



# SHAKE SHACK

– APPLAUSE CASE STUDY –

“DIGITAL IS PART OF OUR DNA. OUR DIGITAL EXPERIENCES HAVE TO BE GREAT AND THEY HAVE TO ADD TO THE OVERALL GUEST EXPERIENCE.”

ZACH KOFF, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SHAKE SHACK

## CUSTOMER

Founded as an impromptu hot dog stand in Manhattan’s Madison Square Park in 2001, Shake Shack now brings its modern-day take on the quintessential roadside burger to millions of customers at nearly 200 locations around the globe.

Serial restaurateur Danny Meyer’s vision for Shake Shack borrows elements of fine dining to create an upscale, high-touch, fast-casual experience that has attracted a loyal fan base. Under Meyer’s “*enlightened hospitality*” concept, the company takes care of its employees so they in turn, deliver exceptional customer service that sets them apart from competitors.

Along with a love of craft burgers and fries, Shake Shack customers are digital-savvy consumers who trade in-line selfies and foodie Snapchats as the appetizer to their main course. Shake Shack’s digital roots go deep: The company put up a Shack-cam webcam in its first location 10 years ago to give customers a preview of line length and wait time so they could better plan their visits.

## CHALLENGE

With firmly established well-trafficked eateries, Shake Shack wanted to move forward with new digital experiences that would satisfy its tech-hungry customers while staying true to its vision and strong brand

### COMPANY

Shake Shack

### INDUSTRY

Restaurant

### TESTING TYPES

Functional | Usability | Payment

### APP TYPES

Mobile

### CHALLENGES

- Create a new digital experience for its customers while staying true to its brand
- Develop a mobile app that would provide a seamless user experience
- Stress test on both the mobile app and the operations processes

### RESULTS

- 200,000 ios app downloads in 4 months
- 15% higher purchases on Mobile orders than in store
- Ran 12 test cycles across 10 locations
- Identified several glitches in the app prior to release

heritage. Research confirmed that mobile devices were ground zero for customer engagement so Shake Shack sought to create a mobile app that reached customers everywhere and delivered an ideal experience, whether it be advance ordering, entertainment, or direct access to a community and promotions.

“The app had to be technically sound, but it had to have our voice and feel—something that was fun and exciting and was representative of why you might love Shake Shack,” Koff explains.

Shake Shack assembled an ecosystem of partners to help map out the guest journey and translate it to the digital space. There were partners tapped for mobile ordering, order notification, and payment capabilities along with others assisting in the CRM, marketing, and customer loyalty components of the program. There was also a need for broad testing services to verify the app’s usability and performance along with the operations workflows required to support the new ordering system.

After researching secret shopper companies, market research firms, and app testing companies, the Shake Shack team teamed up with Applause to run both virtual and physical QA testing on the mobile app and related operations processes. Because Shake Shack is such a well-known brand with an engaged and loyal customer base, it needed a testing partner and platform that could help recreate what Koff and his team fully expected would be the ultimate stress test.

## RESULTS

Crushed the lunch and then some. The Applause test community was tasked with an array of duties, from testing the app’s ordering and payment features to ensuring both the app and in-store user experience lived up to Shake Shack’s high standard of quality customers have come to expect. The team also spent time in the field to train Shake Shack employees on how to deal with the new mobile order workflows.

After an initial run of three test cycles in a midtown New York location, the Applause team **added eight additional markets** for test runs. Over the course of two months, the team successfully fulfilled more than **775 mobile orders in 12 test runs across 10 locations**.

The rigorous testing uncovered an array of valuable feedback, both technical and user oriented. The Applause team discovered weird



*“ WE NEEDED SOMEONE TO HELP US CREATE CRAZINESS. THE TEST WE NEEDED WAS TO SEE IF WE COULD CRUSH OUR LUNCH.”*

ZACH KOFF, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SHAKE SHACK

glitches in the app—for example, it crashed when customers ordered drinks and certain items were missing upon pick-up. The system also allowed people to order more than 24 hours in advance and wouldn't process American Express payments.

Koff says the Shake Shack team really benefitted from the insights, particularly when it came to the technical glitches. “Operationally we nailed it, but we found bugs and crashes we never were expecting,” he explains. “The best outcome is that the data is right there in a deliverable form from Applause, which allowed us to make super fast, real-time corrections for the next test.”

The results speak for themselves as the Shake Shack app was not only **downloaded 200,000 times in the first four months**, but mobile order checks came in on **average 15% higher than** those in the store. By starting off on the right foot, Shake Shack was able to build momentum and trust with consumers moving forward.

In addition to tweaking the app, Shake Shack made a number of other course corrections as a result of the testing feedback, including more training for staffers, better placement of store signage, and opening up a dedicated mobile pickup window to make the process more efficient.

Applause continues to do exploratory functional testing for Shake Shack's mobile apps on both iOS and Android, and moving forward it will do security work and expand customer experience testing for usability and in-store workflows.

*“LEARNING FROM THE APP EXPERIENCE HELPED US LEARN ABOUT THE PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE AS WELL, MELDING THE TWO TOGETHER HAS BEEN CRITICAL TO THE BRAND EXPERIENCE.”*

ZACH KOFF, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SHAKE SHACK

## ABOUT APPLAUSE

Applause is the worldwide leader in crowdtesting and digital quality. Software is at the heart of how all brands engage users, and digital experiences must work flawlessly everywhere. With **400,000+ testers available on-demand around the globe**, Applause provides brands with a full suite of testing and feedback capabilities. This approach drastically improves testing coverage, eliminates the limitations of offshoring and traditional QA labs, and speeds time-to-market for websites, mobile apps, IoT, and in-store experiences.

Thousands of leading companies — including Ford, Fox, Google, and Dow Jones — rely on Applause as a best practice to deliver high-quality digital experiences that customers love.

Learn more at: [www.applause.com](http://www.applause.com)