



Australia

Small and Medium Enterprises Lead the Way with GS1 Standards

ABSTRACT

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the healthcare industry compete with the big players in innovation, agility, and efficiency. As well as ensuring competitiveness, SMEs need to meet the same industry and trading regulations as their larger competitors. GS1 Australia's support teams help SMEs to leverage the GS1 Standards in order to meet their trading partners' requirements, enabling them to compete with large multinationals on a level playing field. This case study overviews three SME organisations, all leveraging the GS1 Standards including use of Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs), GS1 Bar Codes, and GS1's Global Data Synchronisation Network (GDSN) for different applications. All of which are realising outcomes and benefits from their implementations.

The healthcare industry is characterised by research, innovation, and product development, as well as strong competition. While big, multinational companies dominate many of the sector's segments, Small and Medium Enterprises have an important role to play. Much of the innovation in healthcare originates from SMEs and, to successfully compete in this industry, these companies must bring their innovations to market quickly and efficiently.

The Importance of a standardised approach

Complex pharmaceutical and medical products, many of which are highly regulated, must be efficiently and accurately identified throughout the supply chain. In addition, product master data about these products must be communicated between suppliers, distributors, regulators, and end users. Inaccuracies can have life-threatening consequences and will, at the very least, cause manufacturers and distributors the loss of goodwill and business.

GS1 Standards are designed as a multi-industry solution for companies of any size. Using the GS1 System, a company's products may be unequivocally identified and marked with that identifier (as well as with associated production information such as Batch or Lot Number, Serial Number, or Expiration Date). In addition, through use of GS1 Standards for the Global Data Synchronisation Network (GDSN), organisations may share their product and price master data with key trading partners via a secure network.

Since October 2012, key industry position statements have

been released, which clearly articulate the healthcare market's direction towards implementation of GS1 Standards for product identification, marking (bar coding or radio frequency identification) and data synchronisation.

Issued in October 2012, the *National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) Communiqué on GTIN Use Best Practice in Australian Healthcare* explains the need for GTIN allocation and use in line with global standards and states, "NEHTA therefore recommends that Australian Healthcare suppliers adopt GTIN Best Practice and avoid GTIN re-use for Regulated Healthcare Trade Items."

Likewise, the *NEHTA Supply Chain Reference Group Communiqué on Bar Coding and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in Australian Healthcare* issued in December 2012 recommends that "Australian and international healthcare brand owners reference and adopt the guidelines contained

within the GS1 Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC) Healthcare Implementation Guide v 1.1 (or subsequent updates) available from the GS1 Australia website."

The National Product Catalogue (NPC), a NEHTA initiative hosted on GS1 Australia's GDSN compliant data pool,

Today 95% packages dispensed at retail pharmacy carry a GS1 GTIN in a GS1 Bar Code

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GS1net, has been operational in the healthcare sector since 2006. There are currently nearly 300,000 GTINs in the NPC being relied upon by greater than 400 healthcare suppliers, wholesalers, distributors, and public and private healthcare institutions seeking to deliver improved patient safety and realise significant efficiency gains.

Today GS1 Australia continues to support SMEs to ensure they are meeting their trading partner requirements for data alignment, product identification and marking.

To access the documents referenced in this section, please go to the Healthcare Industry page on the GS1 Australia web site at www.gs1au.org

Quality Affordable Healthcare Products™

By **Rachel Boden**, Commercial Director, Orion Laboratories



Orion Laboratories was founded in 1985 by two young chemists, David Stacy and Paul Rowney, who provided small-scale manufacturing services in the chemical, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical industries.

Based at Balcatta in Western Australia, today Orion offers contract manufacturing services specialising in cream and liquid fills. Orion also manufactures and markets an extensive range of its own Orion branded products, including therapeutic pharmaceuticals, over the counter medicines, formulated devices, antiseptics, and disinfectants.

In March 2010, Perrigo's acquisition of Orion Laboratories expanded the company's global presence and product portfolio making GS1 Standards even more of a focus for the company. Use of global standards for product identification, bar coding and the NPC were essential elements in the company's drive for improved sales and efficiency.

