

# PCM International FAQs

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- 1. What is PCM?**
  - a. PCM is Lowe's proprietary application used to store item information. The information is fed from vendors to PCM primarily through the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN). This information contains attributes such as the item's dimensions, weight, ordering quantities, shipping lead times, etc. PCM also houses the item's marketing information such as its image, selling attributes, color, etc.
- 2. What does PCM stand for?**
  - a. PCM stands for Product Content Management.
- 3. What type of data does PCM house?**
  - a. This application houses both Core Product Data and Extended Marketing Data.
    - i. Core Product Data is the basic information on a product. It includes the attributes currently housed in Mainframe, as well as elements like Brand Name and Product Type.
    - ii. Extended Marketing Data is information above what is asked for in Core Product Data, and includes elements like Copy and Images, that would support advanced selling solutions (such as a robust lowes.ca with product content).
- 4. Why is Lowe's Canada implementing PCM?**
  - a. The primary purpose of the Canadian Product Content Management Program is to align Canadian content management across Lowe's, by providing a central repository for Merchandising and Marketing data. Currently, Canada teams lack a repository for managing Marketing data – which means that Canada is excluded from implementing a robust lowes.ca with product content. By implementing PCM, Lowe's Canada will be able to achieve our goals for lowes.ca and also adopt processes which will allow for greater efficiencies.
- 5. What is the timeline?**
  - a. January 2012, Lowe's sent an email to all vendors announcing the implementation of PCM in Canada
  - b. March 1<sup>st</sup>, deadline for all vendors to send PCM contact information in to [PCMCanada@Lowes.com](mailto:PCMCanada@Lowes.com) and begin publishing their products
  - c. March 5<sup>th</sup>, training webinars begin Monday, Wednesday, Friday (schedule/signup on LowesLink)
  - d. April 10-11, PCM International Vendor Forum in Toronto
  - e. May 4<sup>th</sup>, Lowe's begins issuing subscriptions
- 6. Is Lowe's the only retailer doing this?**
  - a. No. Many retailers in the US use the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) to collect product information from their vendors. US retailers who use the GDSN include:
    - i. Target.
    - ii. Sears (US only).
    - iii. ACE Hardware.
  - b. Many other Canadian vendors are also exploring the option of using a GDSN-based solution to gather product data, such as Canadian Tire and Wal-Mart Canada.
  - c. 95% of grocery volume in Canada flows through the GDSN today.
- 7. Is participation mandatory?**
  - a. Yes, PCM is a mandatory initiative for all vendors that supply to Lowe's Canada.
  - b. Please be advised that once PCM is implemented, all new item introductions to Lowe's Canada, as well as changes to product data (e.g. dimensions) must flow through PCM.
- 8. Do I have to do anything different before PCM launches for Lowe's Canada?**
  - a. No; until PCM launches, it is 'business as usual' for all stock and SOS item introductions and maintenance.
- 9. What is the cost to me, a Lowe's product vendor?**
  - a. That depends on the data pool service provider with whom you choose to partner. Some service providers run on a revenue-based model, where others charge based on the number of items you synchronize. Please contact the data pool service providers directly for more information.

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## 10. How do I synchronize my information to PCM?

- a. Core Product Data is synchronized with vendors through the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN).

## 11. What do I need to do to get my information into the GDSN, to synchronize with Lowe's Canada?

- a. Step 1: assign an internal owner/sponsor at your company for this initiative, and send us (Lowe's) their name and contact information.
- b. Step 2: sign up with a data pool solution provider (your data pool solution provider will facilitate the GDSN process with you).
  - (i) An overview of Lowe's preferred Solution Providers is provided at the following link: <http://www.loweslink.com/llmain/pubdocuments/pcmRecommendedSolutionProviders.pdf>.
- c. More information about the process and next steps are outlined at the following link: [www.Loweslink.com](http://www.Loweslink.com).

## 12. What happens next?

- a. Following confirmation of GDSN signup for Core Product Data, you will be contacted by a Lowe's representative regarding Extended Marketing Data including Copy and Images. Extended Marketing Data is the backbone of the selling solutions Lowe's Canada is launching in the future.

