

# Frequently Asked Questions about Data Synchronization

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**What is data synchronization? Why is it important?**

Data synchronization (data sync) refers to a process by which vendors and retailers ensure that their data is the same. It is part of a global effort aimed at obtaining synchronizations within specific industries and is used by many different retailers. This process will be used to communicate changes as well as new product information. For Lowe's, the end goal of the data sync process is to synchronize 100% of the product data for every item supplied by a vendor.

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**What is a Data Pool?**

A Data Pool is a database of information submitted by various vendors available for retailers in order to sell a product. Some Data Pools also offer Solution Provider services.

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**What is a Solution Provider? How do I find one?**

A Solution Provider is a recognized entity that supports the exchange of Data Sync transactions between vendors and retailers. Vendors can also choose to interact directly with a Data Pool. 1SYNC is the Data Pool Lowe's has chosen for their GDSN data transactions. Vendors can also choose 1SYNC for GDSN data transactions, or they can choose any recognized Solution Provider that interacts with 1SYNC. Please see a list of [Solution Provider/Third Party Contact List](#) on LowesLink®.

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**What is GDSN Data?**

The Global Data Standards Network (GDSN) is a network of Data Pools and the GS1 Global Registry that supports the global data synchronization standards. GDSN data is used by Lowe's to sell a product. This data normally includes width and weight information as well as other hard attributes of the product.

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**What is marketing data?**

Marketing data is used by Lowe's to advertise a product on Lowes.com, in tabloids and through the selling center. This data normally includes product descriptions and soft attributes of the product.

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**What is the GS1 Global Registry? How do I register?**

The GS1 Global Registry (formerly the UCCnet Global Registry) provides a repository for item attributes, as well as providing trading partner capabilities and permissions that allow for information exchange. For more information on how to register with GS1, visit GS1 at the Web site: [www.gs1.org/](http://www.gs1.org/).

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**What is a GLN? Who needs a GLN?**

A Global Location Number (GLN) is a globally unique identification number for physical, functional or legal entities that identifies the home office vendor location and/or ship-from locations. All vendors need a GLN to conduct business with Lowe's. For more information on how to secure a GLN, visit [www.gs1.org](http://www.gs1.org).

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**What is a GTIN?**

A Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is a globally unique identification number for products and services that identifies the products vendors sell at all levels of packaging (each, inner pack, case and pallet). You must have a unique GTIN for all of your products.

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**What is a VBU number?**

A vendor business unit (VBU) is a number that uniquely defines each vendor. Only one vendor can have this number and this is how Lowe's identifies vendors within its systems.

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**What is a packaging hierarchy?**

A packaging hierarchy is a level of packaging for the product. While each level (each, inner pack, case and pallet) maintains its own GTIN, they are all tied together and travel as a group from the vendor to the retailer.

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**What are "Hardlines" products?**

Products manufactured and/or sold by the Hardlines (Hardware and Home Improvement) industry to include appliance makers and sellers.

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**What is a publication report? How do I get one?**

A publication report is confirmation that your item has been published. For information on how to access this report, please see the [Pull Publication Reports](#) document located on LowesLink®.

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**What are "check digit validations"?**

The check digit is the last digit in a barcode. This digit is mathematically calculated, and if entered incorrectly, the barcode will be rejected. There is a check digit calculator on 1Sync's Web site at [www.1sync.org](http://www.1sync.org) or many other sites on the Internet.



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### **How does data sync work?**

For a Data Pool vendor, product data originates at the vendor and is then submitted either to the chosen Solution Provider or directly to a Data Pool. In both situations, the data is published and stored in the Data Pool. Lowe's then subscribes to the data and is able to retrieve it. Once received, the data passes through our PCM application to Mainframe. Due to the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN), data can be shared across Data Pools. If the vendor chooses to use a Data Pool other than 1SYNC, Lowe's is still able to receive the data via the network.

