

Wunderkind



2025 Consumer Insights Report

*DINER BEHAVIOR, DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT
AND LOYALTY DRIVERS IN QUICK- AND
FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS*





Introduction

The restaurant industry in 2025 is poised for growth, fueled by continued consumer spending and economic contributions from restaurant operators. Industry sales are projected to reach \$1.5 trillion nationwide, while employment is expected to grow by 200,000 jobs, bringing total industry employment to 15.9 million.

However, economic challenges such as inflation and rising costs remain top concerns for restaurant operators. To thrive, restaurants must meet evolving consumer demands, redefine value beyond price, and create exceptional dining experiences that foster loyalty. A dynamic mix of innovation, affordability, and experience will be key drivers of success.

Diners plan to continue eating out regularly, but affordability, promotions, and loyalty rewards play a major role in their decisions. Restaurants must balance cost-effectiveness with compelling offers, ensuring they meet customer expectations without sacrificing profitability. Technology adoption is accelerating, with restaurants investing in mobile apps, AI-driven personalization, and third-party delivery services to enhance customer convenience. Nearly half of diners prefer tracking and redeeming loyalty rewards via restaurant apps, highlighting the importance of seamless digital experiences in driving repeat visits.

With diners frequently switching between branded apps, third-party platforms, and websites, this fragmented approach makes user identification crucial—ensuring the right message is delivered on the right channel at the right time. However, up to 95% of website traffic remains anonymous, making it challenging to send personalized offers via email, text, and ads. Restaurants that fail to identify and re-engage these potential diners risk losing significant revenue opportunities.

This is where identity resolution transforms the game. Traditional identity resolution providers match an unknown device to an email or mobile number, but Wunderkind takes this a step further. With over 9 billion consumer devices recognized and nearly 2 trillion digital engagements observed annually across thousands of websites, Wunderkind possesses deep insights into the browsing, clicking, and dining behaviors of over 1 billion opted-in consumers. This intelligence allows restaurant brands to match anonymous visitors to their first-party databases, triggering highly personalized messaging at scale. Unlike traditional marketing technologies, Wunderkind guarantees a measurable lift in revenue for its clients.

Wunderkind also addresses a critical challenge for restaurant brands: recognizing diners across multiple devices. Without the ability to connect these touchpoints to a single individual, restaurant brands struggle to deliver a seamless, personalized experience. Wunderkind's advanced identity resolution technology ensures that Jane Doe on her laptop is recognized as the same Jane Doe who browsed tacos on her phone—empowering you to deliver consistent messaging and loyalty rewards that encourage direct ordering.

Beyond identifying existing customers, Wunderkind also helps restaurant brands capture first-party data from anonymous visitors who aren't yet in their database. By collecting consented first-party data at scale, Wunderkind converts unknown website traffic into engaged subscribers, giving restaurant brands a larger, more qualified audience to nurture and convert.

Today's diners expect hyper-personalization in exchange for their loyalty. With partners like Wunderkind, restaurant brands can bridge the gap between anonymous traffic and known diners—unlocking the ability to deliver meaningful, behavior-driven offers across owned channels like email and text.

However, if your restaurant brand isn't leveraging an identity resolution partner, this research will help refine your strategy. By understanding what diners expect at every touchpoint—broken down by age and gender—you can craft a smarter, more effective approach to engaging and converting your audience and drive growth in the fast-paced world of modern dining.



Methodology

In partnership with MX8 Labs, Wunderkind conducted the Restaurant Consumer Insights Report 2025.

This research explores diner behavior in 2025, key factors influencing restaurant choice, dining frequency, attitudes toward personalization, and the factors driving email opt-ins and loyalty program sign-ups. The report offers detailed insights paired with strategic takeaways, designed to empower digital strategists, marketers, and decision-makers to identify emerging diner trends and develop performance marketing strategies that strengthen restaurant-diner relationships.

While this report focuses on restaurants, additional insights into other consumer verticals are available in our Consumer Insights content hub, which includes multiple reports categorized by country and industry.

Wunderkind

X

 MX8 LABS

300

This report delves into the latest trends shaping dining behavior, drawn from a representative sample of 300 diners in the U.S., reflecting diversity across gender, ethnicity, age, and household income.

Data collection was completed in March 2025.

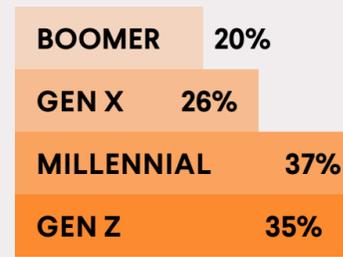
How Often Do Consumers Dine at Restaurants?

Dining frequency varies significantly by age, with Millennials and Gen Z leading in frequent restaurant visits. This trend aligns with their preference for convenience, social dining experiences, and digital engagement with restaurants. Meanwhile, Boomers and Gen X are more likely to dine out occasionally, favoring planned visits over spontaneous dining.

Gender differences also emerge, with men dining out more frequently than women, particularly in the 2-3 times per week category. Understanding these habits can help restaurants refine their marketing and loyalty strategies, ensuring they target high-frequency diners with rewards while encouraging occasional visitors with strategic promotions.

Key Insights

Younger Diners Eat Out Most Often



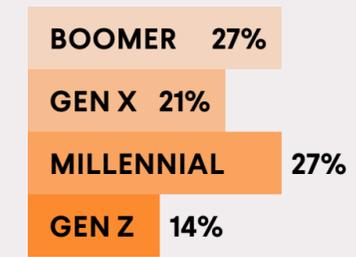
Over a third of Millennials (37%) and Gen Z (35%) are frequent restaurant-goers, dining out 2-3 times per week, with an additional 10% of Gen Z dining out daily. This is the most common dining frequency, reported by 30% of respondents overall.

Planned vs. Spontaneous Dining



Frequent dining is more common among men, with daily dining (7% vs. 3% for women) and a few times per week (32% vs. 27% for women). Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be occasional diners (23% rarely dine out vs. 11% of men).

Weekly Dining Skews Older



Weekly restaurant visits are most common among Boomers and Millennials (27%), but drop to 14% for Gen Z.

 HOW OFTEN DO YOU DINE AT A RESTAURANT?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Encourage High-Frequency Diners

Restaurants should implement loyalty programs, exclusive member perks, and digital ordering incentives to retain Millennials and Gen Z, who dine out multiple times per week.

2. Engage Occasional Diners With Targeted Promotions

Boomers, Gen X and women, who visit restaurants less frequently, can be encouraged with personalized email and text promotions, featuring special occasion discounts and seasonal menu highlights.

3. Personalized Offers by Gender

Men, who dine out more frequently, may respond well to limited-time deals and meal bundles, while women might be more drawn to experiences such as chef specials, premium offerings, or group dining incentives.



 HOW OFTEN DO YOU DINE AT A RESTAURANT?

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Daily	0%	1%	8%	10%	3%	7%	5%
2-3 times per week	20%	26%	37%	35%	27%	32%	30%
Once a week	27%	21%	27%	14%	22%	23%	22%
A few times a month	27%	27%	22%	30%	26%	27%	26%
Rarely	27%	25%	6%	10%	23%	11%	17%

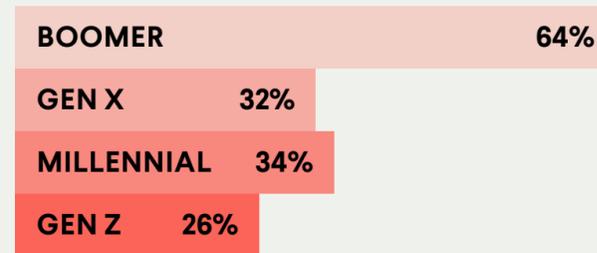
What's the Secret Recipe for Restaurant Discovery?

The way diners find restaurants varies significantly by age and gender, reflecting shifting consumer behaviors. While word-of-mouth remains the most powerful method, particularly among Boomers and Gen X, younger generations increasingly rely on online reviews, social media, and third-party delivery apps.

Millennials and Gen Z are digital-first diners, turning to Google Reviews, Yelp, and Instagram for restaurant recommendations. Meanwhile, Boomers and Gen X still favor personal recommendations but are also open to search engines when exploring new dining options. Gender trends show that women are more likely to rely on word-of-mouth and social media, while men tend to use search engines and maps.

