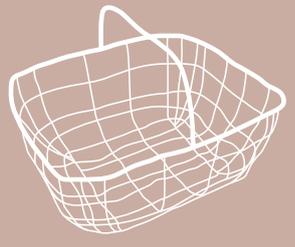


case study

THE HAPPY APPLE ONLINE STORE

myfoodlink
online for food



The Happy Apple

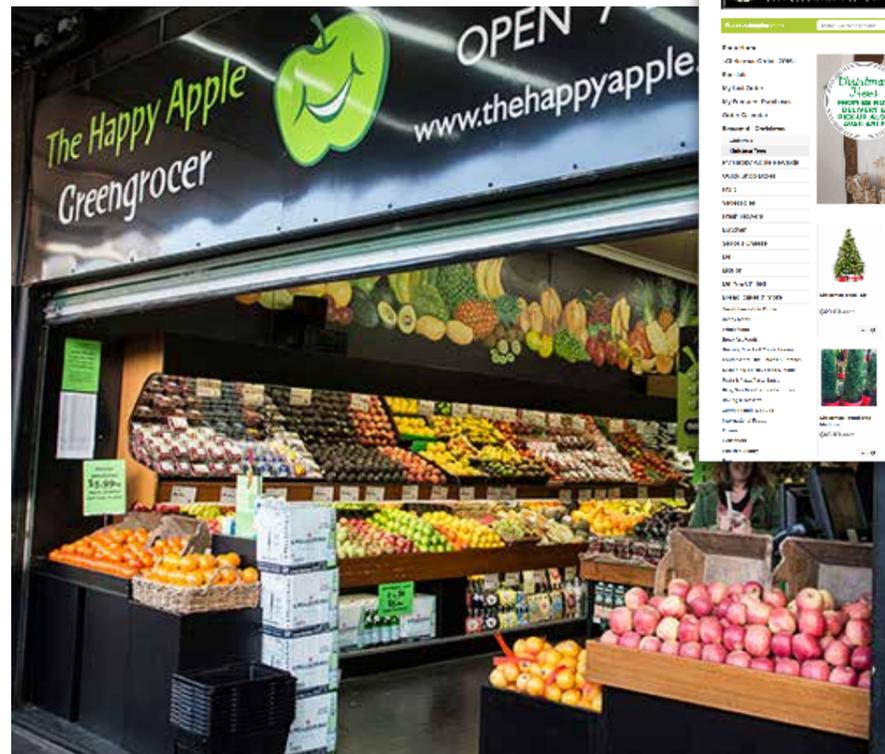
The Happy Apple is a Foodworks store located in Ascot Vale, Victoria. Open since 2007, the store focuses on fresh and seasonal produce and has a reputation as an excellent local greengrocer.

In 2015 the team at The Happy Apple worked with Myfoodlink to migrate from their existing online ordering service to a new integrated platform. The new platform was a success with customers and the team have worked to grow sales since the changeover. This includes developing lasting relationships with online customers and incorporating the online store into the overall business marketing strategy.

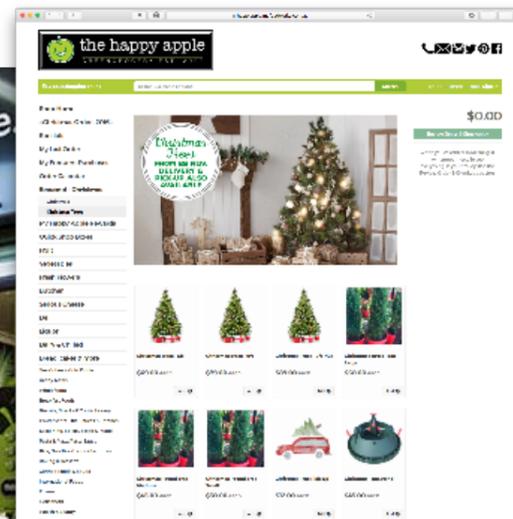
In addition to the online store, Myfoodlink also built a new website and shopping apps for The Happy Apple to ensure customer's digital experience was as seamless as possible.

Today the online store accounts for 9% of overall sales for the business and employs 1 full-time and 2 part-time staff members every day. Now entering their second year online with Myfoodlink, the store has experienced 90–100% year on year growth for the applicable months.

So, how did they do it? In this case study we look at the marketing and sales strategies used by the Happy Apple team to launch and develop their successful online store.



The Happy Apple Ascot Vale store



The Happy Apple online store

Before launching the online store

Whilst the new Happy Apple online store was still being built by Myfoodlink, their in store marketing team began preparing for the crossover and launch of the new platform. Their main aims with the new online store were:

A new rewards program

A new rewards program was launched to coincide with the new online store. A mailout was prepared for customers to advise of the new rewards program and the new online platform, and that the two systems were now integrated - which they previously weren't.

Setting up customer accounts

The team at The Happy Apple created new online accounts for existing customers in the new Myfoodlink system and invited them to the new platform. They also set up customer's repeating orders where possible to make the change as seamless as possible. Over the launch period the team followed up with calls to customers to ensure they were comfortable with the new system.

