The Best Little

Book on Barcodes

All you'll ever need to know about UPC barcodes, QR codes, EAN codes, SCC codes, GTIN Codes, ISBN codes, and much more!

Erik Quisling

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All you'll ever need to know about UPC barcodes, QR codes, EAN codes, SCC codes, GTIN Codes, ISBN codes, Amazon Selling, and much more!

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Cover Design & Layout by Erik Quisling

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-publication Data

07 06 05 04 03 5 4 3 2 1
First Edition

Quisling, Erik
The Book on Barcodes: From Amazon to Walmart, all you'll ever need to know about barcodes to make your products successful. And more! / Erik Quisling;

Edited by Erik Quisling
p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-1-936965-61-8

Library of Congress

1. Self Help/Philosophy 2. Inspiration 3. New Age 4. Eastern Philosophy 5. Quisling, Erik

Upaya House Publishing
8173 Auberge Circle
San Diego, CA 92127

Printed in USA

The Best Little

Book on Barcodes

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Welcome!

For more than 25 years I have been the president of BuyaBarcode.com. In that time, I have answered just about every question there is about barcodes.

However, when finally setting out to make the definitive *Book on Barcodes* I was plagued with one perplexing question:

How do you write an entire book about barcodes that doesn't put someone to sleep faster than a jar of sleeping pills?

The answer? I don't really know. All I can do is promise to do the best I can to make it as interesting as possible. But as a hedge I've decided to sprinkle in jokes – real jokes you can tell your friends – as well as plenty of motivational quotes to help keep you awake.

So, before you begin, please get some coffee, and I hope you enjoy!

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.”
- Mark Twain

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Why don’t blind people skydive?
Because it scares their dogs.

Introduction

People always ask me how I came to be known as *The Barcode Guru*. It's a short story that began in the late 1990s when I set out to answer a seemingly simple question:

"How do I get a barcode?"

At the time, I was the owner of a small CD duplication company in Hollywood, CA. Basically, I helped young bands put together their printing, packaging, and CD manufacturing.

Without fail, towards the end of every project it seemed I would always be asked the same infernal question of "How do I get a barcode?"

"Go to GS1," was my standard reply.

Unfortunately, this would often set in motion a chain of events that at times reduced my customers to tears.

First of all, GS1 had nearly zero customer service and what they did have was terrible.

Secondly, GS1 was incredibly expensive and slow and, at that time, they wouldn't even provide you with your barcode images or tell you which kind of barcode you needed for your type of product.

Instead, they'd give you a certificate with a 6-digit prefix number and then force you to sludge through their giant paper barcode packet to figure out what you needed. It was also up to you to get software to generate the images of the barcodes – and who even knew how to do that!

Finally, in 1999, with the seemingly innocuous question of "How do I get a barcode?" in mind, I decided to come up with a better reply.

Going to GS1 myself, I joined, paid the dues, received my barcode prefix number, bought barcode printing software, figured out the printing issues, and read all of the fine print in the GS1 manual.

Much to my surprise, I realized that the whole barcode process could be made much faster, cheaper, and easier. I could also legally generate thousands of unique new 12-digit UPC barcode numbers to use as I wish.

From that point on, I started providing my CD customers with their barcodes.

But it also soon dawned on me that anyone launching any type of product was more than likely encountering the exact same barcode issues as my CD customers.

BuyaBarcode.com was born.

It has now been more than 25 years and I have helped more than 100,000 businesses with their barcode needs. I have been featured in The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and even been a consultant to Amazon on some of their major barcode issues.

Most importantly, through it all, I am very certain I have saved all of my customers a tremendous amount of time, money, and tears.

So now, with that brief background out of the way, enjoy *The Best Little Book on Barcodes*!

“You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.”

- Mae West

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Where does a waitress with only one leg work?

IHOP.

Chapter 1.

What is a UPC Barcode? How does it work?

There are literally dozens of different types of barcodes in the world and they all have different names. However, if someone simply mentions the word *barcode* in a sentence without specifying further, they are more than likely referring to the standard 12-digit UPC barcode.

