



Introduction

For several years now, a **Mexican Data Synchronisation Steering Committee** has been leading a variety of initiatives designed to leverage the GS1 Global Data Synchronisation Network (GDSN) as a collaborative platform. Under the impetus of this committee, **P&G Mexico, Colgate Mexico** and a **leading Mexican retailer** recently took the GS1 Data Quality Challenge to identify key areas of their processes that might be improved through the implementation of data quality principles from the GS1 Data Quality Framework.

The Data Quality Challenge builds upon the GS1 Data Quality Framework's **Self-Assessment Procedure**, which enables organisations to assess their compliance by positioning their current status in comparison to best practices. It also reveals important opportunities that can be further exploited by trading partners to enhance their processes for data management and data quality.

See www.gs1.org/gdsn/dqf/challenge/about for more information.

Why they took the Data Quality Challenge

The Mexican participants chose to work with each other because data quality is a priority for all of them, and they are all looking for concrete ways to improve processes and boost efficiency. P&G Mexico is always interested in collaborative commerce and is always looking to become more efficient with customers. By choosing to work with a large client, P&G felt they could validate that their

processes work even in a complex environment. As for the retailer, they were seeking all the benefits that improved data quality has to offer, such as more efficient cross-docking and back-holding, more efficient cubing of trucks, and easier migration to a new ERP. The retailer knew both P&G and Colgate were client-focused, concentrated on data quality and able to execute both the Data Quality Challenge itself and any ideas that resulted.



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How they did it

With the facilitation and support of GS1 Mexico, each supplier worked with their retailer counterpart in order to define the scope for the self-assessment. All three participants then conducted their own self-assessments. Their conclusions were discussed between the retailer and each of the suppliers in order to define the best approach for their specific trading relationship.

Quality is one of Colgate's key philosophies, so across the company - which is empowered to conduct projects that are good for business - the value of the self-assessment procedure was quickly recognised.



For P&G, too, data quality is crucial and all departments supported the initiative. In order to help things go smoothly, teams at P&G first met with internal experts to determine who should be responsible for each part of the assessment. The retailer's teams had executive-level sponsorship and support, because beyond just performing an assessment, they were also looking to identify benefits and build a business case.

Experience and lessons learned

Colgate found that the Data Quality Challenge went smoothly for them partly due to the internal knowledge-sharing process: their work was enhanced by having someone who really understands how things work. P&G recommends getting agreement on the scope and the division of labour between logistics teams and areas, so that the solutions identified will benefit all; similarly, Colgate also noted the importance of defining the scope and main reasons to conduct the assessment up front. The retailer felt an initial resistance to change from internal users, but training sessions and meetings organised with area directors gave them the chance to successfully get the message through and continue to improve their processes.

Benefits and conclusions

All three companies saw benefits from the work they did. Colgate treated the exercise as a pilot, so the exercise was a discovery project. Nevertheless, they did see how the Data Quality Challenge enabled them to see opportunities that hadn't been identified before; for example, they plan to work more closely with GS1 Mexico on improving training on aspects that were found to cause confusion for people in the organisation.. Colgate nevertheless felt the assessment clearly validated that they have followed the right path, and showed how far they have come. The retailer obtained new insight on their data quality processes; for example, they saw that while they had put a lot of focus on new item introductions, perhaps not enough attention had been paid to making modifications to existing items. They also now know more about what they need from suppliers so that less time and effort are needed to maintain accuracy. They plan to take the Data Quality Challenge with other suppliers. P&G already uses an internal evaluation system, but they saw how an external, neutral assessment can bring added insight. They plan to implement some new processes and change others. They will also create more documentation and guidelines, to help increase understanding and clarity.

With the encouragement and support of the Mexican Data Synchronisation Steering Committee and GS1 Mexico, the retailer, Colgate and P&G in Mexico have seen up close the advantages of collaborating across the supply chain and the benefits of data quality. These companies have used the Data Quality Challenge to establish a foundation to further develop alternatives that companies in Mexico have to comply with the local data quality strategy, improving the benefits of data synchronisation through GDSN.

