

The Use of sQRrl codes in the food industry:

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A match like peanut butter and jelly! The answer to net promotor scores.



Standardization has been an enormous boon to the food industry. We have standardized product sizes and disclosure regulations have increased consumer confidence in food safety. It was the food industry that instigated UPC codes which some studies claim save up to 6.59% to the bottom line.¹

Labeling is the most critical aspect of food packaging today. It is the primary vehicle for both branding and product marketing. But today's consumer has expectations for answers far beyond the capacity provided by a small label. SheSpeaks polled US female internet users in September about how they interacted with food brands online,

including on social media. Overall, 83% said they liked to see coupons and offers. But recipes were just 4 percentage points behind—and far ahead of any other desired content.²

Since smart phones are now ubiquitous, and capable of scanning a QR code, it is time to rethink the use of that label. Many products—maybe most use the QR code, but usually only as a tag to link to one web site or one piece of information. This is despite that fact that with today's technology each QR code can access up to 4,000 characters of information: If only the data were organized!

The Reverse Logistics Association has released a data dictionary to define standardized field labels. This enables multiple simultaneous uses of a single QR code to optimize the data capacity of the label. Here is an example of what a sQRrl label could communicate for the food industry.

Forward Logistics

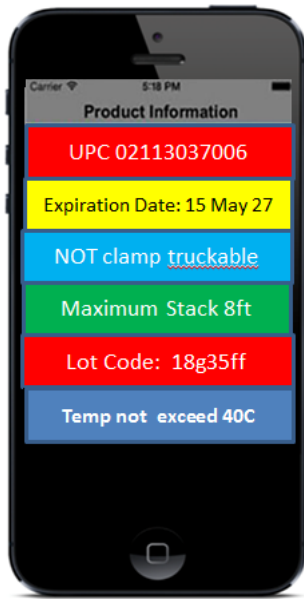
Bar code labeling is mature and well established. But the average shipping container has multiple such one-dimensional codes and still lacks a lot of helpful information. We won't even mention the data required if the product is imported or exported to another country.

Most container labels use standard UPC code labeling. There are often proprietary 1-D bar codes to supplement this information. Standard 2-D labeling technologies such as QR codes can support 4X the

¹ Starting in the mid- 1970's by 5 grocery store chains. As reported in the 2013 GS 1 Annual Report.

² <http://www.shespeaks.com/>

data. Thus there is generally speaking room for all of the current information, plus imagine having access to the following:



By adding this data:

<G29>02113037006<4B>8f<4C>No<4D>160527<4E>18g35ff<I39>40C to the existing UPC code in sQRrl format, the following data is presented.

And since this only took 58 characters, there is plenty of room to include additional information such as more detailed geo-tagging, and whatever additional information the producer wishes to communicate.



Point of Sales

So, products are delivered and are on the shelves. There is consumer information that will be discussed shortly, but there is one unique application that can be added to the individual product package label that has a unique and immediate benefit to the Point of Sale process: product recalls. Product recalls unfortunately occur after products are on the shelves. However, a simple URL location with the proper software can enable POS scanners to identify recalled items as they are being checked out. This would catch any missed items during the product retrieval process. Imagine the customer satisfaction when the cashier says, “sorry sir, this product has been recalled.” The customer feels taken care of: net promoters scores go up.

Once universally adopted, such a field on a product label would actually reduce the need to remove recalled products in advance of the point of sale scan. This would reduce stocking costs considerably. Currently customers do not realize that most recalled products are removed from shelves. There is some satisfaction in catching such defects at the point of purchase.

Consumer Information

Let’s start with the recall situation—an event that often ruins brand names. Unfortunately they occur and the producer’s reputation depends on their response. Software can easily be constructed that would check with a website controlled by the producer to validate a product recall... complete with instructions for next steps should be product be defective. Said website could also assure consumers (and retailers) that any given product is not on the recall list. The addition of this simple code would have a profound impact on the producer’s net promotor score. So if the product scanned is not under recall, a simple site discussing the corporate policy and giving assurance that your company is on top of it... wow! This is the way to build consumer confidence.

An earlier comment noted an interest from consumers for more recipes and coupons. No one wants to type in URL addresses: instead, scan the sQRrl code and be taken directly to the site. But more than

that: today there is emerging a keen interest in product ingredients and origins. The label site limits the inclusion of details. Instead, consumers see arcane chemical additives and confusing numbers. While regulators will always demand their visible presence, so much more information can be included at specially constructed web sites, accessed by scanning a sQRrl code.

There, with hypertexts, consumers could learn that thiamine mononitrate is a stable nitrate salt form of thiamine (vitamin B1) and is found naturally in foods like grains, yeast, molasses, pork and animal organ meats. By removing a chloride ION it becomes more water absorbent and helps noodles keep their shape will adding vitamin B1. That sounds reasonable: no one likes soggy noodles. So what could a consumer oriented sQRrl code label look like?

The data string of sQRrl codes <M65>Campbells<I61>all1.rla.org<I62>allr3.rla.org<I62>No<I63>peanut oil<I64>scct3.rla.org<M60>No<I4D>160527<m66>qww3.rla.org (125 characters) would produce the following label.



All of this is generated by a simple sQRrl code. Imagine what that will do for your net promotor scores. If UPC codes saves 5-6% from the bottom line, imagine what sQRrl codes can do.