Swiggy

Design a feature in Swiggy to reduce customer anxiety while waiting for food delivery.

Context: Users often keep checking the app multiple times after ordering food — to see where the delivery partner is, whether the food has been picked up, or if it's delayed. This creates frustration and reduces overall satisfaction even if the food arrives on time.

Challenge: Design a new feature or improvement in Swiggy/Zomato that helps reduce customer anxiety after they place an order — without increasing operational cost or adding unnecessary notifications.

Assumptions for clarifying questions

- Users place orders through mobile app (primary channel)
- The term Customer Anxiety here refers to how users are worried rather than keeping them engaged while waiting for the order
- Users check the app 5-8 times on average after placing an order
- Delivery partners use a different version of the app for navigation and order management
- Users may not always be familiar with traffic conditions affecting delivery time
- Push notifications are already being used but may contribute to notification fatigue
- Solution should work without requiring hardware changes or additional costs to restaurants/delivery partners

Target Segments

- **First-time or Occasional Users** — People who are unfamiliar with how food delivery works or who don't order frequently. They have higher anxiety because they lack context about typical delivery times, traffic patterns, or how

the process works. They're more likely to check the app repeatedly out of uncertainty.

- **Time-Sensitive Users** — Customers ordering during lunch breaks, before meetings, or for scheduled events. They have a specific deadline in mind and feel anxious about whether the food will arrive on time. Even small delays create significant stress for this segment.
- Group/Social Order Users — Users who order in Bulk for friends or other social gatherings/events. For them, anxiety is high because of social accountability, the pressure to keep others updated.

Pain Points

- **Time-Sensitive Users-less time during work/strict time deadlines, fear of not able to eat if food arrives during meeting after lunch break**
- **Group/Social Order Users-social anxiety, fear of being blamed**
- **First-time users-Lack of knowledge/awareness of delivery model, trust issues**

Prioritization

We will be focusing on first-time users and time sensitive users under the assumption they account for majority of delivery volume and hence revenue. Additionally, Swiggy doesnt position itself as a a leader for social events/weddings. Hence, business wise, it doesnt make sense to focus on event orders.

