C **Calta Delivery** Restaurant margin specialists

A free guide for independent restaurant owners

# The Restaurant Delivery Cost-Cutting Blueprint

How to slash your third-party delivery charges by 30% to 50% and keep the profit you already earned.

**30–50%**
Typical reduction in delivery-associated charges

**3 steps**
Menu pricing, rate renegotiation, refund recovery

**30 days**
How fast most owners see the change land

What's inside



Introduction

# Why you're reading this

If you run a restaurant today, you run one of the hardest businesses there is. Food costs climb. Staff are hard to keep. Rent, power, repairs, and the daily job of keeping people happy never stop. And somewhere in the last few years, a silent partner walked into your kitchen.

This partner never chops an onion. Never washes a dish. Never sweeps the floor at midnight. But every time your tablet buzzes, they take up to 30% to 50% of that sale right off the top.

We're talking about third-party delivery apps.

Services like Uber Eats built a convenience machine, and it works. They bring you orders. They also charge a price that eats restaurant margins alive. Most independent restaurants live on 3% to 9% margins. When a platform takes 30% or more of an order, you're not just losing profit — you're paying out of your own pocket to feed that customer.

That math doesn't hold. But you can't just switch the tablets off, either. Your customers expect delivery, and your competitors are on the apps.

This guide exists to show you the middle ground. Those commissions are not a fixed cost of doing business. With the right moves, you can cut your delivery-associated charges by 30% to 50% and keep more of every order.

### First, three questions

Before the strategy, let's see whether your restaurant is in a good spot to benefit.

> **What are you doing right now in monthly third-party delivery sales?**
>
> If it's $10,000 or more, every point you cut off your commission shows up in your cash flow almost immediately.

> **How much of that revenue disappears into commissions?**
>
> If it's 30% or more, you're on a high-tier rate — which means you have the most room to work with.

> **Are you in a position to put a plan in place over the next 30 days?**
>
> Nothing here works from the shelf. It works when someone runs it.

If you're nodding along, here's how it happens.

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Chapter one

# The invisible leak in your cash flow

To fix a leak, you have to find where the water is getting out. Most owners open the monthly statement, see one big deduction, and move on. That deduction is actually several charges stacked on top of each other.

### The base commission

This usually runs 15% to 30%, depending on the service tier you signed up for. What most operators never notice is what it gets calculated on: the gross order total. That can include sales tax, and if your setup isn't right, sometimes the driver's tip. You end up paying commission on money that was never yours to keep.

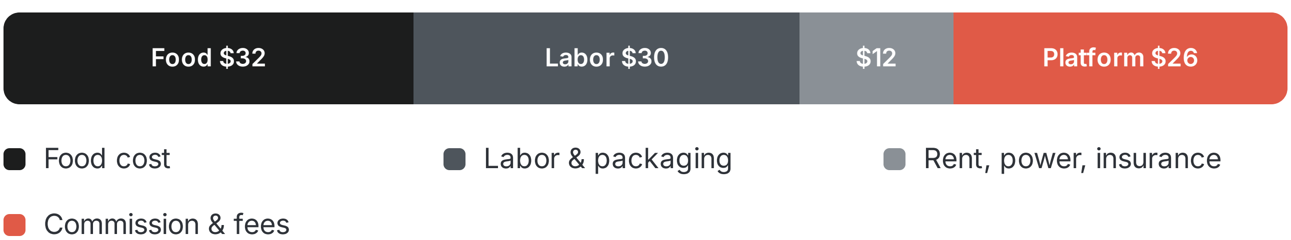
### Errors, cancellations, and refunds

A driver drops a bag. A customer says an item was missing. The platform refunds them on the spot — with your money — and almost never checks the claim for you. Without a system to catch and dispute these, you lose hundreds or thousands of dollars a month to complaints nobody verified.

### The visibility game

The apps want you buying sponsored listings and premium placement. Skip it, and your restaurant slides down the search results. Now you're spending more of your margin just to hold the order volume you already had.

**Where a $100 delivery order actually goes**




**What's left for the owner: $0. On a busy night, less than that.**

Illustrative example based on common independent-restaurant cost structures. Your own numbers are what matter, and that's exactly what a delivery cost audit puts in front of you.

Add up base commissions, hidden transaction fees, refunds you never recovered, and marketing spend, and your real cost of delivery isn't 15% or 30%. It's closer to 40% or 50% of everything delivery brings in.

**That's the leak. It's why you can have a full dining room, tablets going all night, and still sweat payroll on Friday.**

Chapter two

# The reduction framework

Now that you know where the money is going, here's how to stop it. You don't need your own fleet of drivers. You don't need to shut off the apps. You need these three moves, run in order.

### 1 Price your delivery menu for delivery

The fastest way to offset a high commission is to line up your digital menu with your real margins. Most platforms let you set delivery prices separately from your dine-in prices. Move delivery prices up 15% to 20% and you shift part of the platform's fee onto a customer who has already told you they'll pay for convenience.

Then clean the menu itself. Pull the low-margin, high-food-cost items that don't travel well anyway. Keep the dishes that hold up in a bag and hold up on your P&L.

