# Crystal: Top Brand Gains Supply Chain Efficiencies with EDI and GS1 Standards

Headquartered in Colombia, Crystal is a textile and clothing company with more than 50 years of experience in manufacturing and marketing recognizable brands such as Gef, Punto Blanco, Baby Fresh, Galax and Casino. Evident in its brands, Crystal is committed to innovative design and the development of collections by highly qualified, socially aware designers.

Crystal vertically integrates its operations across eight manufacturing plants in Colombia, including spinning and dyeing textiles and manufacturing garments and hosiery.

Five distribution centres ensure that Crystal maintains its competitiveness and flexibility when meeting consumer demand for products, which are widely distributed via retail franchises located throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America.
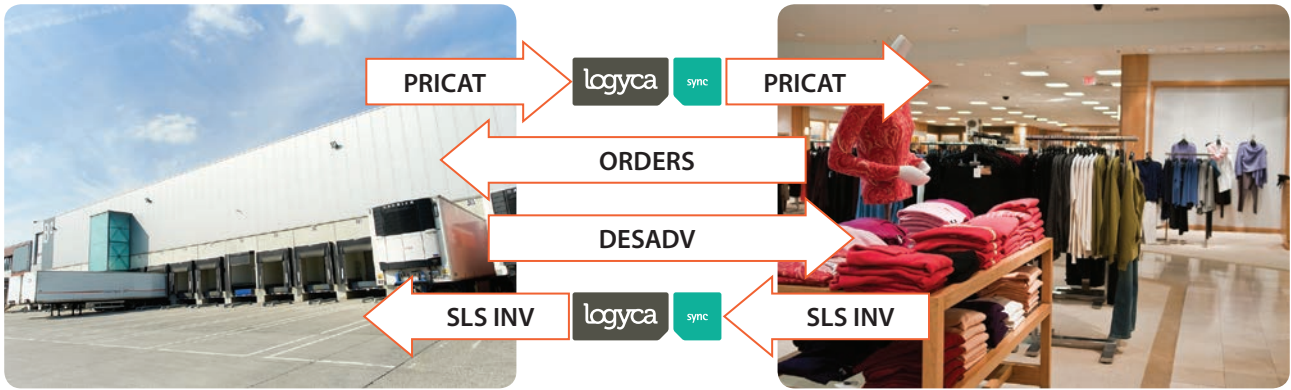
## Opportunities for Improvement

To improve relationships with its trading partners, Crystal initiated a major project to leverage standardised processes supported by electronic data interchange (EDI) and an aligned approach to achieve and maintain quality data. The company's overall goals were to improve communication with trading partners while gaining efficiencies at each point along its supply chain.

Crystal started by developing documentation and implementing EDI with a focus on using GS1 Standards. The aim was to provide a flexible ordering process to meet the unique needs of its clients. Another major opportunity was to minimize manual input errors, thus improving the accuracy of information. By using GS1 Standards as its common language of business, Crystal was assured its new order fulfilment processes would include accurate and well-coordinated information.

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| PRICAT | logyca sync | PRICAT → |
| ← | ORDERS | |
| | DESADV | → |
| ← SLS INV | logyca sync | ← SLS INV |

## New Processes

For approximately seven years, Crystal has used EDI-based order processing enabled by GS1 Standards with its trading partners and clients to efficiently fulfil orders and manage inventory.

Here's how the process works:

- Currently, all products are each uniquely identified with a GS1 Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®), encoded in a GS1-13 barcode on each product's label. For the transport of items, another GS1 Standard – the Serial Shipping Container Code (SSCC) identifies each logistics unit (groups of items) as it moves across systems, from one transport carrier to the next.

- Crystal uses LOGyCA / SYNC, a GS1 Colombia partner and Certified Global Data Synchronisation Network™ (GDSN®) Catalogue, for sharing product data with trading partners, using Catalogue Item Notification (CIN) messages for the addition and deletion of products as well as price changes. Crystal is able to perform these operations, especially the addition of new products, per retailers' store requests.

