



Is stacking hurting
the delivery market?

theDeliveryWorld

Rodeo.

Welcome

This report uses unique data based on millions of orders tracked by thousands of riders on the Rodeo app.

It provides insights into the growing debate about the uses and benefits of stacking and examines what stacking is, why it is used, and what are its benefits and its downsides.



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Key takeaways



Stacking is an important part of efficiency in the on-demand food delivery market.

Without it throughput would be lower and the cost of delivery would rise.

Uber and other platforms are trying to squeeze in more and more stacking.

However, stacking decisions are no longer controlled by restaurants.

This doesn't benefit drivers who get paid less for their time.

It doesn't benefit restaurants because it degrades customer experience.

What is order stacking?

Simply put, it is when the driver takes two or more orders at the same time. It's also called batching by some companies.



Why is it important?

The key to efficiency in on-demand delivery is throughput: how many orders a driver can complete on average in an hour.

Transporting multiple orders at the same time enables drivers to have a higher throughput.

This should mean higher earnings for drivers and lower costs for restaurants.

What are the key challenges?



All on-demand deliveries need to be delivered fast (typically less than 1 hour). This limits the amount of stacking.

Hot food generally has even more time pressure - no-one wants cold pizza because the driver has been doing a circuit of the neighbourhood with other orders.

Volume is often another constraint, particularly for on-demand groceries - there is a limit to how many bottles of water a bicycle or moped rider can carry.

As a result, on-demand hot food orders are generally limited to 2 or 3 orders at a time.

There is scope for restaurants to achieve efficiencies through stacking when orders are not divided across different fleets - for example Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Just Eat orders may be going in the same direction from a McDonalds store; they cannot be stacked. But Domino's can stack all orders as it sees fit because it fulfils all deliveries, irrespective of the sales channel, with its own drivers.

Sometimes of course drivers take things into their own hands and use multiple accounts or phones to accept different orders at the same time. This can be very damaging to the customer experience.

Many restaurants and customers may be surprised to learn that Uber and other platforms now explicitly allow drivers to take multiple orders on different platforms at the same time!



What are the different types of stacking?

Same Pickup



The driver collects multiple orders from the same restaurant. This is the traditional type of stacking. Domino's have been doing it for years and all the aggregators introduced it at an early stage.

Same Pickup can be done effectively by restaurants who manage their own delivery.

Multi Pickup



The driver collects from one restaurant then goes to another restaurant to collect a second order before travelling to the different customers' houses. Uber were the first to do this, others have since followed.

Multi Pickup stacking can only be done by aggregators (Uber, Deliveroo, Just Eat Takeaway).

How many orders are stacked?

Stacking has been increasing over the past few years as delivery platforms have sought to squeeze out more efficiency and reduce their costs.

So far this year we estimate that roughly half of all Uber Eats (and Uber Direct) orders are part of a stack. The biggest change however has been in Multi Pickup stacking, which has more than doubled from 14% in 2022 to 30% this year.

Same Pickup stacking has actually decreased since 2022. This is because most restaurants are now listed on multiple platforms meaning that their orders are divided across different fleets with less opportunity for stacking.

