GS1 Healthcare™ US

Improving Patient Safety and Supply Chain Efficiency

Global Location Numbers and the GLN Registry for Healthcare® provide savvy supplier with a solid foundation for growth.

CHALLENGE

Create an efficient and accurate process to trace, verify and report thousands of sales transactions per day.

SOLUTION

Print Media developed a GS1 standards-enabled business process by implementing Global Location Numbers and the GLN Registry for Healthcare.

RESULTS

Enhanced productivity. Print Media has gained dramatic productivity improvements; what once took four weeks, now takes one or two days.

Improved cash flow. The new process facilitates order-to-invoice accuracy, reducing errors and speeding cash flow.

Increased revenue. Print Media can easily enter new markets and conduct business with any GPO, distributor or healthcare provider.

Greater customer satisfaction. Using GLNs and analytics, Print Media tracks customer buying levels and trends to offer customers greater value.

Print Media, Inc.
Leveling the Playing Field

With only a personal computer and $500 in his pocket, CEO Robert Gonzalez founded Print Media, Inc. (Print Media) over 16 years ago. An energetic and determined entrepreneur, Gonzalez wasn't discouraged when his door-to-door selling to doctors' offices wasn't paying off. *"I couldn't get past the front desk. I knew I had to approach this challenge in a different way,"* recalls Gonzalez.

The answer: using technology – the facsimile machine – to reach his potential customers. *"In those early days, I learned a valuable lesson that we still follow today: Even with limited resources, we, as a small business, can effectively compete by working differently, working smarter,"* says Gonzalez.

Today, Print Media serves the healthcare industry as a single-source manufacturer of recording consumables such as thermal sensitive papers used in EKG and patient monitoring devices. The company also supplies imaging media as well as patient identification solutions like bar code wristbands. With less than 60 employees, Print Media relies heavily on innovative business practices to serve its customers – some of the largest distributors, health systems and group purchasing organizations in the world.

"At Print Media, our employees are either sales people or sales enablers who help us successfully compete in what many find is a complex industry," explains Gonzalez. *"As a small company, we fully leverage technology and GS1 standards to keep us efficient and growing."*

The successful use of data standards and technology is attributed to Fabian Garcia, director of Print Media's Infrastructure and Systems organization. Garcia frequently reviews, analyzes and evaluates current business processes for improvements. *"In 2002, we were awarded our first healthcare group purchasing organization (GPO) contract,"* says Garcia. *"This provided us with a big opportunity for growth, yet added unbelievable complexity to our business."*

Once again, Print Media had to work smarter – now with the GPO, its network of distributors and its healthcare providers.

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– Robert Gonzalez, CEO and President, Print Media, Inc.

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– Fabian Garcia, Director of Infrastructure and Systems, Print Media, Inc.
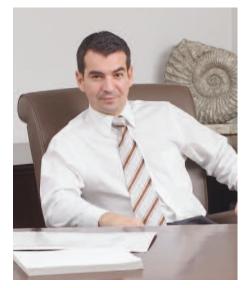
Charting a New Course

The company was getting sales tracing reports from multiple distributors, each with its own ship-to identification numbers associated with a host of healthcare providers. Secondly, each GPO had its own set of identification numbers. For example, one hospital had 50 ship-to numbers and belonged to multiple GPOs. Finally, add to this web of complexity the fact that providers' locations might change.

"We quickly realized the enormous amount of time it would take to trace, verify and report potentially thousands of transactions per day. We had to find a more efficient process," says Garcia.

Expectations were high in 2002. Historically, small companies with limited resources struggle with this type of endeavor, and may fail since they are unable to accurately bill, rebate, and report the individual product prices initially communicated between their company, GPOs, distributors and providers.

"In this industry, there are very few small companies that make it past the first GPO contract award; there are very few renewals. The ability to handle more transactions is the key to our growth; it isn't a matter of just throwing more people at a problem," explains Gonzalez.

