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During the completion of the Product Features and Benefits, I received an error notification that the values in the element must be the same across all levels. However, they appear to have the same text?

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I failed validations and I don't know why?

I accidentally set-up an item incorrectly. What do I do?

GENERAL/OTHER

Can you give me your current GDS time lines with suppliers? We would like to know when we should be ready to send data to the GS1 registry.

I used to be a Transora subscriber (before the merger with UCCnet to become 1SYNC), I am being told due to that fact I can not send the Lowe's Schema Extension in my CINs, is this true?

Lowe's orders different configurations for an individual SKU at different times. Since the Lowe's SKU is the same for these configurations, I am unclear whether Lowe's expects us to publish multiple GTINs for each configuration?

If a supplier is registered with 1SYNC, is there a requirement to go through GS1? The only additional attribute would be the GPC code and I do not see that as a required attribute?

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Will live goods vendors use PCM? How are live goods vendors affected?

Will the Global Registry be used for services, i.e. transportation, or only packaged consumer goods?

How can you expect suppliers that create new items for Lowe's to be compliant with PCM when we don't know if Lowe's will accept them or not, we will not have all the details to complete PCM until Lowe's makes a commitment.

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

Data Synchronization

What is Data Synchronization? And why is it important?

When suppliers and retailers attempt to communicate with one another using unsynchronized data, there is confusion. Neither party completely understands what the other is requesting. The inaccuracies cause costly errors in a variety of business systems. By synchronizing item and supplier data, each organization works from identical information, therefore, minimizing miscommunication. Data synchronization is the key to accurate and timely exchange of item and supplier data across enterprises and organizations.

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What is the GS1 Global Registry?

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 contact GS1 at <http://www.gs1.org/>

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How do I subscribe to the GS1 Global Registry? How much does it cost?

To subscribe to the GS1 registry:













- 1. Educate yourself and others within your organization about data synchronization and data attributes you will need to support.*
- 2. Select a Data Pool/Solution Partner*
- 3. Cleanse your data.*
- 4. Subscribe to GS1 Global Registry*
- 5. Register data*
- 6. Publish data*

For more information, you may visit the GS1 website at <http://www.gs1.org/>

The cost will vary by business size and is determined by an annual evaluation of operational costs. This fee must be paid annually to remain a member of GS1. Please contact your selected Data Pool for more information regarding the pricing structures.

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What are the benefits with global data synchronization?

BENEFIT	RETAILER	MANUFACTURER
Inventory Reduction	 0.5 – 1.0%	 0.5 – 1.0%
Out of Stock %	 2 – 4%	 2 – 4%
Cost of Reconciliation	 5 – 10%	 10 – 20% Customer service and finance
Logistics costs	 1% or more	 1% or more
Receiving times	 +1000 hrs	 +1000 hours
Speed to Market	 2 weeks	 2 weeks

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What is a GLN?

This is a unique location number that identifies the information owner. You will obtain this number after becoming a subscriber with GS1.

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What are the benefits of GLN?

- *Can be used throughout the world with no need for trading partner(s) to assign proprietary numbers to ensure uniqueness.*
- *Saves time and money as the number can be moved quickly and confidently through the supply chain.*
- *May be assigned to any location ensuring ultimate flexibility of the GLN to meet the needs/requirements of all businesses anywhere in the world (from loading docks to aircraft carriers to circuit boards in a router).*
- *Enables users/customers to leverage the full functionality of the EAN.UCC system.*
- *GLNs can be encoded in UCC/EAN-128 bar codes and physically marked onto:*
 - *Trade units to identify the parties involved in the transaction (buyer, supplier)*
 - *Transport units (consignor and consignee)*
 - *Physical locations (place of delivery, place of departure, point of storage)*

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**What is the first step for manufacturers, distributors and retailers to obtain a GLN?
Do I need to have a current EAN.UCC prefix to obtain a GLN?**

If a company does not have an assigned EAN.UCC company prefix, contact the UCC to obtain a membership application. If a company already has a current EAN.UCC company prefix, the company may go directly to GS1 to become a member. You will not need to obtain a new EAN.UCC prefix as long as you have a current prefix.