Singles



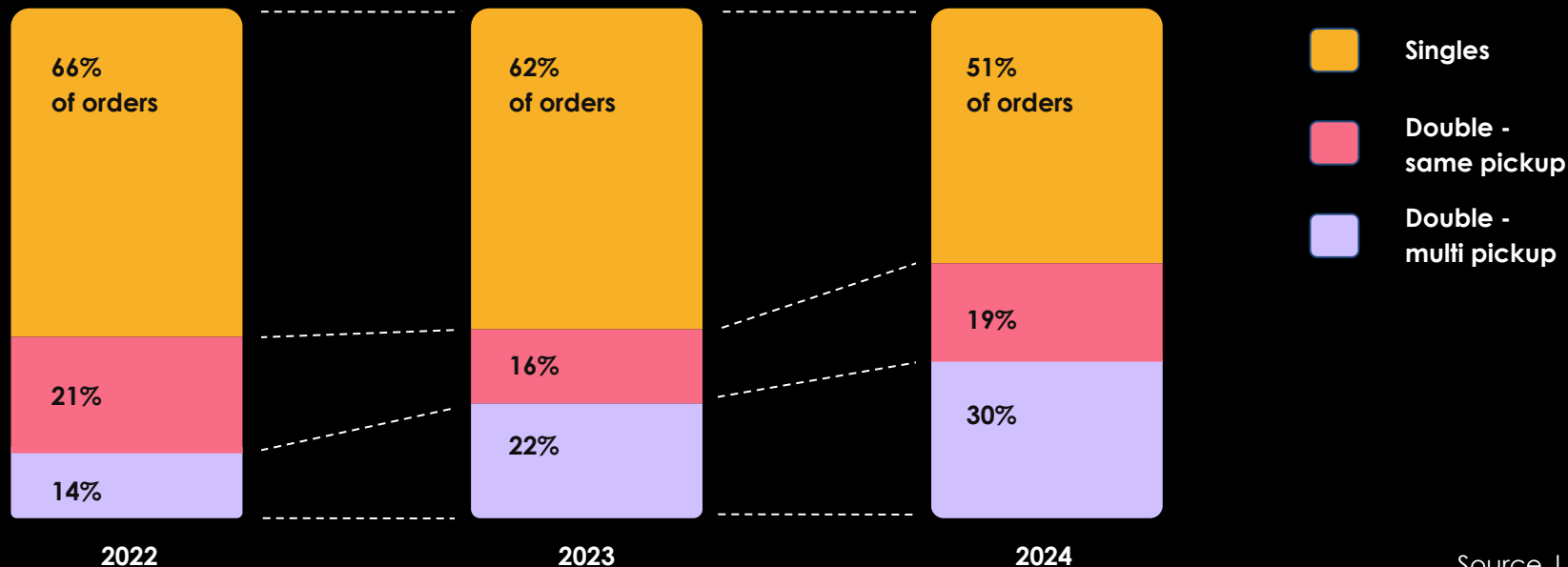
Double - same pickup



Double - multi pickup



Multi pickup stacking has been the fastest growing order type



Source | Rodeo

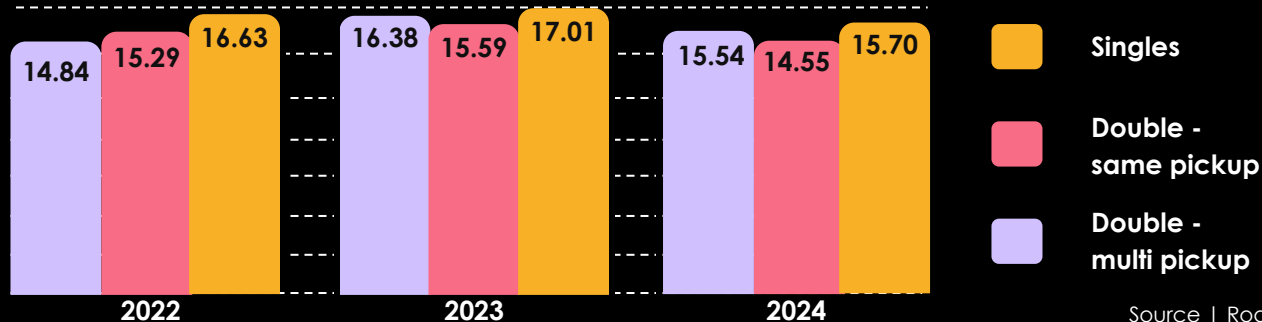
Some platforms now give customers the option to pay extra not to have their order stacked (priority or express fees). However, this does not seem to have had a material impact on the overall data.

Is stacking good for drivers?

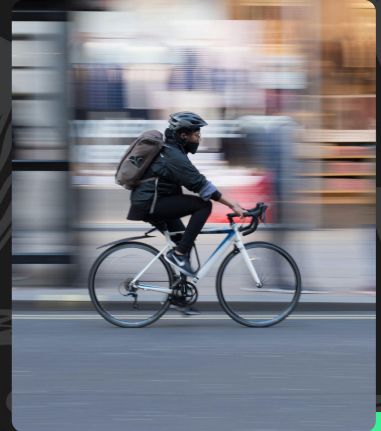


In general stacking is not good for drivers: stacked orders pay less per hour for the time spent on order than single orders. The chart below shows how much drivers earn on average on different order types (for the on-order time). This does not of course include waiting time between orders.

