GS1 MobileCom
Engaging with consumers via their mobile phones
Are you tapping the potential of mobile to reach consumers and grow your business?

Mobile phones have already changed the way we live, work and communicate. Now, they are also poised to change the way we shop.

Many mobile phones today can read bar codes and access the Internet. As a result, they can bring information and services linked to a product directly to the consumer – which in turn brings the consumer closer to that product and its brand.

Brand owners and retailers rightly recognise that there are many ways to use mobile phones to offer consumers a richer shopping experience and more engaging services.

This potential cannot currently be fully realised because the mobile ecosystem is not fully interoperable, and mobile services are not compatible across all mobile devices and operators – so it is costly and complex to launch scalable global services. Global standards and an open and neutral infrastructure, trusted by both businesses and consumers, must be found.

That’s where GS1 comes in. GS1 standards are used by over 1 million companies in more than 150 countries. These companies are working with GS1 to ensure they can leverage existing standards to develop innovative services to make consumers’ lives better.

By working on industry engagement and standards development at global level and implementation at local level, GS1 is helping these companies create and deploy mobile applications and services that are interoperable, scalable and cost-effective.

There are two key focus areas for the use of GS1 standards:

- ensuring products are identified
- enabling access to trusted product information and related services

That’s the work being undertaken by GS1 MobileCom.

Did you know?

- By the end of 2010, there will be almost 5 billion mobile phone subscribers in the world (source: ITU/GSMA).
- There are more mobile broadband subscribers than fixed broadband subscribers in the world today (source: ITU).
- Mobile commerce is booming: the global mobile content market will be worth 167 billion USD by 2012 (source: Juniper).
- There are more mobile phones in the world than there are computers, credit cards or TV sets (source: Informa).

Brands and retailers can use mobile phones to offer consumers a richer shopping experience and more engaging services.
The GS1 MobileCom group is a collaborative, neutral, global forum for all stakeholders interested in mobile commerce and mobile communications: brand owners, retailers, mobile operators, mobile phone manufacturers, service providers, government organisations and regulatory bodies, and a variety of industry associations.

There are many stakeholders in the mobile commerce ecosystem. Without a neutral, not-for-profit and global organisation like GS1, such very diverse companies and organisations would probably not be able to agree on standards. GS1 makes it possible.

Under the guidance of its Steering Committee, the GS1 MobileCom group identifies and prioritises business requirements which allows them to define the open infrastructure and the global standards needed to enable market development and to ensure that services are compatible across all mobile devices and operators. The Group has already published white papers, position papers and other informative material.

The GS1 MobileCom group wants to ensure that services are compatible across all mobile devices and all operators.
Mobile phones have dozens of potential uses across the entire purchase cycle. They can be used for:

- providing store location details
- making promotional offers to shoppers on the go
- offering specially designed mobile-shopping websites
- enabling loyalty programmes
- displaying discount coupons
- making payments for show tickets, parking or transportation.

One of the most interesting potential use cases is how mobile phones can provide product information and related services, whether generic or personalised (such as advice or coaching) or information about products on store shelves.

Did you know?

- A recent study showed that consumers have widely variable needs for information ranging from nutritional labelling to environmental benefits to country of origin. Meeting these needs is a significant opportunity for manufacturers and retailers. (Deloitte)
- 28% of those surveyed thought that scanning a product using their mobile phone could make shopping easier and improve the shopping process (Deloitte)

With so many potential uses, Extended Packaging is a key enabler

This is what is called Extended Packaging – literally extending the information beyond what the packaging and into the digital world.

GS1 MobileCom believes that Extended Packaging offers the most immediate potential, and as a result, acts as a key enabler to mobile services in general. By using the camera of a mobile device to read a bar code, a consumer can obtain more information about a product than its manufacturers are able to print on the outside of the packaging, and can also access additional services.

Extended Packaging opens up seemingly limitless possibilities for brand owners, and is also very easy for consumers to use – while in the supermarket, a shopper simply points, clicks, and immediately obtains allergen information, language translations, recipes, detailed use instructions and more.

What is Extended Packaging?

Consumer  → Mobile phone  → Brand/Retailer

A consumer has a question about a product they are buying. By using a mobile phone to interact with the pack they find the answer they need. Satisfied consumers, deeper understanding, increased trust, better sales.

Extended Packaging services provide an answer to consumer demands for additional information. They solve the problem of limited space on packaging and put an end to the static nature of the information printed there. But most significantly, extended packaging supports the fact that there is a clear link between information provided at the point of sale and purchase decisions. Put simply, Extended Packaging provides consumers with the information they need - and better information means more sales.

