Case Study

Georgia-Pacific

Centralizing data governance maintains data quality

Challenge

Georgia-Pacific recognized as early as eight years ago, that the automated future it was planning would require a solid product data governance program with a well-thought-out structure and processes. With data governance in place, Georgia-Pacific would be better prepared to efficiently launch the digital transformation of its expansive consumer packaged goods (CPG) product portfolio. The company's visionary approach would serve its equally expansive vertical and horizontal customer base—end-user consumers as well as wholesale distributors. Establishing strong data governance would be the ultimate key to overcoming complexity and assuring success.

Solution

Georgia-Pacific adopted a centralized data management structure, bridging any gaps by creating a community among data stewards and other data owners in different divisions. Universal communications and collaboration became the rule rather than the exception within the data governance community. The company's executive steering committee— with the addition of manufacturing and procurement leaders—has nurtured the transformational initiative from early on, helping the data governance program deliver on its potential with informed decision-making and direction.

Benefits

- **Customer satisfaction.** Georgia-Pacific believes its early focus on digital transformation has prepared the company well to meet customer expectations for streamlined business transactions using GS1 Standards. It also serves as an example to others by participating in industry initiatives.

- **Efficiency.** As a company with a global footprint that sells goods in several industries, the ability to transact business using one set of widely used standards for electronic communications enables virtually unlimited growth.

- **Interoperability.** By using GS1 Standards, Georgia-Pacific has established the foundation needed for its different divisions, systems and processes to seamlessly interoperate.

- **Savings.** Having measurable data quality can save money ranging from warehousing and transportation costs, to better inventory management and reduced labor costs.

- **Future-proof.** As more consumers demand richer product information on the goods they purchase, Georgia-Pacific will be equal to the task of supplying it.

GP Georgia-Pacific

Preparing for Digital Transformation

From the time it was founded in 1927, Georgia-Pacific (GP) has grown from a single hardwood wholesaler into a multi-billion-dollar, multi-brand powerhouse. For a corporation of GP's size and scope—with products ranging from building and industrial materials to consumer-packaged goods—the advent of big data has produced big opportunities and challenges for a company committed to innovating responsible solutions, reducing waste and exemplifying sustainability.

Creating centralized data governance to prepare for digital transformation, GP was farsighted when it created an "information governance" organization eight years ago with data stewards, report designers and other key roles, directed by an executive steering committee. Shared services within the company—such as IT and accounting—were also brought into the data governance effort.

Perhaps nowhere within GP is the need for solid data management more apparent than in the consumer products division, offering paper products under the banner of several well-known brands and sold to millions of consumers with an increasing appetite for product information.

An example of how data governance works at GP: The consumer products division wanted to create a new marketing tool that would include creating product data within the tool itself. Yet, GP's data governance principles dictated that sourcing data should always come directly from the master data sourcing system. To follow this vision, the steering committee redirected the plan.

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Lindsay Savage
Director of CPG Data Governance, Georgia-Pacific

Central to the Mission

"We were very siloed within the consumer products division," says Lindsay Savage, director of CPG Data Governance for Georgia-Pacific. "We decided to centralize our data governance decisions, bringing together the owners of the sales platform and marketing platform, as well as the reporting lead and data governance lead."

This new approach aptly named "Business Effectiveness," today contributes to the data governance program's success. Before the Business Effectiveness group was formed, data creation processes and reporting were separated across the businesses and under the IT organization.

Business Effectiveness Framework

Sales & Marketing — Data Governance — Master Data — Centralized Reporting

Solutions that Stick

"Having the leads for the platforms, reporting, and data governance all together in one organization allows us to stay better connected," says Savage.

Data leads for sales and marketing each own one platform through which all data enhancements and changes are routed. These individuals are separate and apart from the Sales and Marketing functions as dedicated data curators. A reporting lead is responsible for analysis and reporting methodologies; and the data governance lead creates and maintains data governance processes within the organization, adhering to GS1 Standards.

"Georgia-Pacific's priority—the overarching theme—is digital transformation," Savage says. "You cannot effect a transformation this monumental without ironclad data governance."

Data stewards on the master data team are responsible for the creation and set-up of master data. They catalogue it, define the content for each data field and product attribute, ensure quality and help develop and enforce policies and standards around the master data. In addition, the master data team also helps with overall data standards and training on how information is being used. When a consumer product manager wants to capture new data about a product or customer, or wants to change how data is being used, it must be routed through the data stewards for approval.