## 13. Do I have to have my information in the GDSN to quote on a product?

- a. It is not a Lowe's Canada requirement to have your item information published to the GDSN to quote on a product. However, individual MMs may have this as a requirement.

## 14. What happens if I don't synchronize in the GDSN by May 5<sup>th</sup>?

- a. Vendors who do not sign up with a Data Pool/Solution Provider by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 will be contacted directly by a Lowe's Preferred Data Pool. This is to ensure that all Lowe's Canada vendors are aligned to the initiative, and will be prepared to publish Core Product Data by May 2012.
- b. If you have not synchronized product data by the May 5<sup>th</sup> deadline,
  - i. You will not be able to introduce a new item to Lowe's Canada.
  - ii. You will not be able to update any existing item information.
  - iii. Your products will not be eligible to appear on Lowes.ca.

## 15. If I already publish data to Lowe's US through the GDSN, do I have to publish again to Canada?

- a. If you already synchronize product information with Lowe's US, work with your Solution Provider to publish product data to Lowe's Canada.
- b. The vendor will need to publish the information for each country. This means that, if the GTIN is shared between US and CAN, the vendor will need to upload the data separately for each country.

## 16. Does it matter if my trading partner and I have signed up with different Data Pools/Service Providers?

- a. No, it shouldn't matter. Because Lowe's leverages GDSN standards, product vendors are free to partner with any GDSN approved Data Pool/Solution Provider. One of the tenets of the GDSN is industry-wide interoperability, so you should be able to synchronize product information with any trading partner, regardless of what data pool or software they use. It's a bit like telephones: if you are a Bell customer and your friend is a Verizon customer, you can still call each other.

## 17. Which data pool service provider has Lowe's Canada partnered with?

- a. Lowe's Canada partners with 1SYNC (<http://1SYNC.org>) as our Data Pool and FSEnet+ (<http://www.fsenet.com>) provides another option that Lowe's endorses. A list of all of the Lowe's preferred solutions providers/data pools can be found on LowesLink.

## 18. What are some of the benefits of implementing PCM?

- a. By collecting this information, Lowes Canada will be able to implement advanced selling tools such as Lowes.ca, which uses PCM data as a foundation.
  - i. PCM data is the foundational information needed to implement product lookup functions on Lowes.ca. This means that PCM will enable product lookup functions on a

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Canadian Lowe's website in the near future, as well as improving the merchandising assortment and planogramming processes.

- b. Quicker and easier new item introductions, which translates to faster new product rollouts.
  - c. The MS will no longer have to work in the system to introduce an item. Rather, all item introductions will be handled by the Product Information (PI) team in the US. The PI team will also handle any back-and-forth communication needed with the vendor to gather complete item setup information.
  - d. The system more accurately and efficiently gathers product data by creating an automated workflow process for new or updated product information between Lowe's and our vendors.
    - i. Product information is more accurate and complete, as well as easier to manage and maintain over time because product updates (dimensions, etc.) are automated as well.
  - e. Vendors that synchronize product information have the same information accessible to all authorized demand partners as well as their internal departments. This means that if a vendor publishes data in the GDSN, they can use it to synchronize with any retailer that uses the GDSN.
  - f. A vendor can publish information for as many items as they want, synchronize everything from basic transactional product information to more robust marketing information that can help differentiate your products, and make it accessible to as many customers as they like.
  - g. The GDSN is standards-based, so information published through the GDSN complies with both global and industry-specific standards, which improves the quality of data.
    - i. Reduces the probability of errors in the data because there are fewer manual inputs (entering the data into multiple systems/spreadsheets) and increased validations.
- 19. Does all information flow through PCM?**
- a. No; costs do not flow through PCM. Consequently, the Item Setup Sheet (ISS) and ECAT cost spreadsheets still exist to submit and enter costs.
- 20. Will Special Order (SOS) product flow through PCM as well?**
- a. Yes, PCM applies to both stock and SOS product.
- 21. Will all work requested by Lowe's be sent to the vendors as a worklist task in PCM?**
- a. Yes, for Marketing Data but not for GDSN data. We will be sending you a list of products soon.
- 22. Will we be required to data sync the 2012 program – we are currently shipping this season – or will it begin with the 2013 product season?**
- a. Since we will begin receiving data in May we would need you to go ahead and send both.
- 23. I assume we can still use Web vendor instead of Data Pool (GDSN)?**
- a. Limited to vendors who already web vendors in the US for their initial data load to Lowe's Canada. The Webforms option will be discontinued later this year and all vendors will need to use a solution provider/data pool in order to exchange data with Lowe's.
- 24. Could you tell me if there are Vendor Guides for Canada as with the US?**
- a. Vendor Guides are forthcoming but are extremely similar to the existing documents. In the interim use the existing list that on LowesLink under Product Information. Units of measure are inches, feet and pounds for Lowe's Canada.
- 25. We did supply Lowe's Canada with product information when we started our relationship. Do I have to put all the information in the system or can the information you already have be transferred?**
- a. All items will need to be re-published using the Canadian TMCC (124) as an information transfer is not available.
- 26. Why does Lowe's reject GDSN data that includes multiple target market codes? Going forward allowing this (it is part of GS1 standards) would simplify publishing new items that will be common to Lowe's north and south of the border**
- a. Lowe's can only receive data that is published to one TMCC.
- 27. How are the GDSN Subscriptions going to be created GLN+TMCC(124)+GTIN?**
- a. Yes.
- 28. Will we have to input ISS for the already existing items or just the GDSN publication?**
- a. No, just publish the GDSN data for now.