UPC barcodes (aka UPCs for short) are literally found on 99.9% of all retail products in North America. In fact, unless the retail product is a book or a magazine, it will have a UPC barcode on its packaging. Perhaps this is why UPC is actually short for **U**niversal **P**roduct **C**ode.

The great thing about UPC barcodes is that they actually work anywhere in the world - even beyond just North America.

Without going into too much detail just yet, many other countries such as Australia and Brazil use a type of 13-digit code called an EAN barcode on their retail products.

However, if you have a UPC barcode on your product you will not need to ever put an EAN barcode on your product – even if selling in Australia or Brazil. More on this later.

Just know that if you have a 12-digit UPC barcode it literally works on any type of product (except for books and magazines) and can be used anywhere in the world.

The most basic definition of a UPC barcode is this:

A UPC barcode is a unique, 12-digit number that nobody else in the world has.

The black lines of a barcode are actually just a font, called the UPC-A font, and each line correlates exactly to the number lying directly beneath them.

Let me explain this a different way.

To create a UPC barcode, you simply set your font style to UPC-A, type in the first 11 digits of your barcode number (starting from left to right) and up pop the black lines. (FYI, there is an embedded algorithm in the UPC-A font that will create the 12th digit of your barcode for you. This 12th digit is called the “check-sum” digit and is based on the sum of the first 11 digits). Why it's done like that is anybody’s guess.

The UPC-A font is used because computer scanners, especially older ones, have a much easier time reading straight black lines of varying widths than they do reading curvy numbers. This UPC-A font is also the reason you often hear barcodes referred to as UPC codes or just UPC's.

By the same reasoning, the stylistic layout of the numbers beneath the lines in a UPC barcode is designed so that they are more easily read with the naked eye.

However, it is often confusing for people to see 2 little numbers on the outside of a UPC barcode and then 2 sets of 5 numbers on the inside. A high percentage of people look at a UPC and will only see 10 numbers no matter how much you tell them there are actually 12 numbers there.

Ultimately, think of the UPC as a social security number for each one of your products.

That's literally all there is to it.

Even though there are many conspiracy theories associated with UPC barcodes, it is almost impossible for there to be any hidden information stored or encrypted in a UPC.

But before I move on, there is a critical aspect of the definition of a UPC that needs to be understood: it is a 12-digit number that ***nobody else in the world has***.

The key here is how do you know that nobody else in the world has your 12-digit UPC barcode number?

The short answer is that ALL UPC barcode numbers need to have originated from the SAME number database.

Since the early 1970s that database has been generated and managed by a company called GS1. I will go into more detail about GS1 later.

While it's true they manage the master database of UPC barcode numbers, they are not the only place you can acquire valid UPC numbers. There are 2 other companies – Buyabarcode.com and their partner TheBarcodeRegistry.com – that own a portion of the GS1 database and can legally provide unrestricted UPC barcode numbers.

Now, let's move on…

So how do UPC barcodes work?

UPC barcodes are basically a tool of convenience for Retail stores.

Nearly every store in the world uses barcodes in conjunction with their inventory management system to help keep track of how much of a product they may have on their shelves at any given time.

Thanks to the barcode system, a manual shelf count is no longer needed. The store can simply type a barcode number into their computer to

find out what has been sold and what they need to re-stock.

Setting up your barcode inside of a store is also very easy and it works the same way for every store – from Amazon.com to Costco to Whole Foods, Macy's or Best Buy.

The whole system generally works like this:

When you go to sell your product at a retailer (i.e. Best Buy or Amazon.com), that retailer will have you fill out a basic product information form. On that form, you will put your company and product details (such as price) along with your 12-digit UPC barcode number. The retailer then manually enters that information into their inventory management computer. Then, when they scan your barcode at the register, it calls up that form in their system. You get credit for the sale and your product inventory gets reduced by one.

As you can see, your barcode is a necessary tool to link your product with its product information form in the store's computer.

In a nutshell, once you place your barcode onto your product, your work is done. The retailer takes care of the rest. They will get the information regarding your product from you by having you fill out a product information form and then upload that info into their inventory management system.

“Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

– Warren Buffet

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Why are toilets always so good at poker?

They always get a flush.

Chapter 2.

What is an EAN Barcode?

