

Rappi delivery strategy: the traditional method against the *Masterrestaurant* method

By  **Diego F. Parra** · Updated 2026-09-09 · Dark Kitchens & Foodtech

MASTERRESTAURANT®

White Paper

Estrategia de domicilios en Rappi: el método tradicional contra el método Masterrestaurant

Método probado en +8.400 restaurantes · 43 países

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QUICK VERDICT

Verdict: a Rappi delivery strategy only holds up when the operator costs the channel as a **SEPARATE** business unit, with its own contribution margin, its own menu engineering and its own break-even. The traditional method —upload the dining room menu to the aggregator and wait for volume— destroys margin quietly: the total effective cost of third-party delivery reaches 30% to 40% per order according to ActiveMenus, while the operator keeps costing with dining room logic. The Masterrestaurant method separates the channel P&L, adjusts the delivery list price to absorb commission without breaking the target food cost (32% per dish maximum), and decides with data whether channel growth comes from the existing kitchen, a ghost kitchen or a virtual brand. For multilateral banks the point runs deeper: a mis-costed channel turns nominal growth into business mortality and formal employment destruction, precisely what SDG 8 measures.

Delivery stopped being an accessory channel five years ago and now works as consumption infrastructure. Grand View Research reported that Asia-Pacific holds over 41.0% of the global online food delivery market (2024), and in Latin America concentration runs even sharper: Statista documented that iFood captures 87% of e-food bookings in Brazil (2024). Rappi plays regionally the role DoorDash plays in the United States, where Earnest Analytics measured a 60.7% market share at the close of 2024. When a channel concentrates like that, the operator loses bargaining power and commission stops being negotiable: it turns into a private tax on revenue.

Here is the trap I keep seeing across the region. The owner looks at the aggregator dashboard, sees GMV climbing month over month —DoorDash grew +20% year over year in its Marketplace during 2024 according to its full-year financial results— and concludes the business is healthy. Yet aggregator GMV is not restaurant margin. ActiveMenus calculated that the total effective cost of third-party delivery sits between 30% and 40% per order once you add commission, packaging, transport shrink, co-funded promotions and the incremental labor cost of a kitchen running two simultaneous flows. With labor cost that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics places between 25% and 35% of sector revenue, the arithmetic closes itself: no margin left.

For SATE Institute this is not a private management issue but a development policy question. A gastronomic MSME that grows 40% in orders while losing EBITDA is a case of growth without productivity, exactly the pattern CEPAL and CAF flag in their MSME agenda when they discuss the regional productivity gap. The formal employment that restaurant sustains —SDG 8— depends on the digital channel being profitable, not merely voluminous. And the digital infrastructure enabling it —SDG 9— only produces development when the operator holds the analytical capacity to use it. That is why Masterrestaurant S.A.S., technology ally of the model, built the instrumentation that translates the aggregator dashboard into verifiable unit economics.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

Side-by-side comparison

	TRADITIONAL METHOD	MASTERRESTAURANT METHOD
Channel costing	✗ Single P&L; commission deducted at the end and never assigned per dish	✓ Separate P&L per channel; the 30-40% commission (ActiveMenus) enters costing before pricing
App list price	✗ Same price as the dining room across 100% of dishes	✓ Price adjusted by elasticity; target food cost held at 32% of the dish maximum
Published menu	✗ Full dining room menu, 60-90 SKUs, many of which do not travel	✓ Menu filtered by logistics viability; 18-30 SKUs with measured contribution margin
Food cost measurement	✗ Annual theoretical food cost, no variance; leakage surfaces in the December inventory	✓ Weekly food cost variance per channel: $(\text{Actual Cost} - \text{Theoretical Cost}) \div \text{Channel Sales}$

	TRADITIONAL METHOD	MASTERRESTAURANT METHOD
Expansion decision	✗ Ghost kitchen opened on intuition or aggregator pressure	✓ Opened only once the channel covers its own break-even and territory passes the density test
Aggregator dependence	✗ 95-100% of delivery through a single app; zero owned channel	✓ Dependence ceiling set at 65-70%; the rest migrates to direct channel with customer data
Brand on the app	✗ One brand competing against thousands of equivalent listings	✓ Virtual brand segmented by consumption occasion, with its own unit economics
Physical menu in the dining room	✗ Removed and replaced by QR to 'save on printing'	✓ Physical menu ALWAYS kept; QR is a complement for delivery and price updates