Average hourly earnings (£/hr) by order type by year

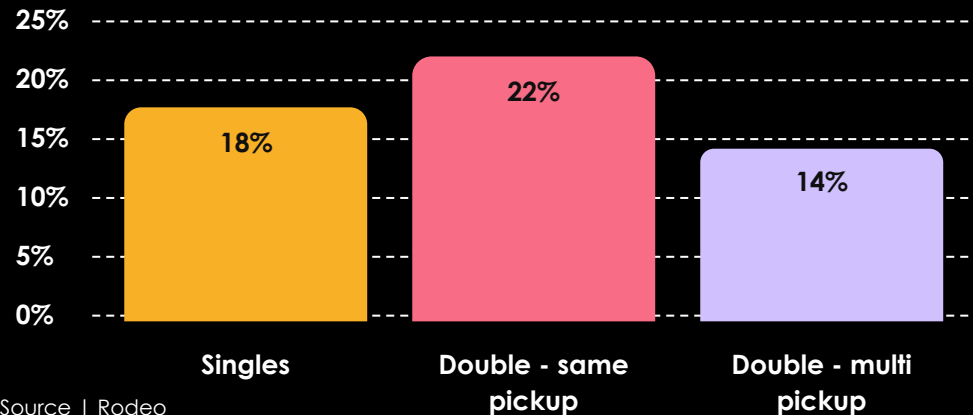


Source | Rodeo



Pay for all order types on Uber has fallen since 2023 as aggregators have adjusted their algorithms to reduce driver pay, as driver numbers have increased and there is no minimum wage protection. Same Pickup stacks are now the worst type of order for drivers and Single orders are the best. In fact we estimate that 22% Same Pickup doubles on Uber now pay less than minimum wage for the time on order. This is based on orders since the minimum wage was increased to £11.44/hr on April 1st 2024.

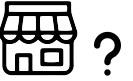
% orders below £11.44 £/hr by stacking type (2024)



Source | Rodeo



Is stacking good for restaurants?



Most restaurants want to ensure that their customers get a good experience - this means food turning up on time and preferably still warm.

On average, Single orders take 16 minutes from the Driver accepting to dropping off. Assuming it takes the driver a few minutes to reach the restaurant and collect the order, this means that most of the time food will spend little more than 10 minutes travelling from the restaurant to the customer.

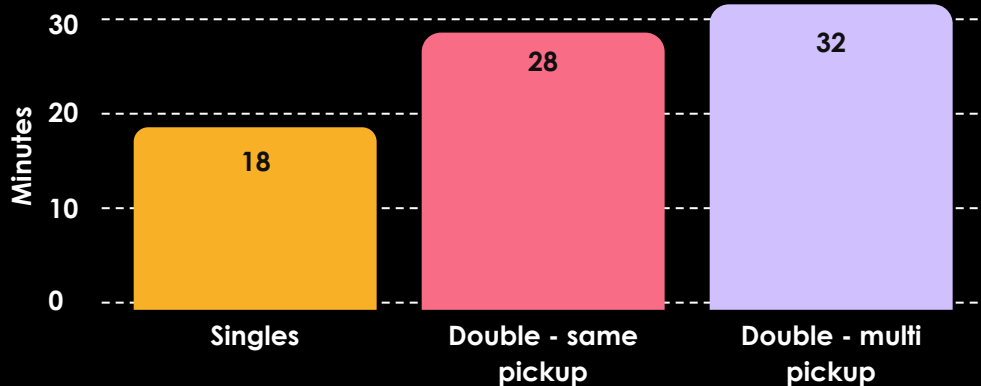


Same Pickup doubles take 28 minutes on average, implying that one of the customer will be waiting longer for their food.

Multi Pickups take even longer - 32 minutes.

Multi Pickup doubles take twice as much time as a Single order, suggesting that there is no actual efficiency saving vs two singles.

