



Executive Q&A

With Steve Werden, Vice President, Distributor Sales, Ecolab, and Member of the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Executive Leadership Committee



Q: How has your participation in the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative helped you improve the consumer experience?

A: By participating in the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative, Ecolab has been able to improve the consumer experience in multiple ways. First, we allow transparency and accessibility of our product data by maintaining accurate and robust data and publishing that data to our business partners regularly. Secondly, we include useful external links such as our Safety Data Sheets and product images which allows the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®) to be a one-stop shop for most Ecolab data. Lastly, utilizing GS1 Standards based data, our customers better anticipate inventory and transportation needs; for example, using the case dimensions we provide through GDSN, our large distributors can better plan how many cases of our product can fit on a truck and how many can be stored within a given warehouse. This allows greater planning and flexibility for our customers in addition to the ROI benefits we are seeing in increased search visibility of our products on e-commerce platforms, shorter speed-to-market and overall supply chain optimization.

Q: What are some key efforts within your company related to product data management, data quality and completeness that directly impact the consumer experience?

A: We are taking on several initiatives to ensure the accuracy and increase the breadth of our product data based on GS1 Standards. We continually update our product marketing statements so that our customers have a clear understanding of the products they are purchasing and what they can, and cannot, be used for. In addition, we are implementing a Product Information Management (PIM) System to create a single source of truth. This will result in accurate and complete data for all downstream platforms directly impacting the consumer experience by providing a consistent message across all consumer touchpoints. Lastly, we are working on building out our image catalog to ensure all products have a clean consumer-facing image.

Q: How does enhanced traceability help you protect your brand and mitigate risk?

A: The advantage of enhanced traceability allows Ecolab to maintain clear records of each logistical touch point of a product from end to end, ensuring products can be located at any point throughout our supply chain. This allows easier investigation and focus on the actual products (or ingredients). Ecolab leverages Advance Ship Notices and the GS1-128 barcode for customers who require this data which enables rapid and effective communication to the appropriate internal and external parties in the case where a product would need to be recalled.

Q: What specific benefits have you seen as a result of leveraging GS1 Standards in your operations? Can you quantify?

A: By establishing data governance, internal education on GS1 Standards, and validating product data with attribute audits, we have increased our overall product data quality by 68 % from 2017 to 2018. We have seen a 19.01% decrease in data errors, a 18.5% decrease in GTINs with errors, and most importantly, we have won a large account as a result of our ability to share product data based on GS1 Standards and GDSN.