Print Media, Inc.
Leveling the Playing Field

With only a personal computer and $500 in his pocket, CEO Robert Gonzalez founded Print Media, Inc. (Print Media) over 16 years ago. An energetic and determined entrepreneur, Gonzalez wasn’t discouraged when his door-to-door selling to doctors’ offices wasn’t paying off. “I couldn’t get past the front desk. I knew I had to approach this challenge in a different way,” recalls Gonzalez.

The answer: using technology – the facsimile machine – to reach his potential customers.

“At Print Media, our employees are either sales people or sales enablers who help us successfully compete in what many find is a complex industry,” explains Gonzalez. “As a small company, we fully leverage technology and GS1 standards to keep us efficient and growing.”

The successful use of data standards and technology is attributed to Fabian Garcia, director of Print Media’s Infrastructure and Systems organization. Garcia frequently reviews, analyzes and evaluates current business processes for improvements. “In 2002, we were awarded our first healthcare group purchasing organization (GPO) contract,” says Garcia. “This provided us with a big opportunity for growth, yet added unbelievable complexity to our business.”

Once again, Print Media had to work smarter – now with the GPO, its network of distributors and its healthcare providers.

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Charting a New Course
The company was getting sales tracing reports from multiple distributors, each with its own ship-to identification numbers associated with a host of healthcare providers. Secondly, each GPO had its own set of identification numbers. For example, one hospital had 50 ship-to numbers and belonged to multiple GPOs. Finally, add to this web of complexity the fact that providers’ locations might change.

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Expectations were high in 2002. Historically, small companies with limited resources struggle with this type of endeavor, and may fail since they are unable to accurately bill, rebate, and report the individual product prices initially communicated between their company, GPOs, distributors and providers.

“In this industry, there are very few small companies that make it past the first GPO contract award; there are very few renewals. The ability to handle more transactions is the key to our growth; it isn’t a matter of just throwing more people at a problem,” explains Gonzalez.

Print Media initially created the company’s own identification system for tracking all its transactions and sales information. “It was a painstaking task of slowly identifying and linking our identification key to locations provided in traced sales data with sometimes unidentifiable, obscure or non-existent identifiers,” says Garcia. “We needed an ‘industry link’ – a common location number that would allow us to easily conduct business with any GPO, distributor or provider in the industry.”

Laying a Solid Foundation
Garcia was encouraged after reading about a GS1 standard: the Global Location Number (GLN). After attending a free, online healthcare seminar offered by GS1 Healthcare US, Garcia was convinced he had found “the answer.” I also participated in a User Group meeting sponsored by GS1 Healthcare US that included representatives from manufacturers, GPOs, distributors and providers. At the meeting, I realized the adoption of GLNs was, and still is, championed by members of the industry’s large, medium and small players. To benefit, we all need to participate,” says Garcia.

The decision to implement Global Location Numbers was immediate. By simply adding GLNs – globally unique location identification numbers – to its internal database, Print Media started creating a new GS1 standards-enabled business process that would serve as a solid foundation for growth. And, by using the GLN Registry for Healthcare (GLN Registry), Print Media could easily add GLN identifiers as they became available.

“When we signed up for the GLN Registry, we found many of our customers and all the GLNs assigned to those customers – all the warehouses, supply rooms, and storage rooms,” describes Garcia. “It was liberating since we no longer needed to depend on ambiguous sales tracing reports to give us new information: a new warehouse location, for example.”

As contracts were renewed, Print Media grew its business by adding more GPOs to its GLN-based process. “The GPOs are really onboard with GLN adoption. They initially add their providers’ Global Location Numbers to the GLN Registry, and then the providers maintain their hierarchy of GLNs. We know the information is accurate because the actual provider is updating its records,” explains Garcia.

With the GLN Registry, Print Media can automatically update its records with changes in GLNs and new ones. While some manual efforts are still needed, Garcia recognizes the value for Print Media as they systemically work with the GLN Registry and as it continues to grow with more participants. And, as more companies in the supply chain use GLNs, Print Media’s job gets easier with increasingly less need to manually identify and cross-reference locations.

Turning Weeks into Days
Before the new process, Garcia estimates it took Print Media as long as four weeks to identify and link all sales traces for issuing rebate payments. Not only did this process tie-up Print Media resources, but as critical, the GPO’s expectation for timely reporting was in jeopardy.

With GLN implementation, Print Media can meet GPO reporting requirements quickly and efficiently.
Print Media now completes sales trace reports in a day or two – a task that once took as long as four weeks.

Now, the company completes sales trace reports in a day or two – a significant productivity improvement. “Because all companies are using the Registry and speaking the same language with GLNs, we don’t have to spend time deciphering what one distributor sent versus what another one sent for the same provider’s location. It’s quick, easy and accurate,” says Garcia.