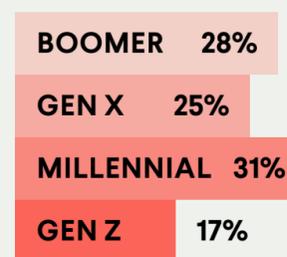
Key Insights

Word-of-Mouth Reigns Supreme



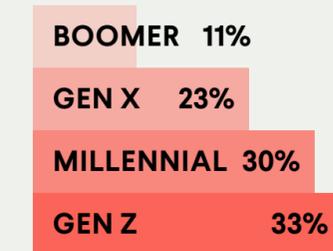
Despite the rise of digital discovery, 39% of all diners find restaurants through word-of-mouth, with Boomers leading at 64%. However, this influence decreases significantly for younger diners (Gen Z: 26%).

Older Generations Prefer Traditional Media Formats



Boomers (28%), Gen X (25%) and Millennials (31%) rely on search engines, compared to just 17% of Gen Z.

Online Reviews Drive Younger Diners



Online review platforms like Google, Yelp, and TripAdvisor play a crucial role for Gen Z (33%) and Millennials (30%), surpassing traditional recommendations.

Email and Text Has a Foothold

Inboxes aren't the traditional way to discover restaurants, but it's still the preferred route for 10% of diners, with uniformity between ages and gender.

Gender Trends: Social Influence vs. Search Habits



Women rely more on word-of-mouth (43% vs. 35% for men) and social media (18% vs. 13% for men) for restaurant discovery. Men are more likely to use review platforms (28% vs. 20% for women) and map searches (20% vs. 11% for women) when looking for new restaurants.

 HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY FIND AND VISIT A RESTAURANT FOR THE FIRST TIME?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Maximize Word-of-Mouth & Customer Advocacy

Restaurants should encourage user-generated content, referral programs, and review-based promotions to maintain strong word-of-mouth influence, especially among older demographics.

2. SEO v GEO? Both!

Restaurants need to strengthen search engine visibility to maintain relevance for older diners. Consider a robust GEO (Generative Engine Optimization) which differs from SEO by enabling AI search tools to provide your site in contextualized food searches (e.g., “best burgers near me”). Early adopters of AI will discover your brand’s products and services in those personalized search results.

3. Dominate Online Reviews

With Millennials and Gen Z relying heavily on Google and Yelp, restaurants should prioritize maintaining high ratings and engaging with reviews.

4. Invest in Social Media & Influencer Marketing

Gen Z and Millennials respond well to social media marketing, viral food trends, and influencer recommendations. Restaurants should use Instagram Reels, TikTok, and engaging visuals to capture their attention.

5. Optimize Third-Party Apps for Discovery

Since younger consumers frequently find restaurants via Uber Eats, DoorDash, and Grubhub, restaurants should optimize their profiles, highlight deals, and use app-based promotions to attract new customers.



 **HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY FIND AND VISIT A RESTAURANT FOR THE FIRST TIME?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Online reviews and rating platforms (e.g. Google Reviews, Yelp, TripAdvisor etc.)	11%	23%	30%	33%	20%	28%	24%
Discovering it via social media posts / ads	9%	12%	18%	22%	18%	13%	15%
Word-of-mouth	64%	32%	34%	26%	43%	35%	39%
Third-party delivery apps (e.g. Uber Eats, DoorDash, etc.)	5%	15%	18%	23%	13%	17%	15%
Maps (e.g. "Best pizza near me")	7%	19%	17%	20%	11%	20%	16%
Opening an email or text message from the restaurant	12%	10%	6%	13%	9%	11%	10%
Finding the restaurant through a search engine	28%	25%	31%	17%	24%	27%	26%
Loyalty & referral programs (e.g. voucher to bring a friend)	11%	10%	12%	10%	10%	11%	11%

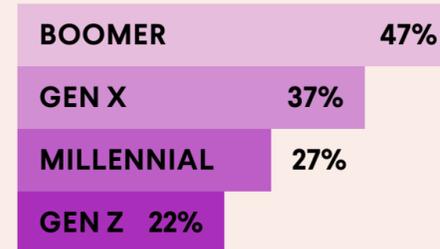
Dine-In, Takeout, or Delivery? How Consumers Get Their Fill

When hunger strikes, diners have a variety of ways to satisfy their cravings—whether by dining in, picking up, or getting food delivered to their door. While dine-in remains the most popular option, particularly among Boomers and Gen X, younger generations are shifting toward convenience-driven choices like takeout and delivery apps.

Millennials and Gen Z are the most likely to order through third-party apps, favoring platforms like Uber Eats and DoorDash. Meanwhile, Boomers prefer traditional dine-in experiences, and Gen X shows a strong preference for ordering directly from a restaurant’s website or app. Gender-wise, men lean toward drive-thru and delivery services, while women show a preference for takeout and in-person dining.

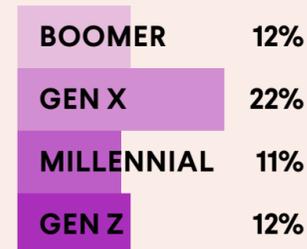
Key Insights

Table for Two? Dine-In Still Dominates



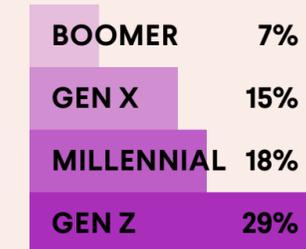
Diners still love sit-down experiences and dine-in is comfortably the top choice of all generations apart from Gen Z. Boomers (47%) and Gen X (37%) are the most loyal to in-restaurant dining.

Direct App Ordering Has Room to Grow



Ordering directly from a restaurant’s website or mobile app is most popular among Gen X (22%) and women (19%), while Millennials (11%), Gen Z (12%) and Boomers (12%) are half as inclined.

Delivery Apps - The Digital Diner’s Choice



Third-party delivery services like Uber Eats and DoorDash are a favorite among Gen Z (29%), predictably declining with popularity the older the diner.

Gender Ordering Styles



Men are more likely to opt for drive-thru (19% vs. 12% for women) and third-party delivery apps (23% vs. 11% for women). Women prefer takeout (23% vs. 17% for men) and a restaurant’s branded app (19% vs. 10% for men).

 HOW DO YOU MOST OFTEN PLACE YOUR RESTAURANT ORDERS?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Put Loyalty at the Heart of App Ordering

While third-party apps are a part of the ecosystem, they own the customer relationship—not the restaurant. Restaurants have a huge opportunity to drive app downloads and direct sales, by highlighting easier ordering, loyalty perks, exclusive rewards, and personalized recommendations. Since the majority of diners still eat in, signage and staff can play a key role in promoting app benefits.

2. Keep Dine-In Experiences Fresh

Since Boomers and Gen X still prefer dining in, restaurants should focus on atmosphere, service quality, and in-person loyalty perks to retain this audience.

3. Speed & Convenience for Millennials and Gen Z

Younger diners want quick, digital-friendly experiences—restaurants should enhance mobile ordering, takeout efficiency, and app-based promotions to keep them engaged.



 **HOW DO YOU MOST OFTEN PLACE YOUR RESTAURANT ORDERS?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Dine-in	47%	37%	27%	22%	34%	32%	33%
Drive-thru	15%	8%	18%	22%	12%	19%	16%
Takeout (ordered in person)	20%	18%	27%	16%	23%	17%	20%
Directly from the restaurant through their website / app	12%	22%	11%	12%	19%	10%	14%
Third-party delivery apps (Uber Eats, DoorDash, Grubhub etc.)	7%	15%	18%	29%	11%	23%	17%

The Ingredients That Matter Most for Online Orders

When ordering food online, diners want a seamless, hassle-free experience—but what makes them hit the checkout button? Ease of use (25%), speed of order placement (26%) and transparent pricing (33%) are the top priorities, ensuring that customers can order quickly and without surprises at checkout.

Meanwhile, real-time order tracking (16%) is gaining traction, particularly among younger diners, while discounts and promotions (21%) also play a key role in decision-making. Restaurants that optimize their digital ordering experience with speed, transparency, and convenience will have the best chance of turning browsers into diners.

Key Insights

A Smooth Ordering Experience is the Main Course

BOOMER	35%
GEN X	23%
MILLENNIAL	23%
GEN Z	20%

Ease of use (25%) is one of the most important factors when ordering online, ensuring a frictionless checkout process. Over a third (35%) of Boomers prioritize this.

