



Case study by  
**StudentBeans**



Home Chef is one of America's leading meal kit companies, which last year delivered over 10 million meals and expanded delivery to cover more than 97% of the US population. Back in 2018, the business was turning five years old and was building a growth strategy that would turn Home Chef into a household name. The brand had initially taken off with an older demographic, and the team realized that broadening their audience would be crucial to achieving their ambitious next steps.

## Home Chef realized broadening their audience would be crucial to achieving their ambitious next steps

Home Chef's mission is to encourage more people to get into cooking at home by making it more accessible and affordable. They focus on simplicity, providing the ingredients for meals that are easy to make and appeal to broad tastes, as opposed to the more gourmet alternatives offered by some competitors. This ethos is a perfect fit for the student market, as many students are arriving at college with little experience of cooking. A desire to eat healthily, reduce waste, and save money has created demand among students for what Home Chef can offer.



### Challenge

- Home Chef was already successful with an older demographic.
- They wanted to engage students without sacrificing their existing consumer base.



### Solution

- Using our technology they gave verified students access to an exclusive discount.
- They experimented with a variety of introductory offers to improve conversion rate.
- They targeted new students by participating in our Back to School campaign.



### Result

- The Back to School campaign drove a 65% increase in discount codes generated.
- The business has become the third fastest growing private company in the US.

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Once Home Chef decided that not just young people, but students specifically, would be their next target market, they set about reassessing their marketing plan. Their existing strategy had succeeded with the older generations, but the business wasn't geared towards the younger demographic they now wanted to engage. Therefore, they faced a challenge: How could they attract this new audience without sacrificing the market they'd already captured? How could they convey to students that Home Chef was the solution to their own challenge of eating healthily and affordably? This is where Student Beans stepped in.

## Solution

In February 2018, Home Chef launched its student loyalty program, powered by Student Beans. They integrated our verification technology into their website, enabling customers to confirm their student status and collect a unique discount code to be applied at checkout. This protects the security of the student program, as it ensures that only verified students can access the discount and prevents code leakage.

Home Chef's discount is promoted in the footer of every page of their website, which serves to raise awareness and improve conversion rate among students, whether they are simply browsing the site or specifically searching for Home Chef deals. The discount is also featured on our Student Beans site, creating opportunities for new customers to discover the brand, and for those already aware of Home Chef to hear about the student program.



Raise  
awareness



Improve  
conversion rate  
among students

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Home Chef launched with an initial offer of 20% off the customer's first meal kit order, and later increased this to 50% as a strategy to incentivize students to give the service a try. They also experimented with a boost to 55% off in February 2019, which drove a 27% increase in sales for that period. This approach is ideal for a brand that offers a relatively new concept and aims to create new behaviors among its target audience, as a higher introductory price point could be considered too risky for cautious young consumers. If the customer has a positive experience with their first order and wants to integrate the service into their daily lives, they are more likely to become loyal brand advocates, often remaining subscribed to the service for years.

### Home Chef experimented with a boosted 55% discount, which drove a 27% increase in sales

Home Chef has also taken advantage of many of Student Beans' student marketing opportunities since our partnership launched. They participated in our 2019 Back to School campaign, which targeted new starters and those returning to college in fall 2019, recognizing that this is a great time of year for students to initiate new habits, such as home cooking. They increased their discount to \$60 off the first meal kit during the campaign period. They secured media placements including a dedicated solus email to our US database, and they offered a gift card prize as part of our offline activities, a tour of college campuses.

### Result

Home Chef's partnership with Student Beans has proven that the student demographic is indeed a perfect fit for the brand's innovative product. The discount program has been successful in introducing the concept to a relevant new audience and convincing students intrigued by the idea to go ahead and give it a try. By experimenting with a variety of approaches to discounting, the brand was able to confidently settle on a standard student pricing strategy, with the flexibility to vary the offer throughout the year in line with the student calendar.



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“Our core focus is working professionals and we didn’t believe we had a market with the student demographic. Student Beans proved us wrong.”

Business Development Manager,  
Home Chef

Taking part in Student Beans campaigns such as our Back to School activities has helped to put Home Chef front of mind at a crucial time in students’ lives, when they are making purchasing decisions in new brand categories for the first time and experimenting with new lifestyles and identities as they kickstart their college experience. As a result of their involvement in the 2019 Back to School campaign, Home Chef saw a 65% increase in discount codes generated compared to the previous two weeks, a 41% uplift in sales from the previous month, and a 20.5% increase in orders.

For Home Chef, engaging the student market has played a significant role in their continued growth. Just six months after launching our partnership, the business was named the third fastest growing private company in the US, according to the Inc. 5000, and that same year it was acquired by leading grocery store chain, Kroger. As Home Chef revolutionizes meal time in homes across the country, Student Beans is proud to be part of its exciting journey.

As a result of the 2019 Back to School campaign, Home Chef saw:



increase in discount codes generated



uplift in sales



increase in orders

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