



# 9 Reasons Why Online Ordering Remains An Essential Website Feature

By Michelle Hummel

Third-party apps like DoorDash and GrubHub have introduced ease into the lives of many consumers when it comes to online ordering. So, why should restaurants invest in their own website platform?

**Online ordering puts the control in your hands.** You've built your business, putting in countless hours towards its genesis. You deserve to have full control over how and what your customers can see of your business online. Online ordering allows your customer base to become familiar with your menu. This means reaping the benefits of increased revenue that comes when customers have more time to consider their options.

**Strong analytics can help inform choices about your bottom line.** Knowing who is buying what can help your purchasing and remove under-performing menu items. Unlike a traditional POS system which simply provides stats on each item ordered, these online systems allow you to browse user profiles to better understand your client base and their interests. Moving your business online not only makes good business sense, but it will significantly increase your revenue.

**Third-party apps take steep commissions.** Unfortunately, the message that DoorDash and GrubHub rescued small business during the pandemic is only somewhat true. While these apps made it simple for restaurants to transition to offering delivery and pick-up when customers were unable to dine-in, their high commission fees have cut into profits for many businesses at a time when revenue streams are at an all-time low. How much do delivery services like DoorDash or GrubHub take from a company's profit? A November 2020 [article](#) by Berkleyside, the local newspaper of Berkely, CA details that a transaction that originally cost around \$45 for a customer may end up around \$65 after service and delivery fees plus courier tips. This extra money goes to San Francisco-based DoorDash, not the local restaurant, along with the commission from the sale, which could be as high as 30 percent for some businesses. These services continue to market themselves as good for small businesses, but many restaurant owners have a different view of the situation.

**Some customers don't want to (or can't) pay for those extra third-party fees**

If you're a business who has already invested in using third-party systems, and have built a strong user base doing it, you may worry about losing customers if you fully switch to an independent online system. Consider, however, that there are customers who have not yet ordered from you because of the cost-restrictive aspect of these services. Having your own system could help you to reach these customers, and make more profit for your business.

**Investing in an online ordering system is a flat fee, rather than variable rate.** Even though it may feel expensive to invest in a large system overhaul, relying on the ever-changing commission fees of a third-party app may hurt your business even more over time. Also consider the stress of what might happen if the company that owns the app closes, or combines with another, like DoorDash did with Caviar in August 2020. Owning a restaurant already comes with its fair share of circumstances outside your control, so contracting this service out may be really appealing. However, relying on another variable might be too much for some restaurants to handle. Operating your own online ordering system is something you can budget for, and the clear-cut costs will help you calculate your ROI, ensuring your customers will always have a place to order your food from while having control of the platform yourself.

**Online ordering improves accuracy, timeliness and revenue.** Imagine your busiest day, all the tables are full and the phone is ringing off the hook. One of your servers calls off, so there's just three people for 24 tables who are also supposed to be taking phone orders. The chances of accuracy of these orders gets lower as you get busier. With a computerized system, the accuracy and order timeliness stay consistent as you get busier, allowing you to increase revenue and efficiency. Plus, with your own online system, you set yourself apart as a full-service, independent restaurant rather than a restaurant that simply serves a third-party application.

**You can easily give customer discounts and build loyalty.** Many customers are entranced with the accessibility and ease of the third-party systems. However, you can create value in your own system that makes customers want to use it. For example, you can give customers an automatic 10 percent discount for using your online system (a charge that is bound to be much less than whatever they're paying DoorDash), and allow them to qualify for free items or discounts after a certain number of purchases. You can even offer free delivery for people within a certain radius. The same personal touches that make return customers for dine-in apply for pick-up and delivery as well.

**Having your own online ordering platform adds value to your brand.** With the sheer overwhelming number of options out there these days, customers are looking for experiences, not just products. By creating an online application platform of your own, you are crafting this experience for your customers and have direct hand in their experience, from start to finish just like if they were in your restaurant. You wouldn't hire outside contractors to be servers at your restaurant. You want people who know your brand and are dedicated to selling it. While using a third-party might be easier at the start (for restaurants and customers) it's not instilling much brand loyalty into the transaction. By having your own system, you eliminate the potential of your customer changing their minds and deciding to order from a competitor. [Toast](#), a web platform that integrates with existing websites and POS systems, explained the benefits of these systems, writing, "With your own online ordering platform, you can make instant, real-time changes to your menu and design. In other words, you'll have greater control over your brand. When customers place their orders, they will be looking at the website you created rather than looking at a third-party app."

**Having your own online ordering platform increases your customer reach.** Most online ordering systems are tied into the main restaurant webpage, and can turn casual menu-gazers into customers with a few clicks. Attract new customers by showing that you are a tech-savvy brand that is interested in serving the wants and needs of your customers, not just contracting that work out to DoorDash. Keep return customers by providing exceptional, reliable ordering experience and service.

*Michelle Hummel is the CEO of Web Strategy Plus. Want full control over your system and profits? [Web Strategy Plus](#) can help. We're a digital marketing agency that has created online ordering platforms for many restaurateurs. We are media experts dedicated to your success, and ready to support your restaurant's growth on your terms. [Schedule a free consultation with us](#) to learn more about our products and services today.*