



**Sizing the Problem:
Unauthorised Numbers
Increasing Supply Chain Costs**



Executive Summary

The ‘Sizing The Problem’ Team has come together to quantify the effects of unauthorised numbers on the supply chain. This effort is a crucial piece of the Manage & Grow Identification Initiative and a renewed focus on ensuring the security and growth of the GS1 System. As GS1 Identification moves into the future, we will be called upon to do more than merely provide a globally unique number. We are being asked to support new areas, such as patient safety, and to become a critical piece in solving global problems of border security and food safety. In order to be properly positioned to continue to be the pre-eminent means of Identification worldwide, we need to take steps to ensure that the GS1 System is healthy and well protected. The introduction of unauthorised numbers in to the supply chain undermines the world’s 35 year-long investment in the GS1 System.

Specifically, this document is designed to enable Member Organisations to better position themselves and the GS1 system in their discussions with their members. By attempting to quantify the costs to the supply chain, the team is trying to put a hard figure to the losses that GS1 Members are experiencing. This has turned out to be a difficult task that will require further study to accurately define. Both the complexity and the magnitude of the problem has proven difficult to quantify. However, the team has been able to estimate that the total cost to the supply chain is between 12.5 and 25 Billion USD.

This document is separated into two distinct sections with two different focuses; Member Organisation information for their members and recommendations for Member Organisations to enact to help stem the effect of the unauthorised numbers.

The first section that focused on Supply Chain Costs is meant to educate the Member Organisation staffer to better understand what the problem is and how to describe it to GS1’s Members / potential members. The immediate areas for GS1 Members to be concerned is related to reprinting / re-labeling packaging as well as the potential lost sales due to delayed product launch. Our research has determined that the company that is most likely to introduce an unauthorised number into the supply chain is a small to medium enterprise. For a small company, any additional costs or delays for packaging can be devastating, especially when those costs that can reach close to sixty thousand Euros.

The second section is focused on recommendations for the Member Organisations to take that can help reduce the impact of unauthorised numbers. These recommendations are also in two sections that are geared towards what the Member Organisation can do internally and what they can do in conjunction with their GS1 Members. The theme of GS1 and GS1 Member action is deliberate and is designed to underscore the need to include and educate our members on this problem.

In order to be successful against unauthorised numbers; our strategies will be dependent upon coordinated management, legal, technical, marketing and industry programs of action. This document is a step forward in defining a problem not only in terms of GS1, but in terms that make sense to our members.



Introduction

There is a growing threat posed by unauthorised numbers that has, so far, not been quantified. The introduction of unauthorised numbers into the supply chain causes disruption and adds costs. These costs need to be estimated to truly understand the size of the problem that our members face. This document is designed to help estimate these costs and provide recommendations on what we can do to help solve this problem.

Business Case

For the next 35 years, GS1 Identification will support new areas (patient safety, border safety, food safety, anti-counterfeit) where "Security of GS1 Identification is Job 1". Unfortunately, this security is under attack from companies who are selling / using unauthorised numbers.

The GS1 System is based upon the integrity and security of its Identification System. Companies that 'resell' their company prefixes or use them after they have been revoked, undermine both the integrity and security of the GS1 System. A conflict with GS1 Keys introduce additional costs into the supply chain and hits the very core of the GS1 System and the value it provides its members. Many think that this problem is limited to only the GTIN, this is an incorrect assumption. The creation of any GS1 Key (GLN, etc.) from an unauthorised Company Prefix is a danger and needs to be considered.

Defining the Problem

The issue of unauthorised numbers, while not a complicated one, does have many aspects. Before we can understand what effect it has on the Supply Chain, we need to understand and define the problem. Below is a list of the five scenarios that describe how an Unauthorised Number is created:

- A trading partner copies an existing GS1 company prefix or GTIN of a GS1 user company
- A trading partner uses GTINs that have not yet been assigned
- A trading partner uses the (country) prefix of an existing MO to allocate GTINs to manufacturers
- A member of a MO transfers/sells GTINs from its own number bank to another user (Unauthorised GS1 Key Reseller)
- A trading partner makes up a number

Supply Chain Costs

As the team began gathering information from GS1 members, a common set of issues became apparent. The experiences of the victims of unauthorised numbers were similar. Below are the highlights of what was discovered. For more details about individual experiences, please refer to the annex which contains some of the case studies that have been gathered by the team.

