

# WaBa Grill Delivers Intelligent Offers and Rewards to Make Customers' Lives Easier



## RESTAURANT LOYALTY CHALLENGE

- Lacked the right tech solutions to drive expansion

## RESTAURANT LOYALTY GOALS

- Introduce the first-ever WaBa Grill Rewards app
- Provide guests with a seamless digital experience
- Create an integrated tech stack to increase sales & scale

## RESTAURANT LOYALTY SOLUTIONS

- Punchh Loyalty, Online Ordering, Coupons/Promos, eClub
- Punchh designed & developed mobile rewards app
- Punchh integrations with POS (Toast V3), online ordering (Olo) and messaging (Sendgrid)

## RESTAURANT LOYALTY RESULTS

**51%**

Increase in Loyalty Sales YoY

**57%**

Increase in Loyalty Visits YoY

**25%**

Conversion from eClub to Loyalty YoY

WaBa Grill, one of the nation's leading healthy rice bowl chains, serves up the best possible food on the go from nearly 200 locations. Celebrating their 15th anniversary this year, WaBa Grill is excited about their recent explosive sales growth, which includes Q2 2021 becoming the top-performing sales quarter in the brand's history. In addition, same-store sales (SSS) were up 30.6% over the same pre-pandemic period for 2019 and strong digital sales, which continue to improve, currently represent nearly 25% of total sales.

**“With Punchh we went from not playing in the digital space to being well on our way to having a solution that not only gives us a presence, but also helps us excel in three critical areas - pick up, digital ordering, and digital delivery/third party deliveries.”**

**MARK FINNEGAN**, CHIEF MARKETING & INFORMATION OFFICER, WABA GRILL

Just a few short years ago, WaBa didn't have any digital sales to speak of. According to Mark Finnegan, WaBa Grill's Chief Marketing & Information Officer, they were operating with a lot of equipment and technology solutions that didn't add value to the business. That all changed in early 2019, when WaBa Grill launched their integrated loyalty program and mobile rewards app powered by Punchh.

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## Easy Partner Integrations Create Seamless Customer Experience

What attracted WaBa Grill initially to Punchh was how many steps it saved them to catch up in the digital game. Finnegan remarked that it provided them with a loyalty platform that also solved for how they were going to develop an app and implement a seamless digital ordering experience. Punchh's strong integrations meant WaBa Grill didn't have to change their approach or existing partnership with Olo to create an even more rewarding guest experience that offered online ordering, pickup and delivery/3rd party delivery.

"With Punchh we went from not playing in the digital space to being well on our way to having a solution that not only gives us a presence, but also helps us excel in three critical areas - pick up, digital ordering, and digital delivery/third party deliveries," said Finnegan.

With the program in place, WaBa Grill focused on acquiring loyalty signups. Guests are encouraged to download the app through cashier scripting, in-restaurant signage, and social and paid media advertising. Because WaBa Grill prides itself on being an extremely franchise-friendly brand with a low investment cost, they operate with a lower marketing accrual than most of their competitors. This puts pressure on their marketing team to maintain a "high advertising batting average" that drives in the best customers to their stores. "And for sure, our best customers are Punchh loyalty customers," said Finnegan.

**"Punchh helps us toward delivering the right message, over the right channel, at the most opportune time to make us more agile and effective marketers, while keeping costs down for our franchisees."**

MARK FINNEGAN, CHIEF MARKETING & INFORMATION OFFICER, WABA GRILL

## Loyalty Channel Quickly Develops More Meaningful Digital Relationships

WaBa Grill attributes their marketing wins to segmentation and customer journeys designed around strategic campaigns to acquire new customers and win back lapsing guests. From the Punchh platform they have the capabilities to provide members with reminders of their brand at more relevant times than their competition. It allows them the opportunity to capitalize on particular moments to send a push notification or an email or a personalized promotion that can influence a purchase or visit.

WaBa Grill has been rewarded for their commitment to supporting franchisees and customers with brand-history record sales, a 51% increase in loyalty sales YoY, and marketplace acclaim with inclusion on NRNs Top 500 report for systemwide sales in 2020 and Restaurant Business' List of Highest Grossing Restaurant Chains 2021 report.

The WaBa Team continues to look forward by prioritizing communication across channels to connect with members and solicit feedback. Their commitment to understanding the context of customer challenges, whether it's price point, convenience or inaccessibility guides their marketing decisions to address what would make those situations easier for their guests. Then they consider the most efficient way to message customers about the product, offer, or operational function that helps solve their challenges and makes them lifelong WaBa Grill fans.

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