



The Global Language of Business



## Case Study

# Beaver Street Fisheries Outswims the Big Fish

Taking a deep dive into solid data governance with  
GS1 Standards and best practices

## Challenge

When a company is importing more than 100 million pounds of seafood every year from waters throughout the world, offering products represented by some 1,500 SKUs, it has the potential to drown in product data. Data cascades from the point of origin to a warehouse, a distribution center, and a processing plant to other distribution points—all connected by shippers, to a stockroom, a frozen food aisle and into a consumer's hands. Everywhere along the way, inaccurate product data can churn up waves of problems.

## Solution

Beaver Street Fisheries (BSF) realized early that trading partners would require supply chain standards to communicate. BSF also knew that with the technology available, government traceability mandates would significantly increase, here and abroad, making compliance-based accurate product data a survival skill. Becoming a member of the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative, Beaver Street Fisheries launched an ambitious and comprehensive data governance initiative leveraging GS1 Standards and following industry-developed best practices.

## Benefits

BSF's initiative has resulted in a wealth of accurate product data that follows each product from one end of the supply chain to the other, winning BSF awards from its customers, the highest accolades for any organization. As more and more empowered consumers seek product information through the internet and social media, using mobile devices and computers, BSF as an early adopter of a solid data governance model stands ready with a "single version of truth." Logistical, nutritional, and ingredient details are accompanied by images, rich content and marketing information, making BSF a desired trading partner.

"We saw an error rate of up to 27 percent go down to less than a one percent error rate by understanding standards, by synchronizing our information, by publishing what items and attributes should be."

**Ray M. Poinsette**  
Director of Process Improvement,  
Beaver Street Fisheries

## Beaver Street Fisheries Benefits From GS1 Standards

**<1% Error Rate**  
Down from 27% by



**Understanding Standards**



**Synchronizing Information**



**Publishing Items &  
Attributes**

Beaver Street Fisheries is a leading importer and distributor of seafood products from around the world, importing more than 100 million pounds of seafood each year covered by more than 1,500 stock keeping units (SKUs). As one of the top seafood purveyors in the country, Beaver Street boasts 12 million cubic feet of freezer space in its Jacksonville, Florida headquarters and 400 employees.

The company's extensive network of carriers enables it to provide both domestic and international 48-hour delivery service, whether the shipment originates from its 27 loading bays or its 90 strategically located cold storage facilities around the country.

Beaver Street's success over six decades has resulted in the introduction of new brands in aquaculture and an expansion into meat products. In addition to frozen seafood and meat products, the company offers "value-added" product lines such as crab cakes, stuffed fish filets and other prepared seafood dishes.

### A Supply Chain Slipstream

A product data error that originates with a shipment of flounder from the Atlantic Ocean can follow the product to the freezer case in Pacific Palisades, leaving those from one end of the supply chain to the other floundering.

**"We're ... using data to better our sales processes, that's what really is driving what we're doing here."**

**Ray M. Poinsette**, Director of Process Improvement,  
Beaver Street Fisheries

With a high level of volume and complexity – each product has on average 160 product attributes – Beaver Street needs to be an innovator in supply chain solutions as a survival skill. With its extensive product catalog, differing waters (and farms) of origin, varying expiration dates, and an unwavering end-to-end commitment to product safety, Beaver Street Fisheries has embraced best practices to keep abreast of technologies that will help it thrive and grow. Among the most important to a worldwide distributor like Beaver Street, are GS1 Standards.

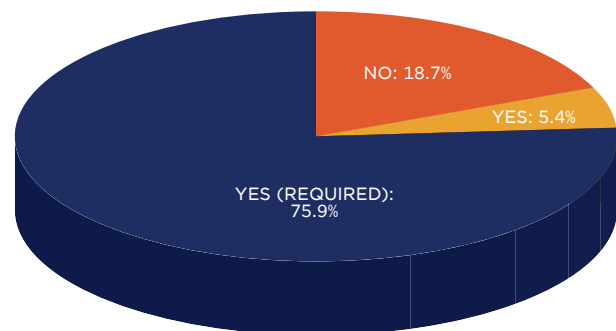
BSF first became aware of the pressing need to adopt GS1 Standards at a GS1 US conference in its home state of Florida in 2011.

"At that first conference, our eyes were literally opened," says Ray M. Poinsette, director of process improvement for BSF. "I went straight to BSF ownership and said, 'We have to get in on this and we have to do it right, because this is where our competition is and this is where our customers are.'"

