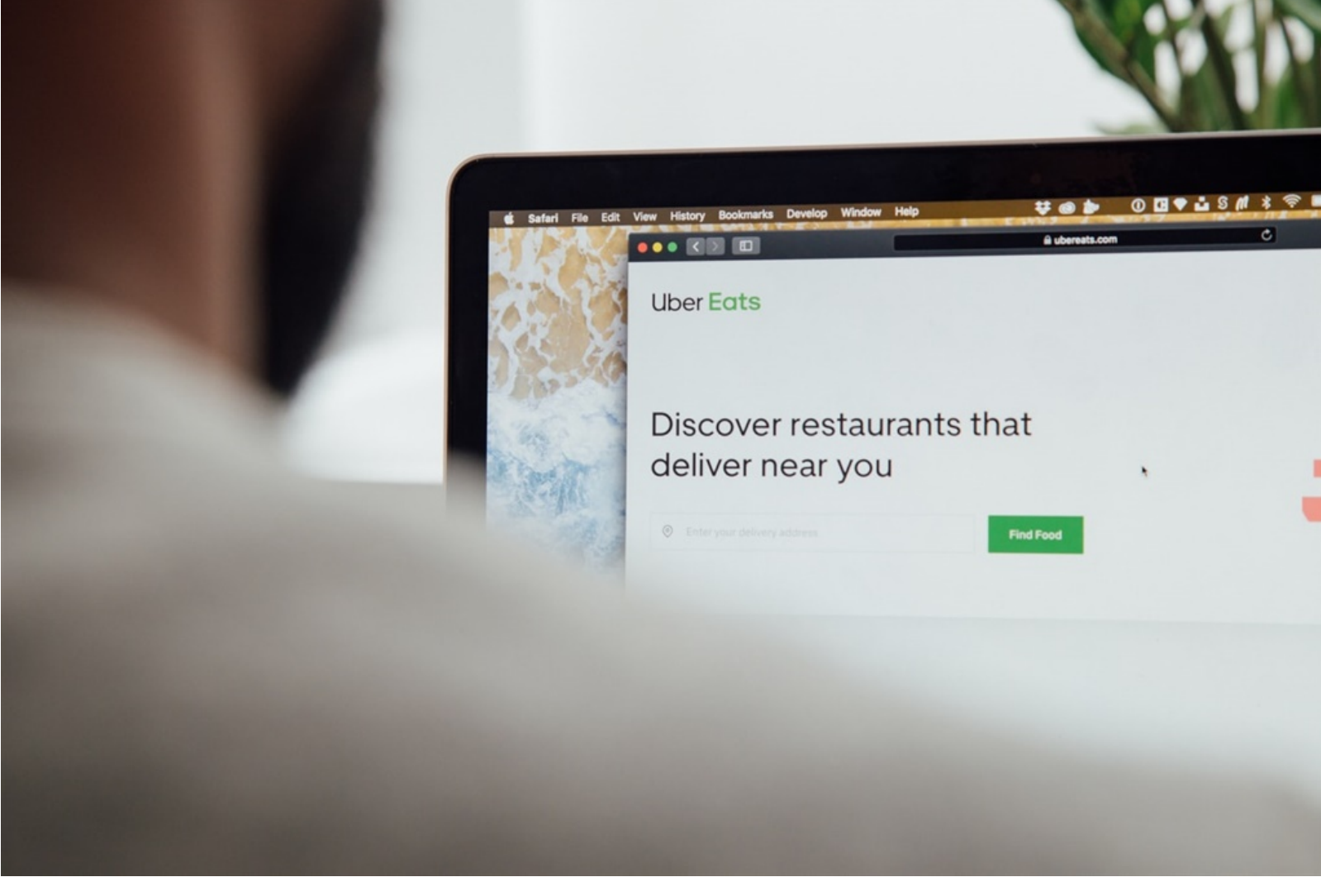


We tested food apps in the townships, and you still can't get Uber Eats or Bolt to deliver

