

# HOW TO SUCCEED IN OFF-PREMISE DINING

NAVIGATING THE THIRD WAVE OF COVID-19  
RELATED INDOOR & OUTDOOR DINING SHUT DOWNS

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# Changing COVID-19 regulations

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has lasted longer than many of us would have thought at the beginning of 2020. Heading into the holiday season, coronavirus cases are rising at the fastest rate ever. Throughout the week of November 16th, over 150,000 new cases were reported each day. Each state and county has its own set of unique rules and regulations, but many areas have reinstated dining restrictions: in many places, outdoor dining continues to be permitted with strict regulations around capacity, but in areas like Los Angeles County, outdoor dining is no longer permitted whatsoever.

# COVID-19's impact on the restaurant industry

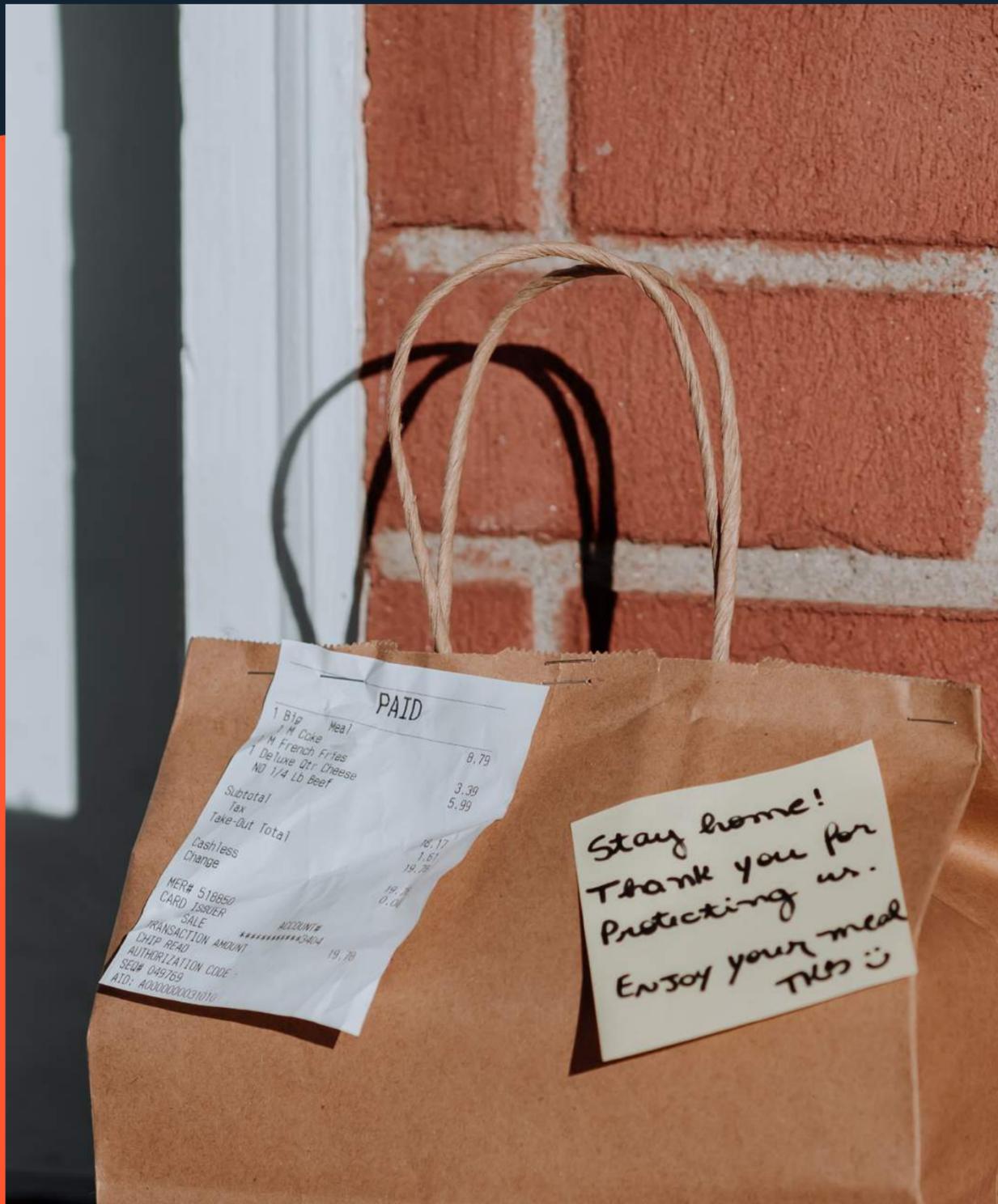
There's no denying the heartbreaking impact COVID-19 has had on restaurants. According to Statista, "the year-over-year decline of seated diners in restaurants worldwide was a staggering 36.61 percent on November 7, 2020." While 2020 was predicted to be a great year for restaurants with pre-pandemic projections at \$899 billion in sales, in reality, by the end of 2020, restaurant owners are predicted to have lost \$240 billion – 40% of operators aren't sure they'll make it six more months.



