Iper, La grande i
Improving coding and consumer service with the GS1 DataBar

Overcoming problems related to the traditional coding solution and offering a better service to end consumers.

Challenge

The traditional identifcation solution in Italy is based on the EAN-13 barcode and unfortunately presents several management inefficiencies. Each individual Iper store had to adopt its own internal coding for variable weight products, leading to inconsistent information regarding the same product being sold in multiple store locations.

In order to calculate the actual amount sold from store to store for each product, it was necessary to decode each identification number centrally, which resulted in a time-consuming and counterproductive process.

Finally, in order to know the amount (weight) sold for each product, it was mandatory to recalculate the sales prices (data collected at checkout) based on the price per kilo, which caused a variety of inaccuracies due to rounding and human error.

Solution

Iper decided to adopt the GS1 DataBar® Expanded on variable weight products labelled in store, in order to identify those products with a GTIN (a unique standard identification system) and to capture the exact weight of each trade item sold at point-of-sale. Moreover, the GS1 DataBar Expanded enables the use of expiry date, which empowers Iper to stop selling expired products.

Benefits

- More precise information available for the retailer.

- Consistent product identification for variable weight products across its business.

- Improved data quality.

- Improved visibility for products throughout their internal supply chain, including point-of-sale.

- Increased safety for the consumer.

"The adoption of GS1 DataBar symbols offers Iper the opportunity to improve management processes; it ensures its customers a better and more secure buying experience; it introduces traceability techniques that, in the future, will play as qualifying and discriminating factors for food products"

Valerio Cortese
Chief Information Officer
Iper Montebello Spa

*Iper, La grande i is a major player in the Italian retailing panorama, one of the few wholly Italian-owned, with **27** stores, in **7** regions. It is part of the Finiper Group which has approximately **9,000** employees and in 2015 recorded an estimated turnover of around **2.6 billion euro**. Assortment breadth, quality, sustainability convenience and Italian style are the values which guide the choices of Iper, La grande i.*

One barcode, big benefit

Over 17,000 variable measure fresh food products marked in Iper stores had been identified with a GTIN.

After weighing, those products were then marked with a GS1 DataBar Expanded Stacked.

By scanning the GS1 DataBar Expanded Stacked at the checkout, the retailer was able to quickly identify the product, the quantity sold and the price of each consumer unit. Moreover, they can collect the expiry date and lot number.

At the moment, the checkout system uses the expiry date to block the selling of expired products.

Return on investment

Simplifying business processes was the most important consideration for Iper in making this investment. In particular, the improvements are focused on the quality of its sales data for variable weight products which enables improved order and replenishment of product at distribution centres and stores.

In addition, the use of this solution can prevent the sale of expired products, resulting in improved food safety.

Critical success factors

Iper had to adapt several hardware (scales, scanners) and information systems in order to capture the new symbology as well as have the ability to manage more information. They also had to align with different solution providers to enable the correct connections between information systems and hardware. There were a few distinct components that were fundamental to Iper's success:

* A detailed cross-functional implementation plan across the organisation (EDP service, checkouts, traditional in store departments, HACCP department).

* Choosing and involvement of Solution Providers with experience and knowledge in the GS1 system of standards.

* Hands-on, dedicated GS1 Italy support to help Iper better understand the requirements, scope and phases of implementation, as well as expertise in technical specifications.

Conclusions

In the Iper stores that upgraded to the new system, there were no signs of difficulty in creating the new labels or in reading the GS1 DataBar Expaned Stacked symbol at checkout. This showed that the new encoding system was fully functioning and that there was no interference with the preexisting EAN-13 symbol which is still used for fixed weight products.

Next steps

Iper will begin facilitating the promotions of products by their expiration date. By identifying the expiry date during checkout, the retailer will be able to discount the selling price in the event of an upcoming expiration. The savings could motivate consumers to buy products that fall into this category.

The retailer will find it easier to manage those products about to expire and will ultimately lead to a reduction in food waste. The capture of the batch number at checkout will also allow traceability up to the final consumer, enabling Iper to identify products by the batches sold and have the ability to recall a critical product.

Learn how GS1 standards can help your business achieve traceability, improve data quality and more. Visit *www.gs1.org*.

For the full story in *Italian*, please download the *GS1 Italy case study here.*

Connect With Us