



## Innovative suppliers and GPOs

# Legrand strengthens its commitment to customers and quality with single-dose identification

Laboratorios Legrand produces, develops, markets and exports pharmaceutical products, based on international standards and best practices in manufacturing and logistics. A long-time user of GS1 standards throughout its operations, the company is now using GS1 standards, encoded in GS1 DataMatrix barcodes, to uniquely identify single doses of its branded pharmaceutical, Omeprazol. Based on positive pilot results with Valle del Lili, a prominent hospital, Legrand plans to extend the benefits of using GS1 standards to include other product lines and business transactions in the near future.



*By Giovanna Higuera García*

## Innovation and quality

For more than 30 years, Laboratorios Legrand (Legrand) has focused on innovation and quality to grow and distinguish itself in the worldwide pharmaceutical industry. Headquartered in Bogotá, Colombia, Legrand was the first national pharmaceutical manufacturing plant to attain Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) certification status, granted by INVIMA, Colombia's National Food and Drug Surveillance Institute. With more than 550 employees, Legrand is committed to the health and well being of Colombians.

"At Legrand, our commitment to customers and patients can be summed up in our motto, 'We do well what makes you well,'" says Giovanna Higuera García, Chief of Planning.

"We continuously work to improve our processes so that we can consistently deliver quality pharmaceuticals for advancements in health. With help from GS1 standards, we can implement and ensure best practices throughout our value network."

## Always at the forefront

Since 2015, Legrand has worked side-by-side with its healthcare providers and pharmacies to implement and use GS1 standards to uniquely identify its medicines, enabling traceability throughout the company's marketing, distribution and dispensing processes.

In 2016, the company re-affirmed its certification in GMP and, at the same time, expanded its use of GS1 standards to include the unit or single-dose level. "We are always considering ways to be at the forefront in the market," says Higuera. "We found that many of our customers wanted to be able to identify the medicine—the actual unit of medicine—administered to patients and managed in their inventory systems. We stepped up to the challenge."

Working closely with GS1 Colombia, Legrand decided that a GS1 Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®) with batch number and expiry date encoded in a GS1 DataMatrix barcode would be used to uniquely identify each single dose of each of its medicines.

## Phased planning and testing

For the implementation, Legrand took a phased approach to include a pre-implementation, planning stage and then a testing phase with one of its key customers, the Valle del Lili Foundation, a 500-bed hospital located in Cali, Colombia.

For approximately three months, the company conducted planning sessions, trained its staff and worked on establishing the systems needed to create and print the GS1 DataMatrix barcodes on dosage-level packages.

“We not only focused on the systems and technical aspects of printing the GS1 DataMatrix barcodes, we also modified our logistics processes and ensured everyone was trained on these changes to ensure a smooth transition,” explains Higuera.

One of the challenges during implementation was establishing automated systems to facilitate the control, traceability and safety of the drug preparation process. Higuera advises, “Many of the information systems are in the design and preparation phase, to achieve proper registration, control, labeling, dispensing and administration of the pharmaceutical service. We know that this takes time but is finally a process, which will improve over time.”



Legrand has modified its processes and best practices to include using GS1 unique identifiers and other valuable information encoded in the GS1 DataMatrix barcode on each dosage of Omeprazol.



Hospitals can now scan to read each GS1 DataMatrix barcode, helping to ensure that the right medicine is being dispensed to the right patient.