Reprinting / Re-labelling Packaging

Every product that is packaged with an incorrect GTIN, results in more money that will be needed to reprint and re-label the product. If a large production run is complete and then it is discovered that the GS1 Key is incorrect, the costs to reprint / re-label the product could be substantial. For a Small to Medium Enterprise, this cost could be a devastating blow to their initial start-up.



Lost Sales

If a product needs to be re-labelled and this causes delays in shipment; it can also result in lost sales. This is true in environments where there are active competitors as well as in situations where a new item is being introduced for a new, niche product. If a product is being introduced to meet a growing need that has yet to be met, delays could give potential competition the opportunity to enter the marketplace; not only resulting in lost sales, but also allowing a competitor to be the 'first to market.'

Unnecessary Trading Partner and Effort

A cost to the trading partners that is difficult to measure is the sheer time and effort needed to resolve these problems. Any discrepancy or issue to be resolved will result in additional time and effort wasted. When deadlines are tight for production and delivery, delays in printing/packaging can be extremely difficult and time consuming to resolve. If the product does make it into the Supply Chain and a 'collision' occurs, the trading partner will need to make updates to their systems and possibly accept a return of the product that was mislabelled. These issues may take weeks to completely resolve – resulting in more potential lost sales and dissatisfaction between the trading partners.

Perception

Establishing a new relationship between trading partners can be very difficult and fragile. Once the initial agreements have been made and the relationship established, a problem is the last thing that is needed. Especially when that problem could be one that delays the first shipment of product. Depending on the severity of the problem, this alone could result in the customer rethinking the relationship.

As a supplier to the customer, the last thing you want to say is that there are delays because the BarCode is wrong. This is something that could lead your customer to question your business experience and ability to deliver.

Fees paid to Unauthorised Resellers

If a company has paid for an Unauthorised GS1 Key and changes to an authentic GS1 Key, any fees paid to the Unauthorised Reseller are lost. In fact, additional fees will need to be paid to GS1 for the correct GS1 Key. Additionally, if a supplier unknowingly uses an Unauthorised Key for its small range of products, but later wants to expand and do business with a larger retailer, they may lose the opportunity because the retailer may ask for a GS1 Certificate. In order to get a GS1 Certificate, they will forfeit money spent thus far on the unauthorised key and will need to spend additional money to obtain an authorised key from GS1. These are fees that are not budgeted for and no one wants to pay twice for any product.

Additional GS1 Services

Potential GS1 Members may not realize that there is an intangible cost of bypassing GS1 and using unauthorised numbers. In order for them to take advantage of GS1 services they would need to become part of the GS1 system and use authorised numbers. These services include: Global Data Synchronisation Network (GDSN), EPC IS, Traceability, etc. Depending on the size of the company and the needs of their customers, the inability to utilise these services may drive the user of an unauthorised number to seek a 'proper' GS1 Key.

The services mentioned above are existing services / standards that are available within GS1, there are also a host of new services that are under discussion that could also effect the potential member. Some of the new opportunities that are being investigated include: Mobile Commerce, ties with the World Commerce Organisation (WCO), national Healthcare regulatory bodies, etc. The potential that a manufacturer is not in



compliance with government regulations should be enough to provide motivation to move to a GS1 Key – as long as they know that they are buying something that is not an official GS1 Key.

Overall Costs to the Supply Chain

While many of the costs to the supply chain that the team identified are difficult to quantify, there are several measures that can be made that are quantifiable. The details of the costs are explained in further detail in this paper, but the three areas where we can provide firm estimates include: reprinting of labels / re-labelling of product, and lost fees paid to the Unauthorised Resellers. In the case studies that are attached in the appendix, the costs of reprinting / re-labelling ranged from \$30,000 – \$80,000 USD, fees of Unauthorised Resellers range from \$30 - \$89 per GTIN. While this number seems low, it is the multiplicative effect of many companies in many countries that gives a true global picture. With the number of small businesses in the United States, Canada and the European Union over 50 million and half of all enterprises in Latin America, there is a huge potential for costs to the Supply Chain on a global level, Using the numbers we have collected, we can estimate the cost to the supply chain of re-labeling product due to these unauthorised numbers. If we assume a conservative cost to a small business to be \$50,000 USD and that between 0.5% - 1.0% of the small businesses experience an unauthorised reseller; the total cost to the supply chain is between 12.5 and 25 Billion USD.