Order Speed Matters

BOOMER	23%
GEN X	33%
MILLENNIAL	24%
GEN Z	25%

Speed of order placement (26%) is another major factor, particularly for Gen X (33%) who expect quick transactions when ordering food online.

No One Likes Hidden Fees

BOOMER	41%
GEN X	29%
MILLENNIAL	39%
GEN Z	23%

Transparent pricing and fees (33%) are critical for diners, especially for Boomers (41%) and Millennials (39%), who want to know exactly what they're paying before confirming an order.

Men vs. Women - Different Priorities on the Plate



Women prioritize ease of use (28% vs. 23% for men), speed (27% vs. 25% for men) and transparent pricing 37% vs. 30% for men). Men want customization options (16% vs. 14% for women) and real-time order tracking (20% vs. 12% for women).

 **WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHEN ORDERING FOOD FROM A RESTAURANT ONLINE?**

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Deliver Rewards That Keep Diners Coming Back

Wunderkind's advanced identity resolution technology ensures that Jane Doe on her laptop is recognized as the same Jane Doe who browsed burritos on her phone—enabling you to deliver the perks that particular customer loves.

2. Promote Discounts & Loyalty Rewards

Highlight exclusive savings, VIP perks, and freebies to convert value-conscious diners, particularly Boomers.

3. Keep Online Ordering as Simple as a One-Click Meal

Since ease of use is the top factor, restaurants should streamline the checkout process, reduce unnecessary steps, and ensure mobile-friendliness to keep customers coming back.

4. Be Upfront About Costs—No Hidden Fees

With transparent pricing being a major concern, restaurants should clearly display delivery fees, service charges, and taxes upfront to avoid cart abandonment.

5. Speed it Up with Pre-Saved Orders & Quick Checkout

For Gen X and Millennials who value fast order placement, restaurants should implement saved payment details, one-click reordering, and auto-filled preferences to make the process seamless.



 **WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHEN ORDERING FOOD FROM A RESTAURANT ONLINE?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Ease of use	35%	23%	23%	20%	28%	23%	25%
Speed of order placement	23%	33%	24%	25%	27%	25%	26%
Customization options	23%	8%	14%	14%	14%	16%	15%
Accurate detailed website information	25%	16%	17%	14%	17%	20%	18%
Transparent pricing and fees	41%	29%	39%	23%	37%	30%	33%
Real-time order tracking	7%	15%	19%	25%	12%	20%	16%
Availability of discounts and promotions	15%	19%	27%	25%	23%	19%	21%
Flexible payment options	1%	16%	8%	17%	10%	12%	11%
Seamless integration with loyalty program	4%	10%	8%	10%	7%	9%	8%



HAVE YOU EVER SIGNED UP FOR A RESTAURANT'S EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE LIST?

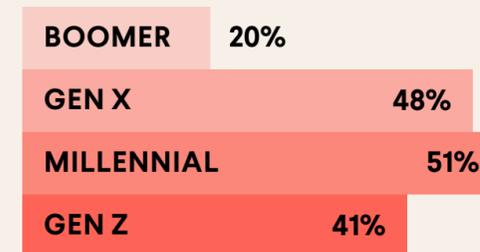
Inbox or Out? Who's Subscribing to Restaurant Messages

Restaurants are always looking to grow their email and text lists. 40% of diners have signed up for multiple restaurant lists, with Gen X (48%) and Millennials (51%) leading the way. However, 16% of consumers aren't interested in receiving marketing messages at all, making it essential for restaurants to offer compelling incentives. Over a quarter (26%) of diners only opt in to their favorite restaurants and 18% state they're not currently signed up, but would consider it, meaning there is a great opportunity to swell your database with the right value exchange.



Key Insights

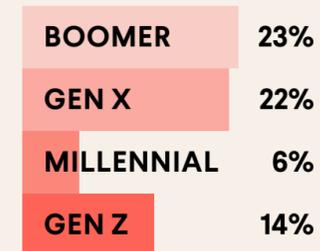
Loyal Fans - Many Diners Are Already Subscribed



2.5x

A large portion (40%) of diners are subscribed to multiple restaurant lists, with Gen X (48%) and Millennials (51%) leading the way and 2.5x that of Boomers.

Who's Opting Out? Some Diners Aren't Hungry for Marketing



While many consumers sign up, 16% aren't interested in receiving marketing messages, meaning restaurants should focus on clear value propositions and preference-based messaging.

We All Have Favorites



Over a quarter (26%) of diners only opt in to their favorite restaurants with parity across generations.



HAVE YOU EVER SIGNED UP FOR A RESTAURANT'S EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE LIST?



Strategic Takeaways

1. Recognize More Anonymous Cart Abandoners

Traditional identity resolution providers match an unknown device to an email or mobile number, but Wunderkind takes this a step further. With over 9 billion consumer devices recognized and nearly 2 trillion digital engagements observed annually across thousands of websites, Wunderkind possesses deep insights into the browsing, clicking, and ordering behaviors of over 1 billion opted-in consumers. This intelligence allows restaurant brands to match anonymous visitors to their first-party databases if they haven't logged in.

2. Make the Value Clear - Discounts & Rewards Drive Sign-Ups

Since diners are most interested in deals and loyalty perks, restaurants should prominently feature these benefits in their email and SMS sign-up promotions.

3. Cater Messaging to Opt-Out-Prone Diners

Since 16% of consumers prefer not to receive marketing, restaurants should allow for communication preferences (e.g., weekly vs. monthly emails) and focus on high-value content to prevent unsubscribes.





**HAVE YOU EVER SIGNED UP FOR A RESTAURANT'S
EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGE LIST?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Yes, for multiple restaurants	20%	48%	51%	41%	40%	40%	40%
Yes, but only for my favorite restaurants	29%	22%	24%	28%	22%	29%	26%
No, but I would consider it	28%	8%	19%	17%	18%	19%	18%
No, I'm not interested in receiving messages	23%	22%	6%	14%	20%	12%	16%

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO SIGN UP FOR A RESTAURANT'S EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGES?

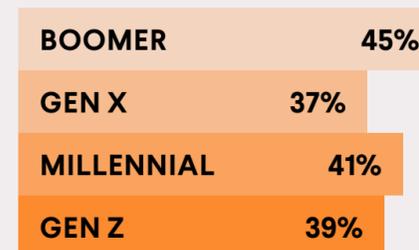
Sign Me Up or Pass the Check? What Gets Diners to Subscribe

Restaurants looking to grow their email and text subscriber lists need to serve up the right incentives. Exclusive deals and promotions (41%) are the top motivator, proving that diners love a good discount. Loyalty and rewards program benefits (41%) are just as important, showing that customers want ongoing perks, not just a one-time offer.

Birthday and special occasion offers (23%) and early access to new menu items (11%) are strong motivators, but restaurants need to make sure their messaging is valuable, personalized, and not overwhelming to keep diners engaged.

Key Insights

Diners Want a Discount with Their Subscription



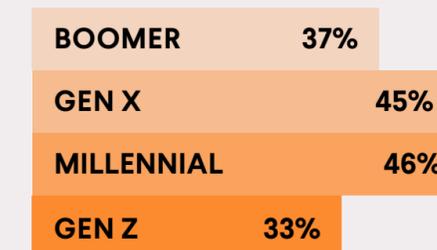
The equal #1 reason diners sign up for restaurant emails and texts is exclusive deals and promotions (41%), making discounts a crucial hook for growing subscriber lists.

Birthday Treats & VIP Perks Help Sweeten the Deal



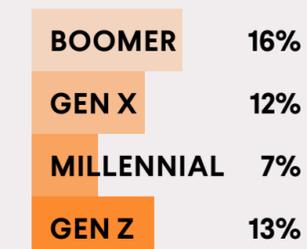
Nearly a quarter (23%) of diners sign up for birthday or special occasion offers, while 11% are enticed by early access to new menu items.

Loyalty Programs Keep Subscribers Engaged



Loyalty and rewards program benefits (41%) are just as important as discounts, proving that ongoing perks drive long-term engagement rather than one-time savings.

Some Diners Just Aren't Hungry for Marketing



16% of consumers aren't interested in signing up, highlighting the importance of clear, valuable incentives and opt-in preferences to reduce opt-outs.