Email marketing

The Happy Apple has an existing email marketing program and the team utilised this channel to advise customers of the new platform.

Staff education

In the bricks and mortar store staff were given information about the new platform, the changes that were being made (such as the new rewards program) and the transfer of customer's accounts, to ensure they were able to communicate the correct information to customers.

Search Engine Optimisation

As well as the best-practice on-site SEO techniques applied by Myfoodlink in the online store, Happy Apple chose to improve their off-site SEO by engaging with an established SEO company.

To coincide with the launch

Email marketing for the online store

The Happy Apple team previously sent weekly emails to customers, but started an email specific to the online store from the platform launch. This online shopping email includes special offers, discounts for first time shoppers, feedback from other online shoppers and clear links to the online store.

Promotion via social media

The Happy Apple had existing social media presence on Facebook (1,400 'likes') and Instagram (480 followers), and these were utilised in spreading the message of the new online store. These continue to be used to promote both the online shopping platform and special offers for online customers.

In-store posters and postcards

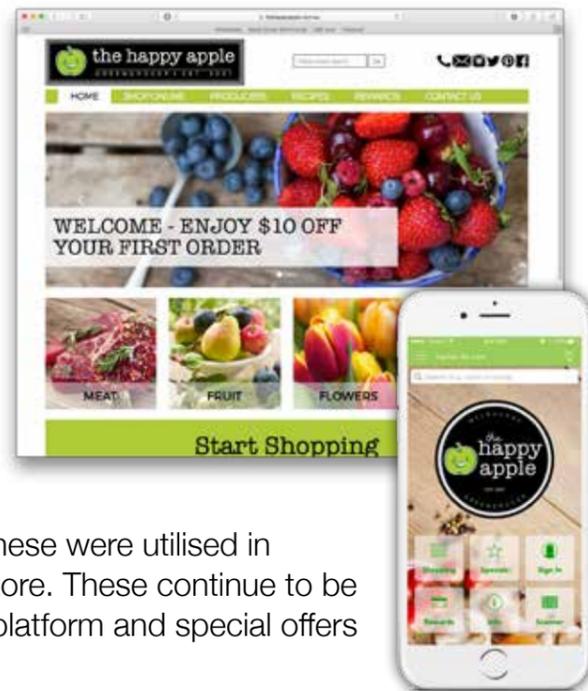
Ahead of the launch of the new platform, posters and postcards were designed and printed and then distributed in store once the new online store launched. Combined with providing staff with information about the new system, this allowed the existing storefront to be a powerful tool in educating customers about online shopping options.

Neighbourhood Flyer

A flyer was developed specifically for use by the Happy Apple Online delivery team. These essentially read 'we've just delivered an online order to your neighbour and here's \$20 off your first order with us' and was intended to be letterboxed to five houses either side of the delivery address by the driver. In some cases these were also left with the customer to distribute to their friends and neighbours.

Discount for first time shoppers

First-time shoppers are always offered \$10 off their first order. This offer is advertised in weekly emails, the Happy Apple website and in the online store.



Post-launch strategies

Branded delivery van

The Happy Apple Online team have two vans out and about delivering orders each day, so they made sure they're clearly branded and eye-catching! Delivery vans are a mobile billboard for your business and are an excellent means of promoting your services in the areas you're delivering to.



Partnering with local schools and community groups

The Happy Apple regularly partners and works with local school and community groups. In these cases printed fliers with the '\$10 off your first order' offer are delivered to increase awareness in the broader community.

Welcome packs for first-time orders

For each new online customer The Happy Apple team includes a 'welcome pack' with their first order. The pack has a welcome letter, contact details for their Online Manager, recipe cards, information about the Rewards Program and a gift of a punnet of strawberries or similar.



Targeting particular departments

Growing sales in specific departments to ensure a clear distribution of spend across the online store is a strategy currently undertaken by the team. Recently the focus was on the meat department with online customers offered 20% off the meat range. This saw an excellent increase in sales to that department, of which about 80% has remained after the close of the promotion.

Free samples of products for online customers

Regular promotions are run in which online customers receive a gift with their order. Past examples have included packs of crumpets, smoothie bombs and fresh juice. This gives the team an opportunity to profile new suppliers and products to online customers and help build sales.

Customer service

And, after all those listed above, the team count their key strategy to be customer service! Ensuring all their customer's questions are answered, their service is top quality, the products they select and pack and follow-up service all combine to make their customers feel like they are being looked after and receiving the best service possible.

Growing sales & keeping customers

The Happy Apple online store enjoyed great success in its first month of operation, but since then the business has continued this trend and consistently grown sales month on month.

A core base of customers has developed with over 50% of orders placed by long term customers, but new customer numbers are consistently high too as new shoppers try the service each month.

New customers

New customers come largely via existing marketing channels or organic online search. The team estimate 50–60% from organic online search, and then 35–40% coming through directly. Of the direct customers the team credit social media advertising and branded delivery vans as their best ‘awareness raising’ tools in the local community.