# Innovating to match the state of culture

In times like these, continued innovation is the only means of survival and success. For restaurant owners, that innovation will come through delivery.

- Eight states are seeing more than 75% of revenue come from either take out or delivery
- One in three customers, 36%, reported using delivery, takeout, and drive thru “more or much more” versus pre-crisis
- 50% of people under 43 and 42% of people over 43 said they were now more comfortable ordering directly from restaurants and third-party apps



# Finding success in turbulent times

Creating a successful off-premise dining experience is critical to your restaurant's business in 2020, and will likely continue to be for years to come. Otter wants your restaurant to thrive, not just survive, throughout this evolution. Read on to learn how you can successfully navigate COVID-19 shut downs, and evolve your business to be as successful off-premise as it is in store.



# On-premise versus off-premise dining

On-premise dining occurs within the brick and mortar environment of your restaurant. This is likely why you got into the restaurant industry: it's fast-paced, face-to-face interaction, hot kitchens, and big smiles. In the past, some restaurateurs considered off-premise dining an optional extension of the in-store experience. Today, customers enjoying your food from anywhere but your physical space is the norm. Luckily, restaurants like yours have been prioritizing the off-premise experience since 2019 when 78% of restaurant operators said off-premise business is becoming a strategic priority, and 74% of them started investing more in off-premise programs.