When asked about EAN barcodes, the questions usually go as follows:

What are they? Do I need one on my product? If I already have a UPC do I also need an EAN? If I already have an EAN barcode on my product, do I also need a UPC?

Let me start by saying that all barcodes (both EAN and UPC) originate from the exact same source – the company I mentioned earlier, called GS1.

UPC barcodes came first and then more than a decade later EAN barcodes came along. But both types of codes come out of the exact same GS1 database.

In fact, the only real difference between an EAN barcode and a UPC barcode is that an EAN is 13-digits long and a UPC barcode is 12-digits long. Other than that, they function exactly the same.

Why EAN codes exist is an interesting question.

From everything I have read, EANs were a marketing ploy born out of the overwhelming success of the UPC barcode system in the United States. Realizing that they could have a lucrative worldwide monopoly on barcodes, GS1 set out to put a GS1 location in just about every country in the world.

They also came up with a plan to assign every country its own Country Code. To do this, GS1 needed to expand their numbering system from 12-digits to 13-digits. Thus, EANs were born. (EAN stands for European Article Number).

I have placed a complete list of EAN Country Codes in the very back of this book.

The next question: Do I really need an EAN barcode on my product?

Here's the straight answer: If you already have a 12-digit UPC barcode on your product then you absolutely do not need to additionally purchase an EAN barcode. (If you call GS1, they will even tell you the exact same thing).

With a UPC barcode, you can sell your product in any store around the world.

But that said, GS1 has done a great job of selling the idea of country-specific EAN barcodes. Throughout Europe, South America, Australia and many other countries, when you inquire about barcodes they will refer you to the GS1 location in that country where they will only sell you a 13-digit barcode.

However, there is just one major problem. An EAN barcode will not work in the United States or Canada. The U.S. and Canada exclusively

use 12-digit UPC barcodes for retail products and the scanners in these two countries will not recognize EAN barcodes. That means you would need to also have a UPC barcode on your product.

By contrast, if you take a 12-digit UPC barcode to a country that is set up for 13-digit EANs, those scanners are calibrated to automatically add a leading zero to the 12-digit number and convert it to an EAN.

You truly only need a UPC barcode.

"We don't describe the world we see – we see the world we describe."
- René Descartes

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You know, it was so cold in Washington D.C. the other day, I saw a politician with his hands in his *own* pockets.

Chapter 3.

How many Barcodes do I need for my products?

How many Barcodes do I need for my products?

This question is extremely common and perhaps the easiest of all to answer (though it will require that you have at least 3rd grade math skills).

First, I'll start by saying that you always keep the same barcode on the same product, no matter where in the world that product is sold.

So, how many barcodes do you need? I'll start with some examples:

Example 1: If you sell a plain red t-shirt that comes in 3 different sizes you would need to buy 3 barcodes.

Example 2: If you sell 2 different styles of t-shirts (a plain red and a plain blue t-shirt) and each color comes in 3 different sizes, you would need to buy 6 different barcodes (2 x 3 = 6).

Example 3: You have just recorded your first CD and you had 1,000 copies of your CD printed up. You would only need one barcode. However, each new CD title you record in the future will also need its own unique barcode.

I could continue with countless examples, but I think you get the picture. Every different style, size, quantity, color, or flavor will each require their own unique barcode.

This way, if one of the product variations is selling faster than the others, the store will be able to tell instantly through their computerized inventory system which one needs to be replenished.

“Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”
- George Bernard Shaw

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What did the Buddhist ask the hot dog vendor?

“Make me one with everything.”

Chapter 4.

What are Standard UPC and EAN Barcode Printing Requirements?

Rule of thumb: 1 inch in length and any height you want to make them.

For the past several decades, the general rule of thumb for printing standard UPC and EAN barcodes is that for a scanner to read them they need to be a minimum of one inch in length from the left edge of the left bar to the right edge of the right bar.

The height of a barcode is not so critical.

Barcodes can literally be any height you'd like them to be – from 1/16th of an inch up to 2 feet tall.

The key to understand is that computer scanners are reading the width of the lines from left to right.

Truth be told, modern scanners can actually read much smaller barcode sizes. However, to make sure your barcodes can be read by even the oldest of scanners, stick to the rule of thumb.

