



The Global Language of Business

# GTIN Management Standard

This standard is used to populate the GS1 website:  
<http://www.gs1.org/1/gtinrules/>

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## Contributors

Name	Organisation
Cherise Allison	Sam's Club
Dominique Alvarez	L'Oreal
Andrea Ausili	GS1 Italy
Nuno Azevedo	GS1 Portugal
Duncan Barnett	Unilever UK
Xavier Barras	GS1 France
Earl Beery	The J.M. Smucker Company
Robert Beideman	GS1 Global Office
Cassi Belazouz	GS1 France
Lori Bigler	The J.M. Smucker Company
Mats Bjorkqvist	GS1 Sweden
Arnaud Bonnefoy	GS1 France
Carol Botten	Tesco Stores Ltd.
Philippe Brian	Carrefour
Jaclyn Broomhead	GS1 UK
Scott Brown	GS1 US
David Buckley	GS1 Global Office
Greg Buckley	PepsiCo Inc.
Heather Burns	Wal-Mart Stores Inc.
Mike Capsambelis	Google Switzerland GmbH
Emanuela Casalini	GS1 Italy
Anthony Chan	GS1 Hong Kong
James Chronowski	GS1 US
Daniel Clark	GS1 Canada
Luiz Costa	GS1 Brasil
Jeffrey Cree	Ahold (USA)
Jay Crowley	USDM
Trey Davis	Alcon Labs

Name	Organisation
Kevin Dean	GS1 Canada
Robert Delp	Johnson & Johnson
Yolande Diaz	Carrefour
Deniss Dobrovolskis	GS1 Sweden
Camille Dreyfuss	GS1 France
Marcel Ducceschi	Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund
Mike Durning	Wakefern Food Corporation
Hussam El-Leithy	GS1 US
Steve Endacott	Tesco Stores Ltd.
Juliet Espinosa	GS1 Colombia
Filipe Esteves	GS1 Portugal
Véra Feuerstein	Nestle
Richard Fisher	DLA - DoD Logistics AIT Office
Stefan Gathmann	GS1 Ireland
Inga Gehring	REWE Group
Vanessa Giulieri	GS1 Italy
Christian Santiago	Google Inc.
Heinz Graf	GS1 Switzerland
David Hackbarth	Procter & Gamble Co.
Ruediger Hagedorn	The Consumer Goods Forum
Andrew Hearn	GS1 Global Office
Kurt Herregodts	GS1 Belgium & Luxembourg
Bernie Hogan	GS1 US
Mark Holmes	GS1 Global Office
Agata Horzela	GS1 Poland
Tany Hui	GS1 Hong Kong
Alan Hyler	GS1 Global Office
Marc Inderbitzin	Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund
Sebastián Infante	GS1 Colombia
Yoshihiko Iwasaki	GS1 Japan
Sven Jahn	Coop Genossenschaft
Lillian Jakubczyk	Mattel Inc
Richard Johnstone	GS1 UK
Manfred Jürgens	Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund
Katalin Kecskes	GS1 Hungary
Jennifer Keegan	Woolworths Limited
Brendan Kernan	GS1 Ireland
Werner Kolb	Unilever N.V.
Thorsten Kroke	REWE Group
Jason Lavik	Target Corporation
Hanjoerg Lerch	METRO Group

