General Specifications Change Notification (GSCN)

The Global Language of Business

WR #	GSCN Name	Effective Date
19-208	Multiple barcodes clarification	13 Nov 2019

Associated Work Request (WR) Number:

N/A

Background:

Language is being clarified in the General Specifications related to the requirement that the same GTIN needs to be encoded when multiple barcodes appear on an item and the barcodes contain a GTIN.

GS1 General Specification Change:

The recommended changes are highlighted below, relative to GS1 General Specifications version 19.1.

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4.16 Multiple barcode management practices for trade items (cross-sector)

When additional barcodes are introduced into an existing scanning environment or business application existing barcodes must remain acceptable. This section provides a set of management practices intended to permit the use of multiple barcodes on the same package.

4.16.1 Multiple barcode management practices for trade items (all sectors)

1. **Current standards:** All scanning systems SHALL deploy symbology identifiers (see section *5.1.2*) and when using GS1 Application Identifiers, process them according to GS1 rules (see section *7.8*).

2. **GTIN plus attribute(s) flag:** Where applications require additional data be captured in a multiple barcode symbol environment, modifications to systems should be made to automate this requirement to optimise efficiency.

3. **Adjacent placement:** Wherever two symbols can be used for the same application (POS, POC, general distribution) they SHOULD be placed adjacent to one another. Adjacent placement of symbols SHALL never infringe on symbol Quiet Zones. The orientation (stack or row of symbols) or sequence (which symbol is placed on the left, right, top, or bottom) shall be determined by the brand owner. Where adjacent placement on one panel is not permitted based on space limitations, placement on adjacent panels SHOULD be attempted. This practice does not supersede any section *6* symbol placement rule (e.g.: 8 mm (0.3 inch) free space between symbols and panel edge.)

4. **Non-adjacent placement:** Wherever two symbols are used for different applications (POS, B2C extended packaging), they SHOULD be placed non-adjacent to one another.

5. **Obscure placement:** Wherever a symbol is used for production control purposes only, it SHOULD be made as obscure as possible or even obstructed on the trade item package.

6. **Product URL barcode indication:** For barcodes encoding AI (01) (8200) see section *4.15* Human readable interpretation rules, rule 9.)

7. **Use of GS1-128 or GS1 2D symbol as secondary symbol with EAN/UPC or ITF-14 as the primary symbol**.
   In general distribution, where EAN/UPC or ITF-14 is used to encode the GTIN and where a GS1-128 or GS1 2D symbol is used to encode GTIN attributes, the same GTIN SHALL be encoded in all GS1 symbols.

8. **Use of GS1 2D symbol as secondary symbol with GS1-128 as primary symbol:**
   In general distribution, where GS1-128 is used to encode GTIN and attributes, these element strings at a minimum SHALL be encoded in the GS1 2D symbol.

4.16.2 GS1 multiple barcode management practice for general retail

In addition to the requirements outlined in section 4.16.1, the following rule applies to the use of multiple barcodes for general retail.

- **GTIN in GS1 DataBar processing:** In order to facilitate migration away from a multiple barcode environment where one retailer requires EAN/UPC and another GS1 DataBar Expanded, at a minimum, all general retailers SHALL be able to process the AI (01) GTIN from GS1 DataBar Expanded.

4.16.3 GS1 multiple barcode management practices for healthcare

In addition to the requirements outlined in section 4.16.1, the following rules apply to the use of multiple barcodes for healthcare.

1. **GTIN in GS1 DataMatrix and GS1 DataBar processing (retail healthcare):** In order to facilitate migration away from a multiple barcode environment where one retail pharmacy requires EAN/UPC and another retail pharmacy requires GS1 DataMatrix or GS1 DataBar

Expanded, at a minimum, retail pharmacies SHALL have the capability to process the AI (01) GTIN from GS1 DataMatrix and GS1 DataBar in addition to the capability for EAN/UPC.

2. **GTIN in GS1 DataMatrix, GS1 DataBar, and GS1-128 processing (non-retail healthcare):** In order to facilitate migration away from a multiple barcode environment where one healthcare provider requires EAN/UPC or ITF-14 and another healthcare provider requires GS1 DataMatrix, GS1 DataBar Expanded, or GS1-128, at a minimum, non-retail pharmacies SHALL have the capability to process AI (01) GTIN from GS1 DataMatrix, GS1 DataBar, and GS1-128 in addition to the capability for EAN/UPC and ITF-14.

3. **GS1-128 as secondary symbol:** In point-of-care applications, where EAN/UPC or ITF-14 is used to encode GTIN and where GS1-128 is used to encode GTIN attributes, GS1-128 SHOULD encode GTIN as it is best practice to encode the GTIN attributes and the GTIN in a single symbol whenever possible to ensure accurate data association.

> ✅ **Note**: Where GS1 DataBar and GS1 DataMatrix are used, GTIN and GTIN attributes SHALL be concatenated to ensure accurate data association.

4. **Scenario-based management practices:** Multiple barcode practices which apply to all sectors are found in section *4.16.1* and take precedence over those specific only to healthcare. While industry best practice focuses on using only one barcode per package, a product package that serves multiple markets may have the need for application of multiple barcodes. When this occurrence is unavoidable, the management practices for use of multiple symbols found in figure *4.16.3-1* apply for regulated healthcare trade items. The figure separates solutions based on combinations of scanner environments encountered for each scenario:

   □ Scanners encountered combination #1: Package scanned in retail pharmacies (Yes or No).

   □ Scanners encountered combination #2: Package scanned in general distribution (Yes or No).

Figure 4.16.3-1. Multiple barcode management practices

Combinations of scanners encountered	Barcode data scenario		Scanner environment		Symbol arrange-ment	Barcode options	Gen Specs	Proposal
	Symbol 1	Symbol 2	Retail pharmacy or non-retail pharmacy/ bedside	Auto-mated conveyor	Vertical or horizontal		Section	
#1	GTIN A	Only attributes for GTIN A	Y	N	NA	GS1 DataMatrix GS1-128 GS1 DataBar * EAN/UPC plus GS1 DataMatrix, GS1 DataBar Expanded, GS1-128, or * EAN/UPC, GS1 DataBar, or GS1-128 plus ** Composite Component	*2.1.4* *2.1.5* *4.16.1*	See Note 1 See Note 10 For * see Note 2 For ** see Note 3
#2	GTIN A	Only attributes for GTIN A	Y	Y	Horizontal	GS1 DataMatrix GS1-128 *EAN/UPC plus GS1 DataMatrix or GS1-128	*2.1.7* *4.16.1*	See Note 1 See Note 10 For * see Note 2