Phumi Ramalepe and Edward-John Bottomley, Business Insider SA

May 26, 2020, 06:51 AM



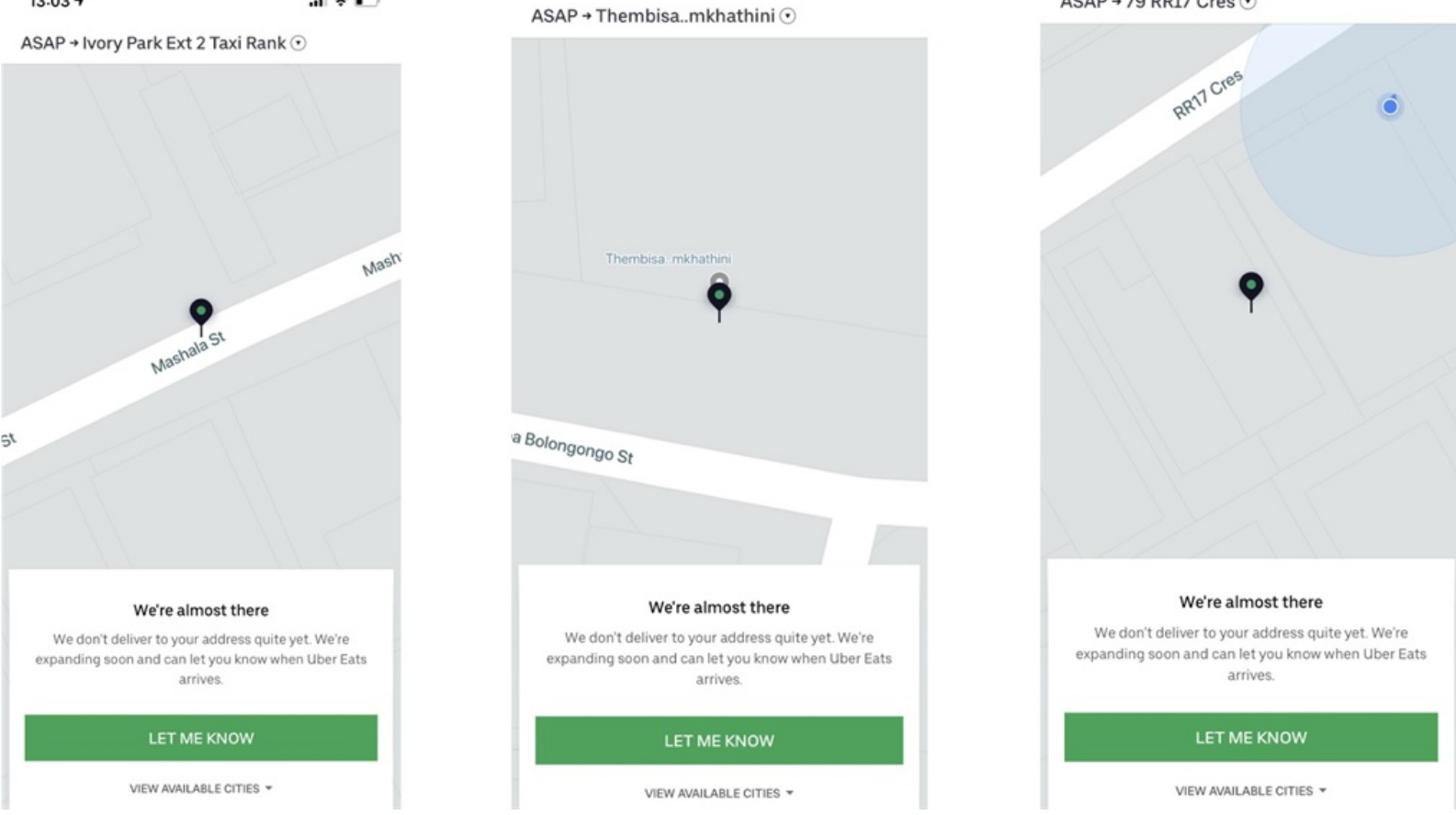
- **Business Insider tested food delivery apps including Uber Eats and Mr D, and found that they will still not deliver to SA townships.**
- **The companies say this is because there is no demand, and no restaurants in those areas.**
- **Online retailers like Takealot and Superbalist have no problems with township deliveries, though. Nor do Steers and Debonairs.**
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Food delivery apps like Uber Eats and Mr D will still not deliver to SA townships, testing by Business Insider SA has shown.

