

UNBOXED MARKET

How Star-Plus helps a zero-waste grocery store stay competitive while reducing environmental impacts



CASE STUDY

Unboxed Market

Michelle Genttner,
Owner

Website

unboxedmarket.com

Industry

Grocery

Product

Star-Plus

OVERVIEW

Environmentally conscience consumers are fueling the growing trend of zero-waste grocery stores. Like traditional grocery stores, zero-waste grocery stores can offer any combination of pantry, meat, dairy, produce, and deli items, with a focus on reducing the environmental impact of packaging and food waste.

Toronto's first zero-waste grocery store, Unboxed Market, is a complete grocery store: offering produce, dried goods, butcher and deli items, cleaning products, oils, and other sundries. Opening in 2019, the store focuses on eliminating single-use plastics and excess packaging wherever possible by partnering with distributors and customers to reuse containers. They also aim to "close the loop" as often as they can, which includes using bruised and wilted produce to create food in their onsite commercial kitchen.

To effectively manage their young business during the turbulence of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as achieve their vision of zero-waste, Michelle Genttner and Luis Martins, owners of Unboxed Market, evaluated a number of point of sale solutions to find the best fit for their business strategy. Star-Plus point of sale software from Auto-Star Compusystems was selected and implemented in 2020. "Our main focus was a system that could work outside of the box (yes, puns, I know), and collaborate with our unique business," explains Michelle. "We researched quite a few POS systems before deciding to work with Auto-Star and Star-Plus. The ability to handle a large amount of SKUs and customize our desktop to allow for items like taring containers, paperless receipts, and quick lookup were key factors."

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UNIQUE & LARGE AMOUNT OF SKUs

Unboxed Market's wide range of unique products requires a retail solution with the capacity to handle a large number of SKUs. Star-Plus gives the store the ability to manage extensive product and inventory data in an intuitive way without compromising speed. On the front end, searching for PLUs for non-barcoded products at the checkout can be time consuming. The Quick Flip feature in Star-Plus helps Unboxed Market's employees find item codes quickly with product images that are sorted by customizable categories, creating a quick and smooth customer experience.

On the backend, Star-Plus also gives the owners of Unboxed Market the information they need to minimize loss and waste while improving inventory turns. Live snapshots of inventory for a specific product or fine line signal if prices need to be reduced or products repurposed in-house.

"We search for innovative ways to increase our output without sacrificing the quality of our offerings," says Michelle.

BRING YOUR OWN CONTAINER

A key part of Unboxed Market's business strategy and commitment to zero-waste is reducing product packaging through the sale of products in bulk, with customers supplying their own containers. Weights vary significantly by container; the Star-Plus solution ensures that when selling weighed items, the empty container weight (or tare weight) is subtracted to accurately charge the customer. The teams at Auto-Star and Unboxed Market worked together to ensure Star-Plus would not only meet the needs of the store, but also their customers. "The team at Star-Plus has been amazing at working through all sorts of not-your-average questions and thoughts that I (and our team) have had in order to make the system work best for Unboxed Market," says Michele. "We have had the advantage of having a couple of key contact [customer service representatives] who have really dug deep into what our store needs and worked with us to find solutions."



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AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION

As the first single-stop zero-waste grocery store in Toronto, Unboxed Market faces significant competition from traditional grocery and bulk food stores. To stay competitive, the small business compares prices to other grocery stores in the area, has a strong presence on social media platforms, and provides staff with a living wage (including benefits for full-time staff). In addition, Unboxed Market has a fully functional website with pickup or delivery order options. Using the Star-Plus integration with Octopus, Unboxed Market syncs with their web platform to automatically download web store orders and generate reports from one place for a seamless end-user website experience.

To further add value to their customers' shopping experience, Unboxed Market recently added the Star-Plus Customer Loyalty module, "which has been an excellent incentive for our regulars to continue to shop with us," Michelle notes. And, to keep with their mandate to reduce waste, Unboxed Market uses paperless customer receipts. Using Star-Plus, receipts are emailed directly to customers from the till at the time of purchase.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As Unboxed Market continues to grow in the expanding zero-waste grocery sector, Star-Plus and Auto-Star are here to support them today and in the future. Michelle concludes: "Our experience has been (and continues to be) great! From our original sales inquiry to present day. The entire team has been incredibly helpful throughout. I highly recommend this product. I know that there are a lot of options out there. We have worked with other POS systems (in other industries), and the care and dedication from the Auto-Star team cannot be beat."

ABOUT AUTO-STAR

Auto-Star's Star-Plus point of sale and retail management solution is designed to assist businesses in optimizing efficiency and customer satisfaction, while lowering operating costs. Contact Auto-Star today for more information on our industry leading solutions for your independent pharmacy or visit www.auto-star.com.

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