Extended Packaging provides consumers with the information they need - and better information means more sales.
Open standards already exist for Mobile Commerce

The GS1 standards and infrastructure that are already known and trusted by over 1 million of manufacturers and retailers in almost every country in the world can be used today to launch Extended Packaging services. Indeed, there are already Extended Packaging services live in many countries around the world.

It’s important to consider what standards to use for mobile commerce, because there is a wide range of possible solutions.

Brand owners and retailers need a system that reaches the most consumers, covers the widest range of geographies and works with the largest variety mobile devices. This is why GS1 recommends using a bar code and product information based on open GS1 standards.

Open standards guarantee scalability

With open standards, the small pilot you run can be efficiently expanded to a full rollout, and the campaign you launch successfully in one country can be efficiently reproduced in other geographies.

Open standards eliminate the risks of vendor lock-in

Solution providers make money by selling their solutions. Open standards encourage healthy competition by allowing vendors to focus on the quality of the service they are providing, rather than the closed standard they are using to provide it. As a result, companies are free to change vendors anytime, which helps to ensure they always have a supplier who is adding the right value.

Open standards ensure interoperability

Because all consumer goods marketing campaigns ultimately involve a product, using open standards (like the existing GS1 product identification number known as the GTIN) makes linking to other information about that product quick and easy.

The GS1 components of Extended Packaging

- GS1 EAN/UPC (1D) bar codes can be used today to drive Extended Packaging implementations. These bar codes are built upon open standards.

The GS1 standards and infrastructure that you know and trust can be used today to launch Extended Packaging services.
Make open standards a reality: Join the GS1 MobileCom Group

The GS1 MobileCom group is a global forum for all stakeholders in the mobile commerce ecosystem who wish to make mobile commerce based on open, global standards a reality and determine the standards that will make it possible.

Whether your company is already working to reach consumers on their mobile phones, or whether you wish to better understand and evaluate the potential value of mobile devices as a way to engage consumers, you should join our group.

As a participant in the GS1 MobileCom group, you can ensure that the specific needs of your business are considered, and you can learn and share information about market trends, technology developments and pilot programmes.

Participation in the GS1 MobileCom group means attending regular conference calls and contributing to the projects and tasks discussed and decided during them. The group also holds two physical meetings every year, which offer the chance to share information with a dynamic group of fellow stakeholders and to work in person on projects discussed during conference calls.

To join, call +32 2 788 78 00, e-mail mobilecom@gs1.org or visit www.gs1.org/mobile.

Learn more

The GS1 MobileCom group has already published a number of informative documents to help companies better understand the actors, possibilities and stakes of mobile commerce.

- “Mobile Commerce: Opportunities and Challenges” white paper
- Extended Packaging Pilot Handbook - for company to start a trial
- Position paper on mobile bar codes
- “Mobile in Retail”, a white paper addressing the ways that retailers can engage consumers via a mobile-friendly in-store environment

Download them from our website at www.gs1.org/mobile.

Get started on a project: Contact a local GS1 office

What are you waiting for? The time to get started is now! The open, neutral, globally-used EAN/UPC GS1 bar codes that are the trusted standard for millions of companies can be used today to implement mobile commerce projects that engage your consumers.

Beyond ensuring solutions and services that are interoperable, scalable and cost-effective, GS1 standards will also allow a fast and easy adoption of mobile services and reduce the cost of the initial investment for businesses.

A local GS1 Member Organisation is the source for more information about implementing a mobile commerce project at your company.

Find the GS1 Member Organisation nearest you on our website at www.gs1.org/contact – we are present in 108 countries around the globe.

Countries with a GS1 office

Countries served on a direct basis from GS1 Global Office

[Map showing countries with GS1 offices and those served directly from GS1 Global Office]
GS1 designs and manages a global system of supply chain standards.

For the last 30 years, GS1 has been dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards for use in the supply chain. GS1 standards provide a framework that allows products, services, and information about them to move efficiently and securely for the benefit of businesses and the improvement of people’s lives, everyday, everywhere.

Our standards ensure effective exchanges between companies, and act as basic guidelines that facilitate interoperability and provide structure to many industries.

GS1 standards bring together companies representing all parts of the supply chain – manufacturers, distributors, retailers, hospitals, transporters, customs organisations, software developers, local and international regulatory authorities, and more.

GS1 standards are used by huge multinational chains and by small corner shops; by world-famous brands and by individual craftsmen. These companies, who may in fact have diverging business interests, work together under our leadership to agree upon standards that make the supply chain faster, more efficient, less complex and less costly.

Read more about GS1 at www.gs1.org