Another key benefit is how Print Media now serves its customers. “At Print Media, we stress ‘executing with precision’ in everything we do. By using GLNs and the Registry, we can now provide customers with value-added consultation,” explains Gonzalez. For example, many hospitals form alliances and take an integrated approach when delivering healthcare services to their communities. With the GLN-based solution, Print Media efficiently and precisely deals with the multiple “layers” within the healthcare system to keep customer confidence strong and retain business. Using GLNs combined with analytics, the company can also track customer buying levels and trends to offer greater customer value, such as aggregate volume discounts.

Print Media can more easily enter new markets. “We have distributors that focus specifically on physicians. Tracking what each physician buys and at what price is even more daunting than tracking hospital locations,” says Gonzalez. “Using our GLN-based process, we can successfully sell to and serve this growing market – something that would have been very difficult before implementing the GLN-enabled process.”

By implementing GLNs and the GLN Registry, Print Media has experienced top-line and bottom-line benefits for its business and customers.

### Business Impact Summary

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<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enhanced productivity</strong></td>
<td>Print Media spends significantly less time identifying and cross-referencing sales locations for reporting and rebates. What formerly took four weeks, now takes one or two days each month.</td>
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<td><strong>Improved cash flow</strong></td>
<td>Print Media has a new, highly efficient process that facilitates order-to-invoice accuracy, reducing errors and speeding cash flow.</td>
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<td><strong>Increased revenue</strong></td>
<td>Print Media can enter new markets such as the growing physician-based market. GLNs and the GLN Registry have enabled Print Media to track, report and rebate individual physicians – something that would have been very difficult before implementing the GLN-enabled process.</td>
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<td><strong>Greater customer satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Print Media uses GLNs combined with its analytics to better serve its customers. Based on customer buying levels, Print Media consults with its customers for greater value such as offering aggregate volume discounts.</td>
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### Encourage participation

“My analogy is: In order to conduct business with people speaking different languages, we need to learn and use a common language. In the U.S. healthcare industry, that’s the GLN,” says Garcia.

### Learn from GS1 Healthcare US

“They are open to all perspectives from all firms, regardless of size. We’re proof that a small business is able to participate and succeed,” says Gonzalez.

Both Gonzalez and Garcia summarize what they have learned:

**Just do it.** “The GLN standard and Registry database are straightforward and simple to understand. Our business is better because of our investment in the GLN standard,” advises Gonzalez.

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Print Media’s successful use of GS1 standards is attributed to Director Fabian Garcia (standing) and his team, Manuel Carvajales, systems administrator and Jeannette Perez, data control clerk.
“We have leveled the playing field. Technology and GS1 standards help us compete against companies many times our size.”

– Robert Gonzalez, CEO and President, Print Media, Inc.

ABOUT PRINT MEDIA, INC.
Print Media is a minority- and veteran-owned small business enterprise that develops, manufactures and sells innovative and reliable supplies for on-demand print technology. Print Media has served the healthcare industry for over 16 years with thermal sensitive papers used in EKG and patient monitoring devices, and has recently expanded into the parking, airline, amusements, and photography markets. Print Media operates with less than 60 employees, yet its customers include some of the largest firms and group purchasing organizations in the world. Since its entry into the acute-care hospital market with the awarding of its first GPO contract in 2002, Print Media has become the second leading supplier in this category with over 20 percent of the U.S. hospital market share. To compensate for size, Print Media relies heavily on technology and an efficient business process, the mission of its Infrastructure and Systems Department. To learn more, visit www.printmedia-inc.com.

ABOUT GS1 HEALTHCARE US™
GS1 Healthcare US is an industry group that focuses on driving the adoption and implementation of GS1 standards in the U.S. healthcare industry to improve patient safety and supply chain efficiency. GS1 Healthcare US brings together members from all segments of the healthcare industry to address the supply chain issues that most impact healthcare in the United States.

CONTACT US
GS1 Healthcare US™ provides expertise, tools, and resources to help you implement GS1 standards to improve patient safety and supply chain efficiency. To learn more, contact GS1 Healthcare US at gs1healthcareus@gs1us.org or visit our Website at www.gs1us.org/healthcare.

GLN AND GLN REGISTRY
The Global Location Number is a globally unique identification number that can be used to identify a physical location. The GLN is unique for one specific location and has attributes defined for each GLN such as name, address, and location type (e.g., ship to, bill to, deliver to, etc.).

GLNs identify:
• Functional entities: a hospital pharmacy or accounting department
• Physical locations: a warehouse, hospital wing or even a nursing station
• Legal entities: a health system corporation

The GLN Registry for Healthcare is an electronic catalog that provides subscribers with a comprehensive list of healthcare facilities in the United States and their corresponding GLNs and associated GLN information. Created and governed by the healthcare industry in conjunction with GS1 Healthcare US, the GLN Registry provides users with a central resource for up-to-date and accurate information to facilitate efficient business practices.