There are two important notes to keep in mind.

1.) If you are expanding or shrinking the size of a barcode, you'll need to make sure you constrain the proportions. This will maintain the

ratios between the widths of the lines. Otherwise, you risk skewing the barcode and rendering it unreadable.

2.) If you have a tall barcode and simply want to crop it shorter, this is perfectly fine so long as you crop it from top to bottom. Never crop a barcode from the sides.

What if my product is too small to meet these requirements? Like a lipstick or a pencil?

Do not fret. Many products are too small for barcodes. In this case, you will often only see the UPC number written on the product.

It'll look something like: UPC #689076111119

Ultimately, what matters most is that the actual barcode number can be read with the naked eye. This way the cashier can manually type your barcode number into the register if there is any problem with the lines.

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."
William Shakespeare (Hamlet)

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What's Forrest Gump's password?

1forrest1

Chapter 5.

What is a QR Code?

In the world of barcodes, QR codes are one of the newest symbols on the block though they've quickly become one of the most popular.

The easiest way to explain the QR code is that it is simply a web address encrypted into that crazy alien font. When you place your phone's camera on the QR code, it then launches that web address inside your phone's web browser.

Pretty much everyone has by now used a QR code to launch their favorite restaurant's menu inside their phone. But it's not the actual menu encrypted in the QR code, it's the URL of the menu page on the restaurant's website.

Creating a QR code is much like creating all of the other barcodes. In this case, you just select the QR font, type in the entire URL (web address), and magically the square alien character is generated.

But, unlike UPC or EAN barcodes, QR codes are rarely if ever used for inventory tracking.

For an extremely brief history of the QR code, I will simply say they were originally invented in Japan in 1994 at the Denso Wave automotive products company. Their intended use was to be an easy way to label automotive parts.

If you're a real glutton for punishment, you can get an in depth history of the QR code on the QR code's Wikipedia page.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”
— Mahatma Gandhi

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What did the horse say after it tripped?

Help! I’ve fallen and I can’t giddyup!

Chapter 6.

Barcodes for Books

Now let me explain the barcoding system for books.

All books use a type of barcode called a Bookland EAN barcode. This type of barcode is created using a unique number issued by the United States Library of Congress called an ISBN.

Short for **International Standard Book Number**, ISBN numbers can only be purchased through the Library of Congress's official website, **Bowker.com**.

Whenever a new book gets published, it is reported to the Library of Congress where it is permanently logged.

A different ISBN is assigned to each separate edition and variation (except reprintings) of a book.

For example, an e-book, a paperback and a hardcover edition of the same book must each have a different ISBN.

Not to bore you too much with technicalities but the basic process of creating a barcode from an ISBN goes like this:

With barcoding software you select the ISBN font (also called the Bookland EAN font). You will next copy and paste in your 10 or 13 digit ISBN number. ISBN's are automatically issued

in both formats. Whichever way you paste the number, the software converts it into 13-digit format.

You will then have the option of inputting a price for your book.

In the U.S. you will start with a 5 and then the 4-digit price. For example, if your book price is $16.95 the price code would be 51695. In Canada, you would substitute a 6 so the code would be 61695.

Most people use what is called the 90000 code. By using this code for price, it means that each different bookstore can set their own price for your book. Otherwise, the bookstore is required to ask no more than the cover price of your book as shown in the barcode.

After all of that, your ISBN barcode will look like this:

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go...”
— Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

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Why can’t you hear a pterodactyl going to the bathroom?

Because the “P” is silent.

Chapter 7.

Barcodes for Magazines

Now, let's see how fast I can explain magazine barcodes!

Magazines barcodes are all issued by one company called **Bipad.com**.

Bipad.com developed a specific numbering system that is unique to the retail magazine industry.

All magazine barcode numbers contain the same GS1-issued prefix of 074470. Added to that is a unique 5-digit identifier issued by Bipad.com for the magazine title – called a Bipad number.

Ultimately, a magazine barcode is simply a UPC barcode with a 2-digit Issue Code attached.

When creating the image of the barcode, you put in your magazine prefix of 074470 and Bipad number and then you add a 2-digit issue code. This issue code is based on the frequency of your magazine. For example, if the magazine comes out once a month and this issue is the March edition you'd use the code 03. If it's the July edition you'd use the code 07.