And so began BSF's journey to data quality excellence. Poinsette had been hired to establish a process excellence department – initially intended as an inventory team, reporting analytics on and managing and keeping track of inventory. With that role came data synchronization responsibility, which ultimately led to BSF becoming a model in the successful use of supply chain standards shared through the Global Data Synchronization Network® (GDSN®).

Poinsette and his team became the driving force behind BSF's master data governance initiative. With thousands of distinct products to which barcodes and other standards-based attributes apply, the 'cleanliness' of the data is as important as the cleanliness of the Beaver Street kitchen and production facilities, a point Poinsette drove home at every opportunity within the company, as he educated other stakeholders on the profound importance of accurate product data.

### BSF Sales Related to GDSN 2017

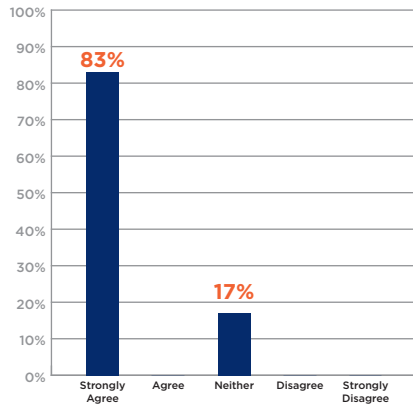


Percent of Change 2012-2017  
 Yes (Required) Up 50%  
 Yes Up 20%  
 No Down 173%

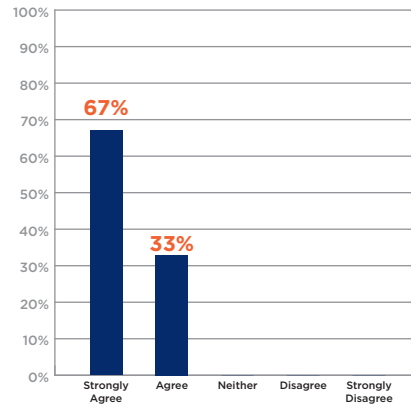
Following on the heels of that first conference, Beaver Street joined the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative and began joining GS1 US workgroups, "because I realized right at that conference, how big this was and what impact it had on our business," says Poinsette.

## Data Governance Delivers Customer Satisfaction

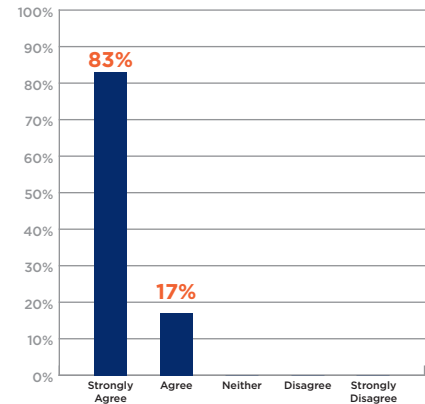
*“BSF makes it easier for my customers and trading partners to do business with me.”*



*Satisfaction with Delivery Time*



*Satisfaction with Order Accuracy*



Beaver Street Fisheries 2017

### Why data governance is important

In Beaver Street Fisheries' experience, data governance is a strategic asset and a competitive advantage. Here's why:

- Risk: Delayed time to market or time to shelf
  - Reward: Average time has gone from 90 hours to 30 minutes, a 99.4% improvement
- Risk: Lost sales
  - Reward: No sales compromised
- Risk: Error-prone and inaccurate product updates
  - Reward: Customer satisfaction (see above)
- Risk: Inaccurate orders, more returns, unhappy trading partners, and high customer service costs
  - Reward: Errors reduced, but orders increased
- Risk: Inefficient processes, resulting in waste and weak output
  - Reward: Efficiency and productivity
- Risk: Expensive one-off solutions to meet information compliance requirements
  - Reward: Consolidated product data under GDSN, eliminating redundant solution providers

No longer able to get by merely with the assignment of a Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®) or Global Location Number (GLN), BSF and many other early adopters found they needed to dive into the deep end of supply chain data and product attributes. “Around 2010, it was no longer just checking a box. You couldn't move customer emails about data standards and supply chain solutions into the delete folder,” Poinsette relates.

“I told my team that every number you see everywhere around here – somebody is using it. You may not think it's important, but somebody is depending on that number or it wouldn't be there. That realization was transformative for us.”

