



CASE STUDY

# Taco Bueno

## Driving Repeat Visits and Rapid Adoption: How Taco Bueno Added 34k Members and Grew Frequency 61% in Just Three Months

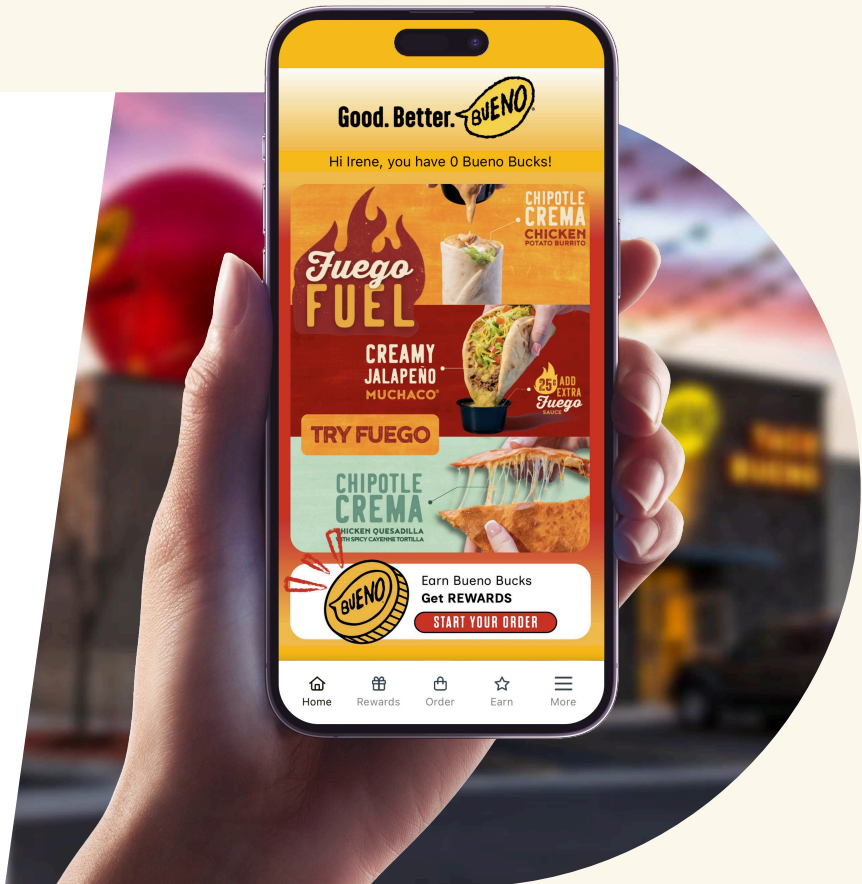
Industry:  
**QSR / Tex-Mex**

Locations:  
**130**

Launched with Thanx:  
**2025**

“We didn't just want to launch an app. We wanted to fundamentally change guest behavior. In just 3 months, we added 34k members to our loyalty program and drove frequency of engaged guests up by 61%!”

Dani Perales, Director of Marketing & Innovation  
Taco Bueno





## Background

Founded in 1967, Taco Bueno is a nostalgic Tex-Mex brand built on fresh, made-in-house ingredients and a loyal following that spans generations. Ready to further expand, the brand set out to modernize its technology, sharpen its product quality, and reposition for the next chapter.

Digital was central to that strategy. With 65% of revenue running through the drive-thru and no app or loyalty program in place, Taco Bueno had a clear opportunity: build a modern guest engagement engine that could honor its legacy while driving the repeat visits and direct sales that fuel sustainable growth.

## The Challenge

- Taco Bueno had a strong, loyal guest base built over decades, but the tools to engage that base had not kept pace. Email and SMS campaigns went out, but with no centralized loyalty platform or mobile app, there was no way to know who was coming back, why, or how to bring them back sooner.
- The team could not easily segment guests by what they ordered, build campaigns around visit behavior, or create the kind of interactive moments that keep a brand feeling alive. Every new idea hit a tooling ceiling.
- Meanwhile, the QSR category was moving fast. Taco Bueno needed a digital foundation that could match how guests expected to engage with their favorite brands.
- With a loyal, longtime guest base to protect while also the goals of reaching a new customer base, the pressure to modernize was urgent.

## The Solution

- Taco Bueno had never had a loyalty app before. Partnering with Thanx meant building that foundation from scratch, and doing it in a way that would actually change how guests behaved, not just give them a place to collect points.
- With Thanx, the team launched a mobile-first loyalty experience. In-store enrollment materials brought guests into the program at the moment they were already thinking about Taco Bueno. Segmentation and automation let the team reach the right guests with offers that fit what they actually ordered.
- With the ability to test new campaign formats tied directly to visit behavior, the marketing team could learn fast and act on what worked. For a brand that hadn't had these tools before, the shift was significant.



## Strategy and Implementation

Taco Bueno started at the front door. In-store materials made it easy for guests to find the app and sign up right at the point of purchase, so the loyalty base grew from day one.

From there, the team built campaigns that felt personal. Item-level segmentation meant each guest saw challenges relevant to what they actually ordered, not generic offers sent to everyone. Rewards, emails, and push notifications went out automatically as guests hit milestones, which meant the marketing team could focus on what to build next rather than manually running each campaign. The app home screen became another touchpoint, with targeted messaging that surfaced LTOs and location-specific updates to the right guests at the right time.

One detail made a real difference: putting an expiration window on rewards. Guests who might have sat on a reward came back sooner because the clock was running.