Orion first began implementation of GS1 Standards in 2005, as the SME representative on a Victorian Government funded project called 'eCommerce in the Hospital Pharmaceutical Supply Chain' (Monash Project). At this time, the prevalence of GS1 GTINs in bar codes in the pharmaceutical sector was substantial, however not to the levels seen today where 95% of the packages dispensed at retail pharmacy carry a GS1 GTIN in a GS1 Bar Code.

Orion found that 14 of the top 15 products ordered by Monash Medical Centre Pharmacy Department carried GS1 Bar Codes at unit level, but none were compliant at inner or carton level. To cater for identification and bar coding at carton and inner level, Orion re-designed the adhesive labels applied to these levels of packaging in line with the Orion corporate label and selected the GS1-128 Bar Code, which can encode information additional to the GTIN such as Batch Number and Expiration Date – attributes necessary for traceability in the pharmaceutical sector. Internal processes were put in place for printing and 'in process' verification of the bar codes produced, as well as reviews made of labelling requirements to ensure that applying bar codes to previously non-bar coded packaging did not contravene any regulatory requirements.



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At the conclusion of the project, the decision to broaden the scope of use of GS1 Bar Codes was simple as there are significant benefits associated with the ability to improve efficiencies in the supply chain through bar code scanning. Most of the Orion customers require bar codes in order to transact with Orion. It is therefore seen as a necessity and a benefit to ensure that Orion is seen as a supplier of choice.

The next step for Orion in the implementation of GS1 Standards was the National Product Catalogue (NPC). The NPC is the future of the supply chain, with most medium to large companies already utilising it. In order for Orion to tender into health departments and private hospitals, it was necessary to populate the NPC with all of the Orion product information to comply with this tender process. Data upload and maintenance need not be complicated, nor consume excessive resources. The implementation programme provided by GS1 Australia took the pain out of the process.

The greatest challenge when using the NPC was collating information from existing sources into the catalogue. This was a challenging step in the process for Orion, and so a third-party company certified by GS1 was used.

The Orion team found the NPC upload process provided an opportunity to re-examine and improve the company's internal systems and processes.

Data upload to the NPC was initially done quite manually, as all of the data was not stored centrally and was only available from varying sources in different formats. To ensure that all information is now entered only once and is correct and

complete, Orion is in the process of implementing all of the data in SAP and uploading this SAP data into a third-party program supplied by Bizcaps Software, a GS1net Certified Product Partner.

One significant learning during the implementation was the importance of ensuring that all of the data is captured and maintained in one database and that business processes are implemented to support the initial capturing of the data and timely updates as part of change control. It is also important to note that whilst populating to the NPC is the end result, having accurate data about all the products in a single, centralised place will only benefit the organisation.

The next step in this journey will be to implement GS1 Standards and bar code scanning in all Orion warehouses, using the bar coded information to drive efficiencies and reduce errors associated with manual checking within the warehouses.

Use of global standards for product identification, bar coding and the NPC were essential elements in our company's drive for improved sales and efficiency.

About the author



With over 24 years in the Healthcare sector predominantly within the hospital ethical area Rachel Boden has developed an understanding of market dynamics and strategies for new product development. Prior to joining Perrigo, Rachel had significant sales management/marketing experience obtained in previous roles with AstraZeneca and Obagi. Rachel originally trained as a midwife and child health nurse.

Medicine that Matters



By **Simone Wagener**, Business Manager, Link Healthcare

Link Healthcare is a privately owned Australian specialist Pharmaceutical and Medical Technology business. Link's mission is to strive for excellence in the marketing of vitally important and unique specialist products that enhance the well-being of thousands of people in the region.

At first, Link Healthcare joined GS1net because it was required under a number of state-based tenders to be a GS1 Australia

member and have the tendered products uploaded. After getting involved with the NPC, Link Healthcare found a number of additional reasons for utilising the NPC, such as

making the ordering process for customers simpler, or being able to check the data used in the NPC against its own system, ensuring the information matched and was up-to-date.

Since Link Healthcare product information and pricing does not change all that often, maintaining the database is more about the addition of new products as they come in,

or setting up pricing relationships with new customers or organisational partners. The work is centralised and carried out

Link Healthcare was keen to get on board with the National Product Catalogue to realise the benefits it offered in opening doors to new business opportunities, as well as in business efficiencies.

