

A 2D key to the future

2DBarcodes are in Australia and the benefits are there for the taking. GS1 Australia has been working with Woolworths on deploying the technology and says it's time for retail to adopt the solution.

2DBARCODES are not new. Many sectors have been using this technology for quite some time including healthcare and transport who are reaping the wide benefits of their use.

The time is now for the retail sector to engage in this revolution.

Woolworths are deploying 2D solutions to enhance food safety and reduce food waste in their stores, leveraging the power of the innovative data carriers that have the potential to shape the future of retail, much the same way the original barcode did 50 years ago.

The benefits of this shift are up-for-grabs for suppliers. GS1 Australia director of retail Andrew Steele says, "It's like someone is handing you a key to the future of business in retail."

Demands have been bubbling away in retail, including the need for more granular product data such as batch, serial number, use-by date, the need to increase consumer engagement by connecting them to extended information about products. Meanwhile, regulators are pressing for better product safety, sustainability and traceability.

By encoding additional product attributes in the 2DBarcode, more business processes can be automated throughout the supply chain and at Point-of-Sale (POS). This includes expiry date management, automatic markdowns at POS, effective recalls and regulatory compliance.

However, understanding the transition from 1D to 2DBarcodes will be very important for manufacturers.

Australian Packaging and Processing Machinery Association chair Mark Dingley says, "For most suppliers looking to adopt 2DBarcodes for point of sale, it will most likely mean moving away from pre-printed barcodes, typically on a label or on the package, to 'inline printing'.

"The process changes impact the package itself and the production line requirements to maintain a high quality 2DB inline print and ensure successful scanning at the supermarket register every time."

Dingley advises suppliers work with their printing partners as early in the process as possible to avoid issues in-store.

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"Print partners will be able to help suppliers test and trial their products so they can ensure data is consistent across their packaging," he says

Suppliers may require additional infrastructure and validation on the production line. Technical capabilities will need to be assessed to ensure print quality is maintained from the first printed barcode to the last and that this can be maintained day in, day out to achieve a high level of scanning at point of sale. This is crucial to long term consistency.



WHAT IS 2DB

MORE THAN A BARCODE

2DBarcodes hold much more information than a linear barcode, including the ability to stop the sale of expired or recalled products at the checkout. Other features are:

- product batch/lot number
- serial number
- best before date
- use-by date
- pack date
- weight and price