

From the blog

ezClocker Helps Heather Emerson Deliver Plant-based, Zero-waste Meals to Your Door



- **Business:** [Prep to your Door](#).
- **Location:** Austin, TX (coming soon: Houston, TX).
- **Interesting Fact about Prep to Your Door:** It's the only zero-waste meal delivery service in the country.
- **Interesting Fact about Heather Emerson:** She is a former nurse in the United States Air Force

When Heather Emerson first started prepping meals in mason jars, it was purely out of convenience. She was living in New York City at the time, and looking for a cheap and easy way to prepare and store healthy meals.

Little did she know she was building the prototype for a zero-waste, plant-based meal delivery service that would take off like wildfire in her home state of Texas.

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Healthy Food Meets Smart Prep

Heather was never what you would call a foodie, let alone a health-conscious foodie. "I'm from a small town in Texas, and I grew up on a meat- and processed food-heavy diet," she says. So when she took a job at the flagship Whole Foods store in Austin, Texas, and found herself surrounded by vegan, raw-food enthusiasts, she thought they were—well, nuts.

"I remember thinking to myself, 'How do these people live on raw veggies?'" she says. "But then I started learning more about food, and I saw that these people were on fire and full of energy."

One of her colleagues urged her to try a plant-based diet, which she did. After just a few days of eating clean, she noticed significant changes. Her mental and physical states improved. She lost weight, and loved how she felt. There was no going back.

Heather maintained her newfound eating habits when she moved to New York City. To save money, she devised a system where she prepared healthy meals at home and stored them in mason jars. It became her thing, and she kept it up when she moved to Cambridge, MA, to study at Harvard. There, a classmate whom she was dating took notice of her unique prep-and-storage system.

"He was like, 'This is amazing.'" Pretty soon, Heather's mason jar system became a business model. The classmate became her life and business partner. And the two of them moved back to Austin, where they launched [Prep to Your Door](#), a plant-based, farm-to-table meal delivery service.

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Staffing Up to Feed the Need

Once Prep to Your Door launched, its appeal was immediate. "A lot of customers loved our food because it's [healthy](#) and there's a variety." Heather had barely advertised and yet the orders were pouring in. To keep up with demand, she created a scaled-up version of her meal-prep-in-a-jar system. It goes something like this:

Thursday is delivery day, when local farms drop off thousands of pounds of veggies to the kitchen. Friday is for prepping, Saturday is for cooking.

On Sunday, the team rises early to jar meals and pack 300 bags worth of product. These are distributed to customers by a fleet of 13 drivers (plus another four drivers on Monday who cover central Austin). The drivers bring the old jars back to the kitchen, where Heather and her team sanitize them to be reused the following week.

After some downtime, the process starts all over again. More meals, more jars—more bellies to feed.

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Held Up By Timesheets and Payroll

Prep to Your Door was thriving in part thanks to its delicious recipes and meticulously planned operations. Yet as Heather and her partner grew their team, they found themselves struggling to manage paperwork. With each new hire, payroll became more challenging. They tested a number of apps for keeping timesheets, only to find none of them user-friendly. At one point, they created their own timesheet tracking system. That was a huge headache.

Her partner in particular struggled. Payroll was his responsibility, and he couldn't find a software that worked for him. "He's an entrepreneur, and a brilliant person, but...he's just not tech-savvy," Heather says with affection. Meanwhile, the business was doing so well that they were looking to expand into Houston. But before that could happen, they'd have to sort out the payroll issue.

"He looked at me and he said, 'I want to cry at how great this is. I don't ever want to use anything else'."

A Solution that Keeps Everyone Happy

After having tried at least a dozen [time clock apps](#), Heather came across [ezClocker](#) and shared it with her partner. She remembers the day he gave it a test-run: "He looked at me and he said, 'I want to cry at how great this is. I don't ever want to use anything else.'" Running payroll for 30 employees—once a stress-inducing task—now took about 20 minutes.

Ever since that day, they've found more reasons to love ezClocker. The GPS function helps them keep track of their drivers, who fan out all over Austin (and soon, Houston) on two separate days. It's also helped pinpoint time discrepancies, such as employees clocking in when they're not yet at work.

More broadly, ezClocker is one way Heather invests in [employee satisfaction](#). The ease with which timesheets are processed leaves little room for human error. And when paychecks are accurate, staff are happy.

This is important to Heather, who is well aware of the notoriously high turn-over in the service industry. Instead of having to spend money to find and train new hires, Heather can invest in equipment her team needs—like high-tech kitchen appliances that make prep work easier. "When you find a team that's great, you want to keep them around," she says.

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Prep to Your Door's Most Popular Meal

"Our buffalo cauliflower bowl is a customer favorite," says Heather. "We get cauliflower from a farm, and process it into florets. Those are tossed in coconut flour, almond flour, and cassava flour. Then they're roasted in sunflower oil and salt, and tossed in Frank's Hot Sauce. We drizzle it with homemade vegan ranch, which has an aquafaba base and is just amazing. That's served with quinoa, carrots, celery, and avocado. It looks really pretty when it's layered in the jar. And it's delicious."

With ezClocker keeping payroll under control, Heather can set her sights on expanding what is currently the only zero-waste, plant-based meal delivery service in the country. It will change how you eat—and that, Heather would say, is a good thing.



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