

The Restaurateur's Guide to Custom Mobile Apps

Mobile ordering is the new normal.

For restaurants, mobile ordering technology is no longer just a 'nice-to-have,' but essential to maintaining relevance in an increasingly digital world. Today consumers fluidly move from discovery to craving to ordering in a matter of seconds. Already upwards of two-thirds of all consumers order takeout or delivery via apps and mobile web browsers, and over one in three restaurants already have an ordering app.¹

Ordering apps provide incredible convenience and efficiency, giving hungry patrons the ability to order their favorite meals in just a few taps of a finger. In fact, 25% of consumers have at least one dining app on their phone, and these apps have grown in popularity by 140% over the past two years.²



Many restaurants have been so eager to capitalize on the mobile ordering phenomenon that they've signed up with third-party delivery apps without realizing **how harmful they are**. These services take a hefty commission out of every order—in some cases over 40%—and withhold valuable customer insights from restaurateurs.

Other restaurants have turned to branded mobile apps to make the most of mobile technology on their terms. Branded apps—also known as custom ordering apps or custom apps—are mobile apps created exclusively for a restaurant's brand, putting the focus on their menu and providing a direct connection to their digital customers.

Restaurants as large as Domino's and as local as Abbot's Pizza Co.—a one-location gem in Venice, California renowned for their fresh ingredients—recognize that custom mobile apps are essential for increasing customer loyalty and growing the bottom line. By occupying precious real estate on hungry customers' phones, apps function as advertisements with revenue streams, placing the restaurant brand literally in the palm of customers' hands. With consumers spending over 3 hours a day on their smartphones, branded apps reinforce a restaurant's brand, with a restaurant's logo front and center, wherever customers are.⁶



WHY APPS MATTER

33%

of restaurants have a branded mobile app.³

140%

increase in popularity of food and drink apps over the past 2 years.⁴

300%

growth in repeat orders among users of ChowNow's branded apps.⁵

ORDERING APPS

Is a branded app the right choice for your restaurant?

Custom apps aren't only reserved for larger franchise and chain restaurants. They also account for a large portion of sales for smaller businesses—23%, in fact, for the typical ChowNow restaurant partner with a custom, ChowNow-built mobile app. These independent restaurateurs also see a 10% increase in order frequency per diner after launching their apps through ChowNow.⁷

If your restaurant is currently on a third-party marketplace ordering app, you may feel that you're doing just fine. It's true that these platforms can offer exposure and some level of convenience. However, third-party commissions add up, and will cost you the bottom line. Many restaurants find that they're essentially paying these middlemen to sell their food, losing any meaningful connection to their customers—including their data—in the process.

TAKE A LOOK AT WHERE YOUR RESTAURANT STANDS:

- ✓ Are you currently on a third-party app that's sending you a considerable amount of orders?
- ✓ Do you have website ordering, and has it been successful?
- ✓ If you don't have online ordering yet, do you have high takeout volume?



Sophie Banh
Owner of Monsoon

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, it's time to step things up.

Establish another channel that lets you take commission-free orders, gather insights about your diners, and communicate directly with them. Your patrons crave this, too: 70% of consumers prefer to order directly from restaurants instead of third-party marketplaces.⁸

Maximize your bottom-line revenue.

Your app will be exponentially more profitable if you promote it to your customers and give them an incentive to use it. It only takes a little bit of effort to see incredible results, and if you work with ChowNow's Restaurant Success Team, they'll take care of everything. Here are five simple tips straight from ChowNow's experts to help you make the most of your custom restaurant app.

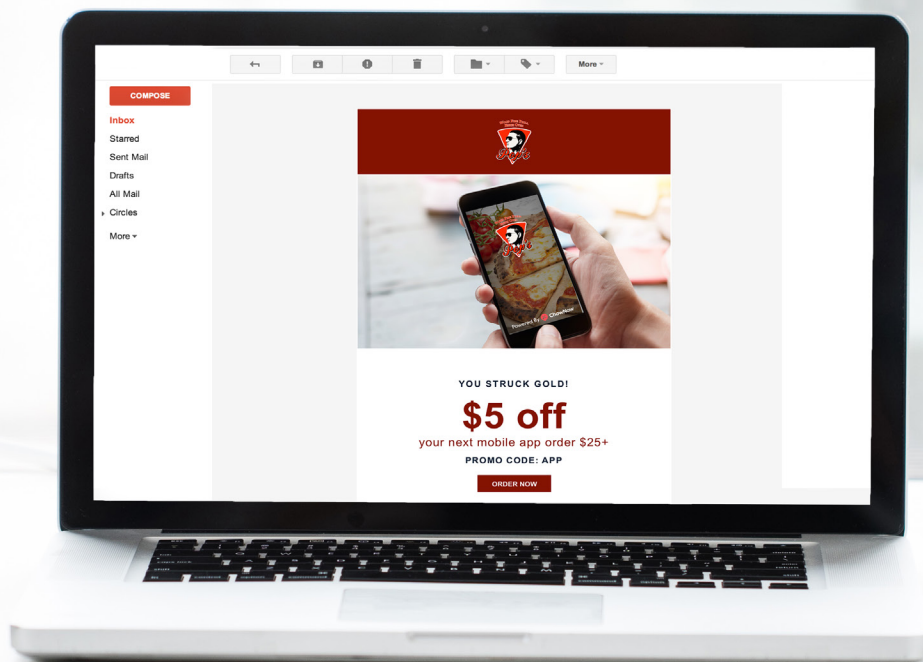
1 RUN AN APP-ONLY PROMOTION.