Average order duration by stacking type (2024)



Source | Rodeo



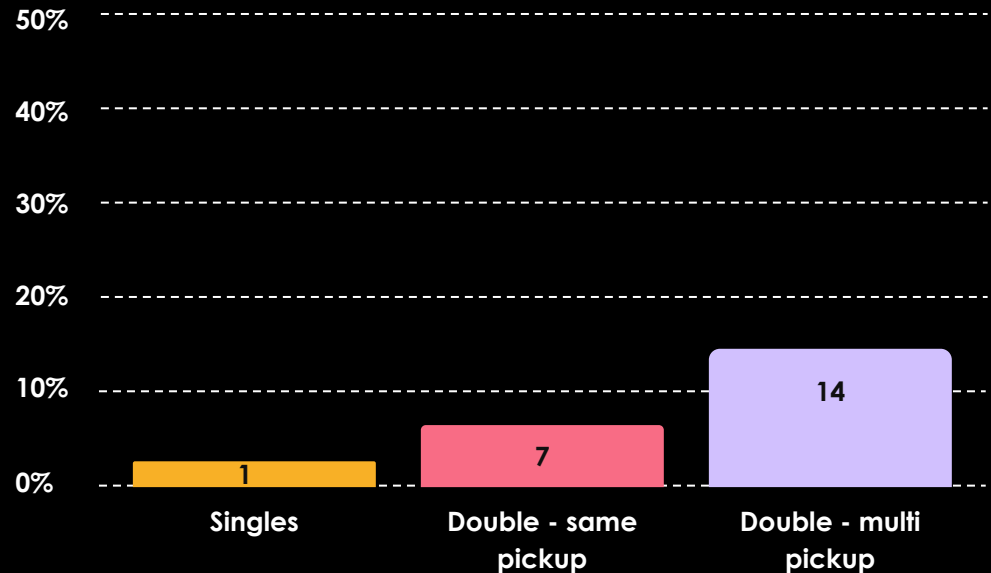
Discrepancies



If we look at the extreme cases where an order takes more than 45 minutes then the discrepancy is even bigger. 14% of Multi Pickup orders take more than 45 minutes whereas just 1% of Single orders do.

Adding in prep time this means customers are likely to be waiting for an hour for food that is almost certainly cold - by anyone's standards that is a poor experience.

% long orders by stacking type (2024)



