



## Valvoline oils their supply chain with EANnet®



**For Valvoline, the move to EANnet was a 'no-brainer'. "We see it as the future direction of our major customer groups and it will open the door to EDI (electronic data interchange) for many more of our smaller accounts too," says Valvoline's Peter Fitzgerald.**

Peter, who is Valvoline's Director of Operations & Technical Services (Supply Chain), has just overseen the company's move to become EANnet Ready™ with project guidance and assistance from the GS1 Professional Services team.

"Coles gave us the impetus to become EANnet Ready but it's something we would definitely have done soon anyway," he said. "We wanted to be able to say to all our customers 'Valvoline is ready to trade electronically when you are.'"

Aside from the marketing benefits, Peter expects to see the keying errors associated with paper-based processes to fall, saving Valvoline considerable time and money.

With EANnet as the foundation for electronic trade, Valvoline will replace universal buying forms (UBFs) for new products; product, packaging and price changes; and the announcement of product obsolescence.

"If you're processing customer orders manually like we have been, there's always the potential for mistakes so, by eliminating so much paperwork, we're expecting to gain quite a few efficiencies," he said.

Peter assembled a team of around fifteen people from his own department and across Valvoline's operations, including marketing, retail sales, administration and information technology. Early on, he also called in specialist help from GS1 Australia's expert Professional Services team, who guided Valvoline through the planning and implementation phases, providing invaluable project management and technical assistance.

"We wanted someone who was dedicated to driving the project and could give it the focus it deserved," Peter said. "Valvoline has a good history with GS1 and we wanted a solution that would ensure that standards were

maintained to ensure we were in alignment with Valvoline's 150 affiliates worldwide."

The Valvoline and GS1 Professional Services teams began by analysing Valvoline's business processes and applications systems to see how data flowed around the organisation. A data GAP analysis revealed the need for data cleansing and validation before new systems could be put in place. For Peter, this step was critical.

"Data management and cleansing was the biggest challenge of the entire project but also one of the most valuable," he said. "GS1 Professional Services helped us put a better data management system in place so that clean data stays clean."

The range of products was limited to those supplied to Coles / GHPL. In all, fifty stock keeping units (SKU), complete with product

and price data, images and attachments were uploaded – a deliberately small percentage of Valvoline's product range.

"In Coles, we had an experienced EANnet user who purchased a relatively small product range," Peter said. "We decided it was wise to crawl before we tried to run and wanted to work out all the bugs before a more extensive roll out - fifty SKUs was a manageable size for us."

Such prudent planning paid dividends. Together, Valvoline and the GS1 Australia Professional Services project management team achieved EANnet Ready status in the twelve weeks Peter had allocated for the project with few hiccups.

"There really weren't many surprises," Peter said. "We were extremely well prepared and having the expertise of Professional Services supporting us at every stage of the process

meant the implementation went "very smoothly."

Valvoline now plans to extend its success with other trading partners in the automotive after market and grocery industries.

Asked if he had any advice for others considering adopting EANnet, Peter said: "The trick is to do your research on the benefits to your organisation and to your customers so that you have a strong rationale for the project. Here at Valvoline, we found being EANnet Ready was a definite competitive advantage and that, together with the Coles mandate, certainly built momentum."

