

How did Toters get their first order?



As is the case with every startup, the platform can be built, the product can be perfected – but if no one orders, you’re not technically in business. The duo behind Toters (<https://www.totersapp.com/>), the online marketplace connecting merchants with customers, shared their experiences at the IGNITE Tech chapter, organized by Endeavor Lebanon (<https://endeavorlebanon.org/>) and the Beirut Digital District (BDD) on what it takes to succeed. Both co-Founders of Toters are Endeavor entrepreneurs.

When Toters first came onto the market in 2017, it was the first Lebanese company to provide such an offering – delivering convenience to consumers based on what they desired most. The plan started with satisfying consumer cravings accurately and creating a seamless online experience. And so, they asked themselves, what do people want, but cannot get delivered? And how can merchants be enticed to use this service?

The first two merchants that signed on, were Italian restaurant Tavolina and former diner, Frosty Palace. But signing them on was a tough feat.

“We identified restaurants that had great food, but didn’t have a home delivery system – and we were showcasing an App to them that has no users,” says Tamim Khalfa, Co-Founder and CEO of Toters. “We just needed to make them to like us and believe in what we were doing.”

Prioritize your tasks & structure yourself

The key to kickstart the delivering process, was to prioritize tasks.

“We had very limited resources, so we needed to prioritize where to put our efforts,” shared Nael Halwani, Co-Founder of Toters. “The initial Toters App was a basic version, that basically fit our needs at that moment. So, the trick was, to build what we needed ‘now’, and improve along the way,” he confides.

The Toters App has since displayed immensely improved versions for the tens of thousands of users that use the App on a daily basis.

Where is the talent?

When Toters first launched, not many were eager to work for a startup and the team found difficulty in enticing talent to join. However, as Khalifa points out, finding the right talent can be an issue for all companies, at any level, regardless of their size.

Toters overcame this challenge by looking for passion instead. “We found a few people through contacts who were passionate and we optimized our value proposition to attract talent,” said Khalifa. “You need to find people with the right mindset and attitude and together, you develop them and develop with them.”

Support systems, tracking and doing it right

“We know that there will be setbacks all the time, but we need to adopt the right approach and create a support system,” shared Khalifa. He added that motivating the team and finding creative ways to overcome the challenges was key to their growth.

“What we learnt is to focus on execution – execute quickly if you are a startup,” advised Halwani. “Get early traction, but always remember to develop a process to track what you have done before.”

Toters now has hundreds of merchants on its App, ranging from restaurants, coffee shops, convenience stores and even flowers and gift items. If that’s what consumers want, that’s what Toters will deliver.