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### **What is the difference between a Data Pool vendor and a Web vendor?**

A Data Pool vendor is a vendor whose product data is shared electronically with Lowe's through the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN). This is preferred and ideal for vendors supplying data to more than one retailer in the GDSN. There are fees associated with this process. Please contact a Solution Provider if you are interested in pursuing this avenue. A Web vendor is a vendor who uses the PCM Web Interface to manually enter all of their product data directly to Lowe's PCM. Lowe's only allows a vendor to be a Web vendor if they sell less than five items through Lowe's. If the vendor decides to sell its products through more than one retailer, the information will need to be re-entered in each retailer's database.

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### **What is the difference between subscribing to the GS1 Global Registry and registering product data?**

Subscribing to the GS1 Global Registry is the act of your company paying a fee and becoming a member of the GS1 Global Registry. A GLN is issued once you have become a member. Registering product data involves setting up GTINs for all of your products, providing all of the item data attributes that are required, and then submitting (or registering) this information in the GS1 Global Registry.

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### **How does the GTIN affect my existing UPCs?**

A GTIN has a 14-digit data structure, while a UPC or barcode may contain only 12-digits (the UPC), 13-digits (EAN-13) OR 8-digits (EAN-8). The GTIN is defined as a 14-digit number to accommodate all the different structures. In this case, the GTIN is formed by adding zeros in front of the UPC or barcode to fit the 14-digit structure.

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### **Does a different GTIN have to be assigned for promotional or seasonal packages?**

Yes, an additional GTIN is required if package dimensions or package quantities change by promotion or by season. No, if there are not any changes to the packaging dimensions or package quantities.



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### **What is the relationship between a GLN and a GTIN?**

There is no relationship other than the use of similar techniques to manage the uniqueness of the numbers. GLNs identify locations and GTINs identify trade items (products and services). The GLN and GTIN must be stored separately because they are separate unique identifiers.

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### **Does a vendor need a separate GLN for each VBU number?**

Although a GLN provides companies a standard means to identify functional, physical and legal entities, the only GLN required is the home office GLN.

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### **How do I know if all my items have been successfully setup and are fully complete?**

Login to PCM and navigate to View Reports. This will allow you to view the status of each your items. You can also review reports from your Solution Provider.

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### **Is there a particular spreadsheet or form that a vendor needs to fill out so the Merchandising Specialist (MS) can subscribe to the GTIN?**

Yes. In order for Lowe's to subscribe to data after it has been published, the vendor needs to complete an Item Set-Up Sheet and return that along with proof of publication to the MS. You can get an Item Set-Up Sheet from an MS or the [PCM Item Set-Up Sheet](#) is posted on the Product Information LowesLink® page.

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### **What do I need to do first? Setup my products with 1Sync or submit the information to the Merchandising Specialist (MS)?**

These two steps should be done at the same time. However, it is important to publish your information to 1Sync before you send the MS your Item Set-Up Sheet.

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### **After I send in my Item Set-Up Sheet, how long does it take to setup the item?**

All items are different. If your Item Set-Up Sheet is free of errors and there are no problems with Lowe's validations, it can be as little as a day. If there are any issues with incorrect item data or if the item fails Lowe's validations, the item cannot be set up until the problems are fixed, which can take time.

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### **Do all retailers have access to the item information? Can you specify who sees the information?**

Access is granted to each retailer by the vendor when opting to have private or public distribution of your product information. It is up to the vendor to make their products public or private.

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### **How do I get a GLN?**

A company can obtain a GLN through GS1 at the Web site:

[www.gs1us.org/standards/barcodes/ean\\_upc](http://www.gs1us.org/standards/barcodes/ean_upc)

If you have any other GLN questions, more information can be found here:

[www.gs1us.org/standards/identification\\_numbers/global\\_location\\_number](http://www.gs1us.org/standards/identification_numbers/global_location_number)

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### **What is Lowe's GLN?**

Lowe's Production GLN is: 0828439000008

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### **Will the GTINs replace the UPC?**

No, the GTIN does not replace the UPC. If you are currently using a UPC number on your products, continue to do so.

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### **I need to set up a new master carton for shipping, how do I do that?**

The procedure for setting up a new master carton for shipping is the same as setting up a new item. You need to publish the new high-level GTIN and contact your Merchandising Specialist with your updated Item Set-Up Sheet.