### 2 Renegotiate the commission

The apps would love you to believe those rates are carved in stone. They aren't. If you have steady volume, a real local following, or more than one location, you have something they want — and they are genuinely afraid of losing good merchants to the app across the street.

Bring your historical volume numbers to the conversation and ask the right way, and lower tiers, fee caps, and marketing credits are all on the table.

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### Chase down every refund and chargeback

Every week, platforms hand out refunds for "missing items" and "cold food" without checking a thing. The fix is a daily audit habit: document how your kitchen packs an order, then dispute the false claims through the merchant portal, one at a time.

Restaurants that work this properly recover as much as 80% of what they were losing on disputed orders. This step alone can put thousands back on your bottom line.

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Chapter three

# Owning the customer relationship

Optimizing the platforms matters. But the real prize is ownership. When someone orders through a delivery app, they aren't your customer. They're the app's customer. The app owns the data, the email address, and the relationship.

To get out of the high-commission trap for good, you build a bridge that walks people from the apps over to your own ordering channel.

Here's how you do that without giving up volume.

## Put direct ordering on your own site

Your own channel carries no commission at all — just standard card processing, usually 2% to 3%. That's the whole gap, right there.

## Let the bag do the selling

Every order that leaves your kitchen with a third-party driver is a delivery truck for your own offer. Drop in a printed card: 15% off the next order when they come to you directly, or an invitation into your loyalty program.

### Make direct the better deal

Keep your best pricing, your family bundles, and your rewards on your own site only. Once people notice they get a better price, fresher food, and a human being to call when something's wrong, the switch is easy.

> **Move just 20% of your app volume to your own channel, and the increase in monthly profit compounds from that day forward.**

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**The bigger picture**

## What this is really costing you

Most owners treat delivery fees as a short-term cost. "I paid $2,000 in fees this month. That's the price of the sales." What that misses is what those losses do when you stack them up over a year.

Say your restaurant does $20,000 a month in delivery sales. At a 30% commission, that's $6,000 a month going straight to the platform. Over one year, $72,000 gone.

Now cut that by 30% to 50%. You've just put $21,600 to $36,000 of pure profit back in your account, every year, without selling a single extra plate.

That's money for better staff. New equipment. A second location. Or a week off with your family for the first time in three years.

Cutting delivery costs isn't about saving a few dollars an order. It's about getting your independence back — and making sure the risk you take every single day actually pays you what it should.

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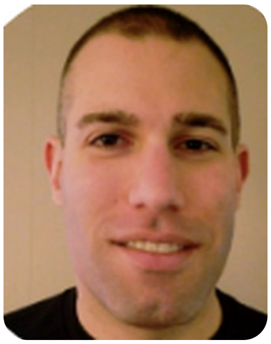
A note from our founder

# Why we built Calta Delivery



**Chris Caltabiano**

Founder, Calta Delivery

Hey — I'm Chris. I know how hard you work to keep your tables full and your kitchen moving. I've watched good operators do everything right and still hand half their delivery money to an app that has never met their customers.

That's why we built Calta Delivery: to hand some of that power back to local restaurants. We do the audits, the negotiations, the menu work, and the refund disputes, so you can get back to running your restaurant.

If you'd rather skip the reading and just see the number for your own restaurant, let's talk. Ten minutes is usually all it takes.

— Chris

# Questions owners ask us

### How do you actually save us 30% to 50%?

We work your delivery logistics and route orders through lower-cost fulfillment instead of paying full marketplace commission on everything. Then we go after the pieces most owners never touch: your rate tier, your delivery menu pricing, and the refunds being taken out of your account without review.

### Do we have to stop using Uber Eats?

No. Stay on the major apps for discovery — that's what they're good at. We route your high-volume orders through the low-cost system so you keep the reach without paying full price for every order.

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### Is there a setup fee or a long-term contract?

We'd rather earn it. Our arrangements are flexible and transparent, and they're built to show a return quickly, not lock you in.

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### How long before we see a difference?

Menu pricing and refund recovery usually show up inside the first 30 days. Rate renegotiation depends on the platform and your volume, so that can take a little longer.

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### What happens on the free audit call?

We look at your recent delivery statements together, show you exactly where the money is going, and give you the numbers for your restaurant. You keep the findings either way — there's nothing to sign to get them.

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# See your numbers before you change anything

We'll go through your delivery statements, show you where the margin is leaking, and lay out what it would take to fix it. It takes about ten minutes and it costs nothing.

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| Call | **516-476-7442** |
| Email | **support@caltadelivery.com** |
| Book online | **caltadelivery.com/audit** |

**About us**

## Calta Delivery

We started with one goal: level the playing field for independent restaurants. Restaurants are the heartbeat of a neighborhood, and they shouldn't have to hand their profit to a tech platform just to survive online.

Our team comes from restaurants, finance, and negotiation. We treat your margins the way we'd treat our own, and we work the numbers until they move.

Calta Delivery

# Ready to see your numbers?


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The figures in this guide are examples used to illustrate how delivery costs work. They are not a promise of results. Savings depend on your rates, volume, menu, and market.