



Executive Q&A

With Randy Wieland, Senior Vice President Business Development and Industry Relations of KeyImpact Sales & Systems and Member of the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Executive Leadership Committee



Q. KeyImpact Sales is in a unique position as it serves the needs of manufacturers, distributors, and operators across all facets of the industry. What are some key efforts related to product data management, data quality, and rich product information that may impact the customer or consumer experience?

A. The role of a foodservice sales agency provides a unique view of the needs at virtually every step along the supply chain as well as the requirements of all customers, be it distributors, operators, and even the consumers. We cannot stress enough how critical it is to have accurate product information, such as specifications, ingredients statements, nutritionals, and declarations of allergens, to allow operators to provide meaningful and trusted information to their customers. It is equally as important to provide relevant images of the product to support sales, especially online.

Q. What are some best practices that companies in the foodservice industry can take to improve efficiencies?

A. A huge challenge the industry faces right now is the lack of standardization for item descriptions. Manufacturers, distributors, and sales agencies need to work together to ensure consistency. Aligning on common naming conventions and item description structure will simplify for those selling the products AND, just as importantly, make it more efficient for customers looking to buy their products. As a resource to the operators, our business is dependent on the accuracy of our partners' product data in the supply chain, and this is a huge reason why we advocate for GS1 Standards in foodservice.

Q. What changes have you seen in the type of product information consumers are demanding? How has the demand for new levels of detailed information impacted your business approach?

A. Historical information such as accurate ingredient statements, allergen claims, gluten-free, organic, etc. is still required so that operators can pass that information along to the consumer. However, we are seeing an increase in demand for information related to sourcing of products, such as cage-free, grass fed, and no antibiotics ever. This is prevalent among younger consumers as it pertains to sustainability of both food and packaging. This area will continue to grow with younger consumers making decisions today on "where to eat" based on operators' messaging and commitment to sustainability.

Q. What are some steps that companies in the foodservice industry can take to ensure they are well-equipped to handle digital transformation?

A. As more digital orders are placed between the operator and the distributor, the ability to build a catalog with information shared using the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®) will help enable the digital transformation. Simplification allows the operator to find products and helps ensure all of the information (including multiple images of the product in various states) is available and accurate, as well as will help improve your operating efficiencies. Using GS1 Standards will help lay that foundation for rich product data and data sharing to help prepare your business for a digital transformation and thrive.

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