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- 29. Is there a Canadian Contact I can talk to?**
- We have a mix of Canadian and US personnel on our team. Your email will be seen by both and answered by the most informed member.
- 30. I have submitted our item and the data was successfully published. Please advise if you see this available for Lowes Canada and how can we check it in PCM.**
- We will begin reviewing subscriptions in April and subscribing in May. We will not have visibility to your published products until then.
- 31. How do I find out what my “VBU” is?**
- Your Lowe’s Vendor Business Unit (VBU) number is a number assigned to your company by Merchandising. Your Lowe’s Sales Representative will know this number.
- 32. How do I get my Canadian vendor number to show in my drop down list in PCM?**
- Once you add it to your digital certificate it will show.
- 33. I handle the US vendor number but our Canada vendor number does not display in PCM. When will this be added to my PCM in Lowes Link?**
- Once you add it to your digital certificate it will show.
- 34. Can you please list Lowe’s special attributes that they want from us so we can provide whom we have in place as our GDSN Provider and advise them on?**
- Ask your solution provider to provide you with a copy of the Lowe’s Extension Attributes or find them in LowesLink: Product Information/References & Reports: Codes Tables, Brand & Barcode Management/Descriptions and Validations of Product Attributes/Lowe’s Data. Or, follow this link in LowesLink, and look for “Lowe’s Data”:  
<http://www.loweslink.com/llmain/pubdocuments/pcmDescriptionsandValidationsofRequiredAttributes.pdf>.
- 35. We are already on this program for the US. Do we need to set it up additionally for Canada?**
- Yes. You need to publish all of your items to Lowe’s Canada using the Lowe’s GLN 0828439000008 and the Target Market Country Code (TMCC) for Canada 124.
- 36. What is the schedule to have data loaded for existing product you already purchase? Are there fines associated with validation errors or incorrect data?**
- You should be signed up with a solutions provider by the end of March and have all of your products published to Lowe’s Canada by the end of April. Subscriptions will begin in May.
  - Incorrect data submitted will be returned to you to correct. Currently there are no financial penalties however continued lack of participation will result in loss of business with Lowe’s.
- 37. Will there be an additional link added to our Digital Certificate or will PCM Canada be accessed thru our current PCM link?**
- No, you can use your existing certificate and add Canada to it.
- 38. Will there be any differences in PCM Canada compared to the US?**
- A few, mostly just the addition of the “Country” field and the addition of the Tariff fields required by Canada.
- 39. Will there be any differences in standards for marketing data compared to the US**
- We will not begin collecting marketing data for Lowe’s Canada until subscriptions are sent. Since we are adding categories and modifying existing ones almost weekly, I am sure that there will be some changes.
- 40. Do we publish stock items or SOS items as well?**
- Both, please.
- 41. Do I publish through 1SYNC or GS1 Canada?**
- You can use whoever your current solutions provider is. One note, if you are a Canadian vendor and want to use 1SYNC, you will need to contact GS1 Canada to get set up.
- 42. We go through NuBridges for 1SYNC but I do not see Lowes Canada set up as a partner. How can I get this done?**
- This will show up when you update your certificate. Also check with NuBridges (Liaison) to make sure their system is set up to sell Lowe’s Canada.