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What is the relationship between a GLN and a GTIN (e.g., UPC)?

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 my company need a new UCC/ECCC Company Prefix?

No, continue to use your current prefix. Your prefix is your company's identification number assigned by UCC, ECCC or EAN. This number will become a component of your GTIN.

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What is meant by “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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Do all retailers have access to the item information? Can you specify who sees the information?

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

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What is a CIN?

*The global standard for the delivery of product data from the Vendor to the Retailer is the **CatalogItemNotificaton or (CIN)**. This transaction is XML schema-based and is comprised of three components: “Core” Schema, Barcode Schema extension and Hardlines Schema extension.*

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What is a CIS?

The **CatalogItemSubscription or (CIS)** is a schema-based XML message used by recipient trading partners to request item information. Once the subscription is set up, the recipient trading partner receives ongoing updates of the matching data from their source trading partner community.

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PCM Application

What is Product Content Management?

Product Content Management (PCM) is a Lowe's initiative to centralize and standardize our product/item data. 1SYNC and its standardized processes and messages will be the basis for us obtaining accurate and up-to-date product/item information.

How will it work?

Lowe's PCM department working with industry groups such as the Item Synchronization Committee under the VICS organization will develop a standardized item setup sheet. 1SYNC will be the organization by which the data is exchanged.

Will this affect my ordering process?

No, this does not affect your ordering process. The initiative is for data that is held at the product/item level and is consistent at that level, i.e. does not vary by purchase order.

What is the compliance date?

June 2006: Internal integration with internal systems. All new products and updates to existing products through Data Synchronization Network or shortly thereafter.

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How do I gain access to the PCM application?

Is the PCM tutorial required?

The tutorial is not required in order to begin the registration process. However, it is **HIGHLY** recommended vendors take the tutorial in order to understand the entire registration process.

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How do we add other individuals as users for PCM?

Send an email to PCM@lowes.com with the contact information for the additional users.

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There are incorrect addresses for our business in PCM. There are also locations that no longer exist. How do we correct this data?

Any changes (vendor home office addresses) must be entered by your Lowe's merchandising contact. We will make updates to your data sync contact information (if provided).

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Will new item setup be facilitated using PCM?

*Yes. In the future all new products coming into Lowe's will come through PCM. PCM will be the **ONLY** way to add new items or make changes to existing items.*

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What is the transaction choreography between PCM and the datapool? *This assumes that your item data is already registered in the Global Registry.*

- 1) *Register/confirm your item data within the PCM application via Lowe's Link*
- 2) *Publish the item data from step 1 to Lowe's*
- 3) *Check PCM notifications within the PCM application*
- 4) *Correct any errors identified in step 3 at the datapool*
- 5) *Republish the item data to Lowe's – publish as a 'NEW_ITEM'*

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Is there a schedule of when you expect to start testing or implement item data synchronization with the suppliers?

Starting in November 2005, suppliers will begin using the PCM application. Future communications will be sent to suppliers with steps to be taken. Until then if the supplier has not registered products with GS1 and 1SYNC, we encourage them to do so.

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What is the Lowe's Schema Extension?

Data attributes specific to Lowe's which are not currently a part of the standard CORE or standard Hardlines extension. These attributes are necessary when communicating with Lowe's Companies and can be included in the CIN. If a supplier cannot provide these attributes via the CIN, the supplier has the option of web form data entry to ensure that Lowe's receives all required data attributes

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Lowe's specific attributes: When will Lowe's want these and how will suppliers send them? 1SYNC or PCM? I assume these will go through 1SYNC?

The Lowe's schema extension can be included now with the PCM application. With the PCM application in November 2005, Lowe's schema can be sent, leaving no product information to be added manually. There will however, be manual steps within the application that apply to registration and subscription generation.

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What is Lowe's GLN?