# Investing in off-premise dining pays off

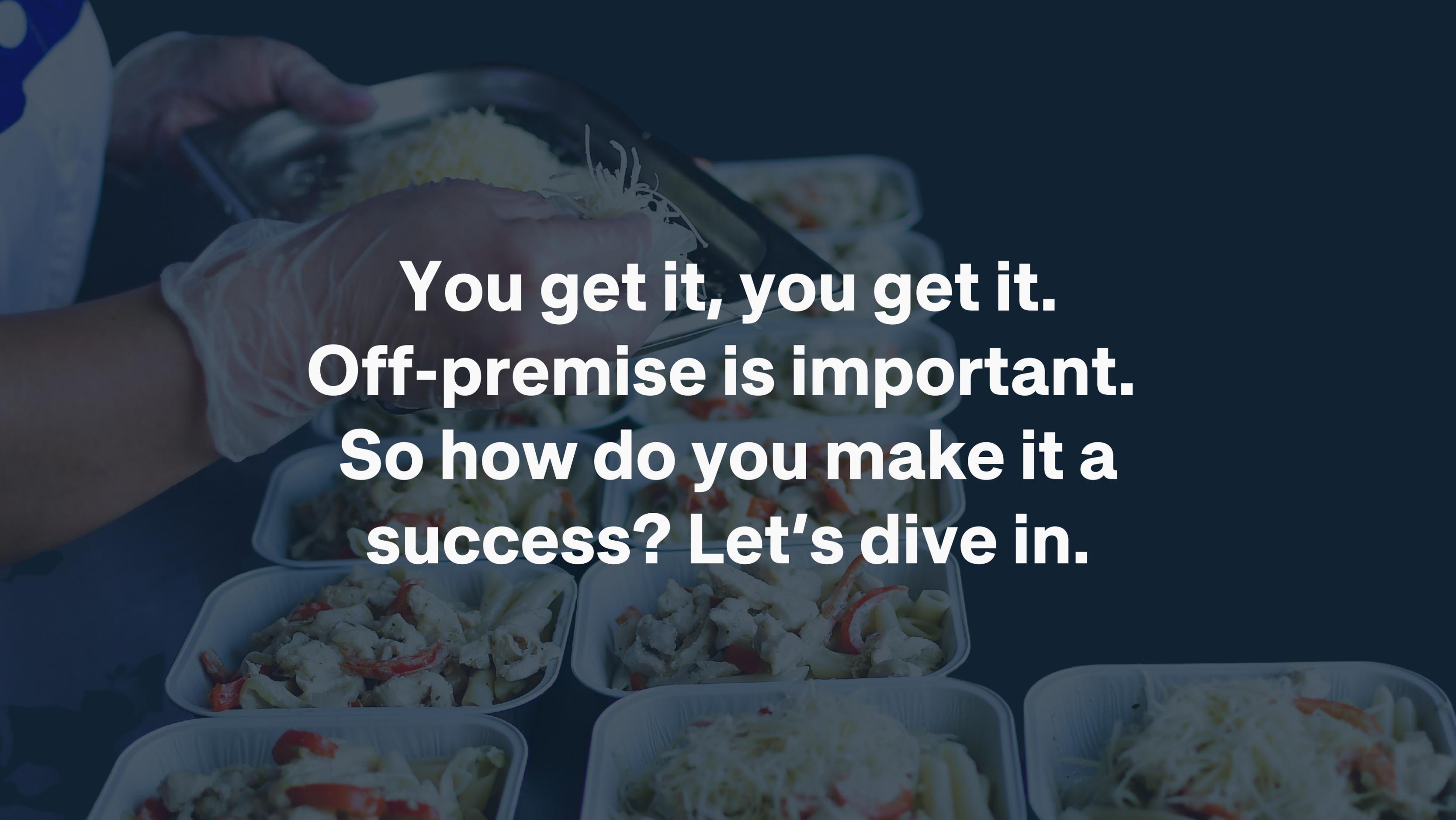
According to a Restaurant Dive survey, in pre-pandemic 2019,

- 92% of restaurants said off-premise had helped generate additive sales
- 87% of restaurants said off-premise resulted in new customers
- 81% of restaurants said off-premise increased profitability
- 68% of restaurants said it has increased average check
- 66% of restaurants offered third-party delivery compared to previous surveys where 44% of restaurants were offering or considering it



**“Off-premise now accounts for a majority of restaurant occasions and will continue to grow. It's not going to shift back.”**

–Hudson Riehle, SVP, Research & Knowledge, [National Restaurant Association](#)

A person wearing a white disposable glove is shown from the side, holding a metal strainer filled with shredded white cheese. They are positioned over a counter with several white takeout containers. The containers are filled with a mixture of white, chunky ingredients, possibly crab or chicken, and red pieces, likely tomatoes or peppers. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a kitchen or food preparation area. The overall lighting is dim, with a blueish tint.

**You get it, you get it.  
Off-premise is important.  
So how do you make it a  
success? Let's dive in.**



## **1. Strategically, think of your off-premise business as a fresh start for your restaurant**

You have familiarity and equity in your name, logo, brand colors, and most popular menu items – think of those as your brand fundamentals. They won't shift. Your established customer base is likely to transfer to your "digital" storefront, but you shouldn't stop there. Setting up your off-premise business is a way to recruit a new customer base who may have never heard of your restaurant before – increasing reach, revenue, and brand love.

## 2. Take a long hard look at your menu and optimize accordingly

Optimizing your menu for off-premise orders can feel daunting. Because of that, we've published an article called "[How to optimize your menu for food delivery success](#)" that features 5 simple steps to get you going.

