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powered by **Interbrand** **Brands That Feed You**

Posted May 13, 2015 by [Caitlin Barrett](#)



Brands do a lot these days to win over distracted consumers. They publish content, provide entertainment and champion sustainability. But, let's be real, the easiest way for a brand to win our love is to get food to our faces, faster. And the race is *on*.

While chains we already know for food are stepping up their delivery game, gourmet ingredient-kit services are cropping up every day and restaurant-free food delivery is now "a thing," some big, totally non-food brands are jostling each other for the chance to ring our doorbell, too.



At first, this sounds insane. After all, we have Seamless (well, some of us have Seamless). For the phone-phobic and choice-hungry, this was the innovation that we were tearfully glad to be alive for. Why would we need anything else? But for a big brand, there's an opportunity much bigger than competing with other food delivery services.

With the right service, brands can compete against *all* of the ways we acquire food. Restaurants, drive-throughs, convenience stores and supermarkets—ambitious brands want to rise above all of these to become our first thought when we need to eat.



Two biggie brands have recently launched programs to do this, using strategies that play to their individual strengths: Google, as an aggregator and Uber, as a curator.

Google has the ability to pull from an entire universe of information. When it comes to food search, it can use its well-connected databases to provide an answer that changes a search for a dine-in restaurant into an order-now-and-stay-home evening. Here's how it works: Search for a restaurant on your phone, and Google's results will show a new "Place an order" option within the basic details about a restaurant. Then, choose from available delivery service: Seamless, GrubHub, Eat24, Delivery.com, BeyondMenu and MyPizza.com (so far, in its San Francisco test).





It's telling that Google's new food-ordering functionality isn't named or branded in any special way. It's just part of the new utility of search, where answers, and the actions we need to take based on them, surface without actually having to interact with individual websites. There's a clear assumption that this is simply the new way things will be done. And while for now, it's acting as an aggregator, it's possible to imagine Google working as a direct service with restaurants and cutting out the middlemen entirely.



Google's launch of its food-ordering functionality comes on the heels of Uber's on-demand meal delivery service, UberEATS. Part of Uber's Uber-Everything experiments, you can now summon a *torta* to your location through the app, the same way you order a car service, in a handful of foodie markets: LA, NYC, Chicago, and Barcelona.

Only a small number of menu items are available at a time, and they range from eateries that already deliver (but can't get orders to you within 10 minutes of requesting them) to places that are partnering with Uber to offer delivery for the first time. The selection is curated (a fancy word for "limited") so that drivers can be ready with the meals loaded when a customer requests a meal.

Amazon obviously deserves mention here as well, with its AmazonFresh service competing with Seamless, FreshDirect and Drugstore.com all at once—while being a more limited version of each.

Postmates, meanwhile, is helping brands including Chipotle, McDonald's, Starbucks and Five Guys handle deliveries in urban US markets.



Microsoft isn't yet a contender, but maybe one day Cortana will offer to order you menu items that meet your day's macronutrient requirements, based on your activity level. Or Facebook will turn your likes into instant-order meal suggestions.

All of these options have one thing in common: They're designed for city dwellers whose primary food problem is an abundance of choice. As we reach the limits of how fast humans on bikes and in cars can serve us world-class chef-prepared meals, will they expand to do something for the suburban and rural dweller? Or will they just switch to drones? (They'll probably just switch to drones, right?)

***—Caitlin Barrett is a New York-based word wrangler. Follow her on Twitter: [@badnewsbarrett](https://twitter.com/badnewsbarrett)***



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