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- 43. We are headquartered in the US and ship our products to a DC in Canada that fulfills our Canadian orders. Can we continue to use our US 1SYNC account to publish to Lowe's Canada?**
- Yes, go ahead and publish using your existing 1SYNC account.
- 44. The data that I upload on 1SYNC for PCM USA will be the same that I will upload for PCM Canada. So, do I do a new agreement for 1SYNC or can I use the same for PCM USA? If I need to do another agreement, what do I need to do?**
- You will not need a new agreement. Use your current agreement and publish your products to Lowe's Canada using the TMCC of 124.
- 45. If I am already publishing my products to Lowe's US am I required to publish all of them to Lowe's Canada as well?**
- Yes, due to the different Target Market Country Code. All products you will sell to Lowe's Canada must be re-published to Lowe's Canada using the TMCC of 124.
- 46. What data attributes is Lowe's expecting to be published?**
- All of the core data attributes along with the Lowe's Extended attributes. You can find a list of these here:  
<http://www.loweslink.com/llmain/pubdocuments/pcmDescriptionsandValidationsofRequiredAttributes.pdf>.
- 47. Which attributes are applicable to Home & Garden products?**
- All Mandatory GDSN Core and Lowe's Extension attributes must be completed; optional attributes are optional.
- 48. How would fields like color be used for a product such as grass seeds?**
- Manufacturer's choice: Color is an optional attribute and may be left blank or filled in as the manufacturer sees it.
- 49. How should net content be expressed for a product such as sod, grass seeds, etc.?**
- Net content is set by the manufacturer. However, in a product like sod, "36 Sq. Ft." is a better description of the net content of the product than does "1 Piece". Grass Seed, Ice Melt and like products; net content would be stated as the contents of the bag or box (i.e., 5 lbs).
- 50. Start Date – what dates should be used for PCM via GDSN?**
- The date the product is available for sale/purchase.
- 51. End Date – what dates should be used for PCM via GDSN?**
- The last day the product is available for sale/purchase.
- 52. Private Label Products – are private label products included in the PCM project?**
- Yes.
- 53. Is there interconnectivity between Lowe's and Big Hammer?**
- Only through the GDSN when Big Hammer is the data pool. Other than that, there is no interconnectivity.
- 54. Should Big Hammer be the primary contact for these types of suppliers?**
- If you use Big Hammer as a data pool, then yes. If not, then no.
- 55. Will publishing my products to Lowe's Canada using TMCC 124 have any effect on the products I have published to Lowe's US using TMCC 840?**
- No, they are completely separate due to the different TMCCs.
- 56. Will there be two different links to PCM? (one for US and one for CA) or will all items show up in the same place?**
- There will be one log-in to PCM Canada. You will select which country's products you will be working on.
- 57. Would it be a problem if we registered our Canadian items in the GS1 global registry with item description in both English and (Canadian) French? And as well, with measurements in both imperial and metric?**
- Lowe's can only accept English and Imperial measurements (inches, feet, ounces and pounds) for PCM.

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**58. Currently, for our business to Lowe's US we are a web-based vendor for PCM. Do we have such an option for Lowe's Canada?**

- a. If you currently use PCM Webforms to enter your data for Lowe's US you may use Webforms to enter your initial data load for Lowe's Canada. However, Webforms is going away this year and you will need to find a solution provider/data pool to partner with in order to continue to sell both Lowe's US and Lowe's Canada. If you do not currently use Webforms for Lowe's US, you may not use it for Lowe's Canada.

**59. If I supply magazines and books to Lowe's are they included in the move to PCM as well?**

- a. Magazines are exempt but books are not, so you will have to supply product information through a data pool/solution provider to get the information into PCM.

**60. If I already have items published to Lowe's US will the item number change when I publish them to Lowe's Canada?**

- a. No, they will stay the same.