

UPC Codes – What Are They?



A UPC Code, or Universal Product Code, is the most widely used barcode for retail item scanning. While newer, more sophisticated codes pack in more information, the UPC is still a workhorse barcode that is useful for many foods, beverages, and other consumer products. You order your code online, much like a website domain name.

The code above has four parts:

- A. The '1' on the left is the Number System Character – it represents a broad class of products, like foods, clothing, or bulk items.
- B. The '22222' represents the company (this is your number).
- C. The '33333' represents the individual product in your lineup. You (the brand owner), select the individual numbers for your products – 16oz chocolate sauce, 8oz strawberry sauce, etc.
- D. The '6' is a Check Digit that is calculated by the software.

The software also creates the bars and spaces, and most vendors (like us) should have code verifiers to ensure that the proper numbers are returned when the code is scanned, and that the code has a high quality rating.

Ordering a code is easy, but it can be expensive depending on how many items you need. Go to www.gs1.org to find out more. They will sell you the reserved numbers you need to give to your vendor in order to print the proper code on your label.

Once the UPC numbers are established, you will have to send this information (probably in a very specific file format) to each retail location that will carry your products. This listing will be uploaded into the retailer's point of sale (POS) system so that the right price rings up when a customer purchases your product. And, in many cases, this will debit the retail inventory and automatically trigger a re-order at the proper point to ensure they are never out of your product.

Once you have your UPC, we can help you integrate it into your label artwork so the package looks great on the shelf and helps to build your brand. Call us today!



Rose City Label

www.rclabel.com • 7235 SE Label Lane • Portland, Oregon 97206
Phone: (503) 777-4711 • Toll free: (800) 547-9920 • Fax: (503) 777-4799