Print Media initially created the company's own identification system for tracking all its transactions and sales information. *"It was a painstaking task of slowly identifying and linking our identification key to locations provided in*

Robert Gonzalez, CEO and president, invests in standards for a competitive edge and double-digit growth.

traced sales data with sometimes unidentifiable, obscure or non-existent identifiers," says Garcia. *"We needed an 'industry link' – a common location number that would allow us to easily conduct business with any GPO, distributor or provider in the industry."*

Laying a Solid Foundation

Garcia was encouraged after reading about a GS1 standard: the Global Location Number (GLN). After attending a free, online healthcare seminar offered by GS1 Healthcare US, Garcia was convinced he had found "the answer." *"I also participated in a User Group meeting sponsored by GS1 Healthcare US that included representatives from manufacturers, GPOs, distributors and providers. At the meeting, I realized the adoption of GLNs was, and still is, championed by members of the industry's large, medium and small players. To benefit, we all need to participate,"* says Garcia.

The decision to implement Global Location Numbers was immediate. By simply adding GLNs – globally unique location identification numbers – to its internal database, Print Media started creating a new GS1 standards-enabled

business process that would serve as a solid foundation for growth. And, by using the GLN Registry for Healthcare (GLN Registry), Print Media could easily add GLN identifiers as they became available.

"When we signed up for the GLN Registry, we found many of our customers and all the GLNs assigned to those customers – all the warehouses, supply rooms, and storage rooms," describes Garcia. *"It was liberating since we no longer needed to depend on ambiguous sales tracing reports to give us new information: a new warehouse location, for example."*

As contracts were renewed, Print Media grew its business by adding more GPOs to its GLN-based process. *"The GPOs are really onboard with GLN adoption. They initially add their providers' Global Location Numbers to the GLN Registry, and then the providers maintain their hierarchy of GLNs. We know the information is accurate because the actual provider is updating its records,"* explains Garcia.

With the GLN Registry, Print Media can automatically update its records with changes in GLNs and new ones. While some manual efforts are still needed, Garcia recognizes the value for Print Media as they systemically work with the GLN Registry and as it continues to grow with more participants. And, as more companies in the supply chain use GLNs, Print Media's job gets easier with increasingly less need to manually identify and cross-reference locations.

Turning Weeks into Days

Before the new process, Garcia estimates it took Print Media as long as four weeks to identify and link all sales traces for issuing rebate payments. Not only did this process tie-up Print Media resources, but as critical, the GPO's expectation for timely reporting was in jeopardy.

With GLN implementation, Print Media can meet GPO reporting requirements quickly and efficiently.

Print Media now completes sales trace reports in a day or two – a task that once took as long as four weeks.

Now, the company completes sales trace reports in a day or two – a significant productivity improvement. *"Because all companies are using the Registry and speaking the same language with GLNs, we don't have to spend time deciphering what one distributor sent versus what another one sent for the same provider's location. It's quick, easy and accurate,"* says Garcia.

Another key benefit is how Print Media now serves its customers. *"At Print Media, we stress 'executing with precision' in everything we do. By using GLNs and the Registry, we can now provide customers with value-added consultation,"* explains Gonzalez. For example, many hospitals form alliances and take an integrated approach when delivering healthcare services to their communities. With the GLN-based solution, Print Media efficiently and precisely deals with the multiple "layers" within the healthcare system to keep customer confidence strong and retain business. Using GLNs combined with analytics, the company can also track customer buying levels and trends to offer greater customer value, such as aggregate volume discounts.

Print Media can more easily enter new markets. *"We have distributors that focus specifically on physicians. Tracking what each physician buys and at what price is even more daunting than tracking hospital locations,"* says Gonzalez. *"Using our GLN-based process, we can successfully sell to and serve this growing market – something that many of our competitors can't do."*

Begin the Journey

Garcia is the first to admit he was apprehensive about implementing GLNs. But, after attending the User Group meeting and "GLN Registry for Healthcare"

Business Impact Summary

Benefits	Results
Enhanced productivity	Print Media spends significantly less time identifying and cross-referencing sales locations for reporting and rebates. What formerly took four weeks, now takes one or two days each month.
Improved cash flow	Print Media has a new, highly efficient process that facilitates order-to-invoice accuracy, reducing errors and speeding cash flow.
Increased revenue	Print Media can enter new markets such as the growing physician-based market. GLNs and the GLN Registry have enabled Print Media to track, report and rebate individual physicians – something that would have been very difficult before implementing the GLN-enabled process.
Greater customer satisfaction	Print Media uses GLNs combined with its analytics to better serve its customers. Based on customer buying levels, Print Media consults with its customers for greater value such as offering aggregate volume discounts.