Offer your customers an enticing one-time discount for using your app. While ChowNow's Restaurant Success Team will recommend strategies specific to your restaurant, they find in general that giving \$5 off a user's first app order of \$25 or more is very effective.

2 SEND MARKETING EMAILS ADVERTISING YOUR APP.

If your online ordering system gives you control over your customer data, you should have a healthy list of email addresses. Send out an email to announce your app-only promotion and link to your Google Play Store and Apple App Store listings so customers can download your app right away. Even when your initial promotion is over, make sure you always mention and link to your app in your emails in order to keep it on customers' minds.

You can use a service like Mailchimp to send out promotional emails yourself, or sign up for ChowNow's email marketing to let experts take care of everything, from designing to sending your message.



3

LEVERAGE WORD OF MOUTH.

Use your social networks, both online and offline, to spread the word about your new custom ordering app. Your employees are your restaurant's best representatives, so ensure that they're informed and ready to talk about the app with customers. You should also post about your app on social media alongside photos of your mouth-watering dishes, and make sure to link to your Android and Apple app listings.

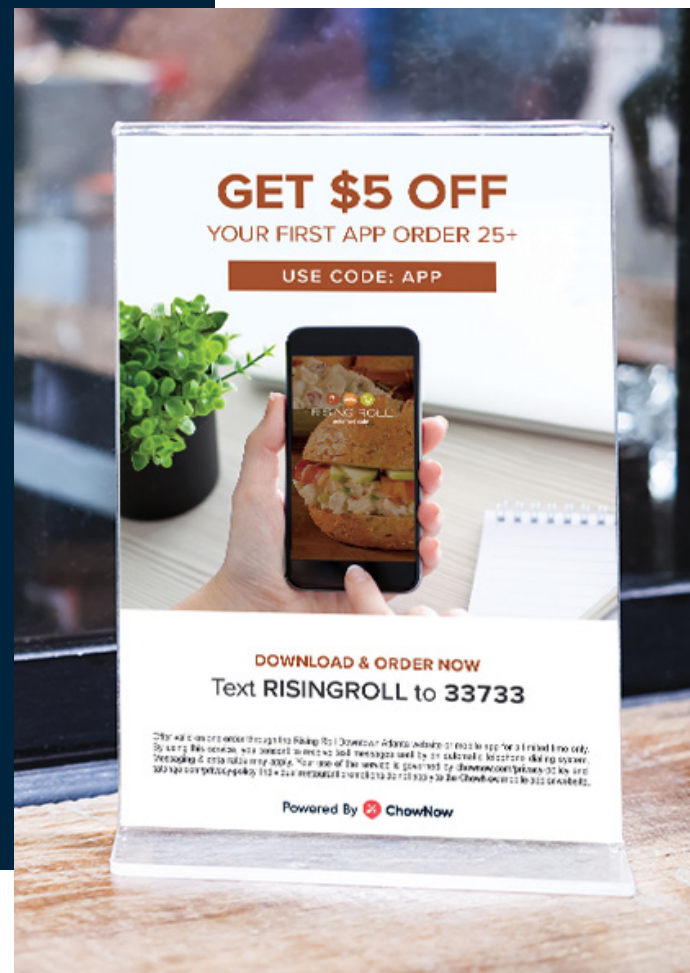
If you're a ChowNow restaurant partner, your Restaurant Success Manager is always ready to lend a hand when it comes to social media tactics. Take a look at some of the team's social strategies in [our complimentary social media ebook](#).

4

USE PROMOTIONAL CARDS, STICKERS, AND SIGNS.

It's important to promote your app when your customers are interacting with your restaurant offline, too. Try putting cards announcing your app-only discount in your to-go packaging. Display signs at your register or in your window to ensure that both eat-in and take-out customers are aware of your new ordering channel.

ChowNow restaurant partners receive a complimentary marketing launch package full of promotional materials. They can also quickly order everything from email newsletters to stickers through a one-stop-shop website, so they can grow their app users without lifting a finger.



5 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS.

Due to their high opt-in and click rates, push notifications are extremely powerful tools for getting your customers' attention. They serve a very practical purpose in that they can automatically alert customers when their orders are ready.

While you should be judicious when utilizing push notifications for marketing purposes, it's worthwhile to selectively send out strategically timed push notifications to drive new orders. They're a great vehicle for announcing a new dish on your menu or offering a discount. ChowNow restaurant partners can simply chat with their Restaurant Success Managers to set up a push notification promotion.



GO FURTHER WITH MOBILE ORDERING

Eager to grow orders and strengthen customer relationships with mobile apps?

[Take the next step by talking to ChowNow's online ordering specialists.](#)