as the common language, all digital transactional data, including GLNs, is reciprocally and efficiently handled through EDI, API, or other methodologies that support digital transactional data.

From Legacy to the Future

Many industries use DUNS numbers – the Data Universal Numbering System number provided by Dun & Bradstreet. Although still widely used, DUNS numbers, having originated in the early 1960s comprise a legacy standalone identification system whereas GS1 Standards work symbiotically with one another.

To "meet its customers where they live" – at their technical and business level – GP uses both numbering systems – DUNS and GLNs, and even the customers' proprietary numbering systems, when applicable. GP can identify all of them through its own cross-referencing capabilities, which GS1 US can house for them for added expediency.

¹ Electronic Data Interchange



“GLNs don’t go away. They’ve been assigned to a facility and any change is like telling me you’re going to change your social security number. That’s not going to happen.”

Ardetha Bradley
Senior Manager, Business Systems, EDI & Content Syndication,
Georgia-Pacific

“A basic principle - our preference - is to use GS1 identifier, one of which is the GLN, in digital transactions.” Bradley says. “We had some trading partners who began using the GLNs in place of DUNs, so we started to capture their GLNs to identify the ship-to locations,” Bradley says. “And always on our long-term roadmap is the intention to use GLNs for all manufacturing facilities and regional distribution centers.”

Knowing Who

New GLNs are assigned using a GS1-based standard process set forth by GP’s data governance organization, a process that takes just minutes. Thirteen-digit GLNs are a combination of the global company prefix, a component of the manufacturing facility or warehouse ID. An algorithm assigns a check digit. While about half of GP’s facilities have GLNs assigned, GP captures 100 percent of customer GLNs when they are assigned.

“When provided, we always communicate with our customers using their GLNs,” Bradley says.

“Our number one best practice - our preference - is the use of the GLN.”

Ardetha Bradley
Senior Manager, Business Systems, EDI & Content Syndication,
Georgia-Pacific

Surmounting the Hurdles

According to Bradley, whose experience with standards is nearing two decades, some ways to overcome common barriers to adopting standards are:

- an internal team to support it
- a willingness to change the way things are done for the sake of efficiency
- the simple assignment of a “home” for GLN information
- the knowledge of what communicating electronically can do to simplify operations.

As a long-term member of the GS1 global community, Georgia-Pacific knows that:

- adoption of standards can be taken at an organization’s own pace
- an entity GLN and a GLN for a single location can simplify operations throughout the supply chain
- ERP systems can provide a “home” for most standards-based information
- GS1 US can provide innumerable resources and guidance to deliver 21st century solutions.

“Always on our long-term roadmap is our intention to use GLNs for our manufacturing facilities and regional distribution centers.”

Ardetha Bradley
Senior Manager, Business Systems, EDI & Content Syndication,
Georgia-Pacific

Location, Location, Location

With an organization as large as Georgia-Pacific and a set of customers that is exponentially larger, there are those representing every set-up on the continuum of digital standards adoption, from the mom-and-pop restaurant using few standards to the large multinational organization that, like GP, uses most of applicable GS1 identifiers.

Because of the enormous footprint its customers occupy, Georgia-Pacific continues to promote the use of Global Trade Item Numbers® (GTINs) and Global Location Numbers (GLNs) as the foundation of end-to-end visibility and seamless supply chain operations.

“We have customers who embed GTINs and GLNs in their data because we want to have two points of data from a data accuracy perspective,” Bradley says. “We now actively solicit GLNs.”

Locating Success

“Success looks like 99 percent of our trading partners at least submitting purchase orders electronically,” Bradley says. “And that’s doable because we have done it in other divisions, so we know that that’s not a pie-in-the-sky benchmark at all. It’s possible. We must continue to show the mutual benefits of adopting electronic transactions, based on GS1 Standards.”



Dixie | Right size for any meal

In fact, GP’s measure of success would be a measure of success for global commerce in general, based solely on the sheer number of businesses with which GP transacts commercial relationships.

“Automatic data exchange and shipment accuracy using standards, rather than maintaining layers of cross references to get back to the customer’s number is obviously the most efficient.” Bradley says.

“GS1 Standards are truly global throughout the supply chain and they touch every component of our business. Period,” Bradley says.

“Trust the process. Trust GS1.”

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Ardetha Bradley
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Georgia-Pacific

To get more information, visit
[Get a Global Location Number \(GLN\)](#).

About the Organizations



About Georgia Pacific

Georgia-Pacific is one of the world's leading makers of tissue, pulp, packaging, building products and related chemicals. Household products, such as Brawny® paper towels, Quilted Northern® bath tissue and Dixie® cups and tableware are Georgia-Pacific brands. Georgia-Pacific also produces gypsum panels and other building materials for the construction industry. Other industries served by Georgia-Pacific include aerospace, mining and facilities management.

www.gp.com



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®). www.gs1us.org

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