Name	Organisation
David Little	eBay Inc
Jia Liu	GS1 China
Theresa Long	Bunge Oils
Elizabeth Lorkins	Unilever UK
Ilka Machemer	GS1 Germany
Maria Madalena Centeno	GS1 Portugal
Meg Mason	Google Switzerland GmbH
John McMains	Mattel Inc
Christine McMaster	Wakefern Food Corporation
Diane Mellowship	Tesco Stores Ltd.
Eddy Merrill	GS1 Global Office
Frank Metz	GS1 Germany
Gena Morgan	GS1 Global Office
Naoko Mori	GS1 Japan
Daniel Mueller-Sauter	GS1 Switzerland
Rebecca Nichols	The J.M. Smucker Company
Melanie Nuce	GS1 US
Benjamin Östman	GS1 Finland
Manfred Piller	GS1 Austria
Neil Piper	GS1 UK
Raymond M Poinsette	Beaver Street Fisheries
Christian Przybilla	GS1 Germany
Nadine Radomski	Dean Foods Company
Paul Reid	GS1 UK
Rob Rekrutiak	Google Switzerland GmbH
Barbara Richardson	Coca-Cola Company (The)
Rich Richardson	GS1 US
Erin Riggs	Procter & Gamble Co.
Steven Robba	1WorldSync Holdings Inc.
Pere Rosell	GS1 Spain
John Ryu	GS1 Global Office
Marcelo Sa	GS1 Brasil
Budi Saputra	Procter & Gamble Co.
Matthieu Saussol	Bonduelle
Sue Schmid	GS1 Australia
Eugen Sehorz	GS1 Austria
Deanna Sheardown	Mattel Inc
David Sheldon	Nestle
Yuko Shimizu	GS1 Japan
Daseul Son	Google Switzerland GmbH
Simone Sporing	Coop Genossenschaft

Name	Organisation
Andrew Steele	GS1 Australia
Emily Stow	New Look Retailers Limited
Taishi Takaoka	GS1 Japan
Xin Tian	GS1 China
Marianne Timmons	GS1 Global Office
Elena Tomanovich	GS1 Global Office
Xavier Tournade	Mars Inc.
Ron Trauthwein	Coca-Cola Company (The)
Milan Vacval	1WorldSync Holdings Inc.
Ankur Vaid	GS1 Australia
Frits van den Bos	GS1 Netherlands
Regan Van Tassel	Ecolab
Krisztina Vatai	GS1 Hungary
Jon Verb	Bar Code Graphics Inc.
Olivier Veys	Bonduelle
Anand Vora	Google Switzerland GmbH
Kathleen Welch	Wegmans Food Markets
Matthias Wiesmann	Google Switzerland GmbH
Carrie Wilkie	GS1 US
MJ Wylie	Johnson & Johnson
Ruoyun Yan	GS1 China
Qi Zhibo	GS1 China
Dale Zukaitis	Wegmans Food Markets

## Log of Changes

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1.0	June 2016	G. Morgan, A. Hearn & D. Buckley	WR16-012, GS1 UniqueID initiative: Simplifying and clarifying GTIN management thereby helping business to share detailed product information with consumers in today's omni-channel marketplace.
1.1	Sep 2023	D. Mullen	WR 23-145 & WR 23-251, GTIN Modernisation MSWG work to denote scope does not include non-new trade items and updates around bundles.

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# 1 Introduction

The Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) provides a global supply chain solution by identifying any trade item that may be priced, or ordered, or invoiced at any point in the supply chain upon which there is a need to retrieve predefined information.

The Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) Management Standard is designed to help industry make consistent decisions about the unique identification of trade items in open supply chains. This standard has been developed in accordance with the GS1 Global Standards Management Process (GSMP) and is considered a part of the GS1 system of standards. Overall, costs are minimised when all partners in the supply chain adhere to the GTIN Management Standard.

Unique identification of trade items is critical to maintaining operational efficiencies that business partners rely on to exchange information about products in consistent ways, as well as ensuring the smooth operations of global supply chains. Additionally, the unique identification of trade items is crucial when complying with various regulations across the globe. Finally, unique identification as well as communication between trading partners of those changes are essential to ensure the right product is made available on the store shelf or is presented and fulfilled properly from an e-commerce platform to the consumer.

## 1.1 Guiding principles/Business objectives of changing a GTIN

The GTIN Management Standard provides an industry standard to create practical business and consumer value, specifically when predefined information *changes* on an existing product or when a new product is introduced for the first time. **This GTIN Management Standard SHALL NOT be used for identifying non-new trade items. For rules on identifying non-new trade items, see General Specifications, section 2.1.15.** The following guiding principles should be considered by any brand owner when introducing changes to an existing product and also when developing a GTIN assignment strategy for a new product.

1. Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?
2. Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?
3. Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?

At least one of the guiding principles must apply for a GTIN change to be required.

## 1.2 Defining a new product compared to a change to an existing product in market

When making decisions about product identification, it is important to understand the differences between a NEW product and changes to an existing product in market.

