



Case Study

Bush Brothers & Company

Bean Counting is Easier with Quality Data

Challenge

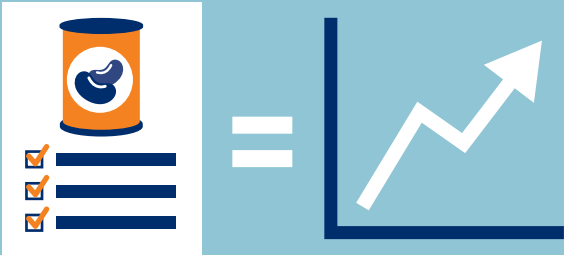
Before 2014, Bush Brothers & Company was providing basic product data to its customers in keeping with industry norms at the time. But the purveyor of a variety of table-ready canned beans was on the precipice of a major transformation that would have its customers seeking greater amounts of product information earlier in the sales process while, at the same time, internal requests for data were increasing. Comprehensive content needed to be ready on-demand and easy to share. How would the company increase both the quantity and quality of its information and deliver it quickly?

Solution

Riding the wave of higher demand for detailed product data, Bush Brothers & Company used each and every opportunity to add to its product data profiles and assets. As more customers requested more types of product attributes, Bush Brothers & Company methodically added to its data cache, designed a product data governance structure, and published robust product data through the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®) to share with customers.

Benefits

With high-quality product data, Bush Brothers & Company is well-positioned to excel in data-driven and multi-channel commerce, ultimately providing consumers with nutrition and ingredient information, recipes, and more. The company is also able to delight its retail customers by providing each with the precise product data they require to sell Bush Brothers & Company products. According to a survey by Dot Foods, a key distributor partner, Dot's sales have grown when complete product data that customers expect is available.



Complete and accurate product data helps increase sales.

Beyond the Basics

Bush Brothers & Company—a family-owned business founded in 1908—started out as a tomato cannery in Tennessee that, with new canning and processing technologies, expanded its product line, eventually specializing in canned beans of many varieties and preparations.

While Bush Brothers & Company products were already staple items in millions of households in 2014, it was at that time that the company's product data program was turned over to Georgette Suggs, product data analyst with Bush Brothers & Company. Suggs was also charged with creating new items in Bush Brothers & Company enterprise resource planning (ERP) software.

Based on her depth of product knowledge from working in formula management, Suggs now manages input of data on nutrition, ingredients, weights, dimensions, supply chain information, and images—making sure it's stored and accessible to share internally and externally.

"When I first took on data management responsibilities, the GS1 Connect conference opened my eyes to the breadth and depth of product data being exchanged by trading partners and the possibilities for better customer experiences," says Suggs. "I returned home having 'caught the bug' of understanding how the GS1 Standards-based framework for product data can serve as the foundation for efficiencies across the enterprise."

"There's more to this than just the basic, 'we'll feed them [data] to meet minimum requirements or to make sure that we don't get fined,'" Suggs adds. "One of the challenges of this role is 'how do you know that you're giving people what they want?'"

As more and more customers sought data, from time-to-time Bush Brothers & Company would get poor marks on a customer scorecard, for missing attributes, for instance. Those scorecards became the impetus for data fields to be added to product data profiles and the design of a product data governance program.

A Hill of Beans

"Now I have everything. I have nutrition, images, ingredients, allergens, marketing descriptions, and keywords," Suggs says. One could make the mistake of thinking that a singular product category would result in a modest amount of data, but Bush Brothers & Company has 159 consumer units and over 500 Global Trade Items Numbers (GTINs) to manage. But as Suggs acknowledges, some suppliers have several thousand.

"Over the past three years, data requirements have completely exploded! Customers like Kroger, Walmart, Dot Foods, and Performance Food Group (PFG) have been very clear with salespeople about what data they want," Suggs says.

Also inside Bush Brothers & Company was growing awareness of product data as an asset to the organization. The explosion in e-commerce demonstrates the value of complete, readily available product data. The consumer response team finds great value in being able to dig into accurate product data to quickly and easily answer consumer inquiries. And when regulatory requirements change, Bush Brothers & Company is equipped to make the required changes, track the changes, and report on them because of the way it is managing product data. As a strong advocate, Suggs has taken a proactive approach to her role—not just as data steward—but as the product data governance lead.

"The buck stops with me. It is my job to ensure that data continues to be accurate, complete and up-to-date. Luckily, supply chain information is standard and does not often change," Suggs says.

"With products that are subject to regulatory compliance, as food items are, being in the loop is the only way to properly stay abreast of changes in product data, including images."

Georgette Suggs, Product Data Analyst, Bush Brothers & Company

Jack-of-all-Beanstalks

But when it came to label images—an area where change does occur frequently—Suggs struggled, because label changes were a marketing responsibility and outside of her purview.

"Over the past year, I have gotten intimately involved in our label process. I just step into whatever process it is that I feel like we're not covering well. I learn it," says Suggs. "I get involved in it. And we're working to implement triggers. If a label changes, I'm automatically notified."