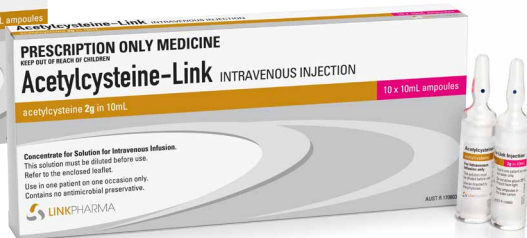
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by one who is responsible for adding in new data once it has been approved by the brand manager or business manager.

Having consistently accurate data will lead to significant business efficiencies

Link Healthcare is still at the early stages of NPC usage, however, each time new data is input, it is a much quicker process as the user can duplicate a number of records and easily change the information required.

It is also worth noting that while one central person may be responsible for data upload, it is imperative that multiple people in the company understand the system and can assist when required.



In the future, Link Healthcare will be looking at data-mapping the NPC information to complement its accounting/ordering systems making the process of placing orders, dispatching, through to payment a more simple and accurate process.

This will help to avoid any delay in the sales and payment processes and ensure accurate pricing to the right customers when you are dealing with a large number of customers all at varying pricing levels.

About the author



Simone Wagener is the Business Manager for Link Medical Technologies – a division of the Link Healthcare Group. With Bachelor of Nursing Science & Applied Science (Biomedical) degrees, she worked clinically as a Vascular Nurse for a number of years in Queensland before moving into a more commercial role in Sales & Marketing in the Healthcare industry in New South Wales. A major interest and passion has always been in the area of wound management and she has worked closely with a number of companies who specialise in unique solutions for wound healing.

Essentials for Warming

By **Ishan Sinha**, Director, Care Essentials



Care Essentials has specialised in patient warming since its establishment in 1996 and has set a benchmark for excellence. The development of the Care Essentials Micro Pore system for the delivery of air gives a constant air flow, thereby giving a uniform distribution of warm air across the patient. Care Essentials named its products Cocons, as when they are used they give a warm, cocooning effect for the patient.

Care Essentials is an Australian company which conducts all its research and development in-house and sources all materials locally, manufacturing its products at their factory in Geelong, Victoria.

In 2011, Care Essentials entered a tender put out by Health Purchasing Victoria. One of the tender requirements was that suppliers be GS1 compliant and NPC ready. Since then, it has found that being GS1 compliant is an advantage for many, if not all, tenders and purchasing contracts.

Initially, the process involved significant research and data collection for Care Essentials, but GS1 Australia provided a very helpful, dedicated account manager to assist along the way, helping the team to complete the process.

"We only have around 30 products and others, and not many changes, so the exercise to get the data together to complete the GS1 Browser Template and load the NPC has been worthwhile. Especially since with most tenders it is a requirement, or at least preference will be given, to NPC compliant suppliers," states Care Essentials.

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In addition, the company recently made a submission to a tender issued from Northern Territory Health where the required tender data was NPC data, and the format that needed to be submitted a spread sheet generated from the browser template. The other states and territories are also requesting this same format, providing additional benefit from a consistent tender approach across Australia. This will result in a further reduction of work effort.

Having made a significant investment in getting Care Essentials data loaded to the NPC, the company is now seeing the possibilities for use of this data in other areas and will continue to explore opportunities where quality data and use of GS1 Standards will distinguish their business from competitors. This may be by use of GS1 GTINs encoded in GS1 Bar Codes on products, or perhaps by a further promotion of NPC status. One thing is certain, Care Essentials will continue to innovate.

“In such a competitive industry as healthcare, being GS1 compliant (having GS1 GTINs allocated to products) and having products listed in the NPC are essential requirements. Meeting these requirements identifies Care Essentials as an organisation that is continuing to be innovative and embracing new developments”.



About the author



Ishan Sinha is Director of Care Essentials Pty Ltd, the leading Australian company in patient warming. Ishan is involved in filing tenders, which often requires him to use the GS1 platform. Ishan holds a Bachelors degree in Commerce and a Masters degree in Applied Finance.

