Getting your products ready to sell online

Your five step guide to getting started with GS1 standards

Identify your products. Prepare your fulfilment. Get set for sales.

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Step 1:
Using your company prefix

You'll need a unique number for every type of product or item you wish to sell – and each number must start with your GS1 Company Prefix.

Although this unique number is often referred to as a barcode number, its full name is a Global Trade Item Number – or 'GTIN' for short. In stores, the barcodes you see on all products are simply a visual representation of a GTIN.

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However online, you may only have to supply your trading partner, for instance Amazon, play.com or eBay, with a GTIN, as the number by itself is enough to identify and track your product.

As a GS1 UK member, we allocate you a unique Company Prefix as a 'base' for you to create GTINs to identify your products. The example here shows a typical barcode and GTIN with the Company Prefix highlighted.

How are company prefixes used?

Your Company Prefix will contain between 6 and 11 digits – depending on how many GTINs you need. You can use your prefix to create different types of numbers depending on whether you're identifying products, cases, pallets, assets, locations or other items.

Once your prefix is live, no other organisation may use it to create numbers. It is yours to uniquely identify your products – so they're ready for trading.

And if you need more GTINs then you just contact us to licence an additional Company Prefix.

How do I manage them?

You can manage and maintain all your company prefix numbers using the secure online service called My Numberbank.

You will find this at **www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank**.

Step 2:
Identifying your products online

Unique numbers help you – and your trading partners – to identify, track and trace items anywhere in the supply chain. They also help streamline processes such as automated ordering or invoicing.

Online retailers and marketplaces will require you to assign a GTIN to allow you to upload your product information for any item you wish to sell through their platform.

You can then use the same numbers in barcodes if you want – if you are planning on also selling the product through physical stores then you will need to do this.

Products requiring unique identification

You'll need a GTIN for each type of product or item that needs unique identification for pricing, ordering or invoicing. For example, GTIN 5012345678917 could be a 330ml bottle of fizzy drink.

Each time you produce a new type, or variation, of a product you must use a new GTIN to identify it to prevent confusion – something that's especially helpful when retailers are ordering from you. For example, for 330ml bottle of **diet** fizzy drink could have a GTIN 5012345679013.

If you are physically barcoding your product and it is too small for the usual-sized 13-digit barcode you'll need to use a special 8-digit GTIN and barcode. These are limited and you must apply to us to get one. You can do this at **www.gs1uk.org/addtional-numbers**.

Find out more about the rules for allocating GTINs for products in Step 3 overleaf.

Where can I create and store my numbers?

The secure My Numberbank service allows you to keep an accurate record of what GTIN-8 and GTIN-13s you have assigned to which product or case – all in one place. It means you can quickly add and edit products and their descriptions at any time (with the exception of GTIN-8, which you can't edit online, as you must tell us their descriptions when you order the numbers).

GTIN-13   **GTIN-8**

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9607 3100
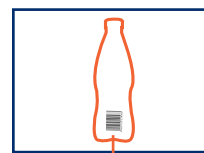
Step 3:
Understanding GTIN rules

A new product will always require a new GTIN, but you will also often have to allocate a new GTIN when you have made changes to a product, for example, if the ingredients have changed significantly, or its size or colour.

Specific rules for retail

There is a specific set of allocation rules and practices that applies to retail – and it's important to follow them. If you don't, you could add unnecessary costs to your business, by having to replace all the packaging on a certain product. In extreme examples where important ingredients have changed you could find yourself trading illegally, or it could even affect people's health.

Review the GTIN allocation rules in full at www.gs1uk.org/how-to.

Step 4:
Fulfilment processes

Once you have registered with an online marketplace or retailer, hopefully you will soon start to receive orders for your product. This means you will need to ship it to your new customers.

There are usually two options here; you send the item yourself OR the online marketplace will send the item on your behalf.

If you are sending the item yourself you do not necessarily need to create a barcode as the item will not be sold at a retail point of sale or enter a supply chain.

However, if the retailer is carrying out the fulfilment of your product you will probably need to apply a barcode image to it (these are also often referred to as EAN-8 or EAN-13 barcodes). This enables the marketplace to easily track and trace your product.

EAN-13

EAN-8

How do I create my barcode images?

You can do this either through GS1 UK or by getting in touch with one of our accredited solution providers. Go to **www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank** to find out more.

How do I make sure my barcode works?

You can either **validate** your barcodes to check their format accuracy, or **verify** them for consistency at the point of production.

Validation

Our validation service checks a PDF version of any barcode images you create – using a barcode verifier that meets our latest global standards. This process checks:

- The GTIN is in the right format showing correct use of the company prefix

- Colours are used appropriately

- The barcode is within the right range of sizes and proportions

- The barcode is positioned correctly on your product

Verification

You can also physically send your product in its barcoded packaging to one of our accredited solution providers who will verify it to make sure it is printed correctly.

You can even go one step further and install specialist verification equipment on your production line to check barcode quality and consistency as your products are made. Contact one of our solution providers for more information.

You can find out more about validation and verification services at **www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank**.

Step 5:
Training

At GS1 UK we can deliver a range of training courses online, onsite or at our offices in London.

We know that understanding all of the standards around getting your product to market can be confusing.

Perhaps you're after a short, focused introduction? Or would like to attend a more tailored workshop to suit your exact business requirements? Either way, our experts can help you to understand, implement and use GS1 standards and barcodes successfully.

Visit www.gs1uk.org/training for more information and the latest courses and dates.

Further help and support

We have all the support and services you need available online at **www.gs1uk.org.**

Some specific resources and services that will help you include...

My Numberbank

Assign GTINs to your products, create barcodes – and more.
www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank.

Find a solution provider

Create and verify barcodes, implement EDI – with the help of 100+ accredited solution providers.
www.gs1uk.org/finder.

How to guides

We have a range of guides to help you use our standards. You'll find them all at
www.gs1uk.org/how-to including:

Bar coding - Getting it right
Your in-depth guide to creating and applying barcodes on products, cases and pallets.

GTIN Allocation Rules
Everything you need to know to make sure you comply with GS1 standards.

And of course you can always contact our
Member Support Team on Freephone 0808 178 8799
or alternatively call +44 (0)20 7092 3501.
We're open from Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm.

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