The basics are:

- Keep it concise and simple
- Optimize for higher basket size
- Keep your most beloved menu items on top
- Make it look as delicious as it tastes
- Take note of what's working, what isn't, and optimize





### 3. Sign up for third-party delivery services

In 2020, having a digital storefront with a single partner like Uber Eats isn't enough. As the way customers order evolves from "I'm loyal to one delivery platform" to "I'll order from whichever has the lowest fee or specific restaurant I'm craving," today more than half of customers that use these services use multiple at the same time. To maximize reach and revenue, your restaurant should have a presence on multiple third party delivery platforms. More on that in our [Business Manager guide](#).

## 4. Sign up for a direct-to-consumer delivery service

Direct-to-consumer delivery services like [Flipdish](#), [Allset](#), and [Chownow](#) help you create your restaurant's bespoke online ordering system. Direct-to-consumer partners enable your brand to have an online-ordering service on your own website or app. This generally results in lower commission fees, and more insight into sales growth, customer loyalty, and marketing. To learn more about DTC delivery services, head to our [integrations page](#).



## 5. Sign up for a delivery consolidation platform

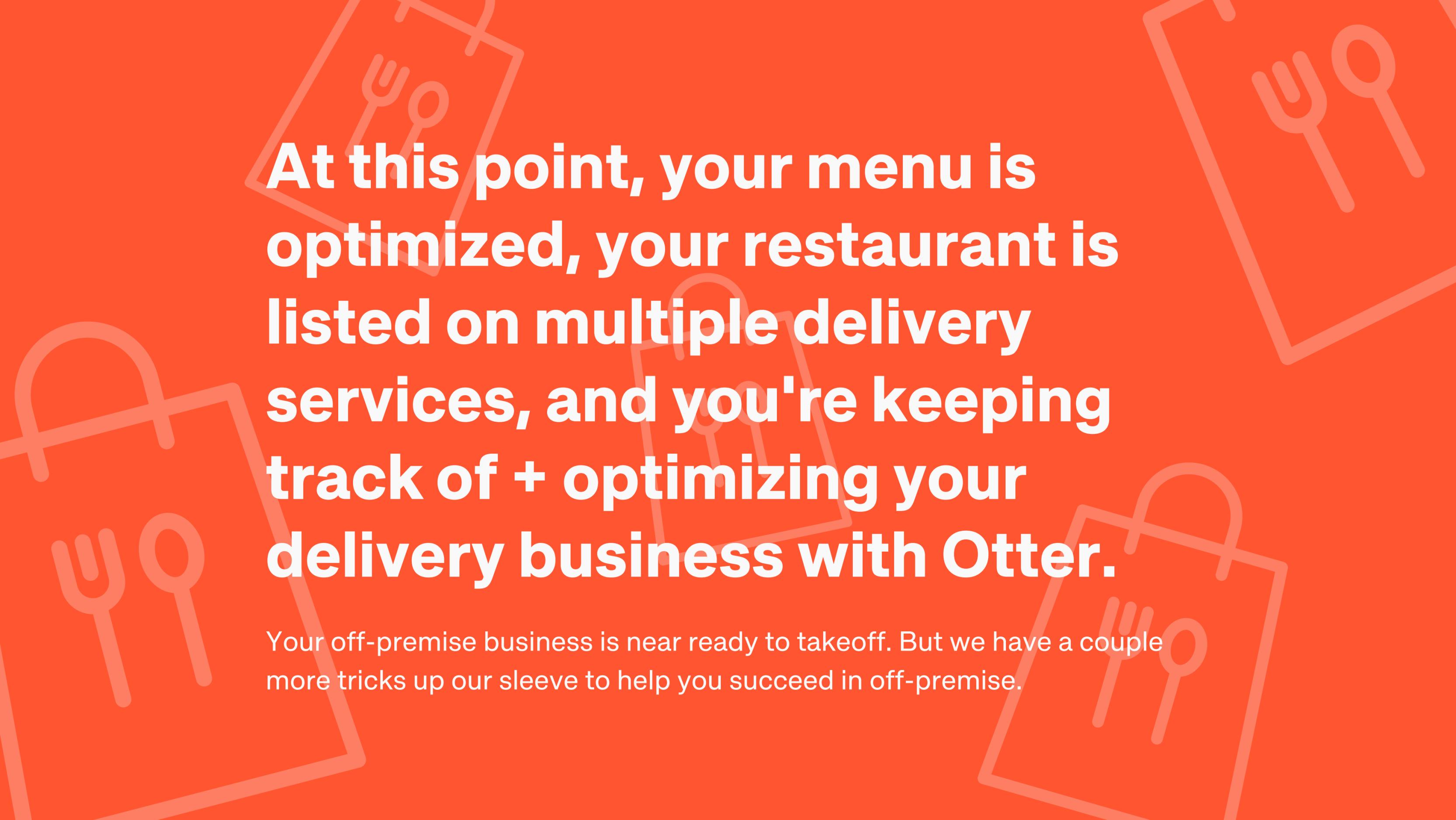
Now that your restaurant has a storefront on multiple third party delivery platforms and a DTC delivery service, you need a way to keep track of those orders, platforms. That's where Otter comes in. Because each delivery platform generally requires its own tablet, your front of house is going to get crowded. And with multiple digital storefronts across third party and DTC delivery services, your orders will be endless. You need a platform that consolidates all of your orders in one place. To simplify the process of succeeding in delivery, learn more about [Otter's Order Manager](#), and [request a demo today](#).



