



Executive Q&A

with Paul Allegri, Vice President, Logistics, Centralized Supply Chain Services, LLC, exclusive buying agent for the Applebee's and IHOP systems. Member of the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative Executive Leadership Committee.



Q: What changes have you seen in consumer demand for information within the foodservice industry? And how has it impacted your business?

A: In today's environment and landscape, providing nutritional information for menus and all respective attributes is no longer just an option, it's a necessity. Guests expect a high level of transparency and this information must be readily and easily available via brand websites and mobile apps. More than ever before, guests want access to allergen disclosures, sourcing information, and proof of claims like gluten-free and organic. In response, our partner, DineBrands, the franchisor for Applebee's and IHOP, has a database of nutritional information and allergens for menu items that is available for consumers to satisfy their demands.

Q: How have you transformed your supply chain and technology infrastructure to meet the needs of consumers?

A: Since the formation of CSCS in 2009, we have invested heavily in our data enterprise system to ensure no disruption in the supply chain. Not only does this help us meet the needs of our customers but our trading partner demands as well. For example, we are able to predict with high accuracy how the launch of promotions or products will perform after a few days of sales data compared to forecast. Having this technology in place along with robust product level data helps us provide information that our partners and customers rely on to make efficient and informed decisions.

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

A: We start with good visibility across our supply chain. The CSCS data enterprise system receives daily feeds from suppliers and distributors that helps us to effectively manage our business. Examples of the data we collect are: suppliers' production in progress, suppliers' inventory positions, shipments to distributors, distributors' inventory positions and shipments to our restaurants. This level of visibility within our supply chain allows us to be proactive about food traceability. In the event of a recall or withdrawal, having the GS1-128 barcode encoded with the right product data on each case is critical to identifying what needs to be removed from the system. Instead, we would have to cast a wide net and recall cases that are not even impacted by the event. Visibility and traceability help us to mitigate risk and stay vigilant to protect our guests.

Q: What are the key areas of focus for your organization to enable efficiencies? How are you leveraging unique identification to help order accuracy, shipping/receiving, inventory management, freshness, and other operational improvements?

A: We have a five-year technology roadmap that continues to evolve so that our supply chain can stay agile in a number of areas. Going forward, we want to understand, from farm to fork, where every case is at all times and we do that with the help of GS1 Standards. Standards lay the foundation for enhanced efficiency and positively influence our business processes. Combined with our strategic use of technology and a highly capable workforce, we are well positioned for the future.