Chapter 1 — The delivery channel is not an extension of the dining room: it is another business unit

Cost Rappi as a separate business unit, with its own contribution margin and its own break-even point, or the channel will eat the dining room's profit without ever showing up in your monthly books. ActiveMenus puts the total effective cost of third-party delivery between 30% and 40% per order once you add commission, packaging, transport waste, co-funded promotions and the extra work of a kitchen dispatching two flows at once. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics places sector labor cost between 25% and 35% of revenue, and that percentage does not fall because the order arrived through an app. Add both bands and you will see that a dish sold at the same menu price on the platform can leave the kitchen with no margin at all. The accounting error always comes before the pricing error. Because market concentration turned the commission into a private tax on sales, and a tax is not negotiated: it is costed.

Chapter 2 — Why did a dominant aggregator's commission stop being negotiable?

Grand View Research reported that Asia-Pacific holds more than 41.0% of the global online food delivery market (2024), and Statista documented iFood capturing 87% of e-food bookings in Brazil (2024).

In the United States the pattern repeats sharply: Earnest Analytics measured a 60.7% share for DoorDash at the close of 2024, against 26.1% for Uber Eats and barely 6.3% for Grubhub. When three platforms split a market that way, the individual restaurant loses every lever at the negotiating table. The practical consequence is uncomfortable but clear: stop fighting for the commission point and fight for the food cost point, the packaging and the assortment, which do depend on you. Growing in orders while losing profit is a perfectly possible outcome, and today it is the most common ending for a badly costed digital channel. DoorDash grew 20% year over year in Marketplace GMV during 2024, according to its full-year financial results, and that figure runs in the press as proof that delivery is doing well.

Chapter 3 — The aggregator's GMV climbs while the restaurant's EBITDA falls

It is doing well for the platform. For the operator, with an effective cost of 30% to 40% per order documented by ActiveMenus, every additional sales point moved onto the app subtracts contribution margin while adding kitchen load. A restaurant routing 25% of its revenue through an aggregator without repricing is financing a third party's growth with its own working capital. And the app dashboard will never show you that subtraction, because it does not calculate it. The same commission produces four different effects depending on the size of the business, and that is precisely why a single recipe fails. Below 500 thousand dollars a year, with labor cost at the ceiling of the 25% to 35% band reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the channel only survives with a reduced menu and a differentiated app price. Between 500 thousand and 1 million, routing 25% of sales through an aggregator at the 30% to 40% effective cost measured by ActiveMenus means giving up 30 to 40 thousand dollars of margin a year if you do not reprice.

Chapter 4 — How the arithmetic changes by annual revenue band

Above 1 million, dedicating a production line to the channel becomes genuinely feasible. Over 5 million, the operator negotiates packaging and promotional co-funding with volume. And above 10 million, the decision is no longer price but a proprietary virtual brand. A celebrity restaurant or a large-format themed venue above 5 million dollars a year faces a problem the small operator does not have: its product does not travel, but its brand does. The signature dish that justifies a high ticket in the dining room arrives cold, badly plated and stripped of ritual, and the guest blames the brand, not the courier. With the 30% to 40% effective cost per order calculated by ActiveMenus applied to a high ticket, the absolute value surrendered per transaction is enormous. These formats must build a deliberately different parallel menu, with product engineered to survive thirty minutes in transport, and use the channel as customer acquisition toward the dining room.

Chapter 5 — The high end loses too: the celebrity-chef restaurant and its own costs

Charging for delivery of a dish that degrades is the most expensive way to destroy a positioning that took years to earn. The app assortment must be designed from scratch around transport and margin criteria, because copying the full menu is the costliest mistake in the entire digital operation. Select the dishes that survive the trip and still leave contribution margin after the 30% to 40% effective cost per order that ActiveMenus documents, and pull the rest without sentimentality. The logic of scale is proven in other markets: Momentum Works measured Grab holding 53.9% of Southeast Asian food delivery (2024) and Foodpanda contributing 15.8% of regional GMV, worth 2.7 billion dollars; in both cases the profitable operators run short menus. First decide what you will NOT sell through the app. Then set the price. Doing it the other way around is what produces eighty-item menus that dispatch badly and earn worse.