Lowe's Production GLN is: 0828439000008

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I thought that the vendor needed a separate GLN for each VBU number?

Although the GLN provides companies a standard means by which to identify functional, physical and legal entities, the only GLN required to work within the PCM application is the Home Office GLN.

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Are we providing a GLN for Lowe's private label brands to our suppliers?

Yes, we have a separate GLN for private label items; please contact pcm@lowes.com for more information.

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Do suppliers have to publish their item information after they have gone into the PCM application and registered their items but before they go in and add the Lowe's additional data?

Additional data can only be completed after the reception of the CIN from the supplier. So, publication must occur before the supplier enters the additional data.

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Do the items have to be registered with 1SYNC or in the GS1 global registry in order to register them within the PCM application?

Yes, Lowe's will send a CIS to 1SYNC (and other data pools) for the vendor to publish. If the product is not registered, the subscription will fail.

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Should suppliers load all of their product information or only the products they are currently selling to Lowe's?

This is up to the supplier however; it may be a good idea to load all of your products. If the supplier does business with other retailers they will eventually make the same request.

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I have published once and failed validations, now I can't publish again?

Once you publish and fail validations and are re-submitting the publication to fix the validation errors you must submit the 'notificationtopic' = New Item and 'isreload' = True

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I can't export any reports to Excel?

This is an issue when a user has upgraded to Microsoft Office 2003. During the upgrade Microsoft removes some necessary files for the export function to work. Go to <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/831590/en-us> for instructions on how to fix the issue.

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What are the system requirements to view the PCM tutorial?

You will need the Macromedia Flash player plug-in (part of internet explorer's standard install) version 6.0 or higher, computer system capable of playing sound to hear the tutorials narration. Flash 9 is currently not compatible.

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Registration

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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Are all suppliers required to subscribe and register their data with the GS1 Global Registry?

Yes. All suppliers are required to subscribe and register their data with the GS1 Global Registry.

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Are any types of products or suppliers considered exempt from GS1 subscription and product registration?

At this time, the focus is on regular merchandise and non-configurable products (stock and special order products).

The following merchandise and suppliers are not a priority at this time but may be required to comply at a later date:

- *Configurable merchandise (example: countertops)*
- *Custom orders (made-to-order per each customer's specifications)*

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What is a GTIN and how do I create a GTIN?

The GTIN is a globally unique; 14-digit number used to identify a trade item (product, product configuration or service). GTIN is an umbrella term for the EAN/UCC-14, EAN/UCC-12 and EAN/UCC-8 data structures (the data structures within the GTIN). GTIN is the global identification standard for all EAN/UCC types. Refer to the UCC solution center to determine your GTIN strategy.

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Why is the GTIN useful?

Uniqueness: The GTIN identifies an item uniquely.

The rules for assigning GTINs ensure that every variation of an item (product or service) is allocated a single reference number that is globally unique.

- *Non-significance: The GTIN numbering structure does not contain any meaningful information in itself. GTINs are simple pointers to database information that can be directly used in any company and in any country.*
- *Multi-sectoral: GTINs are unique across all business sectors. This means that a healthcare product, a PC sound card or an internet-ordered service are all identified in a compatible manner.*
- *International: GTINs are unique worldwide. A GTIN can be assigned anywhere in the world and can be used anywhere in the world.*
- *Security: Security of GTINs is provided through a combination of database look-up and the fixed length, numeric format that includes a standard Check Digit.*
- *Data Integrity: The Check Digit ensures the integrity of data passing into the system.*
- *Source Numbering: the brand owner of the product assigns The GTIN. Once assigned, all trading partners and internal users can use the GTIN.*

Automatic Data Capture: One of the key benefits of the GTIN is that it can be encoded in many automatic data capture technologies (such as a bar code or radio frequency identification tags). Scanning allows the information flow to be linked to the physical flow of trade items through the supply chain.

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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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How does the GTIN affect my existing UPCs?