Poinsette produced a detailed master data governance plan that emphasized to BSF stakeholders the impact data has on a company's operations (see sidebar). He drew distinctions between the static master data the governance plan covers – entities and attributes that rarely change – and transactional data – sales, deliveries and other events that are far more dynamic.

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**Ray M. Poinsette**, Director of Process Improvement,  
Beaver Street Fisheries



Beaver Street recognized that data “cleanliness” is as important as the cleanliness of its facilities.

BSF’s plan assigns roles within the organization, including “data guardians”– individuals who are trained to become subject matter experts on the content and data attributes – and with the power of the veto. There may be multiple guardians for a given product, because of the nature of the product attributes needed. Seven of the 13 data guardians come from the purchasing department. These individuals are already product experts in the specialized products they manage. Two guardians from the quality assurance department handle nutritional information and two more in marketing are responsible for imagery, rich content, and the like. Two guardians are on the process excellence team, in addition to one backup.

Supporting the guardians are senior product information management (PIM) analysts – the data management teams that manage the product attribute communications processes within GDSN. Processes managed by the analysts include fulfilling the need for required attributes; validating the values used and assessing their applicability for all systems; managing customer-specific attributes; creating, providing and communicating about tools and resources for guardians; and managing customer and trading partner scorecards.

“[The need for product information] just literally exploded. First it was our trading partners moving items through the supply chain, but today it’s getting this information to the end user. People rightfully want to know what they’re eating, where it was caught. There’s the traceability aspect and food safety mandates. Then there’s the marketing aspect: they want the “glamour” shot, they need a plated shot, they need all of these things that we have to synchronize.”

**Ray M. Poinsette**, Director of Process Improvement,  
Beaver Street Fisheries





Beaver Street Fisheries has moved beyond the basics to provide rich content, including “glamour” shots of its products.

Because product data quality issues can bubble to the surface far downstream from the initial error, the governance team must be vigilant. To keep its data up-to-date, BSF will periodically send out a product list of 100 items and ask the data guardians to review and validate the attributes. Dashboards of results are published and internal scorecards are issued to keep everyone focused on “good data,” continually reminding employees of the importance it holds for BSF.

### Scoring and Scaling

Scorecards are a reciprocal reality. Just as BSF audits its guardians regularly, it issues scorecards for its freight carriers and suppliers both internationally and domestically. “At the beginning, we had a lot of variation with our case dimensions, which can cause huge problems in the supply chain,” Poinsette says. “We saw an error rate of up to 27 percent, go down to less than a one percent error rate by understanding our standards, by synchronizing our information, by publishing what the items and attributes should be.”

Customers issue scorecards on BSF as well and the awards tell the story compellingly: “Awards started coming in. We were getting awards from our trading partners. As small as we are in headcount, we’re going up against some of the larger organizations in the country and walking away with ‘Supplier of the Year,’ the annual ‘Center of the Plate Award.’ We just got nominated for a Sterling Award, a precursor to a Malcom Baldrige Award.”

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Since it started on the path of integrating GS1 Standards into its operations, BSF has seen requests for product information grow exponentially. “It’s just literally exploded,” Poinsette says. “First it was our trading partners moving items through the supply chain, but today it’s getting this information to the end user. People rightfully want to know what they’re eating, where it was caught. There’s the traceability aspect and food safety mandates. Then there’s the marketing aspect: they want the “glamour” shot, they need a plated shot, they need all of these things that we have to synchronize.”

In fact, BSF has synchronized its information to a URL for those who want rich content on a product. “We’re moving heavily in that direction. Again, we really are using data to better our sales processes, that’s what really is driving what we’re doing here.”

### Beaver Street Fisheries Benefits From Data Governance Based on GS1 Standards

#### Improved time-to-market or time-to-shelf

Average time reduced from **90** hours to as little as **30** minutes, a **99.4%** improvement



Consumers’ hunger for information about the food they eat is matched by trading partners’ hunger for product imagery.





## National Data Quality Program

### 1 Data Governance Process

Master Data Management

### 2 Education & Training Protocol

### 3 Attribute Audit

#### Industry Best Practices

Supplier/Manufacturer,  
Wholesaler/Distributor,  
Receiver/Buyer/Provider

#### Business Sectors

Apparel, General Merchandise, Hardlines,  
Healthcare, CPG, Grocery, Fresh Foods,  
Retail, Foodservice

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### A Plan Goes Swimmably

BSF's governance blueprint includes six clear benchmarks that measure the plan's success. In fact, the BSF model tracks closely with the best practices of the GS1 US National Data Quality Program. (See diagram.)