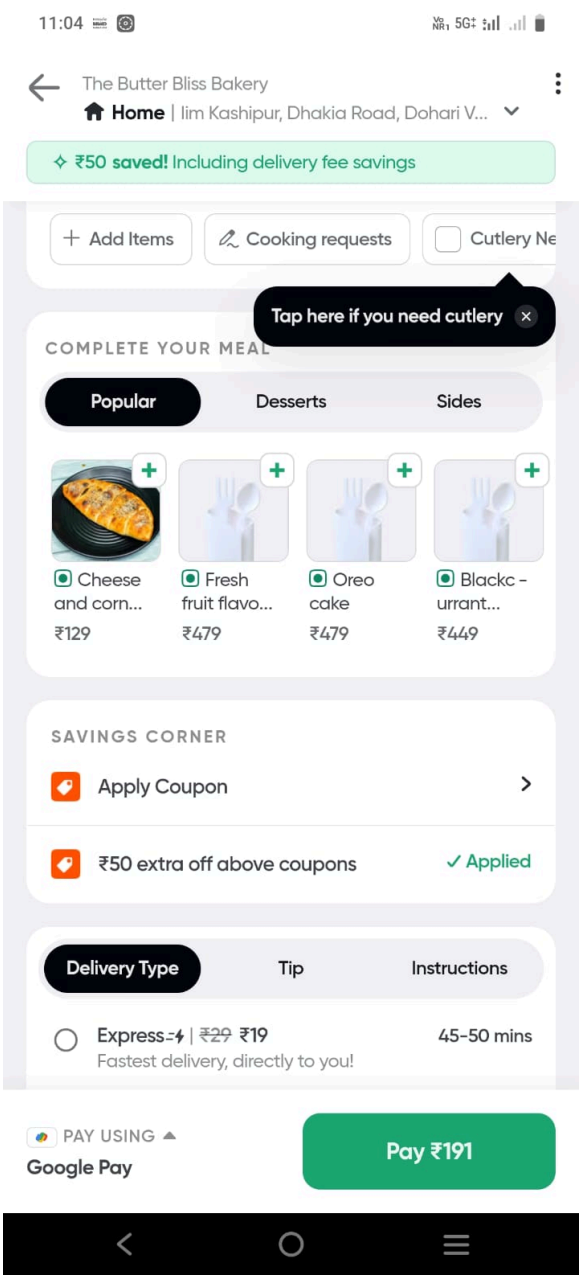
Solutions

Time-sensitive user

Confidence-Based ETA Window

User Journey

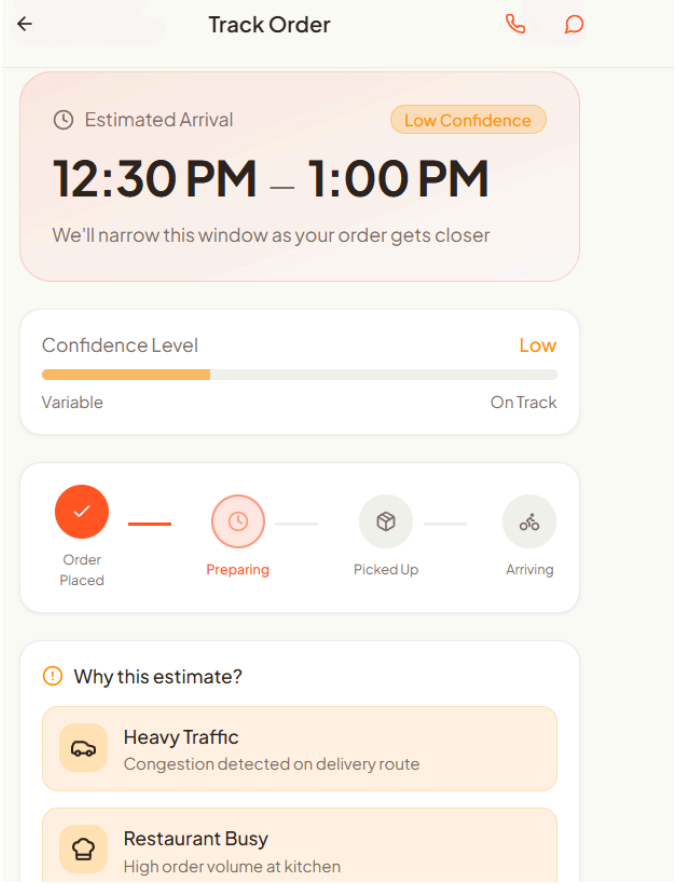
1. User places the order



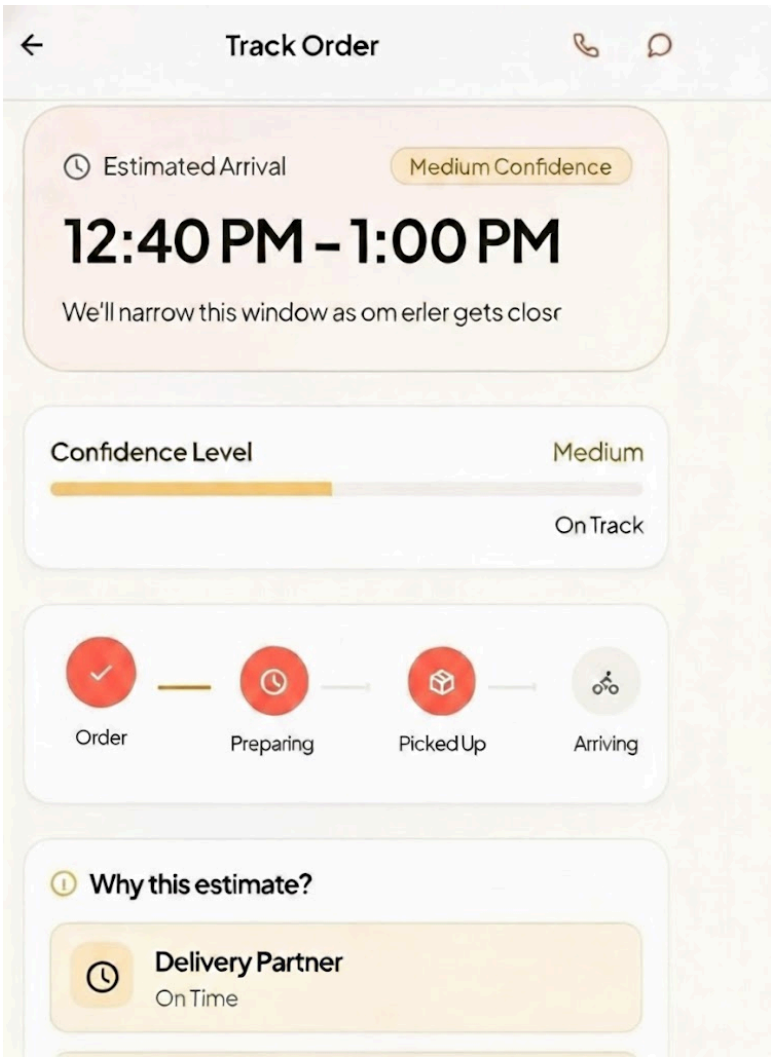
2. User gets the ETA Based time window for the order

