



Pilot Report

U.S. Beer, Wine & Spirits

Industry leaders learn how 1WorldSync solutions provide a better way to share rich and accurate product information across a three-tier syndication model





Challenge

Trends in the beer, wine and spirits industry today reflect a new customer demographic characterized by health-conscious and ethical purchasing decisions, preferences for variety and innovation, and a thirst for product information. Industry has responded with a host of new products and product lines offering high-quality ingredients, flavor options, and novel aging methods. In addition, industry has been ramping up its efforts to make more robust product information available. The goal is to reach data-driven consumers from product discovery through purchase decision, and to support item setup, ordering, and emerging e-commerce channels like direct-to-consumer (DTC).

Unfortunately, traditional approaches to sharing product information in the alcohol industry have made these efforts quite challenging, partly because product information is often shared using proprietary spreadsheets and portals. These one-to-one approaches have proven time-consuming and inefficient, and led to concerns around data quality and consistency. With demand for more and better product information increasing, many in industry are looking for better options.

Pilot Study

Leaders from across the U.S. beer, wine, and spirits industry participated in a pilot study to learn how product information standards and 1WorldSync can improve data sharing across their supply chain and enhance the quality and amount of product information available to support consumer sales. During the pilot, each supplier chose a sample set of items for which participants would share two batches of data.

- In batch one, they shared basic product information (such as identification, name, descriptions, proof, image links, etc.).
- In batch two, they shared additional value-add product content (such as marketing information, tasting notes, nutrients, allergens, etc.).

PILOT PARTICIPANTS



**Retail Business
Services**

A Company of Ahold Delhaize USA

Beam
SUNTORY



**REPUBLIC
NATIONAL**
DISTRIBUTING COMPANY



SAZERAC
NEW ORLEANS

Key Findings

Pilot participants discovered 1WorldSync supports sharing product information from the supplier to the distributor to the retailer as well as data sharing between a supplier and a retailer directly, providing the flexibility and options needed for industry's regulated three-tier supply chain. Moreover, they learned that there are product information standards in addition to identification standards (i.e., GS1 Global Trade Item Number® [GTIN®]), and that these standards have the attributes needed to satisfy demands for rich product content, images and descriptive information about beer, wine and spirits. Finally, participants found that 1WorldSync enables them to:

- Quickly and easily respond to demands for product information
- Exchange timely and relevant content across all suppliers, distributors, and retailers with the push of a button
- Improve product information quality

Product Information

Retailers of beer, wine and spirits have always needed a certain amount of product information to set up an item in their systems and support supply chain and transactional needs (e.g., pricing, measurements, product descriptions, etc.). Due to the nuances of the industry's three-tier supply chain, retailers obtain this information from their distributors.

However, consumer trends in recent years have significantly expanded the amount and type of product information retailers need. "Core supply chain product information is traditional. But over the past five years, the need for consumer-facing product information – like marketing, nutrition, allergen, usage, storage, for example – has exploded," observes Jeffrey Cree, Senior Manager-Supply Chain, Retail Business Services, the service company of Ahold Delhaize USA.

A Manager of Master Data Management at a distributor agrees, noting increases in both the number of retailers requesting additional product information and the amount of

information being requested. "They're looking for rich product content, images and descriptive information, even access to reviews, label descriptions, sugar-free, organic, etc."

"And retailers are making direct requests of the brands for product information to get the most accurate information when it comes to the product assortment, etc.," according to Tamara O'Donnell, Director, Enterprise Information

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Management at Beam Suntory.

Current Approach

The beer, wine and spirits industry has been trying to accommodate the demand for more product information under their traditional approaches to product information sharing (i.e., proprietary spreadsheets, PDFs, and portals). All pilot participants recognized problems with the current approach.

For example, the effort to obtain product information and the numerous or competing data submission formats can be a drain on distributors and suppliers alike. According to a Senior Process Data Analyst at a manufacturer, "A key challenge is finding and compiling the information in our own systems product by product at customer request." Eric Ginsburg, Global Data Synchronization Analyst at Sazerac Company, Inc., agrees, describing the process as "repetitive, duplicative efforts that require many resources to manage."

From the downstream perspective, retailers and distributors are challenged trying to validate and process product information in a timely manner to assure data quality in product listings. "We're trying to get the information holistically, not piece by piece, to respond to demands to get the product to market. But right now, it feels like speed to market is fighting quality control on the

data,” says Bill Smith, Director, Business Sales Technology at RNDC.

Rich, Accurate Product Content

Despite the challenges, pilot participants universally recognized the importance of the additional product information. According to Smith, “The information benefits the retailer in terms of advertising, product assortment, and online – and it benefits the consumer too.”