After lifting the ban on hot food sales, but limiting it to delivery only, the government had evidently hoped that food delivery aggregators would expand to cover more geographical – and socio-economic – ground, just as it encouraged online stores to deliver to a broader customer base.

Business Insider tested three apps, Mr Delivery, Uber Eats and Bolt Food, in a wide variety of townships across South Africa, including Tembisa, Khayelitsha, Ivory Park, Mamelodi, and Katlehong, to see whether they would deliver food to these areas.

None of the three apps were active in any of the areas we checked.



The companies say that is because there's not enough demand in the townships for their services, and not enough restaurants.

Fast food apps such as those of Steers and Debonairs, however, were available in the areas we tested. All of the food apps delivered fast food to Soweto.

E-commerce website too will make deliveries in those areas too. Both Takealot.com and Superbalist were happy to accept our orders in the same townships we tested.

These companies make use of courier and postal service to deliver their packages, rather than the independent drivers that food delivery aggregation apps use.

When asked why they did not deliver in townships, Gareth Taylor, country manager for Bolt in South Africa said: "Bolt and Bolt Food expand to areas where there's enough demand for their services from riders to make it possible for drivers to earn a good income."

Uber Eats, which delivers to Soweto, said that "in order for eaters to see a restaurant in their area, those restaurants would need to sign up to use the Uber Eats app...Uber Eats is always looking to add your restaurants onto their app, so Eaters can keep checking the app to see what is available."

Mr D and Takealot did not respond to requests for comment.

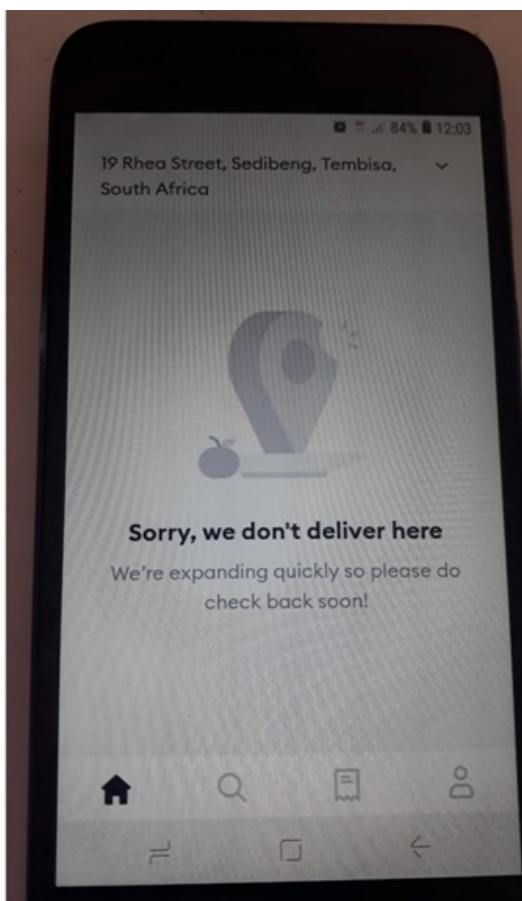
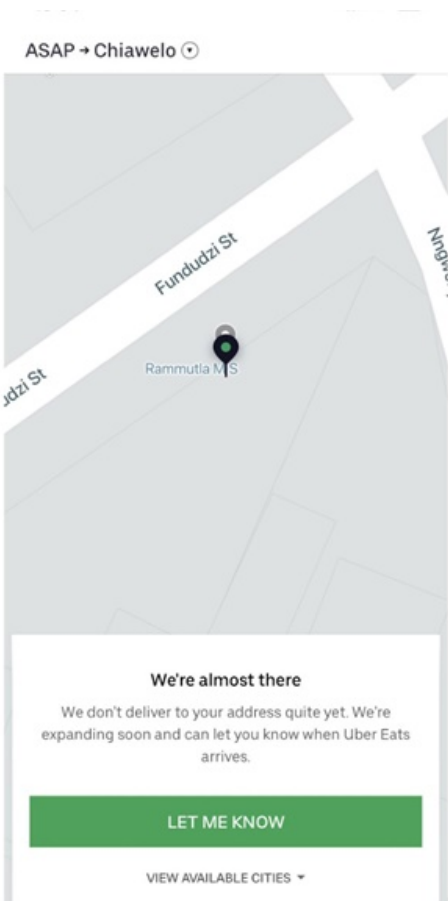
Township deliveries can be tricky, say those who have made it their business.