Lindsay Savage
Director of CPG Data Governance, Georgia-Pacific

GP has three data stewards on its central data team as well as data stewards within its IT, manufacturing and accounting functions—shared functions within CPG. Some capabilities are division-specific, and other capabilities are CPG-wide, as are the data stewards themselves, forming a kind of community.

"Anytime we have to route something through the data stewards, we route it through all of them, regardless of what it is," Savage says. "Data stewards are process-centric versus function-centric, forcing each one to be more knowledgable about the end-to-end process."

Savage herself "owns" the data. "While my central data team may not be 100 percent responsible for enriching everything about it, I still own the overall process as well as the quality of the data created, with a few exceptions."

For instance, a packaging engineer may be responsible for measuring and weighing a product. Those data points are supplied to Savage's team for review and approval before the engineer can populate the appropriate data attribute fields. If a particular data point is in question, the team will return to the engineer for clarification before entering it into the master data system. For example, if the weight of a product changes beyond established parameters, GP will create a new Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN®), following GS1 Standards.

Collaboration for Common Goals

"We evaluated the opportunity to have a corporate governance group, but because of the unique nature of each GP division, we decided it's better for each division to have its own data governance group," Savage points out. "We engage in ongoing dialogue. Each division is learning how peers in other divisions are implementing data governance, how principles are organized and being followed. As long as we maintain collaboration, we get to the same end-goal, determining what efficiencies can be gained by adopting the same one or two tools system-wide."

GP uses two main tools to help drive data governance: SAP Master Data Governance (MDG) and SAP Information Steward. MDG allows GP to implement a role-based approach to creating data and the embedded workflow allows it to have a checkpoint before final approval. The Information Steward tool gives GP the ability to document how data

Georgia-Pacific's data specialists engage in ongoing dialogue, regardless of their functions or divisions. They are from left to right: (Front row) Dawn Van Wychen, Kaitlyn Miller, Nadine Budzis; (Middle row) Panhia Kue; (Back row) Linda Moran, Joan Seidl, Elessa Oudenhoven, Aimee Kummer.

fields are defined, used, and where each is maintained. It also enables the development of data quality rules to track the accuracy of data.

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Lindsay Savage
Director of CPG Data Governance, Georgia-Pacific

Transformation for a Digital Future

The fast pace of the digital evolution, and emerging trends in technology and e-commerce present the largest challenge to companies like Georgia-Pacific seeking to digitally transform its operations.

Individual consumer behavior and the growing trend of interacting with the products they buy and seeking information on the sources of those products is also a factor for any consumer-facing business, like GP.

"[Consumers] want to know more about the products we sell and expect that the information supplied is accurate. We have to capture more information in our master data system to address their preferences," Savage says. "Without a structure in place to govern and capture core data elements or attributes about products—and be certain of its accuracy— we would not be able to meet consumer demand for information, both before and after they buy."

As a company that uses market-based management (MBM) as a guiding principle—creating value for customers and constituencies that results in mutual benefit—consistency in internal processes with downstream consequences becomes an important factor.

"If we don't have a stable organization and process in place, we're never going to be able to adapt as quickly as we need to with how the industry is moving," Savage says. "One of the reasons we have pushed to have a centralized structure and a foundational governance process in place was so that as the industry evolves, we can quickly adapt with it."

Quality Depends on the Journey

"The most important thing is being able to understand how information is used downstream," Savage says. "We've taken ownership of helping our colleagues understand how information is being used—across the sales team, the brand or category team, the marketing team, the supply chain team. We're imparting knowledge on the full end-to-end process."

"They may be thinking, 'What's going to work for my process?' They're not thinking, 'How is this going to impact all the other processes for a sales order, or pricing or a marketing promotion?' That's where data stewards add value: they're looking across all processes. They provide insight into what might impact someone else."

> "We're starting to see more requirements from our customers for better, more accurate data. We obviously saw the need to be proactive in our internal drive for digital transformation. Now we're seeing it come from our external trading partners—making it a requirement."

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GS1 Standards Training Goes Organization-Wide

GS1 US UNIVERSITY

The data governance team has widened its approach by training parts of the entire organization that touch data. It uses the training as the basis for data quality control—access to data is granted only to those having gone through the training. Training includes GS1 Standards and the implications of product data quality.

"We look at it as going hand-in-hand: internal data governance practices and GS1 Standards. We incorporate it all into one training because they are so closely aligned."
Lindsay Savage, Director of CPG Data Governance, Georgia-Pacific

GS1 US® provides a wealth of information not just on the global standards it develops, but on the industries, initiatives, workshops, solution providers, and programs that impact today's trading partners. The GS1 US National Data Quality Program, for instance, helps guide companies like GP and underscores internal training by providing resources, including how others are seeking to implement their own data quality plans.