Recommendations

There are several steps that GS1 Member Organisations can take to help reduce the impact / eliminate the motivation for the use of unauthorised numbers. These recommendations are based upon the experiences of Member Organisations who have taken proactive steps with their members. More details on how these recommendations have been implemented are available on GS1 Online within the 'Combating Unauthorised Resellers Toolkit'.

Recommendation One: Provide a GS1 BarCode Verification Service

If you are a Member Organisation that offers a Verification Service, you should also be checking to see that the Company Prefix is not from an Unauthorised Reseller. If you do not check, you may 'pass' a Bar Code that is from an Unauthorised Reseller. Several Member Organisations provide Verification Services and if your Member Organisation does not offer such a service, there is an opportunity to increase the security and integrity of the GS1 System as well as provide an opportunity for additional revenue.

Recommendation Two: Persuade Retailers to Require GS1 Certificate and Verification

One of the easiest ways to identify if there is an Unauthorised Number is for the retailer involved to insist that they receive a copy of the GS1 Certificate or Verification Report in advance of listing a new product. There are several retailers around the world that require these GS1 assurances. If a few major retailers in your Member Organisation can be persuaded to explicitly require their suppliers to strictly use validated or certified GS1 Keys, many of these problems can be avoided before they begin.

Recommendation Three: Join the Winning On the Web Program

This important initiative is designed to increase GS1's ranking on internet search engines and counteract Unauthorised Resellers. There are over 30 Member Organisations already involved in the program and GS1 is ranking higher and higher on internet searches every month. This is important to gain access to Small to Medium Enterprises, who are the likely users of an Unauthorised GS1 Key. If GS1 does not appear at or near the top of the list, the unsuspecting company may choose an Unauthorised Reseller, based solely on their lack of knowledge.

Recommendation Four: Upgrade to the GEPIR 100 Program

Today there exists a tool that is available to the user community to validate a GS1 Key – GEPIR. The GEPIR Service is one that most Member Organisations currently support. There has been a new release of GEPIR that includes increased security and functionality for those who upgrade. If you are not supporting GEPIR - you should; if you are not on the latest version - upgrade. Above all, ensure that the data that is available is up to date. GEPIR provides the base functionality that may be further developed as a part of the Authentication Project (see Recommendation Six).

Recommendation Five: Enable a "Low Capacity for Low Price" Program

A recent survey by the Anti-Counterfeiting Group (a not for profit trade association, recognised as a leading authority on the worldwide trade in counterfeits) of 1,000 English-Speaking Consumers revealed that 65% of those who would buy a counterfeit article, made their decision based upon the price of the genuine article. Unauthorised Resellers are offering a single GS1 Key for a small fee and provide additional services that many GS1 MOs do not offer. In order to be successful against this competition, we should provide a similar service.



This may take the form of offering one GS1 Key or it may include the sale of a small block (Ex.: 10 or less) of GS1 Keys for a reduced fee.

It is recommended that blocks of GS1 Keys should be no smaller than 10 to allow the end user the flexibility to grow into additional items and allow for product changes without the need for an additional Global Company Prefix. When a block smaller than 10 is assigned, there will be additional administration needed to effectively manage what is equivalent to Full Key Registration. Additionally, fees charged to a user taking advantage of this program should be linked to the company's Turnover, Financial Strength, or Sales Revenue. This is to ensure that the 'right user' is taking advantage of this opportunity. A company with high sales revenue will probably need access to more of the GS1 System than a company with a lower sales revenue.

Recommendation Six: Support of the GS1 Key Authentication Project

A major initiative at GS1 is the creation of a GS1 Key Authentication Service that will allow end users the ability to 'authenticate' that the GS1 Key they have is correct. Initial thoughts are to utilise GS1's existing infrastructure to provide the information needed by our users. This could include the use of GEPIR, GDSN, EPC IS and other GS1 sources of data.

This project is currently finishing the initial requirements gathering for designing a service. If your Member Organisation has not provided requirements, there is still time to enter yours and to learn more about this project.

Recommendation Seven: Gain Access to Trading Partner / Industry Data

A proactive approach that the team has uncovered is the practice of Member Organisations gaining access to trading partner or Industry level data that they then, 'authenticate'. This approach requires the Member Organisation to gain access to the data and then check to determine if there are unauthorised numbers present. If unauthorised numbers are found, the Member Organisation can bring these to the attention of the trading partners involved, and offer a solution that would correct the problem and cause the least interruption to daily business.





Annex A - Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Australian Food Manufacturer

“The Big O” (not the company’s real name) is a family business that was looking to grow beyond their traditional supply of family made food products, into the wider grocery supply chain. Their aim was to “supply the healthiest (Big O) product” to the market.