## 6. Sign up for a delivery performance optimization platform

Now that your orders are consolidated, you need a way to learn about which platforms your restaurant is performing best on, at which times, for which menu items, at which locations. Generally, that involves downloading multiple spreadsheets and sifting through raw data. You don't have time for that, but it's information you need to know to optimize your delivery business. To see all your performance data, insights, and optimization tips, learn more about [Otter's Business Manager](#), and [request a demo](#) today.





**At this point, your menu is optimized, your restaurant is listed on multiple delivery services, and you're keeping track of + optimizing your delivery business with Otter.**

Your off-premise business is near ready to takeoff. But we have a couple more tricks up our sleeve to help you succeed in off-premise.



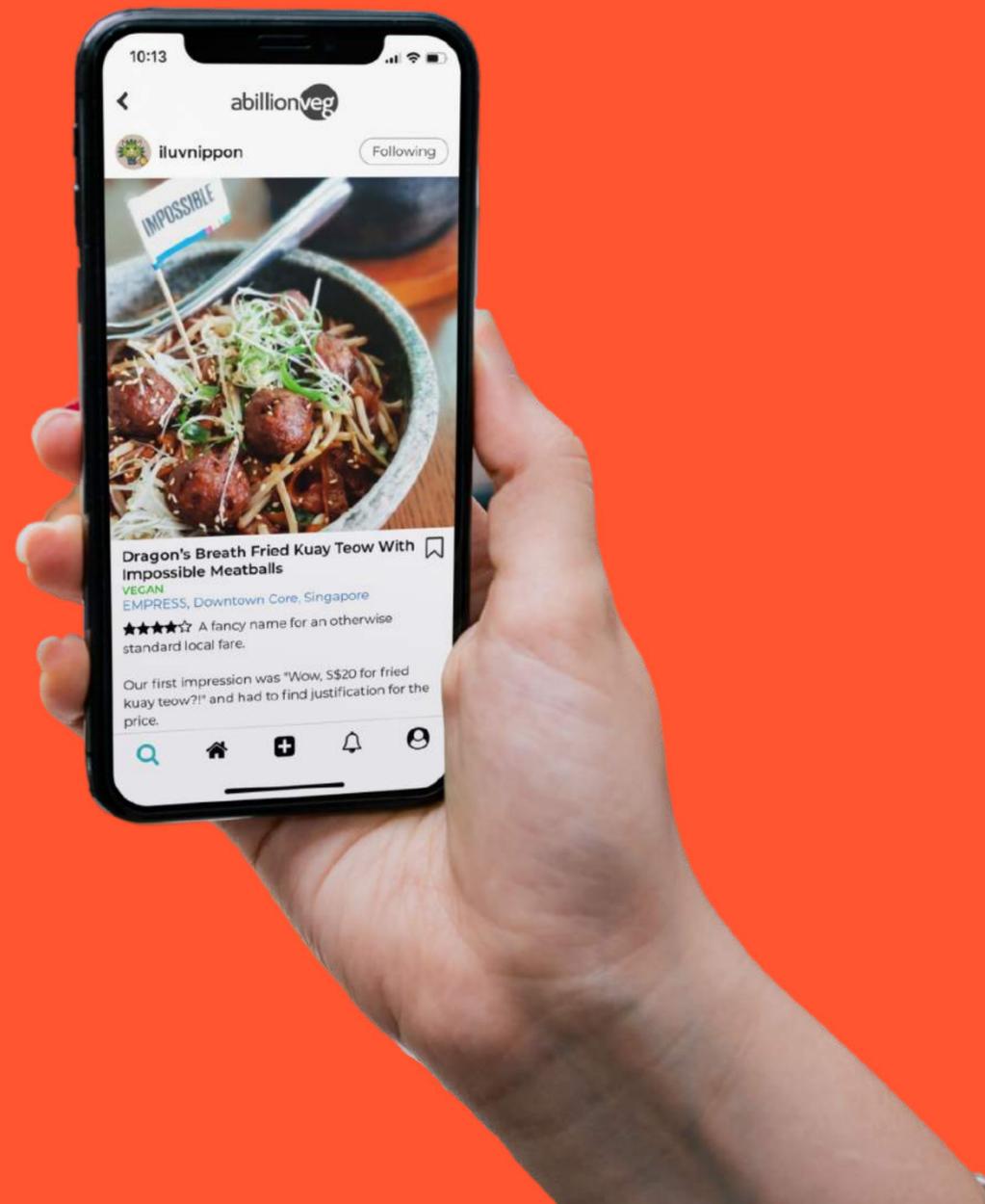
## 7. Consider how you can deliver on the brick and mortar experience of your restaurant at home