The mistake some companies make is trying to offer townships residents deliveries from popular franchises, says Reneilwe Aphane, the founder of Kasi Menu, a township-focused delivery service.

"If you understand kasi economy, a lot of people tend to go to your more independent merchants. An Uber Eats Business Model and a Mr D business model probably don't fit in to what they would want."

And it can also be hard to manage safety, says Lufuno Monguni of White Fox, a township-focused delivery service that does not deliver to Jabulani in Soweto because it is considered a high-risk area.

"I wouldn't say the township is not safe compared to the suburbs. Suburbs have safety challenges of their own."



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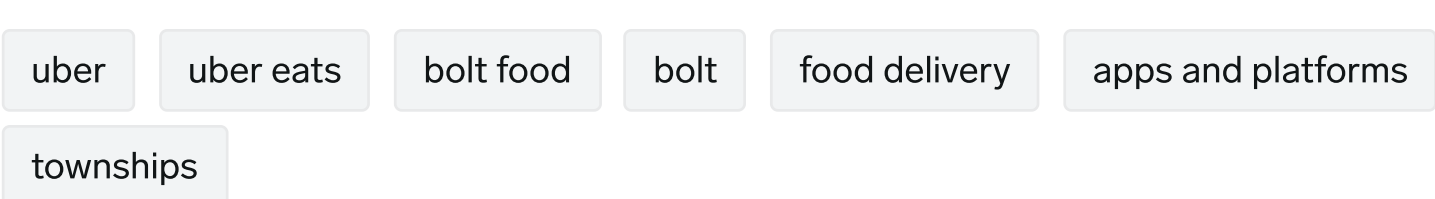
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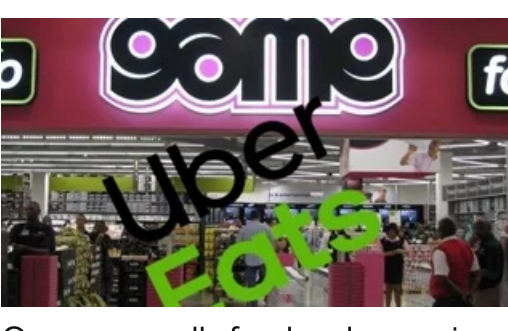
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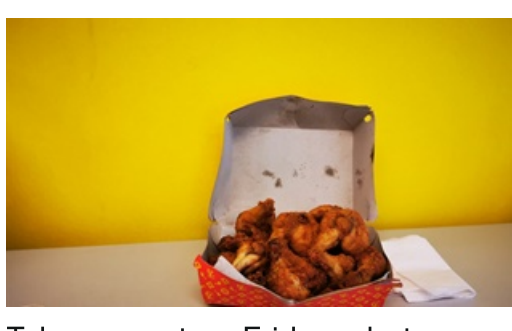
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