Chapter 6 — The channel's break-even and the instruments that measure it

Calculate how many daily orders the channel needs to cover its incremental cost before you accept a single co-funded promotion, because without that figure every discount decision is a blind leap. Diego F. Parra insists on one point that organizes the whole Masterrestaurant framework: the commission enters the plate costing BEFORE the list price is set, never afterward as an administrative expense on the biweekly settlement. With labor cost at 25% to 35% of revenue per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and delivery effective cost at 30% to 40% per order per ActiveMenus, channel break-even demands volume and assortment discipline at the same time. Masterrestaurant S.A.S. built the instruments that translate the aggregator dashboard into verifiable unit

economics. Start this week: split Rappi revenue out in your P&L and calculate contribution margin per app dish. A food-service SME growing 40% in orders while losing EBITDA does not have a private management problem: it has the exact symptom of the productivity gap that ECLAC and CAF flag in their regional agenda.

Chapter 7 — Growth without productivity: why this is a development policy matter

The formal employment that restaurant sustains, the subject of SDG 8, depends on the digital channel being profitable rather than merely voluminous, and the digital infrastructure enabling it, the subject of SDG 9, only produces development when the operator has the analytical capacity to read it. The concentration data makes it worse: with iFood at 87% of e-food bookings in Brazil per Statista (2024) and Asia-Pacific above 41.0% of the global market per Grand View Research, the information asymmetry between platform and restaurant is structural. For SATE Institute, closing that asymmetry through unit economics training is a development intervention, not luxury consulting. The first difference is accounting, and it moves the most money. The traditional method treats Rappi commission as an administrative expense showing up in the biweekly settlement; the Masterrestaurant framework treats it as direct variable channel cost entering dish costing BEFORE the list price is set.

Chapter 8 — The four differences that move margin

With total effective third-party delivery cost between 30% and 40% per order according to ActiveMenus, a dish selling at 10 dollars in the dining room with 30% food cost leaves 7 dollars of gross margin; that same dish at that same price on the app leaves between 3 and 4. A restaurant in the 500 thousand to 1 million USD annual band moving 25% of revenue through the aggregator gives away 30 to 40 thousand dollars a year simply by not repricing. The second is assortment. Nobody has shown that an 80-SKU menu outsells a 24-SKU menu on an app, and platform shortlist behavior points the other way: the user decides within the first six to eight visible items. Menu engineering applied to the digital channel is not the same discipline as the dining room, because the dominant variable shifts from table turnover to product integrity in transit.

Chapter 9 — The four differences that move margin — in practice

A risotto that stars on your table service may be your worst decision on Rappi. Filtering the menu by logistics viability lifts average ticket and lowers complaint rate, and both land in next month's margin. Third comes architecture. Once the digital channel covers its own break-even and demand clusters in polygons where delivery time punishes conversion, the right answer may be a ghost kitchen or a virtual brand rather than a full second location. Grand View Research estimated Asia-Pacific at 48.0% of cloud kitchen market revenue (2025), and Global Growth Insights measured Europe contributing 18.79% of the global dark kitchen market (2024): the format is mature across two continents, with CapEx between a fifth and a third of a full-service site. But opening a dark kitchen from scratch to escape a money-losing channel only multiplies the loss. The fourth difference is customer ownership, and it decides your company's value five years out.

Chapter 10 — The four differences that move margin — key points

With Zomato and Swiggy together above 95% of India's online delivery according to Business of Apps (2025), and Meituan plus Ele.me beyond 90% of orders in China according to Mordor Intelligence (2025), the regional lesson reads clearly: where the aggregator concentrates, the restaurant that never built an owned base ends up

without bargaining power. I got this wrong for years, recommending volume maximization on the app before building the direct channel; the correct order runs the other way. First you set a dependence ceiling, then you grow volume.

POINT BY POINT

Comparative analysis by decision criterion

CHANNEL UNIT ECONOMICS

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD Channel

margin unknown; commission visible only in the settlement

B · MASTERRESTAURANT Contribution

margin per SKU and per channel, computed before publishing the menu

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins: without a separate P&L, a channel representing 25-31% of revenue can destroy EBITDA unnoticed until year-end close.