If the magazine comes out quarterly and it's the second quarter edition the code would be 02.

If the magazine comes out annually you could use the code 01 or 00.

I can imagine that now is a good time to get a second cup of coffee. We're moving on to Case Codes!

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."
— Winston S. Churchill

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What do you call someone who refuses to fart in public? A private tutor.

Chapter 8.

Case Codes (aka SCC, GTIN, and MCC Codes)

One of the most common types of barcodes used in the retail world other than UPC and EAN codes is the 14-digit Shipping Container Code (aka SCC code).

SCC codes are most commonly used for shipping bulk quantities of your product to a store's warehouse. The store then scans the SCC code to know how many of your product are in that particular shipment.

The name of the barcode is simple and self-explanatory. Unfortunately, though, in the world of barcodes it needs to be made much more confusing. This is because there is no universally agreed upon name for the SCC code.

Retailers will often call these codes SCC codes, MCC codes (short for Master Container Code), ITF-14 codes (a reference to the technical type of barcode font used), and most recently GTIN codes (aka Global Tracking Identification Number). They can also be referred to as the Code 3 of 9 (aka Code 39) and the GS1-128 barcode. To make matters worse, sometimes retailers confuse GTIN codes with UPC codes.

To be clear, any strange code asked for ***in addition to*** a UPC is most definitely the standard Shipping Container Code, regardless

of the name used. In my experience, in nearly every circumstance, the ITF-14 font and format will suffice.

Much like the UPC code, the SCC code has no real information encrypted into it so it needs to be set up beforehand in a store's inventory computer.

How are SCC codes created?

Fundamentally, an SCC code is simply a 14-digit number that nobody else in the world has. For this reason, the easiest way to create an SCC code is by using the unique UPC barcode from one of your products.

Keep in mind, there is no necessary relationship between the product and the shipping container, it is simply an easy way to make a unique 14-digit code.

Technically speaking it goes like this…

To create an SCC code, you choose any UPC barcode you own. Next, you select the ITF-14 font in your barcoding software. ITF stands for Interleaved Two of Five – don't ask me what that means. Then, you type in the number 10 followed by the first 11 digits of your UPC number. In total you will have input 13 digits.

Again, just like the UPC, the ITF-14 font uses an algorithm that will generate the 14th digit.

Once you've done that, you magically get a code that looks like this…

If you need to generate additional SCC codes for different pallet quantities you can simply add a 20, 30, 40, 50, etc. instead of the original 10 you used when creating your first SCC barcode.

Once you've done that they will look like this…

And this…

“When your heart is in your dream,
No request is too extreme.”
- Jiminy Cricket

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If you were born in September, it's pretty safe to assume that your parents started their new year with a bang.

Chapter 9.

Who is GS1? A *very* brief history of barcodes.

When a child asks where babies come from, the simple answer is the stork.

When a person with a new product asks where barcodes come from, the simple answer is GS1.

However, despite how they may appear, GS1 is not a governmental organization nor does it have any affiliation with the government whatsoever.

GS1 is the name of the private company that manages the barcoding system currently used by all retailers around the world.

What is immediately confusing about GS1 is that for the first 30 years of their existence they were known as the Uniform Code Council (or UCC).

The UCC changed its name to GS1 about 20 years ago but is still often referred to as the UCC by many older business owners.

It might not surprise you to learn that GS1 is actually owned and operated by several giant retail chains including Wal-Mart, Kroger's, Home Depot, Lowes, and the Federated Group. Together, these companies make an enormous profit from their literal monopoly on the barcode system.

But GS1 did not actually invent the barcode.

The first barcodes were invented back in 1951 by two scientists named Norman Joseph Woodland and Bernard Silver. It wasn't until the late 1960s, however, when telecom giant GTE created a computer scanner that could actually read barcodes.

For years individual retailers devised their own internal systems for using barcodes. However, there was no universally uniform numbering system for barcodes. Therefore, new barcodes had to be assigned by each and every retailer.

Enter the Uniform Code Council (now known as GS1).

