



Executive Q&A

with Katy Jones, Chief Customer Officer, Trustwell
Member of the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative Executive
Leadership Committee



Q. How has your company's participation in the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative helped with strategic objectives as a solution provider and your own adoption and use of GS1 Standards, as well as your customers?

Participating in the Initiative has helped Trustwell connect with key stakeholders across the food industry on the adoption of standards and best practices for supply chain management, including traceability and data sharing. Trustwell utilizes GS1 Standards across our platform and participating in the Initiative has enabled collaboration on the use and implementation of emerging technologies for our customers in the food industry, such as RFID, TDS 2.0, and EPCIS 2.0.

The Initiative also brings together other industry stakeholders, including retailers, manufacturers, and technology providers. For example, we participated in the GS1 US seafood traceability and interoperability pilots with other solution providers, retail grocers, and seafood suppliers. It has been inspiring to connect with industry experts and thought leaders in this space to exchange insights and share expertise. In addition, participation in the work groups provides companies with the ability to help shape the direction of the industry and ensure that standards are aligned with their business needs, regulations, and trading partner mandates.

Q. How do you think your trading partner network will be impacted by increased regulatory oversight, such as the FSMA traceability rules or the New Era of Smarter Food Safety?

Enhanced traceability and FSMA 204 requirements will certainly require trading partners across the entire supply chain to work together. Our hope is that these regulations further help establish standards across the food industry, and lead to greater trust among trading partners. There will certainly be investments in order to comply, but the result is a safer, more efficient food chain and increased consumer trust. In addition, there are many benefits realized with compliance, including order accuracy, product freshness, supply chain visibility, product provenance, and more.

Q. How are you currently implementing traceability?

FoodLogiQ, which recently merged with ESHA Research to form Trustwell, brings over 20 years of experience in implementing tech-enabled traceability programs. Along with IFT (Institute of Food Technologists) and GS1 US, we participated in the first round of FDA traceability pilots and helped test supply chain interoperability based on GS1 Standards. The FoodLogiQ Traceability solution works by capturing and tracking key data elements at each step of the supply chain, including information about the product, the supplier, the location, and the date and time of each critical tracking event at the lot level. This information is then stored in a centralized cloud-based database, which can be accessed by all authorized members of the supply chain. We utilize a number of GS1 Standards for traceability, including GTINs, GLNs, GS1-128 barcodes, RFID, EDI and more. Together with our customers, we have captured over 150 million critical tracking events in our traceability programs— and that number grows every day.

Q. What current industry opportunities do you feel could be served by the adoption and use of unique location identifiers such as the GS1 Global Location Number (GLN)?

The adoption and use of unique location identifiers, specifically the GLN, can help to streamline supply chain operations by providing a standardized way to identify, track, and share location information. The GLN is a critical data point to support traceability by providing a clear record of where products are created, transformed, shipped, and received. By leveraging this unique record for each location in your supply chain, companies can reduce the time and effort required to manage and reconcile data across supply chain partners.

Q. How does enhanced traceability help to protect brand identity and mitigate risk?

Beyond the regulatory compliance aspect, there are significant benefits to enhanced traceability. Connecting the movement of your products allows companies to provide a more transparent view of their supply chain and production processes. Traceability systems can also help companies identify and track quality issues and enable them to quickly

identify and address those issues when they occur. In the event of a product recall or foodborne illness, enhanced traceability can help companies quickly identify the source of the problem and take corrective action. Not only can this help minimize the risk to your brand, but it could also save the lives of your customers.

Q. What pain points is your company experiencing with regards to standards?

While we have seen significant progress made in the last several years, we still see challenges with adoption and accuracy when it comes to GS1 Standards. As a provider of software that hinges on these standards, our pain points are the same pain points our customers' experience. Education is key, and as we onboard companies we provide training on the GS1 System of Standards, including GTINs, GLNs, GS1-128 barcoding and more. We also connect companies with GS1 US resources, such as Data Hub, the Grocery and Foodservice initiatives, and GS1 US documentation, which is created together with industry stakeholders.

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

Digital transformation is an ongoing and iterative process, and companies need to ensure they are well-equipped to handle the changes and challenges that come with it. Companies should develop a clear digital strategy that aligns with their overall business goals and objectives. This includes identifying areas where technology can improve efficiency, productivity, and customer experience.

There also needs to be a strong focus on data management and data quality. Complete and accurate data is foundational to digital transformation, and companies want to ensure they can collect, store, and analyze data effectively. This includes developing data governance policies, implementing data security measures, and investing in tools for data validation, analysis, and visualization. And you cannot forget about the people, especially when it comes to building a data culture. Transformation requires a shift in mindset and culture, and companies need to build a culture that embraces innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. This could include training on digital tools and technologies and creating a culture of experimentation and risk-taking.

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

Technology can certainly help companies improve efficiencies by automating processes, reducing errors, and providing real-time visibility into operations. Beyond technology, companies also need to have a strong culture focused on communication and collaboration. Strong collaboration with trading partners, suppliers, and end customers can help improve efficiencies by reducing errors, improving accuracy, and optimizing processes. Collaborate with your solution providers as well. These ecosystems are becoming more connected than ever before, and with productized integrations, APIs, GS1 Standards and more, we can connect in ways we could not have imagined just a few short years ago.