PRICING POLICY

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD Full parity with

the dining room, out of fear of losing orders

B · MASTERRESTAURANT A 12-18%

differential calibrated against the 30-40% effective cost (ActiveMenus)

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins, with one condition: the differential gets measured per SKU across three weeks, because the elasticity of a main course and that of a beverage look nothing alike.

DIGITAL MENU SIZE

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD 60-90 SKUs, a replica of the dining room menu

B · MASTERRESTAURANT 18-30 SKUs filtered by product integrity in transit

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins: the aggregator shortlist displays six to eight items before the first scroll, and each extra SKU adds kitchen complexity without adding revenue.

MEASUREMENT FREQUENCY

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD Theoretical food cost reviewed at the annual inventory

B · MASTERRESTAURANT Weekly food cost variance per channel, alert threshold at 2.5 points

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins outright: a leak caught in week 2 costs a hundredth of that same leak caught in December.

PLATFORM DEPENDENCE

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD 95-100% of delivery on a single app, no owned customer base

B · MASTERRESTAURANT Explicit 50-70% ceiling by revenue band, with migration to direct channel

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins. With iFood at 87% in Brazil (Statista, 2024) and DoorDash at 60.7% in the U.S. (Earnest Analytics, 2024), concentration does not reverse and bargaining power is lost permanently.

EXPANSION DECISION

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD Ghost kitchen

opened under aggregator pressure or territory hunch

B · MASTERESTAURANT Ghost kitchen or

virtual brand approved only on order density measured by polygon

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins, though the traditional one sometimes gets lucky: the issue is not that it always errs, it is that dark kitchen CapEx tolerates no trial and error.

PHYSICAL MENU VERSUS QR

A · TRADITIONAL METHOD QR only,

physical menu scrapped to save printing costs

B · MASTERESTAURANT Physical menu

kept in the dining room; QR as a complementary delivery and pricing layer

Verdict: The Masterrestaurant method wins. Printing savings run to three figures a year; lost suggestive selling and service pace control run to four or five. Both formats, each with its role.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

What the traditional operator does on Rappi STRUCTURAL RISK

- ✗ Uploads the entire dining room menu, including dishes that degrade within 20 minutes of transport.
- ✗ Sets the same table price, absorbing commission against its own contribution margin.
- ✗ Accepts every co-funded promotion the aggregator proposes without measuring incremental cost per order.
- ✗ Measures success by order count and star rating, never by channel EBITDA.
- ✗ Lets 100% of delivery depend on a single platform, with no owned customer database.
- ✗ Discovers the food cost leak in the year-end inventory, when nothing can be corrected anymore.

What the Masterrestaurant framework requires MASTERRESTAURANT

- ✓ A P&L per channel, with commission, packaging and transport shrink loaded before setting list price.
- ✓ Menu filtered by logistics viability: only dishes arriving intact at 25 minutes make the cut.
- ✓ Weekly food cost variance per channel, not annual, with an alert threshold and a named owner.
- ✓ An explicit aggregator dependence ceiling and a plan to migrate the base to direct channel.
- ✓ Ghost kitchen decisions tied to demand density measured by polygon, never to intuition.
- ✓ Physical menu preserved in the dining room as experience control; QR added as a complementary layer.