Example: Arriving between 12:45–12:55 PM (high confidence)

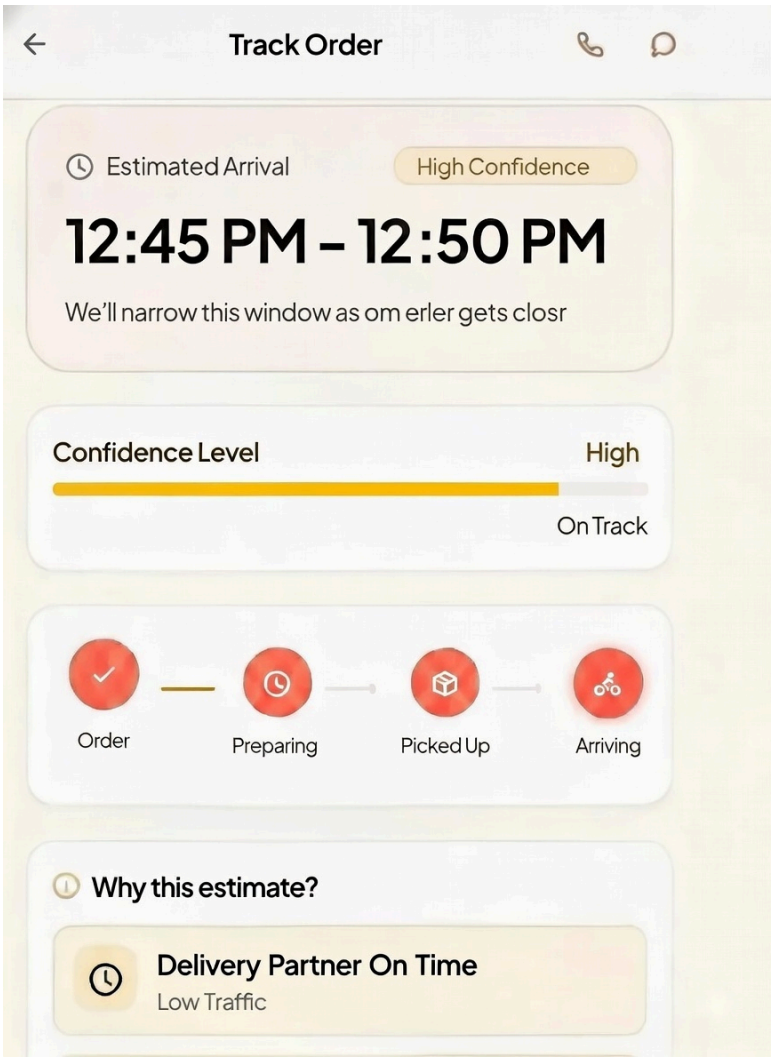
Arriving between 12:30-1:00 PM (low confidence)-low confidence due to traffic or other external variables