New products are those which do not currently exist in a brand owner's portfolio and are new to the market. The GTIN Management Standard requires that if a product is new to the market, it should always be assigned a new GTIN to accurately distinguish the new product from any existing product in market.

Changes to existing products are considered "replacement products" (the previous version will no longer exist once the replacement product has flowed through, as determined by the brand owner). The GTIN Management Standard defines when a change to certain attributes of an existing product in market is such that a new GTIN is required.

- **New product:** A "new product" is defined as a product that does not currently exist or has not been available for sale and is an addition to the brand owner's portfolio/is new to the market.
- **Product Change:** An existing product, currently in the brand owner's portfolio and available in the market whose attributes have been changed.

## 1.3 GS1 standards and legal/regulatory compliance

The GTIN Management Standard represents a minimum requirement. Please be advised that there may be regulation(s) in your market area that are more stringent and SHALL be adhered to.

All local legal and regulatory requirements supersede the GTIN Management Standard.

## 1.4 GTIN Management Standard and brand owner discretion

The GTIN Management Standard represents the minimum GTIN changes that industry has decided upon. Brand owners may change the GTIN as often as they think is appropriate based upon their needs as well as the needs of their consumers and trading partners, considering the guiding principles defined in section [1.1](#).

## 2 GTIN Management Rules

Below are the details that define when a GTIN MUST be newly assigned (NEW PRODUCT) or changed (REPLACEMENT PRODUCT) in order to be in conformance with the GTIN Management Standard.

The GTIN Management rules define when GTIN changes are needed at the retail consumer trade item level (base unit) as well as on higher level trade items (e.g., case, pallet) that currently exist and are used in distribution processes.

Remember that all of the GTIN Management rules need to be taken into account when making the final decision of whether or not to change a GTIN.

### 2.1 New product introduction

A "new product" is defined as a product that does not currently exist or has not been available for sale and is an addition to the brand owner's portfolio/is new to the market.

**Any new product requires the assignment of a new GTIN.**

#### Hierarchy levels of GTIN assignment

- The GTIN is assigned at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	New GTIN for retail consumer trade item or base unit level?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
New product introduction	YES	YES

#### Example business scenarios that require GTIN assignment

- A mobile phone producer is adding a model with new features to its product offering.
- A product line is to include a flavour or aroma of a product that does not currently exist in the brand owner's portfolio, and will be an addition to other flavours or aromas in the portfolio.
- A product's packaging is in English and a Spanish-language-only version of the same product is created.
- A seasonal modification where brand owner expects the consumer/trading partner to be able to uniquely order the product.
- A new television model with new functionalities (e.g., WiFi and streaming capabilities).
- A new jeanswear line includes various sizes of a particular style and colour of jeans (30x30, 30x32, 32x30, 32x32, etc.). Each style, colour and size variation is considered a unique product and is assigned a unique GTIN.
- The vintage (year of production) of a bottle of wine changes such that it is recognised by the consumer as being of different quality than the previous year AND this wine is not handled as "flow-through" or commodity product, rather as a new and unique product.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous / current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
New product introduction	YES	YES	YES

**2.2 Declared formulation or functionality**

“Functionality” is defined as the particular use or set of uses for which something is designed. “Formulation” is defined as a list of the ingredients or components used to create a trade item.

**This GTIN Management Standard SHALL NOT be used for identifying non-new trade items. For rules on identifying non-new trade items, see General Specifications, section 2.1.15.**

***A change to the formulation or functionality of an existing trade item that affects the legally-required declared information on the packaging of a product and also where the brand owner expects the consumer or supply chain partner to distinguish the difference requires a new GTIN. Both conditions must be met requiring the assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- The GTIN change must occur at the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Declared formulation or functionality	YES	YES

**Example business scenarios that require GTIN change**

- A product includes nuts, which introduces a new allergen which is a legally-governed declaration and must be distinguishable by the consumer.
- A change in formulation reducing sugar by 50% to make the trade item “low sugar”.
- Ammonia (a potentially hazardous ingredient) is added to the formula which may cause an issue with how consumers/trading partners currently use or store the product.
- Previously frozen salmon is now sold as fresh salmon.