"With products that are subject to regulatory compliance, as food items are, being in the loop is the only way to properly stay abreast of changes in product data, including images," continues Suggs. "To make sure product images always link to proper URLs, out-of-date images are updated regularly, and new products always have images captured, there is now a process in place—all part of our new product data governance process."

A key to success in ensuring data accuracy and completeness is being connected across several teams within the organization.

"I've been able to nurture connections with regulatory, product development, quality, sales, marketing, supply chain, and warehousing and manufacturing, which are part of supply chain," says Suggs. "There's no way anybody can do this job in a vacuum and think they're going to do it well."

Dot Foods Puts Cost to Accurate Data, or Lack Thereof

Dot Foods wanted to know: Could it come up with a dollar amount for how much bad data might be costing suppliers? Dot's data accuracy scorecard provides item-level detail back to its suppliers on data collected in its warehouse. Initially the scorecard captured the accuracy of case dimensions, weights, and barcodes.

It has been expanded to help its suppliers build their business case for having a data governance program by assigning cost to inaccuracies. Dot's scorecard also prioritizes the items since it can be difficult for suppliers to know which items to focus on first.

"With our scorecards we give our suppliers estimates of potential costs they may be incurring as a result of their inaccurate data—by looking at the difference in case dimensions, the cost of the wasted space, and factoring in volume, for example," says Debbie Bower, Director of E-Commerce at Dot Foods.

While there is not currently an all-encompassing scorecard for Dot Foods on its cost savings, the company uses estimates—not actual charges—as conversation starters. Dot hopes that suppliers realize the potential cost of bad data to Dot's business—and its likely similar cost for their own company or any other company with which they are doing business.

Beans Count

In addition to earning high marks from trading partners like Dot Foods on GDSN product data and completeness scores, barcode and physical audit accuracy scores, and service level, Bush Brothers & Company also sees other benefits from data quality.

Chief among them are customer and consumer trust and satisfaction as well as greater transparency, resulting in brand loyalty and strength. "Our goal is to delight our customers, so they are more inclined to purchase from us to also make consumers happier. That's my belief," says Suggs.

Dot Foods confirms this as well, based on a study the company conducted a few years ago that showed an increase in sales tied to complete data versus a decrease in sales based on using incomplete data. The same study showed that interest in an item quadrupled when images are provided.

"Hearing about best practices from industry peers has been extremely persuasive—and motivational."

Georgette Suggs, Product Data Analyst, Bush Brothers & Company

Bush Brothers & Company Benefits From Data Quality	
 High marks from trading partners	 Consumer trust and satisfaction
 Greater transparency	 Brand loyalty and strength

How to Grow Your Own Program

The customer's voice is the most persuasive in getting suppliers to comply with data needs. "If it's Dot Foods saying, 'you have to publish this product before I'll sell it for you,' that is perfect," says Suggs.

"I don't believe anybody inside a supplier organization can create fire within the organization. But we [in data management] can totally fan it. We help make it easy for sales when they come asking about GDSN. It's really the customers who create the energy. We just help that energy flow."

Suggs has taken advantage of training sessions offered by GS1 US, including on data quality. "The Data Quality Discussion work group and the other work groups that I've been involved with are how I figure out what I'm supposed to be doing," Suggs says. "Hearing about best practices from industry peers has been extremely persuasive—and motivational."

Suggs recommends taking a one-step-at-a-time approach. "Get to know your products. Get to know your content. Figure out where it comes from. Figure out where it goes. Do one small thing and then work up to bigger things, otherwise you might make changes that don't necessarily need to be made."

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Next, get to know who does what. "Find out how it is done. Who is doing it? Why are they doing it?" Suggs says.

"Without complete and accurate data, we're letting the consumer down," concludes Suggs. "When a consumer is not receiving complete product data from you, they're asking 'what are you hiding?' I want to make sure that the content is accurate and we are transparent with our products."

About the Organizations



About Bush Brothers & Company

Bush Brothers & Company began as a family company and remains one today. It's an important part of who we are. Bush's mission has been to provide the best to homes and tables nationwide. www.bushbeans.com



About Dot Foods

Dot Foods Inc. carries 127,000 products from 930 food industry manufacturers making it the largest food industry redistributor in North America. Through Dot Transportation Inc., an affiliate of Dot Foods, the company distributes foodservice, convenience, retail and vending products to distributors in all 50 states and more than 35 countries. For information, visit DotFoods.com.

GS1 US National Data Quality Program

The GS1 US National Data Quality Program provides organizations with a comprehensive approach to data quality. It includes support with validating the data governance process, confirming that proper education and training protocols are in place, and how to conduct regular attribute audits. www.gs1us.org/dataquality.



About the 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/foodservice/initiative



About the GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative

The GS1 US Retail Grocery Initiative is a voluntary collaborative industry effort seeking to address current industry challenges to 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/gs1-us-retail-grocery-initiative



About 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

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