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UNFI expands food rescue, recovery efforts

United Natural Foods Inc. expanded its relationship with Too Good To Go, an innovative food waste reduction app and one of the largest business-to-consumer marketplaces for surplus food. What began as a pilot program in UNFI's Atlantic region has become one of the fastest growing solutions offered by UNFI Professional Services, with the number of retailers offering the program nearly doubling after the first year.

"A core value underpinning UNFI's ESG priorities is our long-standing commitment to doing what's right for people and the planet while working to assure a safe and nutritious food supply for everyone," said Matt Whitney, UNFI's chief growth officer. "We embrace the opportunity to use our expertise, influence, and scale to be a force for positive change within the food system, and we strive to help retailers implement simple solutions that make a real, lasting impact."

Too Good To Go uses technology to connect people with businesses that have surplus food so it can be enjoyed instead of wasted. When grocers have soon-to-expire or extra food, they bundle it into "surprise bags," which are reserved by shoppers on the Too Good To Go mobile app. The shopper is then given a time window to pick up the bag in store. Consumers benefit by getting delicious food at greatly discounted prices, and businesses benefit by reaching a new customer base while recovering the cost of food that would have otherwise ended up in a landfill.

"We are excited to work with UNFI to expand our ability to save more food by connecting our users with uneaten, extra products at independent retail stores. By working together, we can help ensure delicious food doesn't go to waste. That's a big win for people, businesses, and our planet," said Tyler Simmons, head of U.S. key accounts at Too Good To Go.

Currently available to UNFI retailers in select cities across the United States, including New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, and Portland, the expansion of Too Good To Go into additional cities in 2022 will help independent grocers take actionable steps to combat climate change and food insecurity. Green Zebra Grocery, a UNFI-supplied retailer in Portland, OR, fills its surprise bags with prepared food items as well as breads, dairy products and produce at the peak of freshness. Their mixed grocery bags offer \$15 worth of food for only \$4.99, and their shoppers love it. Ninety-nine percent of users have given their experience an average of four out of five stars, highlighting tremendous value and large amount of food.

"Our customers love getting fresh, healthy food at drastically reduced pricing through the Too Good To Go program and we feel good about reducing food waste," said Lisa Sedlar, founder and CEO of Green Zebra Grocery. "The more natural and organic food that gets consumed by our community members, the better!"