

# Reusable foldable box eliminates waste



Since 2003, Colruyt's Collect & Go customers have received their goods packed in foldable plastic boxes. This method has enabled the retailer to eliminate 630 tonnes of cardboard annually. It is a smart and simple way to prevent packaging waste and improve ease of use at the same time.



## Collect & Go shopping service **requires well-adapted packaging**

Since 2000, Colruyt customers can have their goods collected by store personnel so they don't have to run through the aisles themselves. They simply order the goods online through the Collect & Go service. Initially, Colruyt delivered the goods in cardboard boxes, which was in line with the company's policy of avoiding the use of disposable plastic bags.

'In those days, we reused the cardboard boxes that we got from our apple suppliers. Unfortunately, the popularity of the Collect & Go service grew so rapidly that we never had enough of them

in stock,' says environmental coordinator Lies Baute. 'As a result, we regularly had to call for extra boxes, which were delivered by truck. Now, transporting empty boxes is relatively expensive, because you are essentially transporting air. Furthermore, these boxes consumed a lot of storage space at our Collect & Go delivery points. They also came in various shapes and sizes, making uniform packing difficult. That's why we eventually switched to standard sized foldable reusable plastic boxes.'

## **Saving costs** and improving comfort

By using foldable boxes, Colruyt saves on packaging material as well as transport costs. 'We eliminated 630 tonnes of cardboard a year,' says Ms Baute. 'At the same time, we avoid quite significant logistic costs because the customer returns the boxes. The boxes have an average service life of five years, so we don't have to replace them frequently.'

Ease of use is another major advantage, both for the customer and the individual supermarket. The folded boxes occupy

considerably less space in warehouse storage. At home, they can be put away easily. All boxes are the same size, which makes it easier for store personnel to manipulate and pack as well as for customers to load them in their car. Ms Baute adds: 'Don't forget the very important fact that it also gives a more professional impression to our customer and helps retain customer loyalty. In short, the switch was profitable for the customer, for the individual supermarkets, and for our entire organization.'

Do you also have an interesting prevention project?

Has your company realized a successful packaging prevention project? Let us know via [prevention@fostplus.be](mailto:prevention@fostplus.be).

good to remember

Colruyt was searching for a well-adapted and environment-friendly packaging solution for their Collect & Go collection service.

Initially they used cardboard boxes, but that proved too expensive and was not sufficiently efficient.

By switching to standard sized foldable plastic boxes, Colruyt managed to cut costs, make the service more efficient, and improve comfort for both customers and store personnel alike.

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## How does Collect & Go work?

### Step 1: order online

The customer places their order via the Internet. They choose the store where they want to collect their goods the next day. The service costs 4,50 euro.

### Step 2: a store stock picker collects the goods

Store personnel collect the goods and put them in foldable plastic boxes. Thanks to the standardized size of these boxes, it is easy to manipulate and store them.

### Step 3: the customer collects their order

The customer collects their goods at a dedicated area in the store and pay for the goods. There is a 4,75 euro deposit for each foldable box. At the same time, they can collect the deposit on the boxes that they return.

Lies Baute, environmental coordinator:

'We eliminated the use of 630 tonnes of cardboard annually and avoid substantial logistic costs.'

### You can eliminate packaging material as well

A smart packaging solution can save costs, improve service to customers, and protect the environment.

### Colruyt provides some tips:

- Systematically screen your organization for ideas by means of a questionnaire to be checked at least annually in each department. This way you can detect potential savings
- Draw up a balance sheet for each prevention measure taken in order to inform your employees of the benefits.

### Colruyt and the environment

The Colruyt Group established its **Greenline prevention** policy in 1992 and has refined it over the years. This programme makes a strong statement regarding Group Colruyt's commitment to the environment, including its awareness of the environmental impact of packaging.

The Colruyt Group is committed to always offering the lowest prices on the market. Offering low-end prices means working with thin margins; therefore **preventing unnecessary costs becomes even more important.**

### Project outcomes:

- Since its inception, Colruyt has refrained from handing out disposable bags to customers. They actively stimulated the reuse of the cardboard boxes from its suppliers.
- By switching to standardized foldable plastic boxes, Colruyt reduced the use of disposable packaging in its Collect & Go service. This service is still growing rapidly, so the savings become more substantial every year.