Yes Chef: A social media aided dining experience for a home cooked meal.

Executive summary

Food is an integral piece of culture. It's a way of sharing traditions and values. It's a new language for the palate to learn.

Sadly, American fast food culture has veered in the opposite direction of these truths, giving consumers the quick, easy, so-called "tasty" option without providing any real nutrition or meaning in the making of the food.

However, fast food is often most convenient and for time and cash-strapped individuals, especially those college aged through mid-thirties, studying and working to make ends meet while getting whatever sustenance is readily available that won't break the bank.

This fast consumer culture has also left people a little devoid of a genuine human connection and a sense of community. Too often we hear people complain about not having that many friends or struggling to find a community that fits them.

Is there a way to combine "fast" food with real food that not only tastes good but provides an experience to go with it? An experience that connects you with others in the community?

Industry-wide problem

While there are plenty of food apps out there for pick-up or delivery, few provide an in-home, authentic food experience where you not only enjoy a home cooked meal but also enjoy it in the company of the cook themselves.

Fairbanks has a decent number of ethnic food options to choose from for a mid-size town, but it's often hard to decipher meals have been "Americanized" to fit our tastes and which are more closely aligned to their origins. Eating out is expensive and it's important to get more out of the experience than simply the calories to hold you over until the next meal.

Additionally, Fairbanks like many towns, lack restaurants which provide “specialty” meals such as comfort food or experimental cuisine. There are no options available at all for those who wish to request a meal to be made. Yes Chef seeks to fill these market gaps.
Existing solutions and drawbacks

A service offering an in-home food experience is not new. Though there are many food apps that already exist to cater to this market, they do not solve the fundamental concern that Yes Chef wants to tackle: how to foster a stronger local community through sharing food and experiences. We also are keen on being efficient and cutting down cost.

VizEat and its American counterpart EatWith, are both apps social eating platforms that gives the opportunity for users to dine-in with other users. These apps are directed more to tourists who want a more authentic trip with local experiences and food. Yes Chef aims to create a local community by connecting users with other users within their area, there’s no travel hassles or advanced planning involved! The goal of Yes Chef is more than just know the community, but to connect with the local community.

VizEat and EatWith also lacks the efficiency and flexibility that Yes Chef provides. Both apps require you to reserve an appointment days or even months, in advance. On top of that, these apps only offer a select few places to dine-in. This leaves guests with limited availabilities and schedules to get their service. Yes Chef makes ordering and dining-in easier by removing the reservation option completely, giving their chefs the ability to choose what times they can host meals, and having more options to choose from since users can also sign-up and become chefs themselves. This creates flexible schedules that works for both chefs and guests, regardless of time or location.

Yes Chef also provides a delivery and pick-up options for those who still would like an affordable home-cooked meal, but don’t have the time to dine-in.

New, improved solution

Yes Chef isn’t meant to be fancy instead seeking high quality. Millenials are always up for a quick, cheap meal but also want to enjoy the food experience just as much as a seasoned traveler. We provide options for fast meal options but if you have a bit more time, the app is flexible enough to allow the chef to plan the meal however they see fit. By allowing a food culture to form organically and by allowing the chef and patrons room to try new things and adapt we hope to foster dining experiences which are unique, authentic, and affordable.
Case study

Initial market research shows promising results. Both chefs and patrons in various locations were asked to use Yes Chef and record their thoughts, feelings, and their usage statistics were recorded. The results had variations due to population size, cultural backgrounds, and income, however, the general trend of the data seems to have strong positive correlations.

In house research on the effectiveness of Yes Chef has found that since using the app:

- 75% of users felt like they made a new long term friend.
- 90% of users got engaged in a meaningful and successful conversation with their chef.
- 85% of users became regular customers.
- 80% of users reported that they cut down on buying fast food.

Conclusions

Yes Chef brings an enriching cultural element to our community, providing a way for people to meet and interact over a delicious meal. In places with limited food options, it opens up new possibilities. Possibilities not only with flavors and cuisines that can be shared but with friendships and experiences that would otherwise be missed. From traditional cuisine, to culinary fusion, or comforting soul food, good food and good company has a way of bringing people together and at Yes Chef, that is the goal.

In the future as Yes Chef continues to grow opportunities to partner with existing brands such as Uber Eats or Airbnb remain open. Yes Chef is a unique idea which has the flexibility to be implemented in a variety of different occasions, purposes, and price ranges. Whether it be fully integrated or a business symbiosis the future is bright.

About the company

Yes Chef is a startup company located in Fairbanks Alaska. Our team was formed as part of the CS371 class group activity and thus our group had a diverse set of ideas. After struggling to find common ground we realized that food and adventure were common interests, even if the food and adventure are very different. It is our hope that Yes Chef is an app that will bring people together and expand communities wherever it is launched!
References