 **WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO SIGN UP FOR A RESTAURANT'S EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGES?**

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Make the Offer Too Good to Pass Up

Since diners sign up primarily for discounts and rewards, restaurants should highlight these perks prominently on sign-up pages, social media, and receipts.

2. Keep the Perks Flowing—Not Just a One-Time Discount

With loyalty programs driving sign-ups, restaurants should continue engaging subscribers with exclusive VIP perks, early access to menu items, and special promotions.

3. Use Special Occasion Offers to Create FOMO

Birthday deals and early access to new menu items should be promoted in sign-up messaging to attract customers looking for VIP treatment.

4. Personalize Offers Based on Subscriber Preferences

Highlight seasonal promotions and limited-time offers, exclusive menu previews and VIP perks.

5. Respect the “No Marketing” Crowd

Since 16% of diners prefer not to receive messages, restaurants should allow opt-in customization (e.g., frequency of messages) and ensure all promotions feel high-value to prevent unsubscribes.





WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO SIGN UP FOR A RESTAURANT'S EMAIL OR TEXT MESSAGES?

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
A discount on my first order	17%	23%	25%	33%	25%	25%	25%
Exclusive deals and promotions	45%	37%	41%	39%	36%	45%	41%
Early access to new menu items	9%	12%	14%	9%	12%	11%	11%
Loyalty and rewards program benefits	37%	45%	46%	33%	39%	42%	41%
Birthday or special occasion offers	23%	23%	27%	20%	28%	19%	23%
Updates on events or limited-time offers	11%	16%	13%	14%	13%	14%	14%
Nothing, I don't want marketing messages	16%	12%	7%	13%	12%	12%	12%



HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE FOLLOW-UP MESSAGES FROM A RESTAURANT WHOSE MENU /WEBSITE YOU HAVE BROWSED?

Left on Read or Ready to Dine? How Diners Prefer Follow-Ups

After browsing a restaurant’s menu or website, diners have different appetites for follow-up messages. While email remains the top choice overall, younger generations—especially Gen Z (42%)—are more likely to prefer SMS reminders. Meanwhile, push notifications and retargeting ads have yet to gain significant traction in this vertical, showing that direct, personalized communication is still the most effective way to stay top-of-mind for hungry customers.

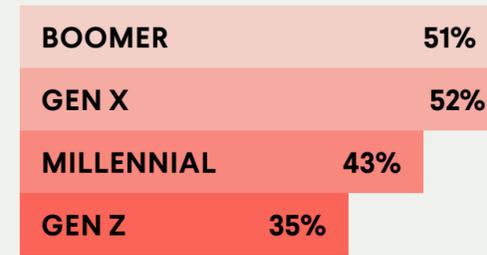
Gender differences also emerge, with women favoring email (49%) more than men (42%), while men are slightly more likely to engage with text messages and push notifications.

Understanding these preferences allows restaurants to serve up marketing messages in ways that feel relevant, engaging, and most importantly—welcome.



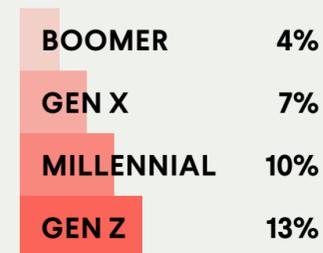
Key Insights

Email Still Serves Up the Best Results



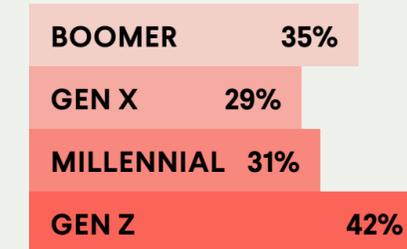
A majority (45%) of diners prefer follow-up messages via email, with Gen X leading the way at 52%. While it remains the most effective channel, younger diners show a shift toward text-based communication.

Push Notifications Need More Seasoning



Push notifications via a restaurant’s app (8%) are not a widely preferred method, but they increase in popularity among younger consumers, suggesting that diners still favor direct, opt-in communication.

Text Messaging: A Hot Dish for Younger Diners



Short, direct SMS messages are particularly popular with Gen Z (42%), surpassing Millennials (31%) and Gen X (29%).

Men vs. Women: Different Preferences on the Menu



Women prefer email (49% vs. 42% for men), whereas men opt for text (35% vs. 33% for women).



HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE FOLLOW-UP MESSAGES FROM A RESTAURANT WHOSE MENU /WEBSITE YOU HAVE BROWSED?



Strategic Takeaways

1. Email: The Cost-Effective Powerhouse for Personalized Restaurant Marketing

With its ability to deliver cost-effective, highly personalized, timely, and relevant content, email campaigns should be leveraged to engage your visitors. Trigger them based on individual browse and click data for maximum engagement.

2. Spice Up SMS for Younger Diners

With Gen Z's growing preference for text messages, restaurants should leverage SMS-based promotions, reservation confirmations, and limited-time deals to capture their attention.

3. Leverage Push

To re-engage Millennials and Gen Z, restaurant brands should focus on app notifications to bring them back.

4. Personalized Messaging for Every Diner

Since women favor email and men engage more with mobile messaging, restaurants should tailor follow-up strategies based on customer demographics to maximize engagement.



HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE FOLLOW-UP MESSAGES FROM A RESTAURANT WHOSE MENU /WEBSITE YOU HAVE BROWSED?

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Email	51%	52%	43%	35%	49%	42%	45%
SMS (short text-only message)	35%	29%	31%	42%	33%	35%	34%
MMS (text with images or videos)	7%	10%	12%	9%	8%	11%	9%
Push notification via the brand's app	4%	7%	10%	13%	6%	10%	8%
Retargeting ad on social media	4%	3%	4%	1%	4%	2%	3%

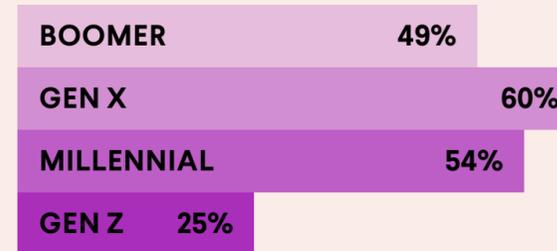
A Side of Deals? How Diners Prefer Their Promotions Served

The channels diners prefer for promotions reveal their comfort with certain platforms and the frequency of their online interactions. When it comes to restaurant promotions and updates, email remains the go-to choice for most diners (48%), especially among older generations. However, Millennials (43%) and Gen Z (45%) are much more likely to engage with text messaging, with it gaining ground as a preferred channel across all age groups.

Gender trends also reveal women favor social media (24%), while men show a stronger preference for email and text. Understanding these preferences can help restaurants plate up promotions that are not just seen—but acted upon.

Key Insights

Email - The Most Popular Dish on the Menu



2x €

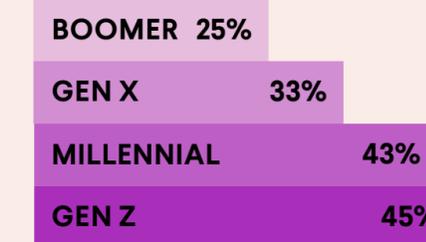
Almost half of diners (48%) prefer receiving promotions via email, with Gen X leading at 60%. The older generations are twice as invested as Gen Z.

Different Gender Tastes in Promotions



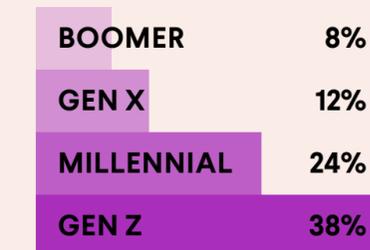
Women prefer social media for updates (24% vs. 17% for men), whereas men engage more with email (49% vs. 46% for women) and text messages (38% vs. 35% for women).

Text is a Growing Favorite



Text promotions (37%) are the preferred option Gen Z (45%), indicating a shift toward quick, mobile-friendly marketing.

Social Media - The Special of the Day for Gen Z



5x €

Gen Z (38%) is far more likely than older generations to engage with social media promotions (3x that of Gen X and 5x Boomers) making platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook essential for restaurant marketing.

 HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE PROMOTIONS AND UPDATES FROM RESTAURANTS?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Deliver Seamless Cross-Device Messaging

Given the selection process of browsing multiple menus—partner with an identity resolution provider to recognize diners seamlessly. Implement a unified cross-channel messaging strategy to deliver personalized, consistent communication at every touchpoint, fostering trust and strengthening relationships.