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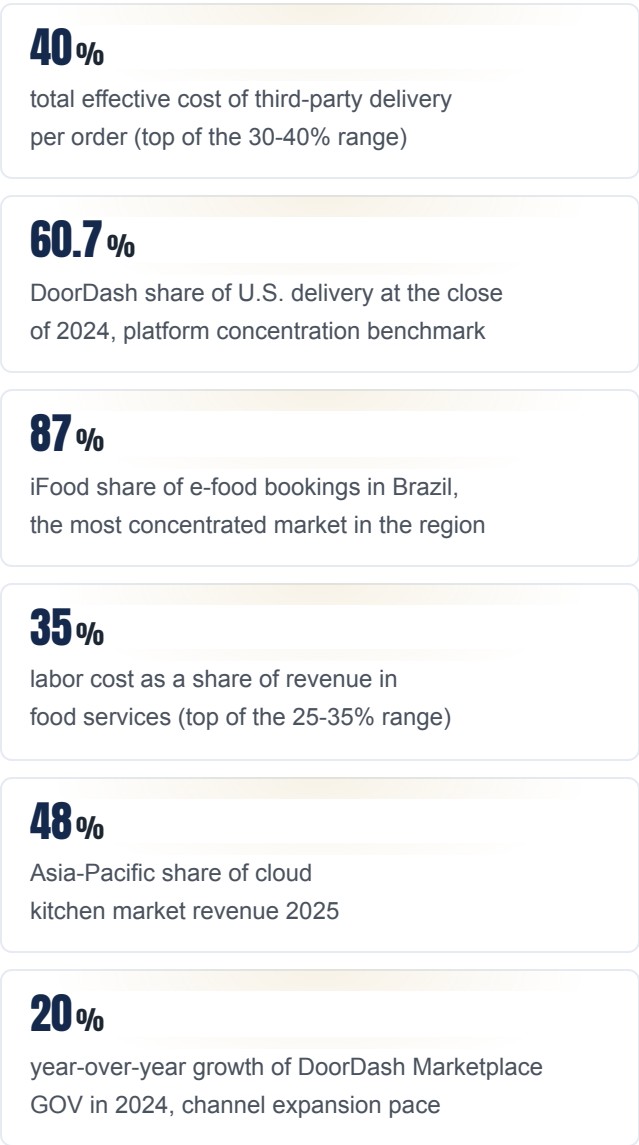
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THE NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Indicators supporting the analysis



VISUALIZATION

The numbers, visualized

total effective cost of third-party delivery per order (top of the 30-40% range)



DoorDash share of U.S. delivery at the close of 2024, platform concentration benchmark



iFood share of e-food bookings in Brazil, the most concentrated market in the region



labor cost as a share of revenue in food services (top of the 25-35% range)



Asia-Pacific share of cloud kitchen market revenue 2025



year-over-year growth of DoorDash Marketplace GOV in 2024, channel expansion pace



Sources: [ActiveMenus](#) — Hidden costs of third-party delivery · [Earnest Analytics 2024](#) · [Statista 2024](#) · [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) · [Grand View Research](#) — Cloud Kitchen Market 2025

Chart by [masterrestaurant.com](#)

REAL CASE

“We ran a 120-seat full service in the 500 thousand to 1 million USD annual band, with 31% of revenue coming through the aggregator and a consolidated food cost of 34%. Once we split the channel P&L we found delivery carrying an effective cost near 38% per order, consistent with the 30% to 40% range ActiveMenus documents, and twelve menu SKUs delivering negative contribution margin on the app. We pulled those twelve, repriced fourteen with a 14% differential against the dining room and closed the digital operation at 26 SKUs. Within four months channel food cost fell from 34% to 29.6%, delivery average ticket rose from 21 to 26 dollars and monthly EBITDA moved from 4,100 to 11,300 dollars with no additional investment.”

— Operations director of a 120-seat full service, 500 thousand to 1 million USD annual band, Bogotá — case documented within Diego F. Parra's working framework

HOW TO APPLY IT IN YOUR RESTAURANT

A 90-day roadmap to rebuild the channel

1

Days 1-20 · Split the channel P&L and measure real variance

Before touching a single price, isolate the channel. Pull gross revenue, effective commission, co-funded promotions and packaging for the last six months from your POS and the Rappi portal, then compute channel food cost variance with the formula $\text{Variance} = (\text{Actual Cost} - \text{Theoretical Cost}) \div \text{Channel Sales}$. Anything above 2.5 percentage points means you have a structural leak rather than a pricing problem. Load incremental labor cost using the 25% to 35% of revenue range published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as a contrast benchmark, never as a substitute for your own payroll. By the end of this phase you must answer one question with a number: how much EBITDA does every hundred dollars sold on the app generate or destroy.