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### **Where can I find Lowe's validations?**

Validations can be found with the product attributes in the [Descriptions and Validations of Required Product Attributes](#) document on LowesLink®.

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### **I received notification that my data failed validations. What is wrong and how do I fix it?**

In the PCM application under the Notifications tab, it will tell you specifically which GTIN failed and the reason. You can also check the [Top 40 Errors Report](#) for the most common errors and how to fix them. The report is located on the Product Information page under the References tab.

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**What does it mean by “brand required”? What if I can’t publish because of a brand issue?**

Lowe’s requires each brand to be registered on the [Lowe’s Controlled Brand List](#). You can find this list on the References tab of the Product Information page on LowesLink®. If your brand is not listed on the Controlled Brand List, you can see the [How to Add or Update a Brand Name](#) document under the New Vendor tab of the Product Information page on LowesLink®.

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**I accidentally setup an item incorrectly, what do I do?**

You will need to create a ticket through the Product Information Support Portal (FootPrints) and a PCM support member will reset that item for you. For help with creating and sending a Product Information Support Portal (FootPrints) ticket, please see the [Product Information Support Portal \(FootPrints\) Overview](#) document on the Product Information page on LowesLink®.

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**How do I change or update a model number?**

For Data Pool vendors, the change can be published through your Solution Provider. For Web vendors, the update can be made in PCM by using the Update Product Data option. Some divisions may be required to get new barcodes for model number changes, so check with your Merchandising team.

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**How do I get my item on Lowes.com?**

It is assumed that all stock items will be added to Lowes.com. It is important to provide marketing data for Lowe’s to use on Lowes.com, and it is also important to let the Merchandising Specialist know the product is meant for Lowes.com.

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### Where does the data on Lowes.com come from?

The data listed for each product on Lowes.com comes from a combination of sources. Below is an example of how data is pulled for each product page. Data outlined in the red boxes are generated by Lowe's and are based from the information submitted through the GDSN and marketing data. Data outlined in the blue boxes are transferred from the information submitted via the GDSN data. Data outlined in the green boxes are transferred from the information submitted via marketing data.

The screenshot shows a product page for 'Raleigh Robe Hook Chrome' by 'allen + roth'. The page includes a product image, a price of \$00.00, a quantity selector set to 1, and an 'Add to Cart' button. Below the image is a 'Description' tab with a list of features. Three colored boxes with text callouts are overlaid on the page to indicate data sources: a red box for 'Generated by Lowe's' (covering the brand and product name), a blue box for 'Transferred from GDSN' (covering the item and model numbers), and a green box for 'Transferred from marketing data' (covering the product description and features).

Source	Data Points
Generated by Lowe's (Red)	allen + roth, Raleigh Robe Hook Chrome
Transferred from GDSN (Blue)	Item #: 163750, Model #: B0341000CP
Transferred from marketing data (Green)	Raleigh Robe Hook Chrome, Durable chrome finish, Part of a design matched family, Mounting hardware included, Limited lifetime warranty

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### How long does it take to update to Lowes.com?

In most situations it takes 5-7 business days after both the GDSN and marketing data are approved and synced with Lowe's data.

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**If I am a new vendor or a backup for someone at my company who usually handles data collection and PCM, is there somewhere I can go to figure out quickly what to do and who to contact?**

Yes. Our introductory documents are located on the Product Information page of LowesLink®, just look for the New Vendor heading. Any other questions about publishing GDSN data should be answered by your Solution Provider.

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**I don't see my question on this list, where can I find a list of people to contact to help with GDSN data, marketing data and PCM?**

Questions about GDSN data can be directed toward your Solution Provider or toward 1Sync. If you are having trouble with marketing data or PCM, create a Product Information Support Portal ticket to ask a Product Information Specialist. If you need help logging into the Product Information Support Portal or creating a ticket, please see the [Product Information Support Portal \(FootPrints\) Overview](#) document on the Product Information page on LowesLink®.

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