A GTIN (Global Trade Item Number) is used for the unique identification of trade items worldwide within the EAN.UCC System. A GTIN has a 14-digit data structure though its data carrier (bar code) 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.

Example:

EAN/UCC-8: 12345678 becomes 00000012345678

UCC-12: 123456789123 becomes 00123456789123

UCC/EAN-14: 1234567891234 becomes 01234567891234

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Who do I contact to make updates or changes to a barcode?

Contact barcodeissues@lowes.com with the item, barcode that needs to be updated, and the old/new quantities or old/new barcode.

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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 no changes to the packaging dimensions or package quantities.

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Where do Canadian suppliers need to sign up?

Canadian suppliers may sign up with ECCnet or any GS1 certified data pool.

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Do Canadian suppliers have to register their products with ECCnet or can they register their products with any data pool?

1. Canadian based Suppliers with Canadian based prefixes

- *You may register your GTIN's with ECCnet or any Data Pool that has a certified GS1 connection.*

2. US based Suppliers with US and Canadian based prefixes:

- *You may register your GTIN's with any Data Pool that has a certified GS1 connection.*

3. US based Supplier with US based Prefixes:

- *You may register your GTIN's with any Data Pool that has a certified GS1 connection.*

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I have stock and SOS products; does it make a difference which ones I should register first in the PCM application?

Please register, publish, and pass all Lowe's validations for your stock items before beginning SOS registration

- **What do I do if I have an item that is available in stock and SOS? Do I need to register this item/model number twice?**

*Yes, you will have to register the item/model combination twice, but please register the stock item first. You will also have to register it under the SOS side as well. This ensures that Lowe's has all the necessary information for the stock and SOS items. However, you only need to make **one publication** of this product. All product data will be applicable to both.*

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How do I make changes to my SOS models that are in PCM?

SOS will be handled the same way it is today. You will still need to submit the SOS excel spreadsheet to have items added, deleted, etc.

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We have different case pack sizes for our products that vary by customer. Will we need to register each pack size?

Yes, you will need to account for all packaging situations.

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Many Special Order items are not Bar Coded. Is this a factor?

Yes, part of your data “clean up” will require that you have a unique GTIN for each of your products. This unique GTIN is used to trade data through the Global Registry.

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Validation Errors

During the completion of the Product Features and Benefits, I received an error notification that the values in the element must be the same across all levels. However, they appear to have the same text?

Please ensure you have no space, dashes, etc.

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Regarding the “is wood a component of this item” indicator, I have some items that have wood shavings in the soil of the plant, does that mean I select yes? Also, what about living plants, such as a tree?

Wood chips in the soil would not constitute as a component of the item, however mulch on its own, or trees should be marked as yes, contains wood. If in doubt email pcm@lowes.com, it is also best to err on the safe side in which case the answer would be yes, it contains wood.

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I failed validations and I don't know why?

In the PCM application under the Notifications tab it will tell you specifically which GTIN you failed and the reason.

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I accidentally set-up an item incorrectly. What do I do?

You will have to email pcm@lowes.com and a team member will reset that item for you.

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General/Other

Can you give me your current GDS time lines with suppliers? We would like to know when we should be ready to send data to the GS1 registry.

Beginning in November 2005 we will start having vendors send data to the registry, you will receive more communication as we progress.

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I used to be a Transora subscriber (before the merger with UCCnet to become 1SYNC), I am being told due to that fact I can not send the Lowe's Schema Extension in my CINs, is this true?

Yes this is true, the Lowe's Schema was UCCnet capability (and new 1SYNC subscribers), in the future, subscribers that were previously with Transora will be able to send the Lowe's Schema.

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Lowe's orders different configurations for an individual SKU at different times. Since the Lowe's SKU is the same for these configurations, I am unclear whether Lowe's expects us to publish multiple GTINs for each configuration?