The Big O knew they’d have to tick many boxes to get in the door of the major retailers. So with some jazzy new packaging artwork, a great story to tell about their wholesome ingredients and decades of family experience to offer, they were off to a good start.

Knowing, in order to be accepted by the retailers, they would need a barcode on their products, they performed a simple internet search and came across an online barcode reseller. (The Big O would later explain they had no intention of buying from a reseller to save a few dollars, they simply thought the company they were dealing with, who had made a range of false representations on their website, were genuinely authorised to sell GTINs by GS1.)

Some 3 GTINs and **\$300** later they assumed there was yet another tick in the box, but little did they know how costly their decision would be.

The Big O spent **\$30,000** printing a large volume of packaging with the new barcodes.

Being confident in the quality of their product, they **invested a great deal of time** and effort presenting their unique product offering to the major Australian Grocery Chains. One by one, they ticked off the requirements... or did they?

- Could they meet the strict quality requirements? - tick
- Could they meet the volume demands? – tick
- Could they offer a great product at the right price? – tick
- Is their product barcoded? – tick
- Do they have a barcode verification report? – Mmmm – better contact GS1 Australia
- Could they create an SSCC for their pallets? – Mmmm – better contact GS1 Australia

The Big O were advised to contact GS1 Australia to get help allocating SSCC numbers and to ensure their barcode scanned correctly. Every product listed by the major Australian grocery retailers required a GS1 Australia Barcode verification report to ensure the number was unique to that company, was correctly printed on the packaging, was the right size, was in the right location on the product, was printed in a color that will work under infrared, and was of a quality to scan first time, every time.

Upon presenting their product to GS1 Australia, the product barcodes were tested, and found to be GTINs that had not been licensed by GS1 to the Big O. Without using their own unique GS1 company prefix in the barcodes (GTINs) printed on their products, their BarCode Verification Report would contain a “critical comment” that prevented the successful listing of their product at the retailer. Retailers do not want to take the



risk of suppliers using GTINs sourced from online resellers. Experience shows this only poses a range of number integrity, quality and support issues.

Without their own company prefix, they couldn't create the required SSCC labels for the pallet level. The obvious problem of purchasing GTINs 1 by 1 from a reseller is that the same company prefix is being shared by many, preventing the creation of unique SSCC's.

The Big O was in a real bind, **over \$30,000 worth of printed packaging** that the retailer **wouldn't accept due to their unauthorised GTINs**.

Summary of Supply Chain Impacts

The impact of the inadvertent decision to use an online reseller were:

- Lost sales as a result of delay in obtaining barcode verification
- Reprinting additional packaging with correct GTINs for the Grocery market (over \$30,000 worth)
- Time and effort spent resolving the issue
- Loss of momentum with listing the product at the retailer
- Concerns by the manufacturer that the retailers did not perceive them as experienced operators given their inadvertent use of unauthorised GTINs
- Money spent on GTINs was lost, and The Big O still had to join GS1 Australia to get their own unique company prefix and GTIN range (\$300 in fees to the unauthorised reseller)

Conclusion

The Big O were inadvertent victims of the false and misleading representation by an online barcode reseller, who not only claimed the GTINs were issued to them by GS1, but also claimed that buying these GTINs would cause no problems in the retail supply chain. At the time, no mention was made by the reseller of the need by some retailers for SSCCs of barcode verification reports.





Case Study 2 – Australian Product Manufacturer

“The APM Co.” (not the company’s real name) has been selling their unique products, outside of the traditional retail supply chain, through a range of specialist providers. As a means of growing their business, they sought to expand their supply channels by seeking to range their products into the wider general merchandise and related healthcare channel.

Realising they needed a barcode, they found and contacted an online reseller, whom they believed to be an agent acting on behalf of “the industry body”. “What type of product do you sell?” they were asked. “An XYZ that can be sold in general merchandise or healthcare channels” they responded”. “Well, we need to give you a GTIN that starts with a 3” they were incorrectly told by the online reseller.

Now, with a very little understanding of how the GS1 system works, the online reseller decided that pharmaceutical products needed to have their first digit should be a 3. So, ignoring the obvious fact that this product wasn’t even a pharmaceutical product and the fact that by changing the first digit of the GTIN they were selling changed the whole number range, the online reseller happily issued APM Co. a 12 digit GTIN that started with a 3.

