



Produce Traceability Initiative

Milestone 1: Obtain a Company Prefix

Q: What is a Company Prefix?

A: A Company Prefix is a number obtained from the GS1 organization that uniquely identifies your company from any other company around the world. Once you use the Company Prefix to create any subsequent number (such as a Global Trade Identification Number or GTIN – see Milestone #2), it uniquely links that number to your company.

Q: Who is GS1?

A: GS1 is a standards organization that has over 108 branches or Member Organizations (MOs) around the world and is used in over 145 countries. Each country has an MO – e.g., GS1 US, GS1 Canada, GS1 Japan, GS1 Germany, etc. The United States MO, now called GS1 US, was formerly known as the Uniform Code Council (UCC).

Q: Who needs to obtain a Company Prefix?

A: The following companies must obtain their own Company Prefix:

- growers who wish to maintain their own brand;
- packers that change the composition of the original case or product and re-brand;
- shippers maintaining their own brand; and
- buyers requiring private labeled product.

Q: When should I obtain a Company Prefix?

A: Those companies needing a Company Prefix must obtain their company prefix immediately, as the recommended time line for completion of this PTI milestone is end of the 1st quarter 2009.

Q: Where do I go to get my Company Prefix?

A: You can contact your local GS1 MO to get your Company Prefix. For those in the United States, you can visit www.gs1us.org.

For those outside of the United States, please visit www.gs1.org to determine where your local GS1 MO is located and to find related contact information.

Q: Are there different types of Company Prefixes?

A: Yes. When getting your Company Prefix from GS1 US, they will send you a Certificate showing a “UPC Company Prefix” and also a “GS1 Company Prefix”. The only difference between the two is that the GS1 Company Prefix has a zero at the front.

Q: When should I use the UPC Company Prefix?

A: When creating and assigning UPC numbers to items.

Q: When should I use the GS1 Company Prefix?

A: When creating and assigning a GTIN, GLN, or SSCC.

Q: How long will it take to get a Company Prefix?

A: Once you have contacted your local GS1 MO, it should take, on average, no more than a week to receive your number.

Q: How much does it cost to get my Company Prefix?

A: This will vary company by company, and country by country. Every GS1 MO has a different pricing model. For more information, refer to www.gs1us.org.

For those outside of the United States, please visit www.gs1.org to determine where your local GS1 MO is located and to find related contact information.

Q: What determines the length of my Company Prefix?

A: The number of case configurations your company has will determine the length of the Company Prefix GS1 assigns to your company, as follows:

<u># of Case Configurations</u>	<u>Length of UPC Company Prefix</u>	<u>Length of Reference Number</u>
99,999	##### = 6 digits	##### = 5 digits
9,999	##### = 7 digits	#### = 4 digits
999	##### = 8 digits	### = 3 digits
99	##### = 9 digits	## = 2 digits

** It is for this reason that the UPC Company Prefix is said to be “variable-length”.*

NOTE: Discuss issues such as future growth and number of pack configurations you might need with your GS1 MO. This could be a result of new commodities, new mergers and/or new acquisitions.

Q: How do I use the Company Prefix?

A: Simply put, the Company Prefix, when used as part of any GS1 number, links that number to the owner of the Company Prefix. If the number is on an item, it links the item to the owner of the Company Prefix. If the number is on a case, it links the case to the owner of the Company Prefix. If the number is on a pallet, it links the pallet to the owner of the Company Prefix.

Q: Can I use the “generic company prefix” 033383 that I got from PMA as my Company Prefix?

A: No. This prefix is used on pre-packed consumer items, not on cases. Its use is simply as the name implies: generic. It does not link what is being numbered to a specific company. Therefore, a company-specific prefix is needed to ensure this necessary link for traceability.