- Then, retailers send to Crystal the ORDER message in EDIFACT / EANCOM – detailing delivery per store which is identified with Global Location Number (GLN) and information required to be placed on the label for each product. The purchase order is received by the VAN (Value Added Network) and integrated to SAP which generates the picking list to Crystal's DC (Distribution Centre) where labels are generated with the requested information for each product as well as labels with the SSCC for each dispatch unit (cases).

- Simultaneously, the physical invoice and the Dispatch Advice DESADV, using the EDIFACT / EANCOM format, are generated.

- At the end, retailers share with Crystal their information about sales and inventories on a daily basis.

- Crystal makes a shipment request in a conventional manner. After the request has been confirmed by the transport provider, Crystal sends the transportation instructions using the IFTMIN (Instruction Message) in the EDIFACT / EANCOM format, which has the associated SSCC for each logistics unit, the customer to which it is addressed, the city, and the destination stores that are identified with GLNs, as well.



**Transportation Instructions**

# Business Benefits

With more efficient and improved supply chain processes, Crystal has experienced tangible business benefits. Following is a summary:

## Pricat (CIN)

• Reduced time by creating and updating clients' systems portfolio of products.

• Improved data accuracy by eliminating typing errors.

• Increased database reliability and alignment with trading partners.

• Significantly reduced the number of credit and debit notes caused by price discrepancies.

• Increased service levels via improved fill rates based on database alignment.

## Placing a purchase order

• Improved data accuracy by eliminating typing errors.

• Reduced time to received purchase order.

## Providing dispatch notice

• Reduced time to receive dispatch.

• Reduced labour cost for clients.

• Reduced time and costs by simplifying the implementation of other best practices such as certified deliveries.

• Reduced errors dispatch and reception, improving inventory accuracy and client service.

• Reduced time to store shelves for improved product availability, resulting in greater client satisfaction and revenues.

## Managing inventory and sales at POS

• Improved intelligence about product behaviour at points of sale for better planning and execution.

• Better information enabling more precise and accurate demand forecasting.

• Optimized and enhanced category management processes at stores in accordance with trends, real demand and high-volume sales.

## DC Automation

• Improved visibility across supply chain with help from GS1 Standards.

• Automated information system that enables traceability; includes location and identification of all pallets, boxes and products that are traveling from manufacturing plants to stores.

• Automation of dispatch processes.

• Increased Inventory accuracy.

• Agility when taking inventory.

• Optimization of workforce for improved productivity.

• Increased service levels for improved partner and customer relationships.

• Instant access to online inventory Information for better and quicker decision-making.

• Automatic controls in-place for process assurance and consistency.

Overall, Crystal advises its new processes have helped it to be more competitive in the market, allowing the company to better position its value with clients for greater growth, year-after-year.

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## Next Steps

As part of its strategy for continuous improvements, Crystal plans to develop additional EDI-based documents supported by GS1 Standards, such as a return notice, freight request for returns and reception notice. Anticipated benefits include a reduction in reception time, improved precision in the quantity and quality of reception, and assurance of a safe, agile and reliable return process.

The company is also exploring the use and benefits of GS1 EPC-enabled radio frequency identification (RFID) technology in its operations to provide even better service to its clients and consumers.

## Conclusion

With its implementation of highly efficient processes enabled by GS1 Standards, Crystal continues to be a pioneer and practitioner of global best practices in Colombia. The company has greatly enhanced its information interchange and communications – internally and with trading partners – while enhancing its service with its clients and consumers in mind. By adopting the GS1 System of Standards, Crystal understands the value of using this global common language within its business and across its supply chain.

**For more information :**

Interested in learning more about this success story?
Contact GS1 Colombia at lpava@gs1co.org

Interested in learning more about
GS1 Standards in Retail Apparel?
Contact your local GS1 Member Organisation at:
www.gs1.org/contact or the
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