



## GTIN FAQs

### ***What is a GTIN?***

GTIN is an acronym for “Global Trade Item Number”. A GTIN is the foundation for uniquely identifying products sold through retail and commercial distribution channels throughout the world.

GTIN is a new term; it is not a new code or identification system. GTIN is a data structure used in computer systems and on paperwork. A GTIN is 14-digits that may contain a 12-digit consumer item UPC (“Uniform Price Code”), a 14-digit case, pallet, or display UPC, a 13-digit EAN (“European Article Number”), or an 8-digit EAN. Numbers are right justified and zero filled for the full 14 digits to create the GTIN.

GTINs are required to synchronize item information through data pools and the GDSN (“Global Data Synchronization Network”). Using GTINs also enables products to be sold anywhere in the world without relabeling.

### ***What are data pools and what is the GDSN?***

A data pool is a service that provides its customers EAN.UCC certified data synchronization services. Data synchronization services allow a supplier to publish master data (item, price, promotion, etc.) in an independently hosted database, and then allow a customer to “subscribe” to that data. A subscriber is automatically notified of any new or changed master data.

Worldwide, there are currently 10 certified data pools with another 17 expected to be certified in October. Examples include UCCnet, WWRE, and Transora.

The GDSN is a network of independent and interoperable data pools plus the Global Registry, which acts as a “Yellow Pages” for the member data pools. The GDSN allows independent data pools to seamlessly exchange data. Data pools must be certified per EAN.UCC System standards to operate within the GDSN.

Most of Western Family’s customers currently have projects in place to develop data synchronization through data pools and the GDSN. Some will be completed by the end of this year. As the largest single supplier for our customers, Western Family fully supports these efforts. We are working aggressively to verify and correct any discrepancies in our master data, modify our systems and update procedures to support data synchronization.



# GTIN FAQs

## **Why is Western Family converting to the GTIN for identifying items? Why not continue to use the UPC?**

The UPC is a standard that, until the beginning of 2005, was recognized only in North America. The rest of the world uses the EAN system for identifying products. As of January 2005, the UPC is accepted around the world just as EANs are now accepted in North America. By formatting a UPC or an EAN as a GTIN, the same programs, processes, and procedures can be used regardless of whether the underlying number is a UPC or an EAN.

Western Family is a global company. Our member warehouses sell products around the world. We support seasonal programs that include a significant number of imported items. And we procure products for our customers under other labels in addition to Western Family and Shurfine. Western Family does not control these other labels. Some of the products in these programs could be identified with EANs, not UPCs.

We need to communicate in terms that are understood around the world and use standards that support global electronic commerce.

## **Will Western Family be changing the UPC code on consumer products?**

No. Consumer items will still be labeled with a 12-digit UPC using UPC-A barcodes. GTINS are used in **systems**, not on product labels.

## **Will Western Family be changing the UPC code on cases, display, and pallets?**

Maybe. A GTIN must uniquely identify an **item**. Identifying items in business transactions with GTINs rather than UPCs does not require us to change the UPC code on any item, provided the UPC has been assigned correctly.

However, Western Family and many other companies, including large national brand suppliers, have incorrectly assigned some UPCs on case items.

Example: In the past, if the label owner (in this case Western Family) created a 14-digit case UPC by prefacing the 12-digit consumer UPC with two zeroes, the GTIN of the consumer item and the case are identical. See the example below.



<b>Retail</b>	<b>Case</b>
Item: <i>Single can 15oz Western Family Fancy Sliced Beets</i>	Item: <i>12 Pack 15oz Western Family Fancy Sliced Beets</i>
UPC-12: <i>015400014281</i>	UPC-14: <i>00015400014281</i>
GTIN: <i>00015400014281</i>	GTIN: <i>00015400014281</i>

**Duplicate Items: Retail and case items with the same GTIN.**



## GTIN FAQs

This prevents a trading partner from looking up the correct weight, pack, dimensions, price, etc. A data pool will reject the second item as a duplicate.

Western Family is in the process of reviewing all our case, display, and pallet UPCs and making corrections where necessary. In most situations, a correction will require changing the first digit from a zero to a one and modifying the last (check) digit.

We are working with our customers and suppliers to make this transition as smooth as possible.

**Do not make any changes to data in your systems or change any case labeling until Western Family contacts you.**

As part of this review, we are checking all case, display, and pallet packaging for compliance with our packaging agreement and the shipping container guidelines on our Web site. Our guidelines are based on GS1/US (formerly the Uniform Code Council) recommendations. In particular, we will be looking for the full 14-digit case code and an ITF-14 or UCC.EAN-128 bar code. To review Western Family's packaging guidelines, go to our website, [www.westernfamily.com](http://www.westernfamily.com) and click on the "Advertising Support" link.

### ***Can I, as a supplier, change a Western Family UPC?***

No. Western Family owns the unique UPCs for all Western Family and Shurfine-labeled products, and must assign codes to all products. It is imperative that we control and coordinate the labeling and assignment of the UPCs on our products. As the label owner, the accuracy of the master data is our responsibility. The automated supply chain breaks down when case labels and product identification is changed without our knowledge.

However, if you believe some Western Family products have incorrect UPCs, we encourage you to notify us.

If Western Family procures an item, but is a supplier-owned label or customer-owned label and UPC, Western Family cannot change the UPC or EAN. Assigning UPCs or EANs is the responsibility of the label owner. If you are the label owner, please be sure you understand the guidelines for assigning UPC and EANs and let Western Family know of any changes before you implement them. If you have questions about assigning UPCs or EANs please go to <http://www.gs1us.org/>.



## GTIN FAQs

### ***Who should I contact if I have questions?***

For Western Family issues or questions, contact Sherine Erickson, our Customer Service Supervisor and GTIN project lead. She can be reached at 503.639.6300 ext. 228 or e-mail [serickson@westfam.com](mailto:serickson@westfam.com).

For general information regarding UPCs, EANs, GTINs and data synchronization go to <http://www.gs1us.org/>.