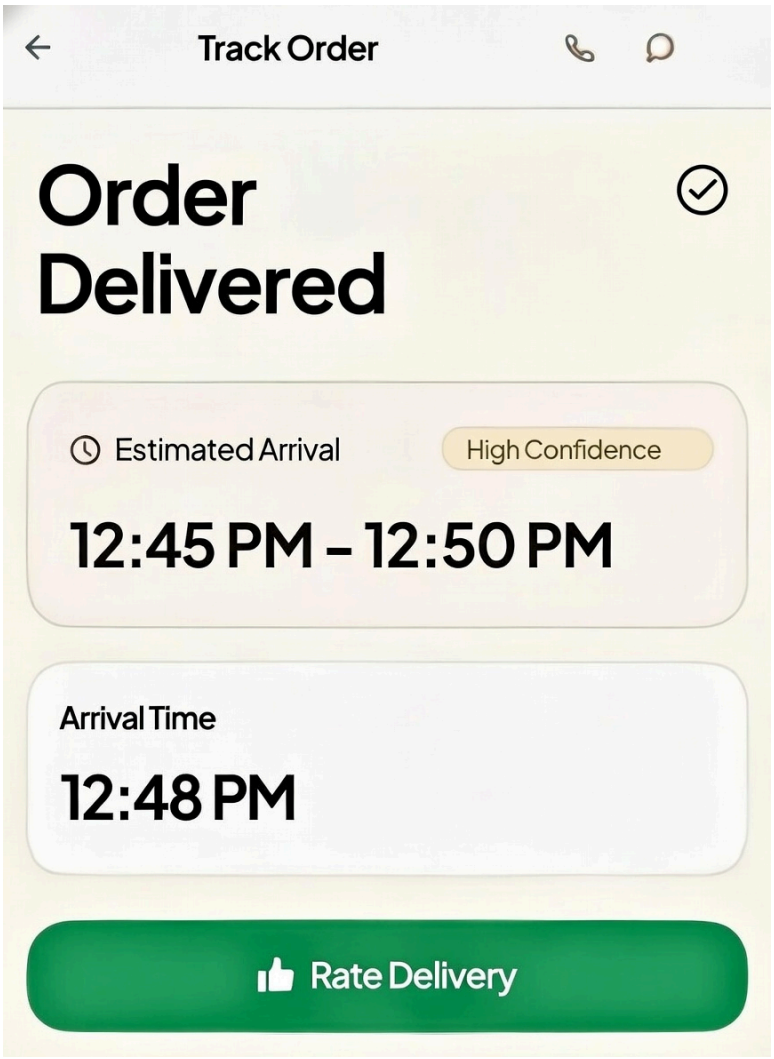
3. User rechecks the app after pickup has been completed



4. Order nearly reaches the user earlier than expected. The ETA is based on low traffic now



5. User successfully receives the order



Why it works

- Removes minute-by-minute anxiety
- Enables planning (“I can take a 10-min call”)

Metrics to track

App refresh per order (Northstar)

Customer Ticket per order (secondary)

Customer Satisfaction (Guardrail)

Trade Offs

Confidence-Based ETA Window

Pros

- **Reduces app refresh frequency:** Users get a clear time range instead of a moving countdown, reducing the need to constantly check
- **Sets realistic expectations:** High/low confidence indicators help users understand uncertainty without feeling misled
- **Enables better planning:** Time-sensitive users can schedule their activities around the ETA window
- **Builds trust through transparency:** Acknowledging low confidence due to traffic is more honest than changing ETAs repeatedly

Cons

- **Wider time windows may increase perceived wait time:** A 30-minute window (12:30-1:00 PM) might feel longer than a single ETA, even if more accurate
- **Complexity in implementation:** Requires sophisticated ML models to calculate confidence levels based on real-time traffic, restaurant prep times, and rider availability
- **Potential for lower satisfaction if delivery arrives at end of window:** Users may anchor to the earliest time and feel disappointed if food arrives at 12:55 instead of 12:45
- **May not work for very urgent users:** Those with strict deadlines might be deterred by low-confidence windows

Final Recommendation

To implement a Confidence-Based ETA system, Swiggy should adopt a phased approach that starts with transparency.

First, replace the single-countdown timer with a range (e.g., 12:30 PM – 1:00 PM) and assign a "Low Confidence" badge based on external variables like high kitchen volume or heavy traffic. As the order progresses and the rider picks up the food, the system should dynamically narrow the window (e.g., 12:45 PM – 12:55 PM) and switch to a "High Confidence" status.

To maintain trust, the UI must include a "Why this estimate?" section that explicitly lists the real-time factors influencing the window. Finally, track App Refreshes per Order as the North Star metric to ensure the broader window successfully empowers users to plan their time rather than constantly checking for updates