So, thinking they were off and running with barcoding, APM Co. proceeded to design new packaging across their range of over 20 products, they produced over 50,000 new labels and packages for products containing their new barcodes.

Having spent a great deal of time beating down the doors of a number of general merchandise retailers that were impressed with their products, they were advised to obtain a barcode verification report from GS1, a GLN number, so they could receive orders via EDI and ensure they understood how to create SSCCs for their shipments. Thinking their journey was almost complete, they contacted GS1 Australia to confirm their GLN, and arrange for barcode reports and training.

To their surprise they found they were not licensed users or indeed members of GS1, despite paying many thousands of dollars for their GTINs, but it got worse....

Upon investigation, it became clear to APM Co. that, not only had the number they purchased from the online reseller not been licensed to them by GS1 but, changing the first digit to a 3 actually changed the GTIN to a number series that was controlled by the US Food & Drug Administration to uniquely identify and barcode a product with the National Drug Code (NDC), a system used in the USA.

The GTINs that APM Co. had been sold were a duplicate of a range of numbers allocated for other products. So, they could not create any SSCCs from the numbers they purchased and did not have a GLN.

Whilst APM Co. received a full refund from the online reseller on the agreement they did not pursue legal action through the courts, the whole experience still left APM Co. **over \$40,000 in out of pocket in expenses and cost them a great deal of time.**



Summary of Supply Chain Impacts

The impact of the inadvertent decision to use an online reseller were:

- \$40,000 in out of pocket costs
- Wasted packaging materials that couldn't be used
- Time and effort spent resolving the issue with existing customers who had entered the GTINs into their systems in good faith
- Loss of momentum with listing the product at the retailer
- Delays in getting the new products to market
- Cost of repackaging and over-labeling product with new GTINs

Conclusion

APM Co. were once again the inadvertent victims of online resellers, but this time it was even worse, as the online reseller had simply made up some numbers that were already issued to another company. This example highlighted the lack of understanding online resellers have in how the GS1 system works and their total disregard for the integrity and uniqueness of the GS1 numbering system.



Case Study 3 – Start up business gets duped!

“SUB Pty Ltd.” (not the company’s real name) was a true start up business, Sarah the owner had researched the effects of a particular type of product on the market and found the chemicals being used to be dangerous. So a natural and soothing alternative was her concept. After much research and digging a supplier was found, and engaged to manufacturer the product for SUB Pty Ltd.

Having made an initial great impression at a major retailer, Sarah was given an initial order, the dates were tight, and it was all systems go.

- Develop the product – done
- Retailer agreed to range product - done
- Create the artwork – done
- Lock in the supply contracts – done
- Get a barcode – to do
- Engage a solution provider to help receive and send EDI and scan pack by store – to do

So off Sarah went as a first time, start up business to find barcodes for her product.

Having found an Online reseller, she was asked where she was selling the product, “just in the Australian marketplace at this stage” was the response.

Well, we can sell you an “Australian number” was the reply!

So a range of GS1 GTINs were sold to SUB Pty Ltd that started with 93. The online reseller had simply changed the single digit at the front of the U.P.C. numbers they were already selling – frighteningly the online reseller had just created a duplicate of a number range already issued by GS1 Australia.

Little did Sarah realize that the 20,000 barcode labels she had just printed, were not only not hers but another companies legitimate numbers.

Having thought the barcoding of her products were all done, Sarah approached a scan pack solution provider. This service provider was an expert in setting up companies to send and receive electronic (EDI) orders and electronic dispatch advices. The solution provider also enabled suppliers to scan pack the goods against an order and link the deliveries to the SSCC logistics label to help the retailer receive and cross dock the goods through their DC’s and onto stores.

Having worked closely with both GS1 Australia and the GS1 standards for many years and seeing that SUB Pty Ltd were using 93 – GTINs, the solution provider suggested Sarah contact GS1 Australia to find out what her GLN was, another unique identifier for the EDI trading.

Upon contacting GS1 Australia, Sarah quoted her GTIN numbers and company name, but they did not match the GS1 records, and after a range of quick questions, both GS1 Australia and Sarah soon realized she had been duped!

So sitting in Sarah’s supplier’s warehouse were 20,000 labels ready to be put on the product being manufactured. Another couple of days and the goods would have been on the ship from Asia with the wrong barcodes firmly affixed.

Realising that SUB Pty Ltd only had a very limited window to get the goods made, shipped and packed by store for the retailer, new GTINs were issued to Sarah by GS1 Australia and disaster was avoided.



