

Vendor Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): GS-1, GTINs and PCP

The Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is a globally unique code that identifies a trade item (any item that is priced, ordered, or invoiced at any point in the supply chain). A GTIN that is properly issued by a GS-1 Member (typically, a brand owner) and associated with a product according to the standards is a reliable identifier for the product, suitable for use in information systems such as eCommerce platforms/Google that need a way to refer unambiguously to different products. Going forward, QVC and HSN are requiring Vendors to become members of GS-1 in order to obtain a GLN (Global Location Number) and individual GTINs for each item being sold on our networks. Below, we've answered some frequently asked questions about this process update.

Q. What is GS-1?

A. GS-1 is a non-profit organization that leverage global standards. They serve more than 2 million businesses worldwide. As the leader in global standardization, GS-1 serves as a source for obtaining a GLN (Global Location Number) as well as a GTIN prefix and GTINs.

Q. Why are QVC and HSN suddenly requiring the use of GTINs purchased through GS-1?

A. The requirement for our vendors to have a membership through GS-1 has been in place for quite some time, even prior to the effort to develop PCP. We were not enforcing this requirement as strictly as needed until this point, but with the implementation of PCP, it is now critical that vendors comply. All existing vendors should already have a GS-1 company prefix (membership) as this is required to produce the serialized container codes we require for master cartons. At that point all they would need to do is purchase GTINs. The GTIN / UPC number is used in our marketing feeds as well as in our supply chain operations for inventory management (for non-ECO items).

Q. When am I required to join GS-1 as a QVC and/or HSN Vendor?

A. If you aren't already a member, to avoid penalties or chargebacks, you will need to become a member of GS-1 by September 1, 2020 in order to properly utilize our new Product Creation Platform system, known as PCP. A GLN (Global Location Number) and a GTIN (Global Trade Identification Number) will be necessary to submit products into our new PCP site.

Q. How can I find out if my organization is already a member of GS-1?

A. The vendor can reach out to GS-1 in one of the following ways: Email: info@gs1us.org | Website: www.gs1us.org | Phone: 937-435-3870

Q. Is there a charge to join GS-1?

A. Yes, there is a fee to join GS-1. A vendor pays a Membership fee which is linked to the number of GTINs they wish to purchase as well as an annual renewal fee based on the number of UPCs they need. The first-year cost of obtaining a GS-1 Company Prefix ranges from \$250 for 10 products to \$10,500 for 100,000 products. Each year after that, there is an annual license renewal fee which allows continued use of the unique prefix number. Annual license renewal fees range from \$50 to \$2100. To learn more about the GS-1 pricing structure, click here: [GS-1 Pricing](#)

Q. Can my vendor get a waiver that will exempt them from this requirement?

A. Any vendor exception would need to be authorized by the division's GMM/VP in merchandising.

Q. What is a GS-1 Company Prefix?

A. GTIN capacity is allocated by a GS-1 Member Organization to an individual GS-1 member in ranges. These digits are called the GS-1 Company Prefix. The GS-1 Company Prefix is a convenient way to refer to the range of GTINs allocated to a member.

Q. What is a GTIN?

A. Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is the name given to the number that uniquely identifies a product. It is 12 digits in North America. A GTIN is also known as a UPC, or Universal Product Code, which is the name given to the standard barcode image of a 12 digit GTIN that is commonly used in North America.

Q. Are UPCs and GTINs the same thing?

A. As terms, UPC and GTIN are often used interchangeably. A GTIN is the actual number while a UPC is the pictorial representation of that number (AKA barcode).

Q. Is the GTIN required at the SKU level?

A. Yes, the GTIN is required at the SKU level. Each SKU (item + color / size) must have its own GTIN (UPC code).

Q. Can my vendor purchase single GTINs?

A. At this time, GS-1 doesn't offer single GTINs for purchase; however, they are planning to launch this option in 2021.

Q. If I'm selling items in a set, do I need a GTIN for each item in the set, or one GTIN for the set itself?

A. In this case, the kit itself will require its own GTIN.

Q. How does a GTIN differ from an SSCC-18?

A. A Serialized Shipping Container Code (aka SSCC-18) is an 18-digit barcode that is placed on the outside of your master carton. It allows you, your distributor, and/or your retailer to uniquely identify, scan, and track each carton. A GTIN (UPC) identifies the actual product / item.