Hospitality has historically been something you deliver on through face-to-face interactions, but as with everything, hospitality has evolved throughout the pandemic. Consider small ways that you can extend the in-store experience of your restaurant for customers eating at home. Try to find a simple way to make their meal feel memorable and personal: a handwritten note, branded takeout containers, or a request for feedback on the bottom of their receipt.

## 8. Maintain a positive, consistent presence on the internet

If a new customer orders your food for delivery and loves it, they may want to learn more about your brand on Instagram or Facebook. Make sure you are posting content that shows your restaurant's personality. Consider creating content that highlights employees, shows off mouth-watering food photography, or tells endearing restaurant stories.





## 9. You knew this was coming... Keep tabs on your reviews

In the restaurant industry, word of mouth is king. While that likely doesn't happen face-to-face in the same way that it used to, it does happen on review sites like Google, Facebook, and Yelp. Responding to both positive and negative reviews is critical to your restaurant's success. But before you fire up that keyboard, read our article on [5 simple steps to responding to negative reviews](#). Believe it or not, you can turn each negative review into a positive touchpoint with a couple tips.

## 10. Be transparent and honest with your staff about changing roles and expectations

It's not just your restaurant's business model that's been forced to evolve in the face of COVID-19, your team's roles and responsibilities have also shifted. While they're working at the same place, they're potentially doing an entirely new job. Consider hosting a training session with your staff about the experience – leave space and room for questions and concerns. Additionally, make sure you update your employee manual for off-premise. Keep it as specific as possible, paying careful attention to cleaning procedures, guest and staff safety. This training manual will help you standardize off-premise operating procedures in the same way you would in-store.



# You're ready to superpower your off-premise delivery business!

22% of customers say that carryout or delivery is more a part of their routine than it was two years ago, and there's reason to believe that number will only increase over time. While the top 3 expectations of guests ordering off-premise are foundational: speed, value, and food quality, you can't stop there. Providing your customers with an off-premise experience that's exciting, fulfilling, and memorable will help you create brand loyalty – turning someone who found and tried your restaurant for the first time through an online-ordering app into someone who orders from your restaurant consistently.

While this time is uncertain and difficult, Otter is here to provide you with advice, support, and solutions to help you thrive in the midst of it all.

[Click here to request a demo](#)  
[hello@tryotter.com](mailto:hello@tryotter.com)

**SUPERPOWER  
YOUR  
OFF-PREMISE  
BUSINESS  
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