SUCCESS STORY: AMERICA TO GO
EMORY UNIVERSITY

America To Go Supports Sustainability at Emory University

AMERICA TO GO
Catering Management Solution

EMORY UNIVERSITY

The Situation

Emory University maintains ambitious sustainability standards for all areas on campus, including on-campus food service providers, catering, and event planning. Emory University's Strategic Procurement organization is responsible for managing the relationships with its on-campus food service providers, who were among the first to adopt the University's goals to source 75% of its food sustainably or locally and to divert 95% of waste from landfills by 2025.

Emory wanted to ensure that each of its external caterers were following the same sustainability guidelines as its on-campus food service providers and embracing progress toward the same sustainability goals.
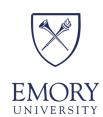
The Obstacles

With nearly 100 external restaurants and caterers serving the campus, extending the University's high sustainability standards was incredibly challenging.

The Actions

Emory and America to Go (ATG), collaborated on sustainability goals for the catering program and worked together to further develop ATG's platform. The four key components of ATG's work with Emory include:

- **Step One: Specifying Standards** – Emory identified specific goals involving catering, including achieving zero landfill waste at all University events and having all University functions free of plastic bottles and Styrofoam by 2025.

- **Step Two: Assess Compliance** – ATG conducted a vendor survey with current and prospective vendors to identify if they met Emory's sustainability standards. This outreach also focused on encouraging these vendors to increase and improve their sustainability practices.

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>
> **Kelly O'Day Weisinger**,
> *Assistant Director, Office of Sustainability Initiatives,*
> Emory University

- **Step Three: Platform Enhancements** – ATG worked with Emory to highlight sustainability caterers on its platform with a number of customizations including: a Sustainability Highlight tile that provides initiative information, a Zero Waste Filter that allows users to sort from the vendor listing accordingly, and Thank You Language on the order text that reinforces the initiative for both the user and the vendor.

- **Step Four: Reporting** – Emory was the first institution to roll out ATG's user-specific sustainability dashboards, which report initiative spend directly on the user's landing page. If the user's spending is down, mouse-over language encourages them to place future orders with a participating vendor. Emory also utilizes ATG's tracking feature to monitor progress and identify potential methods for improvement.

The Results

Through its work with ATG, Emory has successfully created a virtuous sustainability cycle where users seek sustainable vendors, vendors focus on increasing their sustainability efforts, and the entire cycle drives the campus, vendors and the local community toward greener business practices. Results include:

- 55% increase in vendor participation since launch
- 54% of spend now with sustainable vendors
- An immediate jump in sustainable spending after rolling out user-specific dashboards

ATG has provided Emory with a valuable vehicle to extend its campus sustainability initiatives to off-campus vendors. "We were constantly struggling to hold our external caterers to the same standards as our internal caterers," explained Kelly O'Day Weisinger, Assistant Director, Office of Sustainability Initiatives at Emory. "By facilitating this engagement with outside caterers, ATG has been invaluable in helping us meet our sustainability goals and drive more spend to sustainable caterers."

Additional benefits of utilizing ATG:

- **Internal Process Savings** – ATG has helped Emory streamline the catering ordering process, reduce central processing time, and increase payment efficiencies. Invoices are now fully automated through the University's e-procurement system.

- **Reduced Risk** – ATG ensures that all vendors enabled on the system have the proper documentation (including liability and auto insurance) and that they meet the University's specific requirements on their latest health inspections.

- **External Cost Savings** – The ATG platform ensures that users select gratuities within Emory's guidelines. In addition, ATG has helped monitor service fees across all suppliers. This has helped create significant external cost savings while increasing spend visibility.

About America To Go

America To Go (ATG) is an online food ordering and expense management solution that streamlines an institution's restaurants and caterers into one customized platform. This E&I contract helps members lower transaction costs through automated billing and payment, automate and enforce catering policies, and is easily integrated with any eProcurement system. To learn more about how ATG can help better manage your catering experience, please contact Paul Harris, *Business Development Manager, Athletics & Services.*

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