2. Keep Email the Staple on Your Marketing Menu

Since email remains the top overall channel, restaurants should focus on engaging subject lines, compelling visuals, and personalized offers to drive conversions.

3. Text Messages - A Fast and Effective Appetizer

With text promotions gaining popularity, restaurants should send exclusive SMS offers, flash deals, and reservation reminders to Gen Z and Millennial customers.

4. Make Social Media Your Secret Sauce

Since Gen Z responds best to social media promotions, restaurants should invest in Instagram Reels, TikTok content, and influencer collaborations to attract younger diners.

5. Personalized Promotions for Every Palate

Since diners love promotions suggestions, restaurants should harness browsing history and past dining data to deliver hyper-relevant menu recommendations via triggered messages post visit. AI decisioning will allow you to deliver this at scale, with no need for complicated journey orchestration.



 **HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE PROMOTIONS AND UPDATES FROM RESTAURANTS?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Email	49%	60%	54%	25%	46%	49%	48%
Text message	25%	33%	43%	45%	35%	38%	37%
Push notifications from a restaurant's app	8%	19%	27%	32%	19%	23%	21%
Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.)	8%	12%	24%	38%	24%	17%	20%
Direct mail (coupons, flyers, postcards)	17%	19%	19%	22%	19%	19%	19%
None, I prefer not to receive promotions	9%	3%	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%

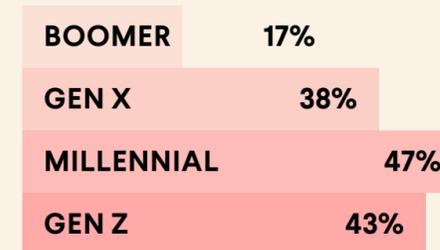
HOW FREQUENTLY WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO RECEIVE PROMOTIONAL EMAILS OR TEXTS FROM A RESTAURANT?

How Often is Too Often? Serving Up the Right Frequency for Restaurant Promotions

Diners love a good deal, but too many promotional messages can leave a bad taste. While most consumers are open to receiving marketing emails or texts, the preferred frequency varies by age and gender. A few times per week (37%) is the sweet spot, especially for Millennials (47%), Gen Z (43%) and Gen X (38%) who are more receptive to frequent promotions. Meanwhile, Boomers' chosen cadence is either once-per-week cadence (25%) or a few times per month (28%), preferring less frequent but well-timed offers. Understanding these preferences helps restaurants strike the perfect balance—keeping diners engaged without overwhelming their inboxes.

Key Insights

A Few Times Per Week is the Perfect Portion



5X€

The most popular frequency for restaurant promotions is a few times per week (37%), particularly among Millennials (47%), Gen Z (43%) and Gen X (38%), all 2x that of Boomers.

Too Many Messages Can Spoil the Appetite

While most diners welcome promotions, only 9% want them daily, and 7% prefer never receiving them, emphasizing the need for a balanced messaging strategy.

Once-a-Week Emails Work Best for Older Diners



Boomers (25%) are more comfortable with receiving promotions once per week, suggesting that less frequent, high-value offers resonate best with them.

Men vs. Women - Different Serving Sizes for Promotions



Men are more open to messages regularly throughout the week (41% vs 25% for women). Women lean toward weekly (25% vs. 17% for men).

 HOW FREQUENTLY WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO RECEIVE PROMOTIONAL EMAILS OR TEXTS FROM A RESTAURANT?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Find the Right Serving Size for Each Diner

Since Millennials and Gen Z are more receptive to frequent promotions, restaurants should send engaging offers multiple times per week while keeping messages concise and valuable. Offering dynamic content such as menu updates and exclusive deals will retain Millennials and Gen Z who engage frequently. Identify these diners with the help of identity resolution partners like Wundekrind to trigger email and text messages more frequently than other diners, even if they appear as anonymous traffic.

2. Keep it Fresh for Boomers and Gen X

Older diners prefer weekly promotions, so restaurants should focus on quality over quantity, ensuring that each message offers a compelling incentive.

3. Avoid Overseasoning—Too Many Messages Can Backfire

With only 9% of diners wanting daily promotions, restaurants should monitor engagement rates and allow customers to set their preferred message frequency to prevent opt-outs.

4. Personalize Promotion Timing Based on Demographics

Men are more receptive to daily deals, so consider flash sales and limited-time offers to drive engagement. Women prefer weekly promotions, so focus on newsletter-style updates with exclusive discounts and new menu highlights.



 **HOW FREQUENTLY WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO RECEIVE PROMOTIONAL EMAILS OR TEXTS FROM A RESTAURANT?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Once a day	4%	7%	13%	12%	8%	10%	9%
A few times per week	17%	38%	47%	43%	32%	41%	37%
Once per week	25%	29%	17%	13%	25%	17%	21%
A few times per month	28%	7%	11%	12%	14%	15%	14%
Once per month	17%	10%	7%	13%	14%	9%	12%
Never	8%	10%	5%	7%	7%	8%	7%

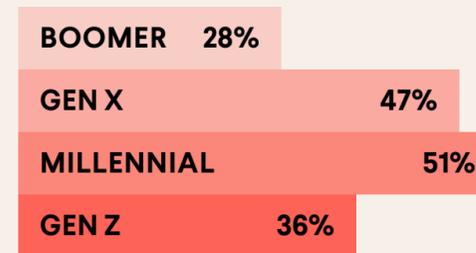
IF A RESTAURANT HAD A MOBILE APP, WHAT FEATURES WOULD MAKE YOU DOWNLOAD AND USE IT?

App-etite for Convenience – What Makes Diners Download?

A restaurant’s mobile app needs more than just a flashy logo to earn a spot on a diner’s phone. The biggest incentive? Mobile ordering and easy checkout (41%), proving that speed and convenience drive downloads. Loyalty program integration (39%) is another major factor, showing that diners want rewards at their fingertips. Meanwhile, exclusive app-only deals (34%) help sweeten the deal, while real-time order tracking (19%) adds transparency to the ordering process. However, 13% of consumers still prefer not to use restaurant apps, meaning restaurants must ensure their apps offer clear value to drive adoption.

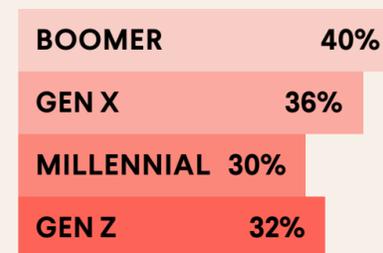
Key Insights

Fast & Frictionless Ordering Wins Downloads



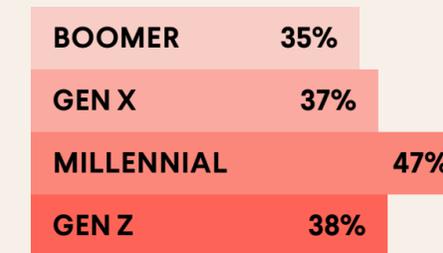
The #1 reason diners download a restaurant’s app is mobile ordering and easy checkout (41%), making speed and simplicity a top priority.

Exclusive App-Only Deals Entice More Users



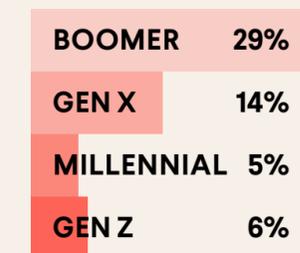
More than a third (34%) of diners say app-exclusive discounts are a major motivator, proving that special offers can drive downloads.

Loyalty Perks Keep Users Coming Back



With 39% of diners downloading apps for loyalty program integration, rewards programs should be seamlessly integrated into the app experience.

Some Diners Still Prefer to Order the Old-Fashioned Way



5x €

13% of consumers say they don’t use restaurant apps, signaling a need for better app experiences and stronger incentives to encourage adoption. Predictably, this is much higher with older diners, with Boomers twice as reticent as Gen X and 5x that of Millennials and Gen Z.

 IF A RESTAURANT HAD A MOBILE APP, WHAT FEATURES WOULD MAKE YOU DOWNLOAD AND USE IT?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Make Ordering Smooth

With 41% of diners prioritizing mobile ordering and easy checkout, restaurants should optimize their app for fast, hassle-free transactions with saved payment methods and quick reordering.