The original founders of GS1 actually came together to figure out a way to solve the chaotic inventory tracking problems faced by stores.

What the founders of GS1 came up with was a very simple numbering system where every new company would get their own set of unique barcode numbers for their products out of a centrally managed number database. The thought was, **if all UPC barcodes originated from the same database, it would be possible to know which barcode numbers were being used and which were not being used.**

These barcode numbers (which GS1 called UPCs) would all have to originate exclusively from GS1 in order to be certain they were unique.

As long as every new business in the world purchased their UPC barcodes from GS1, the whole system would work beautifully. Behold the birth of a monopoly!

Amazingly, this is what GS1 was able to pull off. And the fact that GS1 got every retail business in the world to go along with this deserves a great deal of credit.

Unfortunately, as GS1's monopoly grew, so did its tendency to raise its prices.

Today, they operate one of the craziest, most outlandishly expensive business models out there. In fact, they are so expensive they have become a prohibitive expense for many people trying to start a new business.

Thankfully, GS1's terrible business model allowed my company, Buyabarcode.com, to come into existence and thrive.

Fun Fact: The very first successfully used UPC barcode was placed on a pack of Wrigley's Chewing Gum.

“Everything you can imagine is real.”
— Pablo Picasso

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What does a nosey pepper do?
It gets jalapeño business.

Chapter 10.

The First Alternative to GS1 – Buyabarcode.com

Are There Alternatives to purchasing directly from GS1?

The short answer is YES.

(This is where I can actually toot my own horn a bit).

As I mentioned earlier, I originally became known as “The Barcode Guru” back in 1999 when I founded **Buyabarcode.com**.

At the time, I was the first to figure out a simple way to circumvent GS1’s monopoly without bringing chaos back into the inventory system.

The system I came up with has been enormously successful and Buyabarcode.com has been fortunate enough to have been featured in both The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post as the viable alternative to GS1. I was even brought in as a special consultant to Amazon to help with some of their early barcoding issues.

First of all, let me re-state, it is very important that all barcodes *originate* from GS1. However, it is not necessary to purchase them directly from GS1, as long as the company you are purchasing your barcodes from originally purchased their barcodes from GS1 *and has access to the GS1 US Data Hub*.

For example, at **Buyabarcode.com**, all of the barcodes we sell originate directly from GS1.

This way Buyabarcode.com knows that the barcodes have never been used before and that you can take them into any store in the world and they will work perfectly.

Buyabarcode.com also gives you the option of buying any quantity of barcodes you need. GS1, in comparison, only allows you purchase either 1, 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000, or 100,000 at a time.

And besides being incredibly expensive and slow, GS1 also charges an annual fee that ranges anywhere from $150 to $3,500.

Buyabarcode.com does not charge any annual fees. This is because we purchased all of our barcodes from GS1 before GS1 started charging that annual fee in 2002. Therefore, since we don't have to pay it, our customers don't have to pay it.

For a small business owner, GS1's business model and pricing are daunting, especially after using the majority of your money to produce your product.

Buyabarcode.com takes that problem away. The barcodes you purchase through Buyabarcode.com will never expire and there are never any annual renewal fees or future fees of any kind. And they work for any store in the world.

“Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring.”
— Marilyn Monroe

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Did you hear about the cheese factory that exploded in France?
There was nothing left but de Brie.

Chapter 11.

The 5 Questions to ask when Buying UPC Barcodes

(Buyer Beware of cheap barcode scams!!!)

Inevitably, with the success of Buyabarcode.com, several copycat barcode sellers began to emerge with the sole intent of scamming their buyers.

These unethical, wildcat sellers are easy to spot. They tend to charge anywhere from $5 or less for a single barcode to a penny apiece for 100,000 barcodes. They also sell their barcodes in nonsensically large quantities that absolutely make no sense.

These barcode scammers get their barcode numbers by either making numbers up out of thin air or by hijacking old dormant GS1 prefixes. Regardless of their technique, they have no way of knowing if the barcodes have been used before or if they will be used by someone else in the future.

The barcodes these scammers sell will also NOT work on Amazon nor will they work at most large retail chains. At best they will work at some Mom 'n' Pop stores without large inventories.