**Additional information**

- New GTIN assignment is NOT required when declaring existing functionality that was previously present, but not declared on the package, and is now being marketed on new packaging.
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Declared formulation or functionality	YES	YES	YES

**2.3 Declared net content**

“Net Content” is defined as the amount of the consumable product of the trade item contained in a package, as declared on the label, which may include: net weight, volume, count, units, etc.

***Any change (increase or decrease) to the legally-required declared net content that is printed on the pack, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- The GTIN change occurs at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Declared net content	YES	YES

**Example business scenarios that require GTIN change**

- The declared number of diapers in a package of disposable diapers changes from a 14 to a 12 count.
- The declared net weight of a bag of salty snacks increases from 680 g (24 oz) to 794 g (28 oz).
- The declared count of the number of razors in a package changes from 4 to 6.
- A bonus amount of product is now included in the pack and in the declaration to the consumer. For example, a 4 pack (count) of lip balm is increased and is declared as a 6 pack (count) bonus pack. The additional product (2 count) is declared to the consumer (is now 6 count).

**Additional information**

- The requirement does not include any marketing declarations or suggestions that are for the consumer’s knowledge, but not directly related to pricing, brand, government regulations. For example: suggested serving size.
- Declared net content is what is used to develop shelf labelling and price per unit *declared* to the consumer. Accuracy and synchronisation is essential and failure to comply may result in a penalty.
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Declared net content	YES	YES	YES

**2.4 Dimensional or gross weight change**

***A change of over 20% to a physical dimension, on any axis, or gross weight, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- The GTIN change occurs at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Dimensional or gross weight change	YES	YES

**Example business scenarios that require GTIN change**

- The gross weight of a product increases by 50% from 0.34 kg (0.75 lb) to 0.68 kg (1.5 lb) due to a change in the packaging material from plastic to glass.
- The height of a box of laundry detergent changes by 40% from 7.6 cm (3 in) to 10.64 cm (4.2 in).
- A case or pallet orientation (there is no change to the item inside) may be changed such that one or more axis changes.

**Additional information**

- This part of the standard only applies to changes to the dimensions and the gross weight of a product. Any change to declared net content is governed by the rule on “Declared Net Content”.
- Frequent cumulative changes, without changing the GTIN, in avoidance of the 20% rule is an unacceptable practice. Trading partners should be notified about all dimensional changes. Cumulative changes might cause problems for trading partners and may obstruct the flow through of product.
- See the [GS1 Package and Product Measurement Standard](#) for a consistent, repeatable process to determine measurements for a given product package
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Dimensional or gross weight change	YES	NO	YES

**2.5 Add or remove certification mark**

***A change to packaging to add a new, or remove an existing certification mark (e.g., kosher, UL or CE) that has significance to regulatory bodies, trading partners or to the end consumer, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- The GTIN change occurs at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Add or Remove certification mark	YES	YES

**Example business scenarios that require GTIN change**

- Removal of a Halal or Kosher certification mark from a product's packaging.
- Addition of an "Energy Efficiency" logo provided by a government approved agency.
- Removal of a certification mark: ORGANIC.

**Additional information**

- For the purpose of interpretation of this rule, a certification mark is a symbol, logo or wording on a product that declares a product has met specific criteria and standards in formulation, harvesting, processing or manufacturing (e.g., European Certification Mark) and that can be externally verified by a certification authority or agency which can be either a public or private authority.
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Add or remove certification mark	YES	YES	YES

**2.6 Primary brand**

The primary brand is the brand most recognisable by the consumer, as determined by the brand owner, and can be expressed as a logo and/or words.

***A change to the primary brand that appears on the trade item, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- The GTIN change occurs at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Primary brand	YES	YES

**Example business scenarios that require GTIN change**

- The company’s primary brand name changes from “Old Edge Computers” to “Leading Edge Computers”.

