



a.team

Food & Beverage

# How Blank Street scaled from to 40 locations and raised \$94M with a custom coffee app

**\$94M**

Raised

**4.9**

Average App Store  
Rating for 6.3k+ review

**40**

New coffee cart  
locations

## The Challenge

Blank Street started with a single coffee cart in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. For co-founders Vinay Menda and Issam Freiha, the idea was simple: combine the quick, seamless experience of a coffee chain with the high-quality, specialty coffee of a high-end mom and pop, all while offering more affordable prices than Starbucks and specialty cafés.

To deliver on that Starbucks-like speed and efficiency, Freiha and Menda wanted to build an order-ahead app. But as nontechnical co-founders, they faced significant hurdles:

- Lack of in-house technical expertise
- Limited startup budget
- Need for a diverse skill set, from fintech to real-time services and user onboarding
- Desire for a team that could integrate seamlessly with their operations

As Menda put it: "We needed to build something highly-custom on a startup budget, with a team that felt they were a core part of 'the family.'"

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—Vinday Menda, Co-Founder @ Blank Street

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## The Build

Blank Street turned to A.Team for a solution. Within a week, A.Team assembled and deployed a core product team consisting of a Product Manager, Full-stack Developer, Back-end Developer, and Product Designer. This rapid deployment was crucial for Blank Street's ambitious timeline.

The project scope was comprehensive, including: Prototyping and mobile app development, Integration of digital ordering with physical cafe operations, Seamless connection between Point of Sale (PoS) system and operations, and Implementation of payments, rewards system, and progress tracking.

To bring this vision to life, A.Team leveraged cutting-edge technologies, like: Flutter and Dart for cross-platform development, Firebase and AWS for robust backend services, Node.js and Nest.js for server-side logic, and CodeMagic for continuous integration and delivery.

The result was an intuitive app that enabled single-click ordering, drink readiness notifications, and a loyalty rewards system. Throughout the three-year collaboration, A.Team scaled to meet Blank Street's evolving needs, working closely with the C-suite, Brand/Marketing, and Operations teams.

Menda highlighted the cost-effectiveness of this approach: "Agencies were quoting us at 66% more than it cost us to build with an A.Team." Freiha added, "Our A.Team is not a group of 3rd-party contractors. They are core members of our team and family, adding a level of expertise better than we could have found anywhere else."

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## Outcomes

The impact of A.Team's work was transformative for Blank Street:

- **Rapid Expansion:** From a single cart to over 40 locations in just three years.
- **Significant Funding:** Raised \$94 million, led by Tiger Global and other investors.
- **App Success:** Achieved a 4.9–star rating with over 6,300 reviews in the App Store.

This success extended beyond metrics. Blank Street's innovative approach to affordable, high-quality coffee caught the attention of major media outlets, including TechCrunch, The New York Times, and Fast Company.

The app's seamless integration of mobile ordering with the in-store experience was key to Blank Street's growth strategy. It allowed them to efficiently manage operations while providing customers with the convenience they craved, ultimately fueling their rapid expansion and attracting significant investment.

By partnering with A.Team, Blank Street was able to overcome their initial technical challenges and create a digital product that not only met but exceeded their original goals. This case demonstrates how the right technical partnership can turn an innovative idea into a rapidly-scaling business, even in a competitive market like specialty coffee.