## App Launch and Member Acquisition at Scale

When Taco Bueno launched the app, they wanted guests to feel it right away. In-store materials made it easy to find and download the app, and an early marketing campaign gave guests a reason to keep coming back — earning rewards along the way rather than just collecting points.

It worked faster than expected.

### 34,000 new loyalty members in the first 90 days

That early momentum mattered. With a real base of engaged guests from the start, the team had the reach to test, learn, and build on what was working.

**“What’s been most exciting is how quickly we can test ideas. We’re no longer limited by tooling—we can actually execute.”**

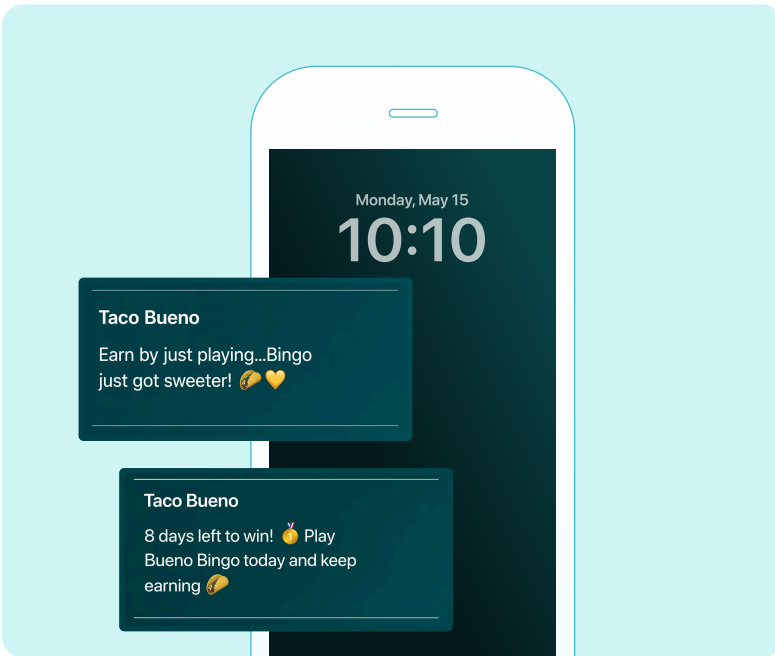
Dani Perales, Director of Marketing & Innovation, Taco Bueno

## Automation and Urgency Drive Repeat Visits

To maximize impact, Taco Bueno:

- ✓ Delivered rewards instantly via automation
- ✓ Targeted messaging that surfaced LTOs and location-specific updates to the right guests at the right time
- ✓ Used push + email to reinforce engagement
- ✓ Added a 30-day expiration window to incentivize faster redemption

This combination ensured that engagement translated into real behavior—driving repeat visits within a defined timeframe.




“The goal was to move beyond traditional promotions and create experiences that actually motivate customers to come back.”

Dani Perales, Director of Marketing & Innovation, Taco Bueno

## Results

 **34,000**  
**NEW LOYALTY MEMBERS**  
In first 3 months of launch

 **174X**  
**GROWTH**  
In returning guests from Jan to April 2026

 **61%**  
**INCREASE IN FREQUENCY**  
Engaged visitor frequency grew from 1.17 avg visits to 1.89 avg visits

 **135%**  
**GROWTH IN FIRST PURCHASE RATE**  
Bueno Bingo increased signups by 5.3x and boosted first purchase rate from ~26% to 61%

## Gamified Loyalty Drives Measurable Behavior Change

Taco Bueno wanted the app to feel fun, not just functional. So they built Bueno Bingo, a campaign that gave guests a “card” of item-based challenges to complete, with a “blackout” reward waiting at the end.

The mechanics were simple: eight challenges, real-time rewards delivered automatically as guests completed them, and email and push notifications that kept progress top of mind. The time limit did the rest.

The campaign included:

- ✔ 8 item-based challenges
- ✔ Real-time reward delivery via automation
- ✔ A “blackout” reward for full completion
- ✔ Email and push notifications tied to progress

“If a guest sees they’re one action away from completing something, they’re much more likely to come back—especially with a time constraint.”

Makenna Doan, Marketing Coordinator, Taco Bueno

By tying rewards directly to behavior, the campaign created urgency and drove incremental visits, generating ~\$76k in revenue in February alone.

## Advanced Segmentation Enables Complex Campaigns

Using Thanx’s segmentation tools, Taco Bueno built highly specific audience logic based on:

- ✔ Item-level purchases
- ✔ Timing and campaign progression
- ✔ Visit frequency

This enabled the team to execute a campaign that would have been difficult—or impossible—with traditional tools.

“Being able to create highly customized segments quickly has allowed us to execute campaigns we simply couldn’t have done before.”

Makenna Doan, Marketing Coordinator,  
Taco Bueno



In just one month, Taco Bueno transformed its app from a launch initiative into a **behavior-driving growth engine**. Increasing repeat visit behavior driven by gamification and urgency.

In the first 3 months since launch, Taco Bueno has completely transformed their guest engagement strategy adding 34k new members to their loyalty program while driving frequency lift of 61%. First purchase rate increased 135% and sign-ups are up 5.3x over historical figures.

## Conclusion

What Taco Bueno built was not just a loyalty program. It was a new way of staying connected to guests, one that gets smarter over time.

The early numbers were a proof point. The team unlocked the ability to keep testing, keep learning, and keep showing up for guests in ways that feel relevant. Getting guests to come back is one thing. Having the tools to understand why they did, and what brings them back again, is what makes growth sustainable. With Thanx, Taco Bueno built a platform for continuous innovation and measurable growth.

Want to grow same-store sales with Thanx's industry-leading guest engagement platform and best-in-class user experiences?

[Schedule a demo](#)