

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Takeout Central Commits to Keeping Misleading Listings, Now Common in the Industry, Off its Platform

CHAPEL HILL, NC — July 29, 2021 — Food delivery customers in North Carolina frustrated by the proliferation of misleading listings on their delivery apps have reason to celebrate. Takeout Central, the NC-based multi-restaurant delivery service, has made a commitment to keep “ghost restaurants” or brands that mislead customers off their delivery platform. These newly created restaurant brands are not actually new restaurants, but instead a rebranding of the restaurant's current menu in order to disguise the actual restaurant.

While new and legitimate restaurant concepts are sometimes prepared in ghost kitchens—commissary spaces without formal dining rooms—established restaurants marketing their menu under different names, creating “ghost brands,” has become more common in the industry.

The goal of the ghost brand is to take up a larger percentage of the total listings on various delivery platforms in order to increase sales by more exposure. Ghost brands have become more common than ever since 2020. As a result, users of many popular delivery apps often find themselves confused by the nature of “new” restaurants in their app.

Users may be curious about a new salad restaurant that just appeared, a listing for a wings restaurant, a burger joint, or a place that specializes in chicken tenders—not realizing that their orders and dollars all funnel into the kitchen of the same well-known fast food chain.

Keeping these deceptive listings off of the platforms aligns with Takeout Central’s goal to support small local restaurants. On many national platforms, big chains occupy a disproportionate share of online real estate and siphon sales away from smaller, independent eateries. Like keyword stuffing on a webpage to rank better in search engine results, ghost brands have flooded the delivery platform listings and dilute real local restaurant content.

Additionally, since these ghost kitchens can modify their “restaurant” name, logo, or menu on the fly if there is negative feedback, there is less incentive to keep the quality of the product they’re offering high; poor food quality often goes hand in hand with these listings.

“We worked hard to form strong partnerships with great local places that foodies will love like 411 West in Chapel Hill and Vinnie’s in Asheville, and we don’t want to have customers try a “new” Italian restaurant only to find afterwards its was cooked in a food truck that specializes in dumplings,” said Takeout Central COO Charles Douthitt .

Some common national restaurants that have experimented with this are Chuck E Cheese with its ghost brand “Pasqually’s Pizza and Wings,” named for the fictional chef mascot on stage. Hooters has launched Hooties Burger Bar, and Arbys has started receiving orders for a brand called Market Fresh.

“Our customers know there’s a difference between an independent chef using a commissary kitchen and Takeout Central to bring their creations to the world without taking on the overhead of a full restaurant, and a well-known company hiding behind a new brand name to trick customers into ordering, say, a gourmet pizza from what turns out to be a children’s party venue,” explained Takeout Central CEO Wes Garrison. “It all comes back to transparency: we want our customers to know what they’re paying for and what they’ll receive. They can be confident that every listing we have is one they can trust.”

To sign up for Takeout Central’s service and start browsing listings of the best restaurants in your area, check your app store or visit <https://www.takeoutcentral.com/>.

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About Takeout Central

Takeout Central was founded in 1996 as Tarheel Takeout and is one of the leaders in multiple restaurant delivery. It is headquartered in Chapel Hill and partners with over 400 restaurants and 200 delivery drivers throughout North Carolina. Takeout Central operates across Wilmington, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, Cary, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and Asheville.

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