From discovery to decision-making, today’s data-driven consumers routinely conduct online research to find products that meet their requirements and preferences. They gather information from a variety of sources, and they expect rich and accurate product content on all channels. “Defining and managing information about your brand and products is so important today that we formed a data management function last year. We want to own our data and provide rich, quality product information to our trading partners and our customers,” says, a Manager Data Sourcing & Data Sharing at a manufacturer.

“In today’s digital world, it is expected that product and brand content is defined and managed so that from the supplier all the way to the consumer, everyone can feel confident that the physical world matches the digital world,”

“There is a huge and growing demand for instantaneous access to product information.”

says Ginsburg. In this environment, missing, incomplete or inaccurate product content can have real opportunity costs.

Cree sees the challenges as a call to action. “There is a huge and growing demand for instantaneous access to product information,” he notes. “As an industry, we need to be able to provide that information. We need to do better and move faster to satisfy consumer demands for information.”

Central Question

The central question for pilot participants was how 1WorldSync solutions can accommodate the nuances of a regulated three-tier supply chain. “Our industry has struggled because of our three-tier supply chain where there’s a disconnect between those that make the product and those that sell it to consumers,” says a brand.

Retailers are accustomed to dealing directly with their distributors, and they will always need certain product information from them, like shipping unit weights and measures and pricing. However, other types of product information, like marketing and descriptions, could be provided to retailers by either distributors or suppliers. The core relationship between distributors and retailers is an essential part of this supply chain, so it is important that retailers have a choice of whether they want to receive the additional product information from their distributor or from the supplier. Therefore, participants were keen to examine how 1WorldSync could support GDSN data sharing from the supplier to the distributor to the retailer, as well as data sharing between a supplier and a retailer directly.

Flexible Data-sharing Options

During the pilot, participants learned that 1WorldSync enables suppliers and distributors to set up one authoritative set of product information that can be shared electronically with retailers (i.e., a 1-to-many model). In addition, they learned that 1WorldSync provides flexibility and product information sharing options that support the industry’s regulated three-tier supply chain and enable beer, wine, and spirits suppliers, distributors, and especially retailers – to receive product information however they prefer.

For retailers who prefer to only receive product information from their distributors, 1WorldSync Product Introduction enables suppliers to publish product information to distributors, and then distributors add their content and send the complete product information set to their retailers. “Many retailers want to receive product information from their distributors because that’s who they buy from and are used to dealing with,” says Smith. “1WorldSync Product Introduction provides a real viable option there.”

In addition, 1WorldSync also supports the traditional two-tier approach where suppliers publish their product information to distributors and retailers directly, and distributors publish their supply chain information to retailers directly as well. Retailers receive the two data sets separately, and marry the information in their systems themselves. This approach can be beneficial to retailers who need the supplier information as soon as possible to set up marketing and online. “Customer requests for descriptive product information and pictures for e-tail and omni-channel has increased – and they’re asking for it sooner for website and customer order entry,” says a brand. Receiving the supplier information at the same time the distributor receives it enables the retailer to get a jump start while the distributor is compiling their information.

A Proven Process

Some of the suppliers in the pilot had been using 1WorldSync for several years with larger distributors and retailers, so their product information for both batches were already loaded. Their experiences sharing data during the pilot illustrated how easy 1WorldSync makes it to respond to requests for product information once you are set up. According to Ginsburg, “Sazerac had the 1WorldSync processes and technology in place – which made the experience very easy, just a push of a button.”

A Senior Data Management Analyst at a manufacturer agrees, “Using 1WorldSync saves so much time and money compared to manual entry, and it’s so much easier. Plus, it minimizes errors so it’s better quality too.”

The pilot also included suppliers who had never used 1WorldSync before. Their experiences provided insight about the onboarding process for new users.

“We went in without any experience with 1WorldSync. For us, it was really about validating that we could do it. We had a lot of great support from 1WorldSync and our pilot partners,” says Smith.

“With any new way of working, there will be

challenges with translating the standards to your internal business user language. But once you get beyond the initial work, it then becomes a typical business activity which enables greater focus on data quality,” says Ginsburg.

Product Information with Tremendous Business Value

As any newcomer to data synchronization might, some pilot participants wondered whether the

Don’t waste countless hours uploading data to individual portals. With 1WorldSync, you can:

- Enter your data one time and publish it to any recipients
- Centrally store your supply chain, logistics, eCommerce and marketing product content in one location
- Leverage mass uploads of your data via our spreadsheet upload or machine-to-machine capabilities
- Get it right the first time with 1WorldSync validations and recipient-specific validations built into our tool
- Send images to your recipients in the same message with other product information

product information standards have the attributes needed to support the alcohol industry. “I found that the standards do have the key attributes needed for our industry,” says a brand.