2. Turn Every Download Into a Loyalty Goldmine

Since 39% of diners download apps for rewards, restaurants should ensure loyalty programs are well-integrated, easy to track, and offer valuable perks.

3. Offer Exclusive App-Only Deals to Drive Adoption

With 34% of users drawn in by app-exclusive promotions, restaurants should regularly feature app-only discounts, flash deals, and special offers to encourage downloads and repeat usage.

4. Win Over the App-Resistant Crowd

Since 13% of diners don't use restaurant apps, restaurants should clearly communicate app benefits through signage, staff recommendations, and social media to encourage adoption.



 **IF A RESTAURANT HAD A MOBILE APP, WHAT FEATURES WOULD MAKE YOU DOWNLOAD AND USE IT?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Mobile ordering and easy checkout	28%	47%	51%	36%	41%	41%	41%
Loyalty program integration	35%	37%	47%	38%	38%	41%	39%
Exclusive app-only deals	40%	36%	30%	32%	36%	33%	34%
Personalized menu recommendations	5%	5%	18%	32%	11%	19%	15%
Real-time order tracking	13%	26%	19%	16%	19%	19%	19%
None, I don't use restaurant apps	29%	14%	5%	6%	14%	13%	13%

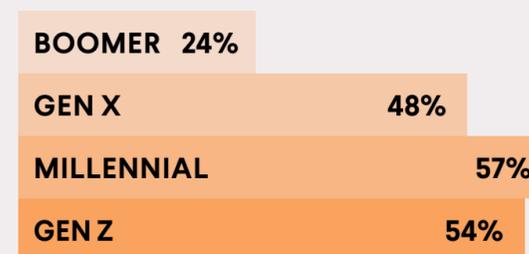
Made to Order: How Diners Feel About Personalized Messaging

Crafting impactful messaging offers is essential for driving direct orders. Email and text remain unparalleled tools for delivering highly personalized and timely messages, with its ability to cut through the noise of crowded digital landscapes.

Restaurants are serving up personalized marketing, but do diners find it helpful or intrusive? The good news: 46% of diners appreciate personalized messages based on past orders and preferences, with Millennials (57%) and Gen Z (54%) being the most receptive. However, 33% are okay with it as long as messages aren't too frequent, signaling that balance is key. Meanwhile, 9% of diners find personalized marketing intrusive, showing that restaurants must fine-tune their messaging strategy to keep engagement high without overwhelming customers.

Key Insights

Most Diners Enjoy a Side of Personalization



2x

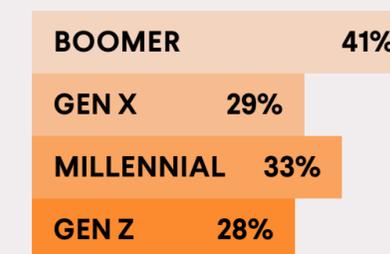
Nearly half (46%) of all diners like receiving personalized messages, proving that customized promotions can drive engagement when done right. The younger generations are more than twice as receptive as Boomers.

Men vs. Women: Who's More Open to Personalization?



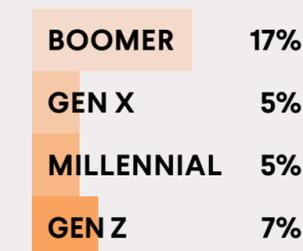
Women (48% vs 44% for men) are slightly more receptive to personalized messages.

Less is More—Over-Messaging Can Backfire



A third of diners (33%) are okay with personalized marketing as long as it's not too frequent, meaning restaurants should be mindful of message volume.

A Small but Vocal Group Finds It Intrusive



3x

9% of diners dislike personalized messaging, showing that restaurants must offer opt-out options and ensure messages feel relevant rather than excessive. Stereotypically, Boomers lead the charge, 3 times as anti-personalization as Gen X and Millennials.

 **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT RESTAURANTS USING PERSONALIZED MESSAGING BASED ON YOUR PAST ORDERS OR PREFERENCES?**

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Double-Down on AI-Powered Personalization to Boost Engagement

Since diners, particularly younger generations, love personalized menu recommendations based on their individual preferences and ordering habits, restaurant brands should harness browsing history and past ordering data to deliver hyper-relevant menu recommendations via triggered messages post visit. AI-driven decision-making enables you to deliver this at scale, eliminating the need for complex journey orchestration.

2. Find the Right Frequency—Don't Overstuff the Inbox

With 33% of diners preferring personalized messages in moderation, restaurants should limit outreach to key moments, such as special discounts, reorder reminders, or new menu alerts. Using email and text triggered by browse and click data to deliver these will generate higher conversions.

3. Give Customers Control Over Their Experience

Since 9% of diners find personalized marketing intrusive, restaurants should allow customers to manage preferences, choose communication frequency, and easily opt out if needed.





**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT RESTAURANTS
USING PERSONALIZED MESSAGING BASED
ON YOUR PAST ORDERS OR PREFERENCES?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
I like it and find it helpful	24%	48%	57%	54%	48%	44%	46%
It's okay, as long as it's not too frequent	41%	29%	33%	28%	30%	35%	33%
I don't have a strong opinion	17%	18%	6%	12%	12%	14%	13%
I dislike it and find it intrusive	17%	5%	5%	7%	10%	8%	9%



IF A RESTAURANT OFFERS EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS VIA EMAIL OR TEXT, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO ORDER FROM THEM MORE OFTEN?

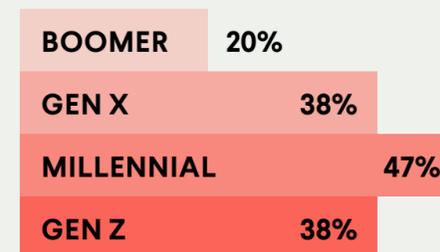
A Deal Too Tasty to Resist? How Discounts Drive Repeat Orders

When it comes to restaurant promotions, a good deal isn't just appreciated—it's a powerful motivator for repeat orders. A staggering 78% of diners say they are either "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to order more often if a restaurant offers exclusive discounts via email or text, with Millennials (86%) and Gen X (83%) leading the way. Only 8% of diners say discounts wouldn't influence their ordering habits, proving that well-timed offers can be a key ingredient in customer retention.



Key Insights

Discounts Are a Surefire Recipe for More Orders



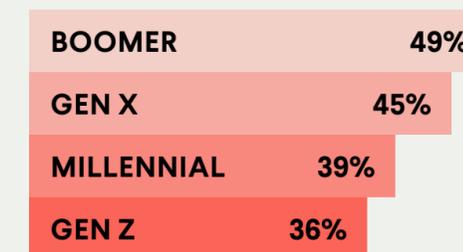
2x€

More than a third (36%) of diners say they are very likely to order more often when receiving exclusive deals via email or text. Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z are twice as likely as Boomers in this respect.

Only a Small Portion of Diners Aren't Tempted by Deals

Just 8% of diners say discounts wouldn't impact their ordering habits, meaning promotions still have broad appeal across demographics.

Most Diners Are at Least Somewhat Influenced by Discounts



A majority (42%) say they are somewhat likely to order more often if offered exclusive discounts, proving that well-placed promotions can drive higher engagement. This trends higher the older the diner.

Men More Likely to Bite?



Men are very likely (37% vs 35% for women) and somewhat likely (43% vs 41% for women) to order more.



IF A RESTAURANT OFFERS EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS VIA EMAIL OR TEXT, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO ORDER FROM THEM MORE OFTEN?



Strategic Takeaways

1. Email with Behavioral Triggers

Design rich, personalized email campaigns targeting all demographics and implement automated reminders, such as meal abandonment messages and personalized recommendations. Trigger upsell offers via email or mobile a day, week or short time after an order is made.

2. Channel Segmentation

Continuously monitor diner engagement metrics across channels to refine strategies. Leverage feedback and behavioral data to stay ahead of shifting preferences and maximize communication effectiveness. Wunderkind is an excellent orchestration partner to ensure cross channel communication is optimized.

3. Make Discounts a Regular Special

Since 36% of diners are very likely to order more often with exclusive deals, restaurants should send targeted promotions via email and text to encourage repeat orders.

4. Capture the 'Somewhat Likely' Crowd with Personalization

With 42% of diners being somewhat likely to order more with a discount, restaurants should experiment with limited-time deals, loyalty perks, and targeted offers based on past orders.

5. Even Small Discounts Can Make a Big Impact

Since only 8% of diners are not influenced by discounts, even a modest incentive (like free delivery or a small percentage off) can drive repeat business.