As for publishing multiple GTINs for each configuration, yes this is the expectation if the product is ordered in different quantities at different times. In the case described, both GTIN configurations for the item would be considered the highest level GTIN. Remember to mark both GTINs as the highest so Lowe's will receive both packaging hierarchies. (This will need to be personalized on a case by case basis)

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If a supplier is registered with 1SYNC, is there a requirement to go through GS1? The only additional attribute would be the GPC code and I do not see that as a required attribute?

1SYNC is a data pool, not a global registry, so you must also join GS1. You will need to contact 1SYNC at customersupport@uccnet.net (1SYNC is the unification of Transora and UCCnet) for issues with the global registry. However, GPC is required at GS1, although there are no hardlines GPC currently established. You will need to use 99999999 as your GPC for now.

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When will special order (SOS) items be synchronized?

With the new PCM application in November 2005, Lowe's will be looking for stock items and all SOS Items currently provided for by Electronic Catalog (E-Cat).

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Plan-o-gram: what is the connection to data synchronization?

In the future plan-o-gram information (including images) will be included.

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RFID: what is the connection to data synchronization?

Lowe's barcode standards are in the same levels of development as data synchronization. For specific questions on radio frequency identifiers please email barcodeissues@lowes.com

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Deals and displays, can Lowe's accept these?

With full integration Lowe's will have the capability to accept product data on display items, etc.

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Where can I find Lowe's specific attributes and validations?

http://www.loweslink.com/pubdocuments/Lowes_Vendor_Implementation_Guide.pdf

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What version of 1SYNC should be used?

The most recent version should be used, please contact www.1sync.org for additional information; all data pools must be compatible with this version.

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Do suppliers with a small number of products still have to register with the GS1 Registry?

Yes. All suppliers are required to subscribe and register their data with the GS1 Registry. We strongly suggest that you shop around and compare prices and services.

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I am a nursery supplier, what guidelines should I follow?

Lowe's and Wal-Mart current endorse the VICS Hardlines document for Nursery Guidelines dated July 2005 as the most appropriate for retailer needs in data synchronization.

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I am a Lowe's Direct Import vendor. Does this initiative apply to me?

Yes, data synchronization is a global standards initiative and applies to these suppliers as well. Your timeline for compliance will correspond to that of the US domestic suppliers.

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What will happen if suppliers do not register their product information?

Lowe's and our merchandising teams are requiring that all product data be registered with GS1 Registry. Beginning in March of 2006 we will begin reporting to the merchandising teams of any suppliers still not in compliance.

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Will GS1 replace EDI?

GS1 was not designed to replace EDI. It was developed to take advantage of new and emerging technologies to more easily enable all the industry trading partners to engage in data synchronization. In addition, GS1 is not addressing commerce messages such as Orders, Dispatch Advises, etc.

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How can suppliers evaluate which solution provider is best for their business?

This needs to be addressed at the supplier level. Lowe's does not have preferred solution providers; therefore each supplier must evaluate their options that most closely fit their business needs. The selected solution provider must be compatible with 1SYNC.

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Do we have to use a specific solution partner or data pool?

Lowe's highly recommends you use 1SYNC, but you are not required to. However, you must use a GS1 certified data pool.

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Will live goods vendors use PCM? How are live goods vendors affected?

Yes, the live goods suppliers will use PCM.

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Will the Global Registry be used for services, i.e. transportation, or only packaged consumer goods?

Ultimately, the Global Registry will be used for many other lines of business.

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How can Lowe's expect suppliers that create new items for Lowe's to be compliant with PCM when we don't know if Lowe's will accept them or not, we will not have all the details to complete PCM until Lowe's makes a commitment.

If you are set up and ready to go with 1SYNC or some other certified data pool, it should not take long to create the products in the registry and data pool once you receive the go-ahead from Lowe's. In this case, we understand you would not be able to bring the data to the line review with you, but you will have to create it as soon as product decisions are made. Lowe's will not be able to place orders without the full set of data.

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

Log in to PCM and go to View Reports. This will allow you to view the status of each your items: Stock and SOS.

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Don't see your question? Then email the PCM group at pcm@lowes.com

Thanks!