**Additional information**

- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Primary brand	YES	NO	NO

**2.7 Time critical or promotional product**

***A change to a product that is being promoted (including packaging changes) for a specific event or date, impacting the required handling in the supply chain to ensure the trade item is available for sale during a specified time period, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- No GTIN change is required at the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Time critical or promotional product	NO	YES

**Example business scenarios where a unique GTIN at the higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet) are required:**

- A free trial item (not identified with its own GTIN) is attached to an existing item for a promotional period, the declared net content of the original item is unchanged and packaging dimensions or the gross weight of the product are NOT changed by more than 20%.
- For a period of two months, holiday images are portrayed on a product. Holiday trees are added to a box of tissues.
- A unique product package is introduced for the "Back to School Season".
- World Cup logos are added to product packaging for a limited time.
- For a period of time, a manufacturer attaches a \$1 off coupon to a "Giant" size bottle of laundry detergent. The coupon is intended for redemption at time of purchase.
- A promotional version of a product is launched with "Special offer" printed on the packaging.

**Additional information**

- For time critical promotions, the GTIN for the retail consumer trade item/base unit level does not need to be changed, but for tracking in the supply chain, the case and pallet needs to be uniquely identified.
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Time Critical or Promotional Product	YES	NO	YES

## 2.8 Pack/case quantity

***A change to the number of trade items in a case or a change to the quantity of cases in a predefined pallet configuration, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Pack/case quantity	N/A	YES

**Example business scenarios where a unique GTIN at the higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet) are required:**

- A case configuration changes from containing 8 trade items to containing 12 trade items, the case needs to be uniquely identified.

- A pallet configuration changes from containing 12 cases to containing 16 cases, the pallet needs to be uniquely identified.

**Additional information**

- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

**Relevant guiding principles**

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Pack/case quantity	NO	YES	YES

**2.9 Predefined assortment**

A predefined assortment is a type of physical trade item assortment/bundle that comprises a fixed composition of two or more trade items that are combined and sold together as a single physical trade item.

***A change, addition or replacement of one or more trade items included in a predefined assortment, requires assignment of a new GTIN.***

**Hierarchy level of GTIN change**

- The GTIN change occurs at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Predefined assortment	YES	YES

**Example business scenarios that require GTIN change**

- A fragrance variety within a three pack of perfumes is changed and one of the bottles of fragrances is replaced with a new scent.
- A combination pack of shampoo and conditioner is changed to be shampoo and deep moisturising hair mask.
- A package containing multiple blue coloured shirts is changed and a yellow coloured shirt replaces one of the existing blue shirts.

**Additional information**

- The individual trade items included in the assortment are explicitly defined by the trading partners and carry their own, unique GTIN separate from the GTIN assigned to the assortment.
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

### Relevant guiding principles

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Predefined assortment	YES	YES	YES

## 2.10 Price on pack

'Price on pack' is defined as when the brand owner includes pre-pricing as part of the package graphics. This is not considered a price marked on a price ticket, sticker, hangtag or anything that could be removed from the package or product.

**Any addition, change or removal of a price marked directly on the product package (not recommended), requires assignment of a new GTIN.**

### Hierarchy level of GTIN change

- The GTIN change occurs at the retail consumer trade item or base unit level.
- A unique GTIN is assigned at every existing level of the packaging hierarchy above the retail consumer trade item/base unit level.

GTIN Rule name	GTIN change for retail consumer trade item/base unit?	New GTIN for higher level packaging (e.g., pack, case, pallet)?
Price on pack	YES	YES

### Example business scenarios that require GTIN change

- The pre-printed price on a package changes from €3 to €2.
- A selling price of €8 is added to a product's packaging.
- The Manufacturing Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) is set at \$2.19 and is included in the packaging graphics.

### Additional information

- There is a danger that the price declaration to the consumer (on the pack) is different to the price charged (price in retailer(s) system). Pricing legislation normally means that the price shown must equal (or be greater than) the price charged to the consumer. It is strongly recommended not to include a pre-printed price on pack due to these challenges.
- Local, national or regional regulations may require more frequent GTIN changes. Such regulations have precedence over the rules provided within the GTIN Management Standard.

### Relevant guiding principles

GTIN Rule name	Is a consumer and/or trading partner expected to distinguish the changed or new product from previous/current products?	Is there a regulatory/liability disclosure requirement to the consumer and/or trading partner?	Is there a substantial impact to the supply chain (e.g., how the product is shipped, stored, received)?
Price on pack	YES	YES	YES