

# EATSY DOES IT

Like the name suggests, startup Eatsy is about making dining out easy. Its CEO and founder Shaun Heng shares how the app offers a hassle-free experience for diners, even when they are in a group, while capturing valuable patron data for restaurants.

AS TOLD TO VIVIEN SHIAO

## TELL US MORE ABOUT EATSY AND WHAT IT DOES

For every meal with your friends, you'll always need to get the waiter's attention, wait for your bill, and split it with your friends after the meal. We are a mobile app that eliminates all these hassles - diners can order, pay and split their bills through their phones when dining out, and even get rewarded with cashback after every meal.

We offer a convenient solution to diners, just by using one app to order and pay for all restaurants on our platform. Through this simple action, we also help restaurants to automatically capture all their diners' dining data to help them identify, reward and retain them.

Eatsy's investors include Quest Ventures, Spring Singapore (now Enterprise Singapore), the co-founders of RedMart (Roger Egan, Vikram Rupani and Rajesh Lingappa), Lo & Behold Group (Wee Teng Wen), and prominent angel investors who shared our vision.

## HOW DID THE IDEA OF EATSY COME ABOUT?

Over the past one to two years, we have seen the rise of food delivery platforms such as UberEats and Deliveroo. What this means for us is that diners are educated on the convenience of using their own phones to order and pay for food. At the same time, restaurant owners appreciate the benefit and ease of adopting a mobile ordering and payment platform.

In light of that, we have built a platform similar to the concept of UberEats but for the 80 per cent of diners who prefer to dine out.

## WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR? WAS IT A TOUGH DECISION TO MAKE?

To be honest, I never knew I would become an entrepreneur so early in my career. After graduation, as with most of my peers, I started out in investment banking before making a switch to RedMart to help them with corporate development efforts, including capital raising and the eventual acquisition by Lazada. This opportunity provided the springboard for me to start my entrepreneurship journey.

Towards the end of 2016, I was stuck in a traffic jam in Jakarta on the way to the airport with Roger Egan (co-founder of RedMart). I shared the idea of Eatsy with him, as well as the worries I faced making this leap into the entrepreneurship world. All he said to me was, "Shaun, what is the worst that can happen?" The funny thing was that when I really thought hard about this question, the answer was crystal clear to me. At the end of 2016, I left RedMart to pursue Eatsy full time.

Our mind tends to over-complicate issues at face value. By asking ourselves this question, we disengage ourselves

from the situation and instead take the time to process the information and break down the issue into smaller parts - oftentimes, the decision is much more obvious than we initially thought it was.

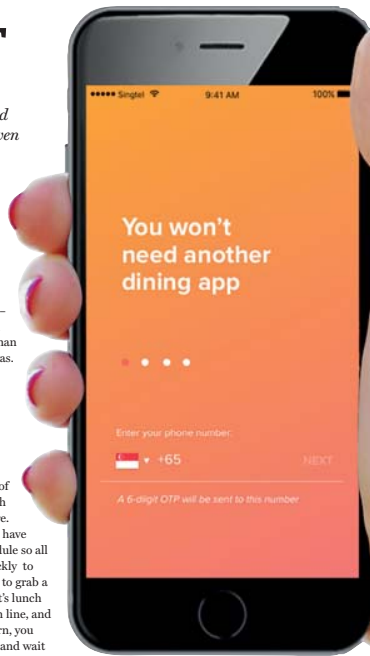
## WHAT PROBLEMS ARE YOU TRYING TO SOLVE WITH THE APP?

Diners want a seamless and fuss-free dining experience. I'm sure all of you have been faced with a similar situation before. It is lunch time and you have an extremely busy schedule so all you want is to head quickly to the nearest burger shop to grab a takeaway. But because it's lunch time, you have to wait in line, and when it's finally your turn, you have to order your food and wait for it to be prepared - all this while wasting precious time that could have been better spent elsewhere.

With Eatsy, we offer a hassle-free solution - diners can conveniently and quickly order, pay and split-bill through their phones, and even get rewarded with cashback after every meal.

What about the restaurant? What happens after a diner leaves after a meal? More often than not, restaurants have no idea who these diners are, what they ordered, and most importantly, how to get them back. Restaurants are constantly searching for new ways to attract new diners, but studies have shown that the key determinant of business continuity lies in repeat customers. In fact, regulars spend 67 per cent more than new diners, and they contribute up to 50 per cent of a restaurant's revenue. Building that repeat business takes time, and we know it's not easy.

With Eatsy, we get your favourite restaurant onboard (within a day), you will be able to order your food from your desk and simply head down to pick it up when it is ready. And through this simple process, we help these restaurants to capture valuable dining data about who you are, when your last visit was, and what you ordered. These are data that they may not have been able to capture before.



**PARTNERS**  
Shaun Heng (seated in front),  
(left to right) Novabelle Ng (designer),  
Lim Gang Rui (business development),  
Nicholas Lim (business development),  
Lim Gang Yi (CTO)

## WHAT HAS YOUR APP ACHIEVED SO FAR?

Since its launch recently, we have signed up 45 eateries including Cede, Rookery, Strictly Pancakes, The Clan and The Acai Affair. Our monthly transaction volume has also reached a level that allows us to begin commercial discussions with payment gateway providers to lower mobile payment costs so that we can return some of it back to the restaurants, whom we all know operate on very thin margins.

## WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGES AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

We are in an extremely crowded space and ultimately, it boils down to two things: speed and a good product.

To achieve speed, we have created a seamless onboarding process for restaurants. The time taken to onboard a restaurant can be as fast as one day.

In terms of a good product, we also noticed that dining is by and large a collaborative group activity with friends. However, existing apps in the market only allow for one single diner to order and pay for the entire table, and very few people want to be that person. Hence, in terms of a good product, our real-time collaborative dining application makes it simple for diners

and their friends to order and pay. This eliminates the need for diners to spend time calculating who pays what or collect money back later.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Building a scalable international restaurant-technology company has always been the company's focus since Day One. We know that we are not just building a product for the Singapore market. However, our vision can only be achieved if - and only if - we have a great team in place.

There's an African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." My focus at this stage is to make sure that we lay the necessary groundwork for a solid foundation so that when it is time for us to expand out of Singapore, we already have the necessary playbooks and systems in place to scale up fast in each city that we expand into, and in the most capital-efficient manner. ■

