

# Outer Aisle's New App Is as Much of a Testing Tool for New Products as It Is an Engagement Channel

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**L**aunching a new app can be challenging for many brands. Getting consumers to download and use it regularly can be just as tough.

We recently spoke with Vasa Martinez, CMO of Outer Aisle—known for its bread made of cauliflower—about the brand's recent mobile app launch, why it'll be essential to future products, and how the company plans to engage users on an ongoing basis.

**Tell me about Outer Aisle.**

Outer Aisle originally started around 2013 in the home kitchen of founder Jeanne David. She created delicious, versatile and convenient cauliflower-based bread alternatives. Back then, cauliflower wasn't that popular. But fast forward two years, the product launched regionally in select Whole Foods stores.

**The company recently launched a mobile app. What's the strategy behind it?**

We started working on the app several months ago because we wanted to create a destination for our community. There are quizzes, recipes

and exclusive offers. There will also be more product launches very soon.

The app is not necessarily an acquisition method as much as it is a community channel. Some of our most bottom-funnel, loyal users will be those who joined at the start—though we do have some ways to capture top-funnel users who come in.

One of the most exciting parts of the app is going to be using it as a focus group for new products. As you might imagine, there's going to be some new product innovation, for which we will have sourced feedback from our most loyal community members. There may be some limited-edition product drops exclusively through the app. The fun part is we can engage with the users directly through push notifications.

### **Many consumers will download an app to use it only a few times before it just sits on their home screen. What will you be doing to continue that engagement?**

We plan to add more features, like different variations of quizzes and games. I think it'll keep people very entertained, but also informed about the products and different sectors of our community.

Eventually, the quizzes will be hosted by influencers. We want to work with influencers who have a point of view and are considered thought leaders in certain verticals. Take a keto diet for example: The topic will have its own quiz that will likely be conjoined with a blog post where users can then access valuable content through the app. And with the use of push notifications, those who have already downloaded the app will be the first to know. For those who have not downloaded, they can be made aware of content via email or social.

### **How are you getting the word out to drive downloads for the app?**

Initially, we've leveraged email and social. Our email strategy has shifted such that we segment in a different way. There are folks who just don't want to download an app to have a certain offering, and messaging for those folks will say, "Hey, if you want to order on the

website, you can get 15% off, but if you download the app, that's 20% off."

As far as the social strategy goes, every post that pertains to exclusive content on the app has a call to action to click the link in our bio. When you follow the link, it still takes you to our homepage. But on the homepage, our super header has a call to action to download the app. For first-time visitors, there's a pop-up at the bottom that has reviews of the app, along with a call to action to download at the App Store or Google Play.

**Outer Aisle was working on this app pre-pandemic. What challenges did you encounter along the way, especially as the company started working remotely?**

We started working on the app in late December, and as things started unfolding, a lot of our branding and awareness campaigns have had to pivot. For instance, we had a campaign that was called "Bring Your Own Bread (B.Y.O.B.)," which called for our community members to go to their favorite restaurant or Whole Foods for a meal and swap out deli breads for Outer Aisle products.

We have plenty of posts and Stories, which we just can't share right now, of folks who have gone to That Burger Spot, In-N-Out or Shake Shack and swapped out their bread with our products. One of the key performance indicators there was how many requests we received to be carried by food-service companies. We then were being carried at places that we never expected, like The Cheesecake Factory.

So, we quickly pivoted that campaign to be more about how we can get our products delivered directly to consumers. We essentially turned out that campaign before it even started. We then began messaging via email and social about different ways in which our product can be delivered by our retail partners straight to customers' doors.