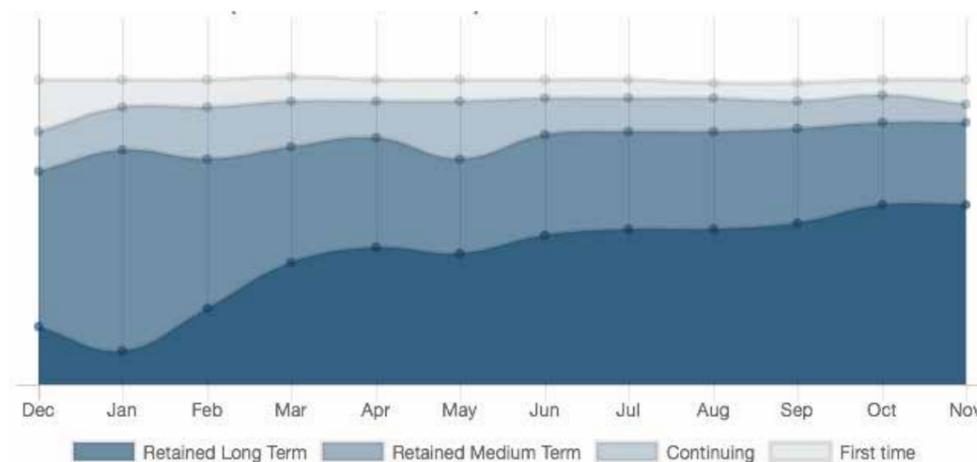
The Happy Apple online store regularly sees anywhere from 30 and 40 new customers try the service per month. These are great figures and show that new people are hearing the message all the time, and taking action as a result.

Return customers

Return customer purchases are helped along by a number of services offered through the online store. In particular the repeating orders feature, fruit & veg box deliveries and deliveries to offices and cafes. In October 2016 the online store had 59% of shoppers retained at a long-term level, and a further 27% in the medium-term. These are excellent figures, and show a high degree of loyalty to the business.

Customer service is key here as it ensures customers remain engaged with the brand and the service. In-store success has come from product range and customer service, so replicating this online is key.

Customer Retention (% of number of orders)



A few bits & bobs to think about

The Happy Apple team credit communicating with customers as being the key to their success; for example following up with customers with an email or phone call to make sure they were comfortable with the change from the old system. Here personal contact is an excellent indicator of customer service, and something very important to the online strategy of The Happy Apple.

By actively marketing the new online store well ahead of launch, The Happy Apple team were able to raise awareness amongst potential online customers. This meant they were connected with existing customers and new customers before the store went live and were able to capitalise on this work when the new online store opened for sales.

The previous online system was separate from the store’s Point of Sale system, meaning the full range of products could not be available. The Myfoodlink platform offers close POS integration, which has resulted in an increase from an average spend of \$70 to \$110. Active management of products to ensure it’s all streamlined and the range of online products is as good as possible, is really important here.

Regular promotion of ‘online only’ options helps to highlight the advantages of online shopping to customers. This includes first-time ordering discounts, a flat delivery rate, regular promotions, online only specials and regular gifts with orders — all of which are an existing element of the online team’s strategy — and help customers feel like they are getting extra value for money.

The Happy Apple also believe that appointing an Online Manager has been a key factor in maintaining high levels of customer service and corresponding repeat sales. Here he oversees the day to day running of the online store, maintains the product catalogue and is the first point of contact for all enquiries for the online store. He ensures that their online store is working to the businesses advantage and that its customers are happy — a great combination!



New customers receive a welcome letter with their first order.

Regular promotions ensure new customers are continually attracted to the online store and existing customers keep coming back

So, what can we take away?

The Happy Apple online store clearly demonstrates that a well executed launch strategy and marketing plan will result in sales and growth. Marketing your online store with, and in addition to, your regular marketing mix is a must.

Online shopping is front and center of marketing communications from The Happy Apple: it's the first thing you see when you log into their website, its at the top of their weekly emails, and is promoted via the business' social media. The marketing communications from the business are clear and consistent, allowing their messages to be clearly heard by their customers.

The Happy Apple have selected key messages to communicate with customers and repeat them. These are: we offer online shopping; \$10 off your first order; and a flat delivery rate. They also use customer feedback in their marketing materials to reinforce that the service is positive.

If your approach to promoting your online store isn't working, try something new; different groups of customers will respond to different types of marketing messages. Find the mix that works for your business, but don't be afraid to change it up.

Set goals for your online store, so you know what you're working towards. When you're starting out these goals should be based on sales, number of new customers and number of return customers.



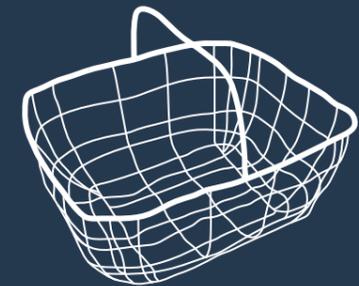
Key messages have been selected and are repeated to increase effectiveness



Welcome Pack note included with gift



myfoodlink
online for food



With thanks to the team at The Happy Apple for their assistance