At the top of the list is the **empowerment of leadership**, typified by the assembly of a strong stakeholder team that for BSF includes procurement, imports, production, marketing, sales, logistics administration, IT, operations and customer service.

Data guardians are provided **ongoing training and resources** to make sure those who have joined the effort are as well-informed as their more seasoned colleagues.

**Continuous testing** of performance is also a key element of success in any program, as is **communication**. BSF calls for comprehensive documentation outlining strategies and tactics, policies and processes – a compendium it recommends be reviewed annually.

**Metadata management** is also part of a successful program and BSF's plan calls for the adherence to GS1 Standards and best practices, including the best practices established by the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative and adherence to GS1 Standards and best practices for the use of GDSN and guidance developed by industry initiatives.

As with any program in which disparate owners with different priorities are working towards a common goal, a solid **change management process** must also be instituted that “take[s] into account the organizational culture and implement[s] a methodology to manage the rate and scope of change.”

### Nothing Fishy

“We want to be the easiest trading partner to do business with – that’s what we strive for. Whether it’s a sales process, a data process, a logistics process, a shipping process -- we strive to make sure the product is satisfying our customers’ needs, and that it’s easy for them,” Poinsette says. “If they have to call us for additional information, we’ve done something wrong, because there are automatic processes set up to make sure they get what they need.”

To say that Poinsette is ideally suited to champion the initiative within Beaver Street would be an understatement of oceanic proportions. A Six Sigma black belt who appreciates how the use of numbers – in this case, standards – can have such a wide-ranging ripple effect. “I didn’t know data could be so fun!”

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## Learn More

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For more information about the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative, visit [www.gs1us.org/retailgrocery](http://www.gs1us.org/retailgrocery) or contact [retailgrocery@gs1us.org](mailto:retailgrocery@gs1us.org).

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## About

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### Beaver Street Fisheries

Beaver Street Fisheries™ is a leading importer, manufacturer and distributor of quality frozen seafood products from the USA and around the world. For more than 60 years, the company has provided products to the foodservice industry and more recently to the retail market. [www.beaverstreetfisheries.com](http://www.beaverstreetfisheries.com)

### GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative

The GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative is a voluntary collaborative industry effort seeking to address current industry challenges to help improve product information and images, data quality, supply chain visibility, and operational efficiencies. This structured Initiative for retail grocery aims to help enable stakeholders to focus on the most important industry problems, streamline resources, and drive adoption and implementation of the industry-defined solutions leveraging GS1 Standards. [www.gs1us.org/industries/retail-grocery/initiative](http://www.gs1us.org/industries/retail-grocery/initiative)

### Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative

The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative represents a broad cross section of industry trading partners. Today 132 manufacturers, distributors, brokers, operators, industry associations, government agencies, logistics, and technology providers are participating members in initiative activities focused on improving transparency, operational efficiencies, traceability, and food safety with GS1 Standards. [www.gs1us.org/industries/foodservice/initiative](http://www.gs1us.org/industries/foodservice/initiative)

### GS1 US National Data Quality Program

The GS1 US National Data Quality Program provides organizations with a comprehensive approach to data quality that encompasses validating a Data Governance Process exists within an organization to support the creation and maintenance of product data based on GS1 Standards; confirming that proper Education and Training protocols on GS1 Standards are present within an organization for creating and maintaining accurate product data; and conducting regular Attribute Audits that audit, verify and compare product attributes to most recently shared data to enable trading partners to have confidence that the data shared is accurate, complete and timely. [www.gs1us.org/dataquality](http://www.gs1us.org/dataquality).

### GS1 US

GS1 US®, a member of GS1® global, is a not-for-profit information standards organization that facilitates industry collaboration to help improve supply chain visibility and efficiency through the use of GS1 Standards, the most widely-used supply chain standards system in the world. Nearly 300,000 businesses in 25 industries rely on GS1 US for trading partner collaboration that optimizes their supply chains, drives cost performance and revenue growth while also enabling regulatory compliance. They achieve these benefits through solutions based on GS1 global unique numbering and identification systems, barcodes, Electronic Product Code-based RFID, data synchronization, and electronic information exchange. GS1 US also manages the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code® (UNSPSC®). [www.GS1US.org](http://www.GS1US.org)

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