**Information about Bar Codes and Technology Used by Retailers**

When planning to sell your products in the retail market, most retailers look for Universal Product Codes, also known as U.P.C. bar codes to identify your items. The bar code includes a unique company number (“company prefix”) that identifies your company as the manufacturer or distributor of the product.

**I understand that I may need a bar code. Where do I begin?**

Company prefixes are provided by a not-for-profit organization named GS1 US™. Your first step is to complete a membership application for the GS1 US Partner Connections program online at [www.gs1us.org/pc](http://www.gs1us.org/pc). Along with your company prefix, you will receive access to an easy-to-use tool called Data Driver™ that you can use to automatically create and manage bar code numbers for your product(s). No technical knowledge is needed and the tool will automatically provide the bar code size and placement for your product(s). Data Driver will also supply you with information about printing your bar code so that it can be scanned quickly and accurately at point-of-sale. You may choose to have your bar code incorporated into your package design, have it printed by a label vendor, or print it yourself using commercially available software.

**What should I keep in mind when assigning and printing a U.P.C. bar code?**

Retailers depend on their suppliers to correctly assign U.P.C. bar codes to ensure their point-of-sale systems operate efficiently. This sales information is also used by buyers and category managers to analyze sales trends, and in their plan-o-gram and reordering systems. You will need to assign unique U.P.C.’s to each version, color, flavor, and size of the product you produce. When printing your bar code, the preferred combination is black bars on a light background.

**What is data synchronization and where can learn more about it?**

Data synchronization is the continuous updating of product information via the Internet by suppliers for their customers. Information about sizes, colors, flavors, strengths, and other characteristics is communicated by a global network to retailers, distributors, and wholesalers around the world. To learn more about data synchronization, go to [www.1sync.org/data_sync.html](http://www.1sync.org/data_sync.html)

**What is EDI?**

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is the computer to computer communication of purchase orders, invoices, shipment notices, and other key business to business messages based on defined industry standards. The first step is to find out about a customer’s specific EDI requirements. Then you may purchase EDI software or use the services of a solution provider that meets your particular needs. More information about EDI can be found at [http://barcodes.gs1us.org/dnn_bcec/Standards/Ecommerce/EDI/tabid/101/Default.aspx](http://barcodes.gs1us.org/dnn_bcec/Standards/Ecommerce/EDI/tabid/101/Default.aspx)

If you have any questions about bar codes, data synchronization, or EDI, contact GS1 US Customer Service via email at info@gs1us.org or by phone, 937.435.3870.