

# Predicting the Impact of GS1 Digital Link

In June 2024, GS1 celebrated the 50th anniversary of the UPC barcode, ushering in the new standard: GS1 Digital Link.

GS1 Digital Link is the evolution of the traditional UPC barcode, transforming it into a web-enabled, dynamic QR code. This technology allows each product to be linked to a wealth of information accessible through a single scan, enhancing consumer engagement and operational efficiency across the supply chain.





## What is GS1 Digital Link's Impact on Consumer Brands?

GS1 Digital Link offers significant advantages for consumer brands by enhancing consumer engagement, brand protection, and marketing personalization. Brands can provide real-time information, such as product details, promotions, user reviews, and personalized content.

### Unmatched Two-way Engagement Creates First-Party Data

For example, a beverage company can use GS1 Digital Link to provide consumers with real-time information about the ingredients, sourcing, and nutritional facts of their drinks. By scanning the QR code, consumers can also access promotional offers and user reviews.

This technology also enables two-way communication, allowing direct feedback from consumers. A cosmetics brand can use the QR code to direct consumers to a feedback form where they can share their experiences with the product, helping improve future product formulations.

### Authentication of "Real" Goods

Brand protection and trust are enhanced as consumers can verify product authenticity, reducing counterfeit risks. For instance, a luxury handbag manufacturer can include a GS1 Digital Link on each product, allowing consumers to scan and verify the authenticity, ensuring they are purchasing a genuine item.

### Putting Sustainability and Regulatory Information Front and Center

Transparency in offering detailed product information builds trust and reinforces brand integrity. A food brand, for example, can provide detailed information about the farming practices and sourcing of ingredients, building trust with consumers who are increasingly concerned about where their food comes from.

### Targeted Marketing Campaigns with Engaged Consumers

GS1 Digital Link also facilitates targeted marketing campaigns by using data from scans to tailor marketing efforts to specific consumer segments. A sports apparel company can use data from QR code scans to understand which products are most popular in different regions and tailor their marketing campaigns accordingly.

Additionally, QR codes can lead to interactive content, enhancing the consumer experience. For example, a toy manufacturer can include a QR code on their packaging that leads to an interactive app or game related to the toy, providing an enhanced experience for children and adding value to the product.

## The Impact of GS1 Digital Link on Consumers

Consumers benefit from GS1 Digital Link by making more informed purchasing decisions and enjoying enhanced convenience and safety. They can easily access product origins, ingredients, and sustainability practices.

### Well-Informed Buying Decisions

The convenience of easy access to necessary product information simplifies shopping. For instance, a consumer shopping for electronics can scan the QR code on a product to instantly access user manuals, warranty information, and customer reviews, making their decision-making process easier.

### Deeper Engagement with Products and How to Use Them

For example, a consumer scanning the QR code on a package of coffee can learn about the coffee's origin, the farmers who grew it, and the sustainability practices involved in its production. Engaging content such as recipes, tutorials, and promotions can be accessed instantly, enhancing the overall purchasing and cooking experience. A food brand can offer recipe ideas and cooking tutorials when a consumer scans the QR code on a product.

### Easy-to-Access Recall and Allergen Information

Safety and trust are also enhanced as consumers can verify product authenticity and access comprehensive information about the ingredients used in products. A skincare brand, for example, can provide detailed information, ensuring transparency and building consumer trust.





# How GS1 Digital Links Will Impact the Supply Chain

GS1 Digital Link improves traceability and operational efficiency across the supply chain.



## Better Accuracy of Transport Status

Real-time data enables tracking of products from manufacturing to the end consumer. A logistics company can use GS1 Digital Link to track shipments in real-time, ensuring timely deliveries and providing accurate updates to customers.

## Dramatically Improved Recall Responses

It also simplifies the process of identifying and recalling defective or expired products, reducing the impact on consumers and brands. A food manufacturer, for example, can quickly identify and recall batches of products that are contaminated, minimizing the risk to consumers and the brand's reputation.

## End-to-End Data Sharing Improves Preparedness

Data integration streamlines data sharing across supply chain partners, improving coordination and reducing errors. An automotive manufacturer can integrate GS1 Digital Link into their supply chain to streamline data sharing with parts suppliers, ensuring accurate and timely deliveries. Enhanced visibility into inventory levels helps optimize stock management and reduce waste.

## How Retailers Benefit from GS1 Digital Link

Retailers stand to gain significantly from GS1 Digital Link through improved inventory management, enhanced customer experience, and better data insights.

### Accurate Inventory Improves Efficiency

Retailers can monitor inventory levels in real-time, reducing overstock and stockouts, and ensuring that shelves are stocked with the right products at the right time. For instance, a supermarket chain can use GS1 Digital Link to manage inventory across multiple stores, ensuring that popular products are always in stock and reducing the likelihood of overstocking less popular items. This leads to more efficient operations and cost savings.

### Improve Customer Experiences to Build Loyalty

Customer experience is enhanced as retailers can provide more detailed product information and interactive content. A clothing retailer, for example, can include GS1 Digital Link on product tags, allowing customers to access information about fabric, care instructions, and even styling tips by scanning the QR code. This added value can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### Insights into Buyer Preferences for Improved Decision-Making

Additionally, retailers can gain valuable insights from scan data, helping them understand consumer preferences and tailor their offerings accordingly. For example, a home goods retailer can analyze scan data to determine which products are most popular and adjust their inventory and marketing strategies to better meet customer demand.







## Sustainability Comes to the Forefront with GS1 Digital Links

As consumers care more and more about environmental issues, GS1 Digital Link promotes sustainability by reducing waste, optimizing resource use, and increasing consumer awareness.

### Reduce Waste with Improved Recall Processes

Efficient recalls enabled by faster identification and removal of defective products reduce waste. A food company, for example, can quickly recall specific batches of products, preventing widespread waste and reducing the environmental impact.

### Anticipate Buyer Preferences to Avoid Overproduction

Better inventory management minimizes overproduction and waste, as seen with a fashion retailer using GS1 Digital Link to better forecast demand and reduce unsold inventory that would otherwise go to waste.

Resource optimization is achieved through improved coordination and data sharing, leading to more efficient resource use. A manufacturer can optimize their production processes by integrating real-time data from GS1 Digital Link, reducing resource consumption and improving overall efficiency.

### Share Sourcing and Sustainability Practices to Build Loyalty

Transparency in sourcing and production encourages sustainable practices across the supply chain. A coffee company, for instance, can showcase their commitment to sustainability by providing detailed information about their sourcing and production practices, encouraging others in the supply chain to adopt similar practices.

Consumer awareness is increased as brands can provide information about their sustainability efforts, encouraging eco-friendly purchasing decisions. A clothing brand can include information about their use of organic materials and ethical labor practices, influencing consumers to make more sustainable choices.

## Brands that Take Advantage of GS1 Digital Link Will Win Consumers Over

GS1 Digital Link represents a significant advancement in the way products interact with consumers, retailers, and the supply chain. By turning each product into a gateway for dynamic information, it enhances consumer engagement, improves supply chain efficiency, and promotes sustainability.

Brands adopting this technology can expect to build stronger connections with their consumers, optimize their operations, and contribute positively to the environment.

Retailers will benefit from improved inventory management, enhanced customer experience, and better data insights, while consumers will enjoy more informed purchasing decisions, convenience, and safety.

Overall, GS1 Digital Link is poised to transform the landscape of product information and interaction, driving progress in engagement, efficiency, and sustainability. [As a brand, what are you doing to get started?](#)

