



Executive Q&A

With Dick Tracy, President, Dot Foods, Inc,
Member of the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative
Executive Leadership Committee



Q: The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative has helped to drive real change across the industry, what benefits has Dot Foods seen?

A: This initiative has been a big win for our business. It has helped us capture more accurate information on the products we sell than we could have ever done on our own. Our customers have been telling us for years that we need to provide more product information on our ecommerce platform called the Dot Expressway. Weight, cube, images, nutritional information, allergens, and preparation instructions are all good examples of things we had a hard time getting and keeping updated on our own. We can't effectively sell the products we carry without them.

Q: Looking back, how has this changed the way you've done business internally? With your trading partners?

A: In the past, we manually set up all of our items and did not always have consistent guidelines on how this was done. We still have to do some of that today since not all of our manufacturer partners have jumped on board with this initiative. Fortunately, many have and we can now tell a much better story about the individual products we sell. Our sales numbers back this up since we know that items with information provided through the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®) grow 7% faster than those that were done manually. You can see why our expectations moving forward is for every item set up in our system to come through the GDSN.

Q: What's still a pain point when it comes to standards? What keeps you up at night?

A: My 16-year-old daughter is usually what keeps me up at night, but I don't think that is what you are asking about here. The information we get through the GDSN is more complete and accurate than what we do on our own. We know that for a fact since we have spent a lot of time measuring the difference, as well as looking at the costs of poor data. It appears there are still many companies in our industry who do not think this should be a priority. They either don't understand the waste poor data drives in their own supply chain or the opportunity cost associated with not making it readily available.

Q: How can you leverage these benefits to drive your company's innovation forward?

A: We believe the world has changed dramatically in the last few years in terms of how consumers spend their money. They expect information on the products they purchase to be at their fingertips, literally. That is especially the case with the food they consume and there is no difference between where this happens – home or away. This is why we are making big investments in the options our customers have to both view and purchase the products we carry. In our case, it won't matter if someone wants to use a computer, a tablet, a smartphone, or even talk to a live person. All options will provide them the answers they are looking for at any time of the day. This all relies on accurate product information that is readily accessible.