The sad result is that many unwitting buyers put the bad barcodes on their expensive packaging only to find out too late that the barcodes do not work. This often results in new packaging having to be created.

So what are the 5 key questions to ask a barcode seller before purchasing?

Here we go…

1. Do your barcodes originate from GS1?

2. Can you instantly provide a copy of the original certificate issued by GS1 after purchase?

3. Can you instantly provide me with a ***signed*** Letter of Affiliation from the company name listed on the original GS1 certificate after purchase?

4. Do you have access to the GS1 US Data Hub for the barcodes you sell?

5. Will you place my company, barcodes, and products into the GS1 US Data Hub?

If the barcode seller answers NO to ANY of these questions then run away and don't look back. Any answer of NO means you are dealing with a barcode scammer.

Obviously, most of these companies say all of the right things on their website. But if they

can't provide you with those basic verification documents then the barcodes they are selling will not work at Amazon and most of the large retailers.

Remember, a certificate of transfer from their company to yours means absolutely ZERO to Amazon or any large retailer or distributor.

At the very minimum, retailers need to know that you didn't just make your numbers up out of thin air. In order to do this you'll need to show at minimum a copy of the original GS1 certificate and a signed Letter of Affiliation with the name on that certificate.

Once again, be sure to ask those 5 questions before any purchase.

To my knowledge, there are only 3 barcode sellers who can answer YES to all 5:

BuyaBarcode.com

TheBarcodeRegistry.com

GS1

“The most important thing in life is to stop saying ‘I wish’ and start saying ‘I will’. Consider nothing impossible then treat possibilities as probabilities.”

- **Charles Dickens**

****

My teachers told me I’d never amount to much since I procrastinate so much. I told them, “Just you wait!”

Chapter 12.

Amazon Sellers and Barcodes. All you need to know.

If you have any type of standard product, the most important place in the world to sell your products these days is Amazon.com. And as just about every Amazon vendor can attest, the listing process keeps getting stricter and stricter.

This is especially true when it comes to barcodes.

After decades of problems with fraudulent barcodes being input into their system, Amazon has finally cracked down on the barcode process.

Now, Amazon wants you to prove that you didn't just make up your barcode number up out of thin air and that it at least originated from GS1.

To do this, Amazon starts by cross referencing the UPC number you give them with the name listed with that barcode's prefix inside the GS1 GEPIR database. If your vendor name and the GS1 prefix name don't match exactly then Amazon gives you the following slightly scary message:

ERROR: You are using UPC, EAN, ISBN, ASIN, or GTIN codes that do not match the products you are trying to list. If you believe you have reached this message in error, please contact Seller Support.

After receiving this message, you will then be prompted to open a Help ticket inside your Amazon account and upload the following 2 verification documents:

1. **A copy of the original GS1 certificate associated with your barcode's prefix**
2. **A signed Letter of Affiliation with the company name on the GS1 certificate**

Once you upload those 2 documents an Amazon rep will verify your connection and then whitelist your barcodes. You can then proceed with your listing.

Note #1: You'll only have to upload the documents one time as long as all of the products you are listing have the same prefix.

Note #2: You can also call Amazon's top secret customer service number (866) 216-1072.

Note #3: Personally, I prefer opening a Help ticket. It's really quick and easy and doesn't force you to listen to terrible Hold music.

In the unfortunate instance that you are unable to provide those 2 verification documents (for example, if you purchased from one of those ultra-cheap barcode scammers) then you will need to get brand new barcodes.

These new barcodes can be purchased from one of the 3 companies that can answer YES to all 5 questions I mentioned in the last chapter.

(**Hint:** Buyabarcode.com, TheBarcodeRegistry.com, or GS1).

Lastly, a lot of vendors are wondering how the new Amazon policy changes affect products that are *currently* listed on Amazon.

Many people are freaking out that the products they are currently selling on Amazon will get removed because of their barcodes.

This is absolutely NOT the case. If your products are already being sold on Amazon, you will not have any issues with your barcodes, and they will NOT be removed. It is not in Amazon's self-interest to start kicking current products off of their shelves.

The whole point of Amazon's new barcode policy is to tighten the ship on their barcode system ***moving forward***.