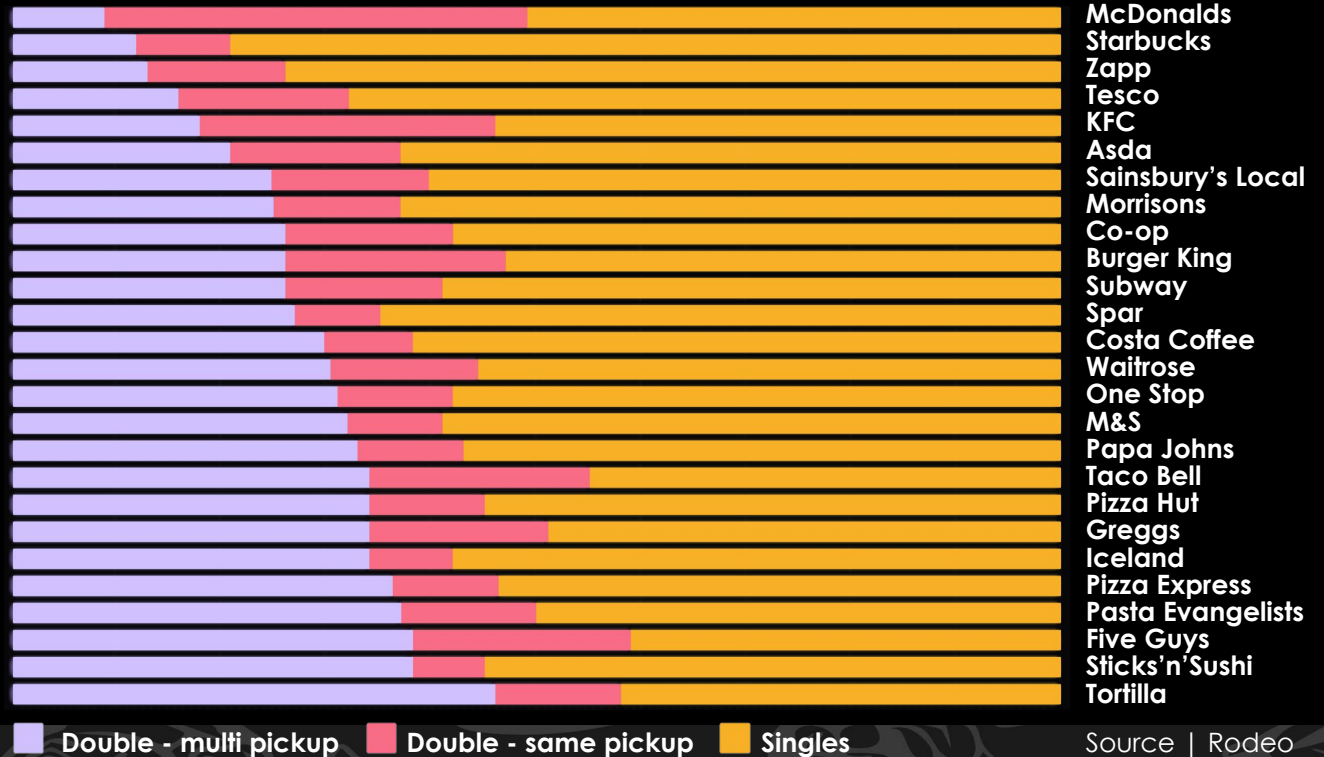
Source | Rodeo

Does stacking vary by restaurant brand?



At one end of the spectrum is McDonalds where there is very little *Multi Pickup* stacking. At the other end is Tortilla and Sticks'n'Sushi where 40-50% of orders will be stacked with another order from a different restaurant.

% stacking types by restaurant brand (2024)



Definitions



Delivery aggregators: Delivery platforms like Uber Eats, Deliveroo, and Just Eat Takeaway that connect customers with a variety of restaurants and handle the logistics of delivery, often using a network of drivers or riders

Delivery efficiency: The ability to maximize the number of orders delivered in the shortest time while minimizing costs. It is affected by factors like stacking, delivery time, and the number of orders a driver can handle.

Delivery market: The industry focused on the delivery of goods, particularly food, where efficiency, speed, and customer satisfaction are key components.

Multi pickup stacking: When a driver collects orders from different restaurants before delivering them to customers. This type of stacking is typically managed by aggregators like Uber Eats, Deliveroo, and Just Eat Takeaway.

On-demand delivery: A delivery service model where orders need to be delivered quickly, typically in less than an hour, to meet customer expectations for speed and quality.

Order stacking: The practice of a delivery driver taking two or more orders at the same time, also known as batching by some companies.

Definitions



Priority or express fees:

An option provided by some delivery platforms where customers can pay extra to ensure their order is not stacked, meaning it will be delivered directly without being grouped with other orders.

Same pickup stacking:

When a driver collects multiple orders from the same restaurant and delivers them to different customers. This is the traditional type of stacking and can be effectively managed by restaurants that handle their own delivery.

Single orders:

Orders that are not stacked with any other orders, resulting in direct and quicker delivery to the customer.

Throughput:

The number of orders a driver can complete on average in an hour. Higher throughput means higher earnings for drivers and lower costs for delivery aggregators.

Time on order:

The duration that a delivery driver spends actively handling an order, including traveling to the restaurant, possible waiting time there, and then delivering the order

Methodology

This report is a combination of expert commentary from theDelivery.World and Rodeo, plus data based on millions of orders tracked by thousands of drivers using the Rodeo app.

About Rodeo

The Rodeo app is used by more than 20,000 independent delivery drivers to find, analyse and manage their work. Rodeo works with restaurants and grocers to build and manage their own flexible fleets of drivers, providing recruitment, onboarding, contracting, scheduling and payment solutions so that clients can control their delivery experience without the headaches.

About theDelivery.World

theDelivery.World – the international go-to platform for information, insight and connections across the global restaurant delivery market, including podcasts, newsletter, commentary, company data, consultancy and more. Used as a trusted source by delivery operators, restaurants, tech companies, and investors.

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