## Collaborating for confirmation

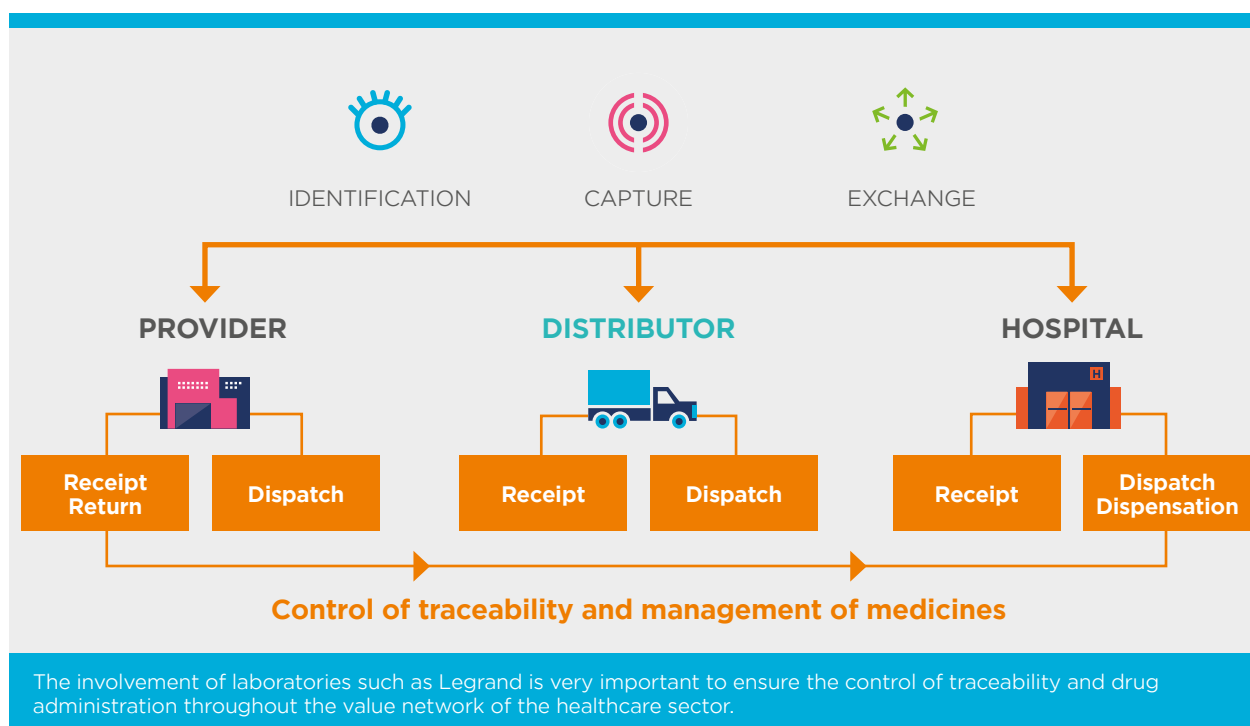
During the implementation phase, Legrand tested the new process and GS1 DataMatrix barcodes on dosage-level packages. “We collaborated with Valle del Lili and identified one of our own medicine brands—Omeprazol—to conduct the pilot,” says Higuera. “The result was highly satisfactory. Valle del Lili could easily scan and consistently read the GS1 DataMatrix barcodes on the Omeprazol dosages when administering medication to patients.”

And with each scan, thanks to the implementation of GS1 standards, Legrand’s customers like Valle del Lili can now realise benefits within their own hospital operations such as improvements in inventory management, resource efficiencies and patient safety.

For example, Valle del Lili has reported that by using GS1 standards within its operations such as single-dosage GS1 DataMatrix barcodes, it has experienced a 50 – 75 percent reduction in obsolete inventory and 15 – 30 percent reduction in inventory levels.<sup>1</sup>

“With the implementation of GS1 identification at dosage-level standards in place, we can now trace our medicines to not only the individual hospital, but also to the individual patient to whom it was administered,” says Higuera. “This is a powerful capability.”

<sup>1</sup> “Valle del Lili improves patient safety with automated inventory management,” pages 28-30, GS1 Healthcare Reference Book 2016-2017: <https://www.gs1.org/healthcare/reference-books>



## Looking ahead

With the objective of optimising production times, materials and its associated costs, Legrand is now looking to extend the benefits of using GS1 standards to several of its branded medicines manufactured in two of its distribution centres. "We plan to work with GS1 Colombia and other hospitals for continued compliance in implementing standards," says Higuera.

Legrand is also considering extending the use of GS1 standards to include the labeling on their manufactured products and for other clients. It plans to automate transactions by including GS1 standards in the electronic exchange of documents, such as purchase orders and dispatch notices.

"We will continue our drive toward innovation and quality," concludes Higuera. "With GS1 standards, many improvements are possible in today's healthcare environment."

### About the Author



*Giovanna Higuera García is the Chief of Planning at Laboratorios Legrand where she has been for more than 14 years. Ms. Higuera is a public accountant with specialisation in Management and Financial Management. She has contributed to the development of Laboratorios Legrand to become one of the most important laboratories in Colombia.*

### About Laboratorios Legrand

*In 1986, Laboratorios Legrand was formed with the acquisition of the production plant and licensing agreement for products of the pharmaceutical company, Lepetit de Colombia SA, a subsidiary of the multinational group, Dow Chemical Company. Today, the company produces, develops, markets and exports pharmaceutical products, based on international standards and best practices in manufacturing and logistics. Headquartered in Bogotá, Colombia, Legrand has more than 550 employees who are committed to the health and well being of Colombians.*

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