CASE STUDY

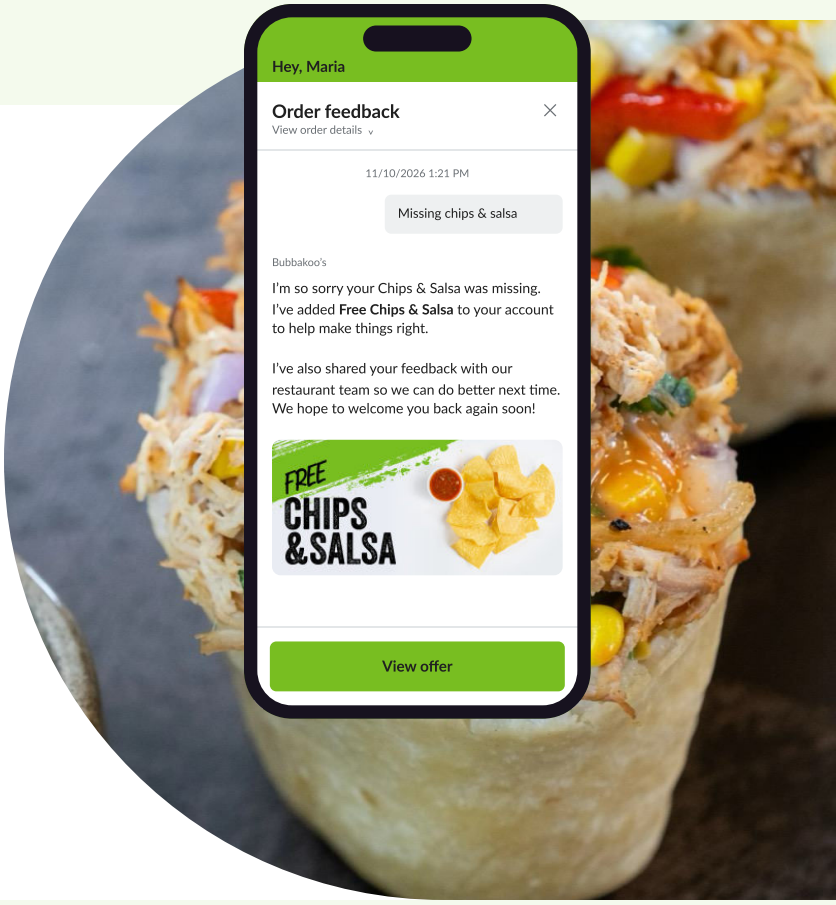
Bubbakoo’s Burritos

From 14% to 28%: How Bubbakoo’s Burritos Doubled the Return Rate of Unhappy First-Time Guests and Brought Unhappy Guests Back 1.3x as Often with RecoveryAI

Industry: **QSR**

Locations: **147**

Launched RecoveryAI: **September 2026**



2.0x
First-timers

5.2x
Return on fees

1.3x
Win-back rate

Return on fees: 30-day spend per $1 in fees, before rewards.

“I absolutely recommend that other brands turn this on. It’s always a lot cheaper to win a guest back than to get a new one.”

Chris Ives, CEO, Bubbakoo’s Burritos

Since launch, first-time guests at RecoveryAI locations have come back twice as often within 14 days (28% vs. 14%).



Background

Bubbakoo's Burritos is a QSR burrito brand with 147 locations, most of them run by franchisees. When a guest has a bad experience, the brand wants them back, and it wants that to happen without adding work to restaurant teams that are already stretched. Chris Ives, Chief Executive Officer, chose RecoveryAI to do that work automatically.

The Challenge

At Bubbakoo's, each general manager or franchisee was responsible for responding to complaints at their own restaurant and making it right. That work came on top of everything else happening in the store. For a first-time guest, a bad visit can be the only visit. Many never come back.

The Solution

Bubbakoo's chose RecoveryAI because it takes the work out of store hands. When a guest rates an order with a thumbs-down, RecoveryAI reaches out, resolves the issue and offers a make-good when it is warranted. Store teams do not have to respond to anything.

> "Responding manually takes time out of their day, and it's every day. They always have to constantly look at it."
>
> Chris Ives, Chief Executive Officer, Bubbakoo's Burritos

> "RecoveryAI removes the operators from having to do anything. It eliminates the manual element."
>
> Chris Ives, Chief Executive Officer, Bubbakoo's Burritos

Strategy and Implementation

Bubbakoo's set RecoveryAI up to respond to unhappy guests automatically, with no manager time:

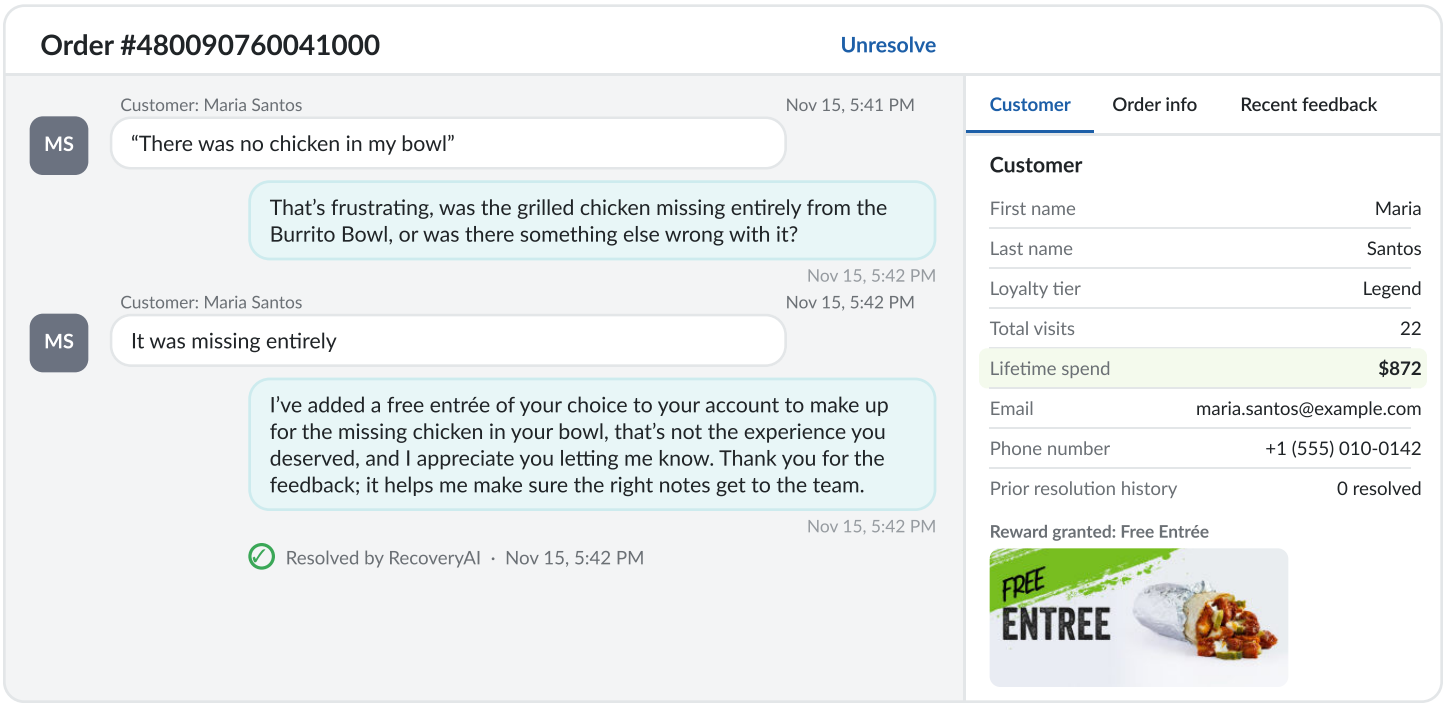
- Automatic from the first rating
- Corporate sees the exceptions
- No work for store teams
- Rewards only when warranted

First-Time Guests Came Back Twice as Often After a Bad Experience

First-time guests are the hardest to win back. At Bubbakoo's locations running RecoveryAI, 28% of first-time guests who rated an order thumbs-down came back within 14 days. At Bubbakoo's locations without RecoveryAI, 14% did.

> **2.0x: first-time guests came back within 14 days with RecoveryAI vs. without (28% vs. 14%).**

Across all guests who rated an order thumbs-down since September 1, 2026, 49% at RecoveryAI locations came back within 14 days, compared with 37% at locations without it, a 1.3x lift. Every thumbs-down is counted, including guests who never replied to the agent.



> "RecoveryAI handles 98% of the issues; there's not much escalation happening. It reduces the friction of trying to win back and recover a guest."
>
> Chris Ives, Chief Executive Officer, Bubbakoo's Burritos

Returning Guests Spent $5.20 Within 30 Days for Every $1 in Fees

For guests RecoveryAI resolved, Bubbakoo's measured what they spent on their first return visit within 30 days against the Thanx fees earned in that window. That figure is before reward costs.

5.2x return on fees within 30 days, before rewards.

5.2x	2.0x	98%	1.3x
Return on fees	First-timer lift	No escalation	Win-back rate

RecoveryAI Handled Guest Conversations Without Pulling Store Teams In

Among guests who replied to RecoveryAI, 98% were resolved without being escalated to a person.

> "The first visit is when you're most likely to lose someone for good. RecoveryAI responds to that guest right away, and my operators don't have to do anything."
>
> Chris Ives, Chief Executive Officer, Bubbakoo's Burritos



Results

2.0x
FIRST-TIMER RETURN
28% vs. 14% within 14 days

1.3x
WIN-BACK RATE
49% vs. 37% within 14 days

5.2x
RETURN ON FEES
30 days, before rewards

98%
NO ESCALATION NEEDED
Among guests who replied

Bubbakoo's measured RecoveryAI by one question: how often do guests come back after a poor experience? Since September 2026, first-time guests at RecoveryAI locations have come back twice as often within 14 days (28% vs. 14%), and returning guests spent $5.20 within 30 days for every $1 in fees, before rewards.

Conclusion

For Bubbakoo's, guest recovery had been a task for busy store managers. RecoveryAI made it automatic at the moment that matters most, when a guest has a bad experience and the first impression is on the line.

Want to win back more guests after a bad experience with Thanx's industry-leading guest engagement platform?

Schedule a demo