Q. Do we encode our GTIN (UPC) into the SSCC-18?

A. No. The SSCC-18 is encoded with your GS-1 company prefix followed by a sequential serial number.

Q. What is a GLN?

A. Global Location Number (GLN) can be used by companies to identify their locations, giving them complete flexibility to identify any type or level of location required.

Q. I am a manufacturer for a QVC or HSN proprietary (own label) brand / DDGS Vendor. Do I still need to join GS-1?

A. Yes, we will use GTINs on Proprietary Brands going forward.

Q. I am a vendor rep for several QVC and/or HSN brands. Do I need to join GS-1, or would that responsibility lie with each individual vendor?

A. Ideally, each vendor the rep is working with should become a member of GS-1 and subsequently purchase GTINs for the items the vendor rep is bringing to QVC and/or HSN. In many cases, these individual vendors may be existing members of GS-1.

Q. If I'm a Drop Ship Vendor, does this change still apply to me?

A. Yes, this information will be requested for each product submitted by vendors into our new Product Creation Platform (PCP), regardless of vendor type.

Q. Are HSN's ECO Vendors required to use GTINs?

A. HSN's ECO vendors, like all vendors, are subject to this requirement. Currently, they would use the ECO spreadsheet, and in the column named "UPC" they would supply GTIN / UPC. Once the ECO vendors are moved to PCP, they would enter the GTIN / UPC information directly in PCP.

Q. Can I purchase a block of GTINs from a third-party vendor?

A. We ask that if you are currently purchasing your GTINs via a third party, that you discontinue doing so and utilize your own GS-1 membership to purchase your GTINs going forward.

Q. Does this change how a vendor labels their products/saleable units?

A. Vendors will continue to label as they always have in accordance with our QA/Supply Chain guidelines.

Q. If my labels are not changing, where will I enter my GS-1 information?

A. This information will be requested for each product submitted by vendors into our new Product Creation Platform (PCP).

Q. What is the penalty for non-compliance / if a vendor does not register with GS-1 to purchase their GTINs? When will they begin to incur these non-compliance chargebacks?

A. This information will be provided in the coming weeks. Chargebacks will not be issued for non-compliance until on or after November 1, 2020. To clarify, this is not a barcode requirement. A vendor does not have to use UPC barcodes. They do have to purchase GTINs (UPC or EAN codes) and provide those to their buyer/DDGS partner to be entered into our system. We would only chargeback the vendor if they do not provide. The initial outreach after November 1 would be to educate, and understand why they were not provided and let them know we would charge back moving forward.

Q. Do I need a GTIN for my carton or for each individual item?

A. GTINs that identify cases / cartons are GTIN-14. We are not asking for this. We are looking for the GTIN (UPC) that identifies the individual product / item.

Q. If a vendor is located outside of the US and already has EANs purchased through GS-1, are they interchangeable with GTINs?

A. They are not interchangeable but an EAN is the EU equivalent of a UPC. EAN-13s purchased through GS-1 are acceptable. Additionally, GTINs purchased from GS-1 Canada are also globally recognized, and therefore, acceptable.

Q. If I'm selling a book, and the book already has an ISBN, does it also require a GTIN (UPC)?

A. Yes. The ISBN and UPC are not the same either in number or in barcode. So, while all books will have an ISBN, this satisfies neither our barcode requirement nor our GTIN requirement.

Q. If we have reorder items that have UPCs instead of GTINs, do we need to have them relabeled with the new GTIN number?

A. For what we are asking for, the UPC is the GTIN. There is a one to one ratio between item (item defined as product plus variants) and GTIN so any re-ordered item should have the same UPC as the prior receipt so there would be no need to relabel.

Q. Do we need to use GTINs for items that are included in HSN's autoship program?

A. Due to system limitations, autoship is currently out of the scope of this initiative, and therefore, autoship items do not need to be labeled with GTINs. If there are any leftover backend autoship units that are transferred to singleship skus, they would then need a GTIN.