

## **PRODUCT & PRICE INFORMATION FORMAT**

### **Frequently-Asked Questions**

The following frequently-asked questions regarding the Product & Price Information Format (PPIF) are organized by general, vendor/manufacturer and distributor/OEM questions. PPIF users are encouraged to review all questions to better understand their business partners' concerns.

#### **General Questions**

- Q.** What is the PPIF?
- A.** The PPIF allows manufacturers to issue detailed information on products, parts and prices in an ASCII format that is suitable for being transmitted via mail, e-mail or the Internet. This single-format, single-program system can be installed and used easily by manufacturers, distributors and OEMs.
- Q.** Why is it important to endorse the PPIF and how will it benefit us?
- A.** The PPIF replaces a multiplicity of vendor-based formats, dramatically reducing the time spent processing updates. It can be implemented without significant software expenditure, eliminates manual re-keying and ensures accuracy in applying manufacturer price updates.
- Q.** Where can we get a copy of the PPIF?
- A.** Download a free copy at [www.ptda.org/ppif](http://www.ptda.org/ppif) or request a copy from PTDA (+1.312.516.2100; [ptda@ptda.org](mailto:ptda@ptda.org)) or BSA (+1.630.858.3838; [info@bsahome.org](mailto:info@bsahome.org)).
- Q.** Who can we contact for assistance interpreting the format?
- A.** Contact PTDA (+1.312.516.2100; [ptda@ptda.org](mailto:ptda@ptda.org)) or BSA (+1.630.858.3838; [info@bsahome.org](mailto:info@bsahome.org)).
- Q.** We have suggestions for revisions to the format that could benefit our industry. How can we communicate these suggestions?
- A.** Revisions should be forwarded for consideration to PTDA (+1.312.516.2100; [ptda@ptda.org](mailto:ptda@ptda.org)) or BSA (+1.630.858.3838; [info@bsahome.org](mailto:info@bsahome.org)). Any proposed revisions to the PPIF must be submitted in writing either to BSA or to PTDA and should include an explanation of the issue to be addressed, a proposal for the number of fields needed, meaningful field names, thorough development of field definitions and comments/examples for the support documentation. Proposed revisions may be submitted at any time.
- Q.** How do we know we have the latest version and how will we know what changes have been made?
- A.** Check [www.ptda.org/ppif](http://www.ptda.org/ppif) for updates; revisions from the last version are described in the PPIF Overview.
- Q.** Do we have to update to the latest version?
- A.** Updates to a new version may not be logistically possible immediately; however, the update should be a high priority. Updates maintain the integrity of a format and likely will benefit communications between the manufacturers and distributors with commonly requested information. Should there be revisions requiring a new version, the revised PPIF will be distributed in the first calendar quarter of the year.

## Vendor/Manufacturer Questions

- Q.** There seems to be a lot of information requested. Why is this important?
- A.** PPIF fields provide valuable information to distributors that are cumbersome to obtain otherwise, reducing the time needed to perform database updates. Identifying new items, superseded items and obsolete items eliminates time to research each part. Knowing stock/non-stock information helps distributors make informed selections. Knowing part weights informs purchasing consolidation and freight decisions.
- Q.** Why can't we alter the format a little to help our company or our customers?
- A.** ANY alteration defeats the purpose of a standard format. In time, deviations erode the standard's purpose and integrity and undermine its many valuable benefits.
- Q.** Our company manufactures products based solely on customer specifications. Can we use PPIF if we don't have standardized products?
- A.** PPIF is designed to provide product information and price updates on stock items and is not practical to use for customized products.
- Q.** How can we get more distributors to adopt the format?
- A.** Announce the availability of updates in the PPIF format on all price notice letters and provide contact information to request updates in this format. Provide price updates only in the PPIF and provide advance notice of the change to distributors to allow ample preparation time.
- Q.** Can we provide the PPIF in Excel format?
- A.** Only if files also are provided in an ASCII tab-delimited format.
- Q.** What is the Read Me file and how can we use it?
- A.** The Read Me File allows vendors to explain any special field usage and answer frequently-asked questions. Required and recommended Read Me content is specified in the PPIF Read Me Overview. A sample Read Me file also is provided.
- Q.** What are Required fields?
- A.** Suppliers are strongly encouraged to populate fields with all available data but may choose not to populate any fields except those marked as "R" (Required). Required fields must be populated if the data exists.
- Q.** We don't have UPC numbers for our products. Can we still use PPIF?
- A.** Although UPC is a required field, there may be instances where a UPC does not exist. If this is the case, you can use Field 2 (catalog or item number) to identify your product. Be sure to include that number in Field 2, not in Field 1. Field 1 is specifically for UPC numbers and including a catalog or item number in that field could cause more harm and confusion than good. For example, the UPC standard length and format that makes it unique in industry. If the number you put in the field happened to be the same as another manufacturer's real UPC number, it could be confused with a different item. Also, when loading the data into the distributor's system, it could be rejected because it most likely would not be in the correct format.
- Q.** What is the difference between Special Net Invoice Price and Published Distributor Invoice Price?
- A.** Special Net Invoice Price is the price on the invoice for this distributor; Published Distributor Invoice Price is the published price for most distributors.

- Q.** What are Pricing/Discount Group fields?
- A.** These fields allow the supplier to group products for pricing or discount purposes. See the supplier's Read Me file for a description.
- Q.** What should we load in the Description 2 field (Field 18)?
- A.** Product type information, such as BEARING, SEAL, SPROCKET, V BELT, etc.
- Q.** How do we provide quantity break information?
- A.** Provide this information in the Price Break Records by Quantity, Dollar Amount and/or Weight file.
- Q.** We have buy plans for a select group of products where a discount is offered after a certain dollar level is reached for said item. How do we include this information in the format?
- A.** Either use a “Y” flag in Standard Product Record Field 36 (Special Pricing Flag Number) and use the Price Break file for dollar level (include only applicable items) OR populate Standard Product Record Field 62 (Conditional Price Multiplier) and/or Field 63 (Conditional Invoice Price).
- Q.** How do we include unique information that is not covered in the format?
- A.** Use User-Defined Fields 40-44 and 49-59, and include corresponding information in the Read Me file.
- Q.** Should we enter a row for column headings?
- A.** Do NOT enter a row for column headings.
- Q.** What if we do not have data available for a particular field?
- A.** Leave the field blank by inserting two tabs.

### **Distributor/OEM Questions**

- Q.** How can we get more manufacturers to provide updates in the PPIF format?
- A.** Let all of your suppliers know that you prefer to receive updates in this format and request that they take the necessary steps to use the format in their next scheduled update. A sample template letter to send to manufacturers is available for this purpose.
- Q.** What is the Read Me file and how can we use it?
- A.** The Read Me File allows the vendor to explain any special field usage and answer frequently-asked questions. Carefully review the Read Me File before interpreting and importing data, particularly when dealing with an update from a vendor that is a recent adopter of the PPIF.
- Q.** What if we don't need all the data provided?
- A.** Requesting custom files erodes the standard's integrity and undermines its benefits; instead, accept data in the standard format and program your system to extract only the fields you need. For assistance in manipulating the data received, consult your supplier's PPIF contact.
- Q.** What if we have questions or receive a non-compliant file?
- A.** Contact the PPIF contact identified by the supplier; this individual's name and contact information should be included in received PPIF correspondence and in the Read Me file.