



Vendor Gold Alliance Program Technical Specifications

Introduction

The purpose of the Vendor Gold Alliance Program is for the manufacturer to provide a timely update to UniformMarket of the current stocking levels of the products available for sale or, indeed, if any of those products have been discontinued. If products are temporarily out of stock, any additional information, such as expected restocking dates, would also be useful.

This document is divided into three sections:

- Transport: how the information can be transmitted from the manufacturer to the retailer.
- Content: exactly what information is being sent and what portion, if any, of the information is optional.
- Format: how the information is organized and presented.



Transport

We have worked with manufacturers using Web Services or FTP. There are two ways to go with each method: accessing the manufacturer's servers via FTP or web service, or accessing our servers via FTP or web service.

Web Service

To retrieve the latest Inventory levels using the manufacturer's Web Service we will need:

- A URL, preferably HTTPS, for the web service. If this is a SOAP web service, then this would be the URL to the WSDL definition.
- Optionally, any specific header information required, such as usernames and passwords. If the recommended HTTPS protocol is used, this information can be supplied as part of the URL. It can also be supplied as part of the content.
- The optimal time to use the Web Service to retrieve the inventory information. We prefer that this be once a day if not real time per SKU.

To receive the latest inventory levels from the manufacturer using our web service we will provide:

- The URL, which will be HTTPS, where the inventory will be sent.
- It would be helpful to know the time when we should expect the transfer. We prefer that it be very early in the morning, between 3 am and 6 am ET, but it can be any time convenient to the manufacturer.

FTP

If the transfer is via FTP from a folder on a manufacturer's servers, then we need:

- The server name or IP address
- Optional folder(s) that must be navigated to for the transfer
- Username
- Password
- Type of protocol
- File naming convention.
- When and how often to scan the folder. We actually prefer doing the scan once a day.

If the transfer is via FTP to a folder on our servers, then we provide:

- The server name
- The folder that must be navigated to for the transfer
- Username
- Password
- Type of protocol, which is standard port 21 unencrypted.
- File naming convention.
- When and how often to scan the folder. We actually prefer doing the scan once a day.

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Content

Required fields are marked. Optional fields are of two flavors: not needed ever because the manufacturer does not need or want the information, or not needed occasionally. This will be determined by discussions with the manufacturer.

For XML layouts, the nodes for missing occasional fields can be omitted or left empty.

For CSV layouts, missing occasional fields are specified by no content between the commas.

The name of a field is the suggested node name for the XML layout, but any agreed upon names can be used. Also, the order of the fields can be adjusted in the csv layout. In general the csv layout does not contain a header row, but it can be provided if desired.

Field size is also flexible and can be anything within reasonable limits.

Field	Req	Description
UPC	*	We prefer UPC, but this can be named anything, such as ManufacturerSKU and contain your internal Identification for a specific size, color, cut, etc. for a specific product. It is what you have requested that we name all your specific unique SKUs in our retail stores!
Qty	*	Qty in stock. Some manufacturers prefer reporting this as codes rather than quantities, such as “Out of Stock”, “Low”, or “In Stock”. In this case we translate “Out of Stock” as “0”, “In Stock” as 10000, and “Low” as either “0” or “10000” depending on the manufacturer’s choice.
?		Any other fields that the manufacturer requires associated with inventory levels.
Availability		Used if the manufacturer wants to supply additional information when the SKU is out of stock. This can be nothing, a date when restocking is expected, or even a discontinued notice. If the manufacturer wants this information displayed with SKUs that are out of stock, we work with them to determine how the values supplied in this field are to be formatted for display.

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Format

We currently support two data formats: XML and CSV. Both are easily implemented and, just as important, easy to view and understand in a spreadsheet or standard text editor without the need for additional tools or programs.

I have included the same sample data in both formats. Which fields are shown and, for CSV the order of the fields, can be varied based on manufacturer needs.

XML

```
<?xml version="1.0" ?>
<Inventory>
  <Item>
    <UPC>704739864555</UPC>
    <Qty>211</Qty>
    <Availability />
  </Item>
  <Item>
    <UPC>704739865555</UPC>
    <Qty>0</Qty>
    <Availability>05-01-2008</Availability>
  </Item>
  <Item>
    <UPC>704739866555</UPC>
    <Qty>392</Qty>
    <Availability />
  </Item>
  <Item>
    <UPC>704739867555</UPC>
    <Qty>0</Qty>
    <Availability>Discontinued</Availability>
  </Item>
</Inventory>
```

CSV

The format is one ASCII line per record (ending in cr, lf, or crlf). Fields are separated by a delimiter, usually a comma, but any character can do if agreed upon, such as tab or bar. Fields that contain the delimiter are surrounded by quotes, which for some reason in the computer industry are called double-quotes.

We prefer the use of crlf for line delimiters and comma or tab for field delimiters.

We would prefer files that do not contain a header. Content is recognized by a mutually agreed upon order of the fields.

```
704739864555,211,
704739865555,0,05-01-2008
704739866555,392,
704739867555,0,Discontinued
```

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