



Working Smarter: Reimagining Small Business Supply Chains

A GS1 US Expert Exchange Forum for Small Businesses
August 18, 2022

Overview

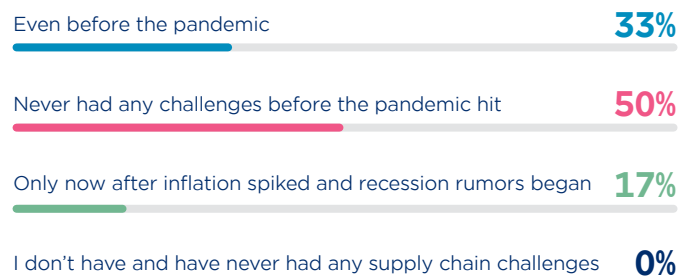
GS1 US®, the not-for-profit supply chain standards organization best known as the administrator of the UPC barcode, invited small businesses and several solution providers to a virtual roundtable to get a real-time read on small businesses' supply chain challenges and key strategies to solve them.

Is enhanced collaboration the key to alleviating supply chain challenges?

Yes, collaboration is essential to the participants and not just related to GS1 Standards. The group discussed collaboration in the context of hiring consultants to fill in the gaps in knowledge, having guidance on new sourcing models, communicating better with fulfillment centers, and adopting traceability and transparency the right way from the beginning.

According to some participants, implementing GS1 Standards can make solving supply chain challenges easier, and they also help with efficiency, particularly in working with overseas

Supply chain issues were a challenge for me...



The Pandemic's Impact

To gauge supply chain challenges in relation to the pandemic, GS1 US moderators asked participants to check the response that best completed this sentence: "Supply chain issues were a challenge for me..." This exercise demonstrated that small business supply chain issues are often more related to the pandemic than not.

suppliers. For example, it's become typical for a small brand to find an interim supplier to work with if a main supplier has shortages or delays. "That's when collaboration gets really, really important because anytime you decide to source from a second place, you

have to also stay in close collaboration with your original suppliers. That's one of the big challenges we're seeing," said an executive from a company that handles design, pre-production, sourcing, and logistics for small brands.

Also, bottling was a significant challenge discussed. Delays in glass coming from Europe caused one small brand to put off a new product launch—issues such as shipping container availability, rising energy cost increases due to the war in Ukraine, and residual pandemic disruptions all factoring into this decision.

One overarching takeaway was that small businesses are at an advantage because they can still make faster pivots than

prominent brands and have possessed that advantage even before the pandemic. As a result of the exposed fragility in the supply chain today, small brands are doubling down on their ability to work smarter to gain market share. By tapping into shifting consumer demands, such as a preference for product information transparency, small brands can expertly—and quickly—match their products to new audiences, with the right combination of collaborators.

GS1 Standards Help Small Brands Work Smarter



“Most small companies do not have a GS1 expert on staff. Many bring in third-party consultants to fill in those knowledge gaps. There is a big sigh of relief once companies can gain that confidence.”

—Susan Sanchez, Master Data Consultant,
Susan Sanchez Virtual Business Solutions



“Implementing GS1 Standards goes beyond just assigning a GTIN.® Implementing Serialized Shipping Container Codes (SSCCs), for example, has been very important for our clients with outbound shipments from warehouses to Amazon Vendor fulfillment centers, and it helps introduce more efficiency.”

—Chris Khoo, Founder of KhooCommerce,
an E-commerce Inventory Management
Software Company



GS1 US offers a variety of educational resources and tools to help small businesses grow. Learn more at www.gs1us.org

In this publication, the letters “UPC” are used solely as an abbreviation for the “Universal Product Code,” which is a product identification system. They do not refer to the UPC®, which is a federally registered certification mark of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) to certify compliance with a Uniform Plumbing Code as authorized by IAPMO.

GS1 US Corporate Headquarters

Princeton South Corporate Center, 300 Charles Ewing Boulevard
Ewing, NJ 08628 USA
T +1 937.435.3870 | E info@gs1us.org
www.gs1us.org

Connect With Us



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