SUB Pty Ltd. received compensation from the online reseller to cover the **cost of reprinting the 20,000 labels**, and they were lucky that disaster was circumvented with the assistance of GS1 Australia.

Summary of Supply Chain Impacts

Had the problem not been detected by SUB Pty Ltd for another 2 days, according to Sarah the impacts would have been devastating, including:

- Significant cost to relabel the product
- The likelihood that the initial delivery dates to the retailer would have been missed
- Potential canceling of the supply contract by the retailer
- Loss of reputation by the retailer as to the professionalism and ability to supply by SUB Pty Ltd

Conclusion

SUB Pty Ltd were the victims of the unauthorised allocation of GTINs by an online reseller, who took a U.P.C. number range (they purported to have the rights to use, a fact never proven) and then changed the number by dropping the leading U.P.C. digit and adding a 93 prefix, because it was an "Australian Product". This example once again highlights the lack of understanding online resellers have in how the GS1 system works. As well as their total disregard for the integrity and uniqueness of the GS1 numbering system and the significant risks in dealing with such disreputable organisations.



Case Study 4 – What’s an extra zero between friends

CCC Co. (not the company’s real name) had been operating in a retail channel for some time with barcodes on their products that had been purchased from an online reseller.

Wanting to get some more barcodes printed, they contacted a printer asking for a competitive quote from them, as the company they bought the barcode from were getting a bit expensive in their printing.

“But GS1 Australia doesn’t sell printed labels” was the reply from the printer, “we didn’t buy them from GS1 was the reply from CCC Co.”

After contacting GS1 Australia, CCC Co. were advised on the GTINs they were using.

The online reseller had sold them some U.P.C.s, but not the normal range they were selling, but a different range of numbers. The online reseller had incorrectly slipped an extra zero into the barcode, pushing all the digits one space to the right, thereby duplicating another company’s numbers.

Summary of Supply Chain Impacts

CCC Co. decided to pretend the problem didn’t exist, claiming they’d fix it if they got their product listed with another retailer!

So the impacts would be:

- Inability to list their products with other retailers due to risk of GTIN duplication
- Need to repackage all their products with correct new GTINs
- Potential risk of duplication of their GTINs with someone else’s
- Inability to grow their product presence in other retailers
- Taking the risk that in the future the GTINs they were using didn’t duplicate other products in their current customers systems

Conclusion

CCC Co. were victims of the unauthorised allocation of GTINs by the online reseller, who took a U.P.C. number range (they purported to have the rights to use, a fact never proven) and accidentally inserted another zero at the front, thereby changing the number to another company’s licensed range. This is another example that highlights the lack of understanding online resellers have in how the GS1 system works. They have a total disregard for the integrity and uniqueness of the GS1 numbering system, along with the significant risks in dealing with such disreputable organisations.



Case Study 5 – A start-up that almost didn't start

Notch 8 BBQ LLC sells barbecue sauce with “a full-throttle BBQ taste.” The start-up company currently sells wholesale to independent retailers and to the United States’ military commissaries at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield (AAF), and markets directly to consumers via the Internet.

Bar code experience

When owner John Bennett first considered the possibility of bottling and selling barbecue sauce based on his special recipe, he started researching bar codes on the Internet. He Googled “bar codes/U.P.C.”, and found Simple Barcodes among the search results. When he contacted the bar code reseller, he was never told that he would be purchasing a U.P.C. based on someone else’s Company Prefix. He purchased two bar codes—one for the bottle and one for the case—for approximately \$80 and received a Certificate of Purchase along with a welcome letter stating that Notch 8 BBQ had purchased the numbers.

As a new company, Notch 8 BBQ then began contacting local branches of major food chains to get its product on their shelves. Among the outlets they contacted were the military commissaries at Fort Stewart and Hunter AAF. While completing the U.P.C. information on the required forms from the commissary, administrative assistant Debbi Marsh noticed a problem. Until the company had its own U.P.C. codes, the commissaries could not accept the product. She contacted GS1 US to resolve the issue.

Notch 8 BBQ not only had to obtain new bar codes, but it also had to purchase new U.P.C. bar code stickers and case bar code stickers, and then repackage their products. It cost money and valuable time.

Now Notch 8 BBQ is a member of GS1 US Partner Connections. Once the company received its own U.P.C. codes, its product was accepted into the commissaries, and Food Lion/Harvey’s (a supermarket chain) is also now considering putting Notch 8 BBQ Sauce on its shelves.



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