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”
— Theodore Roosevelt

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Why did the cowboy get a wiener dog?
He wanted to get a long, little doggie.

Chapter 13.

Barcodes and Walmart.

The most important thing to know about Walmart when it comes to barcodes is that they (along with Kroger) actually own GS1.

Since Walmart is very much inclined to make a profit they require that all of the products and barcodes uploaded into their system ae also inside the GS1 US Data Hub.

GS1 US Data Hub is GS1's proprietary database that you can only get access to if you have an active GS1 account.

Therefore, there are only 2 ways to get your products inside the GS1 US Data Hub so you can sell at Walmart:

1. Purchase your barcodes directly from GS1.

2. Purchase your barcodes from a barcode seller who has access to the GS1 US Data Hub.

To my knowledge, the only barcode sellers for #2 are Buyabarcode.com and TheBarcodeRegistry.com.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”
— Martin Luther King Jr.,

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What do you call fake spaghetti?
An impasta!

Conclusion
(Yayyyy!)

For more than 25 years, barcodes have been a major part of my life. Though I never learned one thing about barcodes in all my years of schooling, through trial and error I have managed to become perhaps the world's leading expert on barcodes.

For those sorry folks that do know more about barcodes than me I can only say God help their soul.

Hopefully, you learned what you needed in this little Book on Barcodes. And if you still have questions you can always reach me at Buyabarcode.com!

And now, a parting inspirational quote and one more bad joke…

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world."
— Mahatma Gandhi

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Why do Norwegians have barcodes on their battleships?

So they can Scandinavian.

Below is a list of EAN Country Codes:

000 – 019 United States and Canada
060 – 099 United States and Canada
100 – 139 United States
200 – 299 Restricted distribution
300 – 379 France and Monaco
380 Bulgaria
383 Slovenia
385 Croatia
387 Bosnia and Herzegovina
389 Montenegro
400 – 440 Germany
450 – 459 Japan
460 – 469 Russia
470 Kyrgyzstan
471 Taiwan
474 Estonia
475 Latvia
476 Azerbaijan
477 Lithuania
478 Uzbekistan
479 Sri Lanka
480 Philippines
481 Belarus
482 Ukraine
484 Moldova
485 Armenia
486 Georgia
487 Kazakhstan
488 Tajikistan
489 Hong Kong
490 – 499 Japan
500 – 509 United Kingdom
520 – 521 Greece
528 Lebanon
529 Cyprus
530 Albania
531 Macedonia
535 Malta
539 Ireland
540 – 549 Belgium and Luxembourg
560 Portugal
569 Iceland
570 – 579 Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland
590 Poland
594 Romania
599 Hungary

600 – 601 South Africa
603 Ghana
604 Senegal
608 Bahrain
609 Mauritius
611 Morocco
613 Algeria
615 Nigeria
616 Kenya
618 Côte d'Ivoire
619 Tunisia
621 Syria
622 Egypt
624 Libya
625 Jordan
626 Iran
627 Kuwait
628 Saudi Arabia
629 United Arab Emirates
640 – 649 Finland
690 – 695 China
700 – 709 Norway
729 Israel
730 – 739 Sweden
740 Guatemala
741 El Salvador
742 Honduras
743 Nicaragua
744 Costa Rica
745 Panama
746 Dominican Republic
750 Mexico
754 – 755 Canada
759 Venezuela
760 – 769 Switzerland and Liechtenstein
770 – 771 Colombia
773 Uruguay
775 Peru
777 Bolivia
779 Argentina
780 Chile
784 Paraguay
785 Peru
786 Ecuador
789 – 790 Brazil
800 – 839 Italy, San Marino and Vatican City
840 – 849 Spain and Andorra
850 Cuba
858 Slovakia

859 Czech Republic
860 Serbia
865 Mongolia
867 North Korea
868 – 869 Turkey
870 – 879 Netherlands
880 South Korea
884 Cambodia
885 Thailand
888 Singapore
890 India
893 Vietnam
896 Pakistan
899 Indonesia
900 – 919 Austria
930 – 939 Australia
940 – 949 New Zealand
955 Malaysia
958 Macau

For questions, please visit us anytime at:

https://www.BuyaBarcode.com