IF A RESTAURANT OFFERS EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS VIA EMAIL OR TEXT, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO ORDER FROM THEM MORE OFTEN?

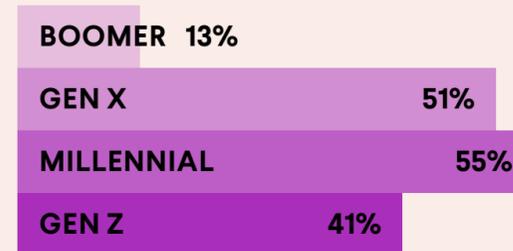
RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Very likely	20%	38%	47%	38%	35%	37%	36%
Somewhat likely	49%	45%	39%	36%	41%	43%	42%
Neutral	20%	11%	11%	16%	17%	12%	14%
Unlikely	4%	0%	0%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Very unlikely	7%	5%	4%	7%	5%	6%	6%

Feast or Forget? Who's Dining on Loyalty Rewards

Loyalty programs are a great way to keep diners coming back for seconds, and most are pulling up a chair. 72% of diners actively use loyalty programs, with 40% signing up for multiple establishments - Millennials (55%) and Gen X (51%) leading the pack. However, 11% of consumers aren't interested in loyalty rewards at all, meaning restaurants need to serve up compelling perks to win over hesitant diners. Many diners prefer sticking to their favorite restaurants, with 32% only participating in select loyalty programs, proving that quality incentives—not just any program—keep customers engaged.

Key Insights

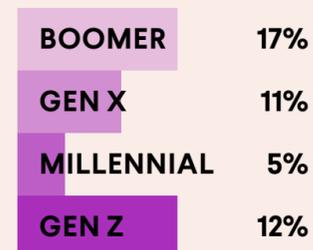
Loyalty Programs Have Plenty of Regulars



4x 

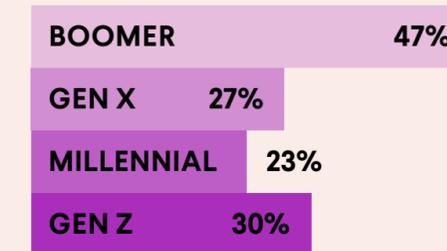
A solid 40% of diners actively use multiple restaurant loyalty programs, making rewards a proven strategy for driving repeat business. Gen X and Millennials are 4x as keen adopters as Boomers.

Some Diners Just Aren't Hungry for Rewards



A small but notable 11% of diners aren't interested in loyalty programs, meaning restaurants should clearly communicate benefits to encourage sign-ups.

Many Diners Are Picky About Their Perks



2x 

While some diners sign up for multiple programs, 32% only join loyalty programs at their favorite restaurants, showing that exclusive, high-value perks are key to participation. Boomers are twice as picky as Millennials.

 DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN RESTAURANT LOYALTY OR REWARDS PROGRAMS?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Make Loyalty Programs Too Tempting to Resist

Since 40% of diners already use multiple programs, restaurants should continuously refresh rewards, offer bonus incentives, and make it easy to earn points to maintain engagement.

2. Win Over Selective Loyalty Members with VIP Perks

With 32% of diners only joining loyalty programs at their favorite spots, restaurants must focus on standout rewards like exclusive discounts, birthday perks, and members-only menu items.

3. Convince the Loyalty Skeptics with Instant Value

Since 11% of diners aren't interested in loyalty programs, restaurants should offer an immediate benefit (e.g., a free appetizer or discount on the next visit) to encourage sign-ups.



 **DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN RESTAURANT LOYALTY OR REWARDS PROGRAMS?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Yes, I actively use multiple programs	13%	51%	55%	41%	42%	39%	40%
Yes, but only for my favorite restaurants	47%	27%	23%	30%	30%	34%	32%
No, but I would consider joining	23%	11%	17%	17%	16%	18%	17%
No, I'm not interested in rewards program	17%	11%	5%	12%	12%	10%	11%

WHICH RESTAURANT LOYALTY PROGRAM FEATURES ARE MOST APPEALING TO YOU?

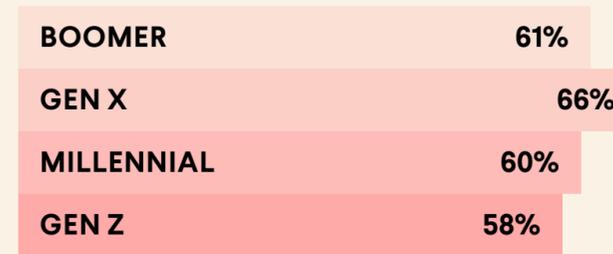
The Perks That Sizzle – What Diners Crave in a Loyalty Program

A well-designed restaurant loyalty program isn't just about rewarding customers—it's a powerful strategy for driving repeat business, increasing revenue, and strengthening customer relationships. The most appetizing perk? Earning points toward free food or drinks (61%), proving that diners love rewards they can cash in for something delicious. Exclusive discounts (46%) and birthday freebies (29%) also rank high, adding extra incentives to stay loyal.

Meanwhile, surprise perks (15%) and VIP access to new menu items (8%) add a touch of excitement, though they're not as widely prioritized. With only 8% of diners uninterested in loyalty programs, it's clear that most customers are eager to sign up—if the rewards are worth it.

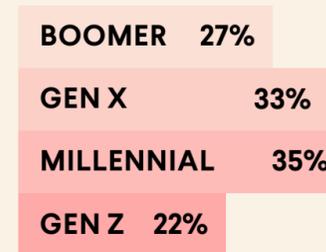
Key Insights

Free Food is the Golden Ticket



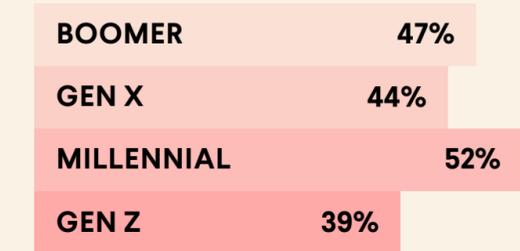
The #1 most desired loyalty perk is earning points toward free food and drinks (61%), making it a must-have for any restaurant rewards program.

Birthday Treats Make Loyalty Sweeter



29% of diners appreciate free birthday rewards, proving that personalized perks boost customer engagement.

Discounts Keep Diners Coming Back



Nearly half of diners (46%) rank exclusive discounts and promotions as a top reason to join a loyalty program, reinforcing the power of savings.

Surprise & VIP Perks Add Flavor, But Aren't Essential

While some diners enjoy surprise perks (15%) and VIP access to new menu items (8%), these extras rank lower than traditional discounts and point-based rewards.

What Perks Entice Men and Women to Sign Up?



Men love loyalty points (63% vs 59% for women) and discounts (48% vs 43% for women). Women are more interested in birthday rewards (32% vs 26% for men).

 WHICH RESTAURANT LOYALTY PROGRAM FEATURES ARE MOST APPEALING TO YOU?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Make Free Food the Star of Your Loyalty Program

Since 61% of diners prioritize earning points toward free food and drinks, restaurants should offer simple, easy-to-redeem rewards to keep customers engaged.

2. Sweeten the Deal with Exclusive Discounts

With 46% of diners valuing discounts, restaurants should frequently offer loyalty-only promotions, bonus point days, and special limited-time offers.

3. Use Birthday & Milestone Perks to Drive Emotional Loyalty

Since 29% of diners appreciate birthday rewards, restaurants should send personalized offers and celebrate customer milestones to strengthen brand connection.

4. Test Surprise Perks & VIP Access for Added Excitement

While not the top priority, surprise perks and VIP menu access can be used strategically to create buzz and make loyal customers feel special.

5. Leverage Behavioral Triggers

Implement automated email and text messages like cart reminders and tailored menu recommendations to engage diners based on ordering history.