By implementing GLNs and the GLN Registry, Print Media has experienced top-line and bottom-line benefits for its business and customers.

web seminar, he became a believer. *"Being in a small business, we weren't sure if our questions and concerns would be taken seriously,"* explains Garcia. *"Our experience with GS1 Healthcare US was just the opposite."*

During the User Group discussions, Print Media contributes a great deal, representing the needs of small business, and continues to offer and gain insight into the latest business trends. *"With GS1 Healthcare US and the GLN Registry, you can get the support you need. The information is available for any business to use,"* says Gonzalez.

Both Gonzalez and Garcia summarize what they have learned:

Just do it. *"The GLN standard and Registry database are straight-forward and simple to understand. Our business is better because of our investment in the GLN standard,"* advises Gonzalez.

Encourage participation. *"My analogy is: In order to conduct business with people speaking different languages, we need to learn and use a common language. In the U.S. healthcare industry, that's the GLN,"* says Garcia.

Learn from GS1 Healthcare US. *"They are open to all perspectives from all firms, regardless of size. We're proof that a small business is able to participate and succeed,"* says Gonzalez.

Print Media's successful use of GS1 standards is attributed to Director Fabian Garcia (standing) and his team, Manuel Carvajales, systems administrator and Jeannette Perez, data control clerk.

"We have leveled the playing field. Technology and GS1 standards help us compete against companies many times our size."

– Robert Gonzalez, CEO and President, Print Media, Inc..

ABOUT PRINT MEDIA, INC.

Print Media is a minority- and veteran-owned small business enterprise that develops, manufactures and sells innovative and reliable supplies for on-demand print technology. Print Media has served the healthcare industry for over 16 years with thermal sensitive papers used in EKG and patient monitoring devices, and has recently expanded into the parking, airline, amusements, and photography markets. Print Media operates with less than 60 employees, yet its customers include some of the largest firms and group purchasing organizations in the world. Since its entry into the acute-care hospital market with the awarding of its first GPO contract in 2002, Print Media has become the second leading supplier in this category with over 20 percent of the U.S. hospital market share. To compensate for size, Print Media relies heavily on technology and an efficient business process, the mission of its Infrastructure and Systems Department. To learn more, visit *www.printmedia-inc.com*.

ABOUT GS1 HEALTHCARE US™

GS1 Healthcare US is an industry group that focuses on driving the adoption and implementation of GS1 standards in the U.S. healthcare industry to improve patient safety and supply chain efficiency. GS1 Healthcare US brings together members from all segments of the healthcare industry to address the supply chain issues that most impact healthcare in the United States.

CONTACT US

GS1 Healthcare US™ provides expertise, tools, and resources to help you implement GS1 standards to improve patient safety and supply chain efficiency. To learn more, contact GS1 Healthcare US at *gs1healthcareus@gs1us.org* or visit our Website at *www.gs1us.org/healthcare*.

GLN AND GLN REGISTRY

The Global Location Number is a globally unique identification number that can be used to identify a physical location. The GLN is unique for one specific location and has attributes defined for each GLN such as name, address, and location type (e.g., ship to, bill to, deliver to, etc.).

GLNs identify:

- **Functional entities:** a hospital pharmacy or accounting department
- **Physical locations:** a warehouse, hospital wing or even a nursing station
- **Legal entities:** a health system corporation.

The GLN Registry for Healthcare is an electronic catalog that provides subscribers with a comprehensive list of healthcare facilities in the United States and their corresponding GLNs and associated GLN information. Created and governed by the healthcare industry in conjunction with GS1 Healthcare US, the GLN Registry provides users with a central resource for up-to-date and accurate information to facilitate efficient business practices.

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