Cook Medical Meets Industry Date for GS1 Global Trade Item Number

The health care industry is adopting a set of standards to make supply chain easier for hospitals and Cook Medical is ready for the change. Almost ten years ago, Cook Medical realized all of its manufacturing companies were using different product numbering systems. The lack of standards caused confusion and inefficiency in shipping and tracking product. Cook realized that if it was struggling to communicate across its own companies, its customers were likely dealing with the same struggles.

To solve this, Cook adopted GS1 standards to simplify the supply chain. This decision laid the groundwork for Cook to meet Monday's industry-agreed date for assigning GS1 Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) to products.

All Cook products sold in North America now have GTINs. GTINs are unique numbers that are assigned to products and usually appear on packaging as barcodes. GTINs give a common language to manufacturers, suppliers and hospitals.

"We think standards make sense for health care and for our business," said Dave Reed, vice president of the Healthcare Business Solutions division and vice president of operations at Cook Medical. "The lack of a common language for identifying products and the lack of clean data in health care make it difficult and costly to do business. More than manufacturers and health care providers will benefit from using a standard like GS1."

This common language of GTIN makes it easier to track products as they move from manufacturer to patient. It also helps reduce the number of errors made because of inaccurate information.

"We've been working with GTIN for about a decade. It wasn't always easy, but it's very positive for health care, right down to the patient level," added Reed. "We feel like all the effort was worth it."

About GS1 and GS1 Healthcare
GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards and solutions to improve efficiency and visibility in supply chains. GS1 is driven by more than a million companies who execute more than six billion transactions a day with the GS1 System of Standards. GS1 is truly global, with member organizations in over 100 countries, and has its global office in Brussels, Belgium. GS1 Healthcare is a global, voluntary health care user group that develops global standards for the health care supply chain and advances global harmonization. For more information visit www.gs1.org/healthcare [1].

About Cook Medical

A global pioneer in medical breakthroughs, Cook Medical is committed to creating effective solutions that benefit millions of patients worldwide. Today, we combine medical devices, drugs, biologic grafts and cell therapies across more than 16,000 products serving more than 40 medical specialties. Founded in 1963 by a visionary who put patient needs and ethical business practices first, Cook is a family-owned company that has created more than 10,000 jobs worldwide. For more information, visit www.cookmedical.com [2]. Follow Cook Medical on Twitter [3] and LinkedIn. [4]

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