The Benefits of Digital Transformation

Customer Satisfaction

Efficiency

Savings

Future-Proof

Outside In

Like thousands of consumer-facing businesses, GP has honed its understanding of the external customer and how their evolving needs impact the data that's supplied and how the data drives value for the customer.

"We look at our various customer sets holistically," Savage says. "We have a vision of the governance principles we operate under and they do not differ if we're dealing in foodservice or retail. And we're starting to see a lot of crossover between industries, making it much easier to manage with a unified process versus trying to be specific."

"We're starting to see more requirements from our customers for better, more accurate data. It's come full circle. We obviously saw the need to be proactive in our internal drive for digital transformation. Now we're seeing it come from our external trading partners—making it a requirement."

Measuring Products and Results

About a year ago, GP purchased three Cubiscan® machines—equipment that reads the weights and dimensions of packaged products—deploying one on the West Coast, one on the East Coast, and one central to its facilities. It now audits over 100 products on a monthly basis at each location, comparing the readings to what is in the system to ensure data is within pre-set tolerance levels. GP is targeting 98 percent accuracy.

The Global Data Synchronization Network and Georgia-Pacific

GDSN

"The information in our product catalogue is the same information that we syndicate out to our partners, as well as our upcoming e-commerce sites that we're developing. Now, we're starting to pay attention to the marketing attributes of our products and making sure they're correct."

Lindsay Savage, Director of CPG Data Governance, Georgia-Pacific

"We look at gaps or discrepancies and ask ourselves, 'What do we need to change about our processes? Do we have the right people entering in this information? Have they been properly trained on how they should weigh a product or measure a product?'" Savage says.

"A second phase will be to measure batches and lots," Savage continues. "There are certain metrics, like weight, that we have more work to do versus case length, case width, case height. First, we wanted to get a baseline understanding of the complete product portfolio because that drives the next action."

The issue of product weight is not inconsequential. It impacts accuracy scores—and potential chargebacks from retailers carrying GP products. And it impacts ROI through transportation costs. "We've seen an improvement in our scorecards. And we have saved on transport because we're able to load more cases on our trucks," says Savage.

"When you say, 'Weight drives financial metrics,' you get a lot more attention. Having a measurement process allows us to show people how gaps in weight can correlate to financial impact—especially considering the volume being reported. It's a real-life use case for people to see—and people move pretty fast to make sure the weight gets corrected," adds Savage.

"And we have saved on transport because we're able to load more cases on our trucks."

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Sharing and Comparing

Cubiscan is not the only tool GP uses to check accuracy. Like thousands of other participants in the global supply chain, GP publishes its product information to the Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN)® that enables trading partners to share trusted product data in real-time. With GS1 Standards in place, companies can publish product data and provide greater product transparency to information-hungry customers.

"Customers may come back to us with 'This doesn't necessarily look correct on our site. Can you double check it?'" says Savage. "It gives us another opportunity to look at our internal processes. We might be doing a great job keeping our data up to speed internally, but we also need the right communication outbound."

"It enables us to say, 'Just think if we had a more unified process and better-connected systems how much further we can go!" Savage says. "Now that we've cracked the code for a strong data governance program, we are looking to apply the benefits of GS1 Standards to inventory management, the reduction of operational costs and many more future business priorities."

Learn more at www.gs1us.org/DataQuality.

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Five-Point Best Practice for Data Governance

1 Adhere to GS1 Standards and rules for initial attributes in internal set-up.

2 Assign data owners throughout the organization.

3 Appoint one entity, department, or individual as the sole owner of product data.

4 Audit all new items produced in a sustainable production environment ready for shipment (i.e., finished goods).

5 Execute communication of initial attributes and package measurements, both internally and externally.

Source: Data Governance Best Practice Guidance
GS1 US National Data Quality Program

About the Organizations

About Georgia-Pacific

Georgia-Pacific is one of the world's leading makers of tissue, pulp, packaging, building products and related chemicals. Household products, such as Brawny® paper towels, Quilted Northern® bath tissue and Dixie® cups and tableware are Georgia-Pacific brands. Georgia-Pacific also produces gypsum panels and other building materials for the construction industry. Other industries served by Georgia-Pacific include aerospace, mining and facilities management. www.gp.com

About the Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative

The Foodservice GS1 US Standards Initiative represents a broad cross section of industry trading partners. Today over 125 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.

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.

About the 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
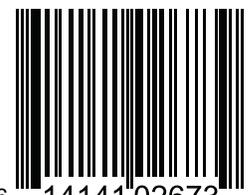
About GS1 US

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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