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## **Zingerman's Delicatessen: Sustainable Packaging Initiatives at a Local Michigan Business**

When Mark Fate left the office with news of his promotion in June of 2017, a flurry of thoughts ran through his head. The prospect of starting a new role as the purchasing manager at Zingerman's Delicatessen excited him and he was grateful that his work experience, which started on the Zingerman's receiving dock, gave him the knowledge and credibility needed to land the new position. Fate had spent over two years learning the procurement process for one of Ann Arbor, Michigan's most popular eateries through its "training passport program",<sup>1</sup> which allowed staff to proactively learn more about related functional areas. With this multifunctional training, he was already thinking of ways to improve the business and its impact in the community.

Fate, a 2015 University of Michigan graduate, thought back to his time in college, when he pursued his passion through the university's Environmental Ethics and Environmental Justice course offerings. In his new role, he was placed in charge of purchasing for a local food institution that served around 500,000 people per year.<sup>2</sup> His mind raced with ideas, including the opportunity to create a plan to replace all of the single-use plastics with sustainable alternatives.

Zingerman's already had a clear commitment toward sustainability, yet he still wondered how he would best make the business case to change things up in a busy and high volume operation. What types of disposable products should he replace first? Should he prioritize high-impact products or lower-impact items? How could he engage with the leadership team at the Deli to maximize the impact of these changes? How could he mitigate the risk of negatively impacting the employee or customer experience with the ideas for increasing sustainability?

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