2

Days 21-45 · Filter the menu by logistics viability and reprice

Sort every SKU into four quadrants, crossing channel contribution margin against product integrity at 25 minutes. Whatever lands in the low-low quadrant leaves the app without debate, even if it sells well at the table. On what remains, apply a price differential calculated to return dish food cost to target, capped at the 32% the Masterrestaurant framework sets. Typical differentials land between 12% and 18%, consistent with the 30% to 40% total effective cost per order ActiveMenus reports. Measure elasticity for three weeks per SKU, not per category. And keep the physical menu in the dining room: it controls menu narrative and suggestive selling, while the QR enters as a delivery and price-update layer, never as a replacement.

3

Days 46-70 · Set the dependence ceiling and open direct channel

Put in writing what percentage of digital revenue you accept flowing through the aggregator. With DoorDash at 60.7% of the U.S. market according to Earnest Analytics (2024) and iFood at 87% of Brazilian bookings according to Statista (2024), regional evidence says concentration does not reverse on its own. A 65% to 70% ceiling is defensible for an operation under 500 thousand USD annually; above 5 million, the ceiling drops to 50% because volume already justifies an owned or hybrid fleet. Build your customer database with the one asset the aggregator cannot take: packaging, the physical insert and the product itself. Every percentage point migrated to direct channel carries three to four times the margin of the same point sold on the app.

4

Days 71-90 · Decide ghost kitchen or virtual brand on territory evidence

Only now, with the channel already profitable, evaluate expansion. Map orders by polygon and hunt for concentration where delivery time punishes conversion. If one polygon holds more than 18% of your orders and sits beyond 25 minutes from your kitchen, you have a ghost kitchen case; if demand spreads out but segments by consumption occasion, the case points to a virtual brand on the same kitchen. Grand View Research measured Asia-Pacific at 48.0% of cloud kitchen market revenue (2025) and Global Growth Insights placed Europe at 18.79% of the global dark kitchen market (2024): the format is proven, the mistake is using it as an escape from a channel that loses money. The ecosystem's Restaurant Model Canvas frames this decision on a single sheet.

FAQ**Frequently asked questions about Rappi delivery strategy****What does selling on Rappi really cost beyond commission?**

The total effective cost of third-party delivery lands between 30% and 40% per order according to ActiveMenus, because commission must be joined by packaging, transport shrink, co-funded promotions and the incremental labor cost of running two simultaneous flows. Costing commission alone understates real impact by ten to fifteen percentage points.

Should I price higher on the app than in the dining room?

Yes, and it is not unfair practice but correct accounting: the channel carries costs the table does not. Typical differentials run from 12% to 18%, calculated to return dish food cost to target with a 32% cap. Communicate the price transparently and measure elasticity per SKU for three weeks before locking it in.

Is it worth opening a ghost kitchen to serve Rappi?

Only once the digital channel covers its own break-even and a polygon holds more than 18% of your orders beyond 25 minutes from your kitchen. The format is mature —Asia-Pacific holds 48.0% of cloud kitchen revenue according to Grand View Research (2025)— yet opening a dark kitchen from scratch to escape a money-losing channel just multiplies the loss.

Can I replace the physical menu with a QR menu if I already run delivery?

No. Masterrestaurant recommends ALWAYS keeping the physical menu in the dining room: it controls service pace, menu narrative and suggestive selling, which is where average ticket gets built. The QR is a complementary layer, useful for delivery, accessibility, price updates and analytics. The right answer is both, each with its role.

DATA & SOURCES

Sector data 2026 (official sources)

Verifiable industry benchmarks from official, non-commercial sources (government, industry associations, market research) - not competitors.

Metric	Benchmark 2026	Source
Penetración segmento meal delivery 2026	29.2% de penetración de usuarios en 2026; 2.6 mil millones de usuarios al 2031	Statista 2026
Mayor mercado de delivery (China) 2026	USD 539.87 mil millones de ingresos en China en 2026	Statista 2026
Delivery en línea América Latina 2027	Segmento meal delivery superará USD 39 mil millones en 2027	Statista 2024
Mercado delivery en línea América Latina 2024	USD 12,917.3 millones en 2024; CAGR 8.6% (2025-2030)	Grand View Research 2025
Modelo plataforma-a-consumidor en LatAm	80.07% de participación de ingresos en 2024	Grand View Research 2025
Usuarios de delivery en línea LatAm 2026	147.0 millones de usuarios en 2026	Statista 2024

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