 **WHICH RESTAURANT LOYALTY PROGRAM FEATURES ARE MOST APPEALING TO YOU?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Earning points toward free food or drinks	61%	66%	60%	58%	59%	63%	61%
Exclusive discounts and promotions	47%	44%	52%	39%	43%	48%	46%
Free birthday rewards	27%	33%	35%	22%	32%	26%	29%
Surprise perks for frequent visits	12%	10%	14%	23%	16%	14%	15%
VIP access to new menu items or events	4%	5%	10%	14%	6%	10%	8%
None, I don't care about loyalty programs	13%	7%	2%	10%	8%	8%	8%

Stacking Up Rewards – How Diners Track & Redeem Loyalty Perks

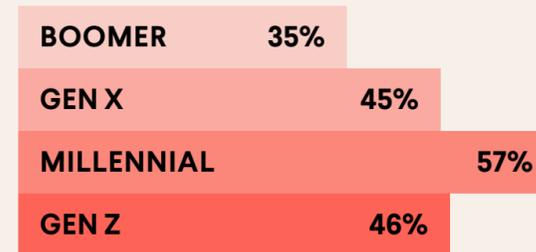
A great loyalty program is only as effective as its redemption experience—and diners expect a seamless, hassle-free way to claim their rewards. If the process is too complicated, customers may lose interest, leaving valuable perks unredeemed. To keep diners engaged, restaurants must offer convenient, user-friendly tracking and redemption options that fit into their daily routines.

The top choice for reward tracking and redemption is restaurant mobile apps (46%), proving that digital convenience is king. With an app, diners can check their points, receive personalized offers, and redeem rewards with just a few taps, making it an efficient and frictionless experience.

However, not all diners rely on apps alone. 31% prefer email notifications, while 27% favor text message reminders, demonstrating that multiple touchpoints help keep rewards top-of-mind. A well-timed email about an available discount or an SMS reminder about an expiring freebie can be the nudge a diner needs to place an order or visit in person.

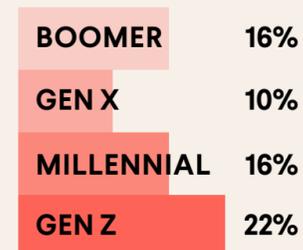
Key Insights

Mobile Apps Take the Cake for Loyalty Tracking



Nearly half (46%) of diners prefer to track and redeem rewards via a restaurant’s mobile app, making a user-friendly app essential for loyalty success.

Some Diners Still Love a Classic Punch-Card



Despite the digital shift, 16% of diners still prefer physical loyalty cards, meaning restaurants should offer both digital and traditional options for maximum accessibility. Surprisingly, Gen Z lead the way here on 22%.

Email & Text Keep Rewards on Diners’ Radar



A combined 58% of diners track rewards through email (31%) or text messages (27%), proving that digital reminders drive engagement.

Men vs. Women: How They Cash In on Rewards



Men love mobile apps (50% vs 42% for women), text reminders (29% vs 24% for women) and physical loyalty cards (18% vs 13% for women) Women favor email notifications (34% vs 28% for men).

 HOW DO YOU PREFER TO TRACK AND REDEEM LOYALTY REWARDS FROM RESTAURANTS?

 **Strategic Takeaways**

1. Make Your Loyalty App a One-Stop Shop

Since half of diners prefer using restaurant apps, restaurants should ensure their app offers an intuitive, seamless way to track and redeem rewards.

2. Use Email & Text to Nudge Customers Toward Redemption

With 58% of diners relying on email or SMS reminders, restaurants should send personalized updates on available rewards, limited-time offers, and redemption deadlines.

3. Don't Forget About Traditional Loyalty Users

Since 16% of diners still use physical loyalty cards, restaurants should offer hybrid options, allowing customers to track points both digitally and via a physical card.



 **HOW DO YOU PREFER TO TRACK AND REDEEM LOYALTY REWARDS FROM RESTAURANTS?**

RESPONSE	AGE GROUP				GENDER		EVERYONE
	BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL	GEN Z	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Restaurant's mobile app	35%	45%	57%	46%	42%	50%	46%
Website login	19%	14%	20%	13%	17%	17%	17%
Email notifications	36%	26%	31%	32%	34%	28%	31%
Text message reminders	11%	27%	35%	33%	24%	29%	27%
Physical loyalty card	16%	10%	16%	22%	13%	18%	16%
I don't use loyalty programs	13%	11%	6%	14%	10%	12%	11%

Conclusion

The restaurant industry in 2025 is being shaped by evolving consumer preferences, digital engagement, and the growing demand for convenience. From how diners discover new restaurants to how they prefer to receive promotions and redeem loyalty rewards, this report has uncovered key trends that restaurants must consider to stay competitive.

One of the most consistent themes in this report is the importance of loyalty programs and personalized marketing. Diners are willing to sign up for restaurant email and text lists, but they expect real value in return. Exclusive deals, discounts, and rewards programs are major motivators, with many diners actively using multiple restaurant loyalty programs. However, to maintain engagement, restaurants must strike the right balance—too many messages can overwhelm diners, while too few may cause them to forget about the program entirely.

To truly succeed in 2025, restaurant brands must prioritize true-personalization, at every step of the dining journey. However, personalization is only possible when restaurant brands can accurately identify their potential diners. Up to 95% of website traffic remains anonymous, making it essential to deploy identity resolution solutions that recognize and track diner behavior across devices and sessions.

Wunderkind helps restaurant brands identify logged-out loyalty members and even builds behavioral profiles for truly unknown visitors, enabling marketers to deliver hyper-personalized offers at the right moment. By leveraging patented email and

mobile capture tools, restaurant brands can grow their first-party data and re-engage diners through behaviorally triggered email and SMS campaigns.

Wunderkind has identified over 9 billion consumer devices and tracks nearly 2 trillion digital interactions each year across thousands of websites. With insights into the browsing, engagement, and dining behaviors of more than 1 billion opted-in consumers, Wunderkind enables restaurant brands to connect anonymous visitors to their first-party databases. This advanced intelligence powers highly personalized, one-to-one messaging at scale, delivering a guaranteed increase in revenue—setting it apart from traditional marketing solutions.

Triggered email and text campaigns represent a particularly powerful opportunity. By leveraging first-party data and AI decisioning, restaurant brands can engage diners at the right moment, whether it's with a new menu item, a reminder about loyalty perks, or a personalized recommendation. These timely, tailored interactions not only boost sales but also deepen loyalty.

The insights in this report serve as a roadmap for navigating the modern restaurant landscape. Those who adapt quickly, innovate strategically, and prioritize value without compromise will be the ones who thrive in this fast-changing industry.





Unlock the Power of Identity Resolution

Wunderkind's Identity solution transforms brand-customer connections empowering marketers to deliver personalized experiences, ensuring privacy, compliance, and seamless cross-device engagement, leveraging powerful first-party data insight.

[Download Now](#)



The Power of Acquisition

Unlock the power of first-party data with our comprehensive guide, designed to help you turn website visitors into engaged customers. Learn how to collect emails and phone numbers, leverage behavioral targeting for personalized marketing, and ensure compliance with privacy laws, all while boosting conversion rates at a lower cost than paid media.

[Download Now](#)



Success Stories from Leading Brands

Discover how leading brands are leveraging Wunderkind's Autonomous Marketing Platform to drive personalized engagement, boost revenue, and enhance customer loyalty. By utilizing identity-powered messaging, first-party data, and seamless cross-channel campaigns, these brands are turning unknown traffic into known and seeing huge lifts in revenue.

[Learn More](#)



The Performance Marketing Solution

At Wunderkind, we drive meaningful, measurable outcomes for our clients. With identity and permissioning at the heart of our business, Wunderkind has the data and expertise to help you scale owned revenue channels while providing a premium experience for your customers, all while guaranteeing a lift in revenue.

[Drive Unmatched Revenue](#)

Wunderkind

Wunderkind is the leading AI-driven performance marketing solution that collects consent-based, first-party data and identifies anonymous traffic for restaurant brands in order to scale hyper-personalized one-to-one messages. Restaurant brands lean on the Wunderkind Identity Network, a proprietary database recognizing 9 billion devices and 1 billion consumers, and observes 2 trillion digital transactions every year, to trigger the most impactful offers and rewards to their target audience at the right moment and in the right channel. This proprietary data is accessed by Wunderkind's Autonomous Marketing Platform, an AI engine that integrates seamlessly into a restaurant brands' existing ESP to boost performance across email, text and advertising channels.

Wunderkind is the only performance solution that guarantees a lift in revenue for its clients and delivers over \$5 billion in directly attributable revenue annually for brands across a number of industries, often ranking as a top 3 revenue channel in clients' own analytics platforms. Brands such as Cracker Barrel, Harley-Davidson, Perry Ellis International and Shoe Carnival partner with Wunderkind to drive top-line revenue through its guaranteed results.



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