In addition to those core data elements, the standards also support many other data elements that can provide real value-add for beer, wine and spirits. “It is important to focus on the basics and get them right first,” says Smith. “But, I found a lot of other attributes that could be used in our industry someday and this provides a platform where suppliers can go to provide that data too.”

As recipients in the pilot downloaded and reviewed the product information, the value became

quite clear. According to Cree, “We provided the product content we received from 1WorldSync to Ahold Delhaize USA’s local brands’ category merchandising team and asked them how valuable it would be to have this information. Their feedback was swift and clear: ‘How soon can we get this?’ That was pretty telling.”

Sazerac, which has been using 1WorldSync for over three years, has also received positive feedback about their synchronized product information. “Our trading partners have been enthusiastic about the data being shared, and have found the product information to have tremendous value to business activities, including enhanced item data accuracy and consistency

for a more accurate ordering and efficient supply chain,” says Ginsburg.

“By providing accurate and timely data, Sazerac is serving our business and trading partners better by enabling them to prevent lost/misplaced revenue opportunities and decrease costs through improved resource utilization,” adds David Eirich, Director Business Operations Transformation at Sazerac.

Final Thoughts

Suppliers, distributors, and retailers in the alcohol industry need rich, accurate product information to support item setup, ordering, and e-commerce. However, current approaches to sharing product

Benefits

Sources of Product Information (e.g., Suppliers and Distributors)	Receivers of Product Information (e.g., Distributors and Retailers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Save time & money Accelerated time-to-market and lead times for acquisition and maintenance, which allow you to reduce costs as you manage product content across channels.• Unlimited demand-side partners Publish product content to as many data synchronization recipients as desired.• Enhance data quality With content validation, you can be sure that product content is timely and relevant across recipients as you reduce time spent on administrative tasks.• Multiple methods for data entry Leverage whichever data entry method you prefer (e.g., web interface, Excel upload or machine-to-machine automation) to seamlessly input data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce inefficiencies Reduce the time spent managing supplier item setup, and easily share supply chain data.• Improve data quality Decrease manual data entry and improve data accuracy received from suppliers. 1WorldSync validations ensure data requirements are always met.• Cut costs Reduce the costs of managing product content from suppliers and distributors with minimal effort.• Increase speed to market Achieve effortless item setup and shorten the time it takes to onboard new suppliers.

information are time-consuming and inefficient and can undermine data quality. Industry is examining their product information and sharing/syndication mechanisms and discovering that 1WorldSync provides a better way. “1WorldSync



enables us to have all of our information in one place, and have a fast and easy way to share it so we can have our brands the way we want to see them across all channels,” says a brand.

Eirich adds, “The business benefits are immeasurable, since all trading partners connected to Sazerac via 1WorldSync have the same version of the product data/images in a timely manner. The 1-to-many approach is truly transformational and enhances the overall enterprise operational experience.”

Looking to the future, Smith notes, “We understand there’s a lot of manual 1-1 sharing right now and that will have to change. With the pilot, we were able to see beyond the newness of 1WorldSync. We could see how 1WorldSync could be beneficial for our partners, and we could see the value and benefit to industry.”

“With the rise of e-tail and the need for a

seamless omni-channel information experience for consumers in general, customer demand for pictures and product information is great. This is making its way to beer, wine and spirits, and it’s pushing us as an industry to look at our data and get it together for retailers and customers,” says a brand.

Cree agrees. “I see evidence of increasing momentum across industry to simplify the way we share information to make it easier to understand, easier to implement, and easier to share. I think we’re on the cusp of a revolution in the way we utilize data as an industry.”

Karin Borchert, Chief Executive Officer of 1WorldSync, supports this outlook. “1WorldSync is pleased to help the beer, wine, and spirits industry enable a much stronger and consistent process for reaching buyers.”

About 1WorldSync

1WorldSync™ is the leading provider of product content solutions, enabling more than 25,000 global companies in over 60 countries to share authentic, trusted content with customers and consumers, empowering intelligent choices for purchases, wellness, and lifestyle decisions. Through its technology platform and expert services, 1WorldSync provides solutions that meet the diverse needs of the industry. 1WorldSync is the only product content network provider and GDSN Data Pool to achieve ISO Certification 27001. For more information, please visit www.1worldsync.com.

