

Instamart: turning browsers into regulars

How Swiggy Instamart could convert more cart-builders into repeat customers, and the one test I'd run first.

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Instamart

₹364

Blinkit

₹453

Zepto

₹357

Payable totals from one late-night session. Not like-for-like baskets.

Test the clarity before blaming the price

MY SHORT ANSWER

Show shoppers the payable total and fee conditions earlier in the cart, and test it against a control group before calling it the root cause.

Instamart's checkout already shows bill details. The question is whether earlier and clearer changes what people do.

HOW TO READ THIS

Interview report

What a participant told me.

Walkthrough observation

What I saw on screen, at one address and time.

My hypothesis

A reading that still needs testing.

Evidence limit. Directional discovery research: 15 interviews and one walkthrough per app, at one address and one time. Not representative, and not proof of cause.

What I looked at

1

Customer Interviews

2

Apps walked through: Instamart, Blinkit, Zepto

3

Late-night session, same address

4

Items in the intended basket

Questions I wanted to answer

- 1 What decides which quick commerce app people open?
- 2 Where do discovery and checkout create friction?
- 3 How do fees, minimum-order thresholds and offers change perceived value?
- 4 Which intervention is both testable and measurable?

Three personas, three ways to define value

PERSONA 1

Lowest price wins

Compares apps and orders where the price is lowest. Reported abandoning orders mainly because of pricing, extra-fee worries and one 33-minute delivery.

Reading: Total price and speed expectations may decide completion.

PERSONA 2

Fees, minimums, recovery

Uses several apps by price and availability. Minimum order matters. Instamart felt less affordable because of extra charges. Support fixed a wrong-item order.

Reading: Value includes fees, thresholds and service recovery.

PERSONA 3

Convenience, and a look-alike

Compares first for essentials and wants low minimums. Calls Instamart a last resort for some orders, and says it looks too much like Swiggy.

Reading: Value perception and differentiation may both matter.

Interview reports, n=15, anonymised. Directional only.

Where the journey gets heavy

1	Need	Urgent top-up or routine restock? One participant checks a nearby store first.	Interview report
2	App choice	Price, availability, minimum order and convenience get compared across apps.	Interview report
3	Discovery	Water and chips took scrolling. Amul Taaza and regular Amul Vanilla were not available on Instamart.	Walkthrough
4	Cart and checkout	“What will I actually pay?” Fees and thresholds looked different on each app.	Walkthrough + interview
5	Delivery and after	One 33-minute delivery. One wrong-item order, fixed by support.	Interview report

Testable now: uncertainty about total cost. Discovery and assortment come next, in a separate test.

Same night, three different bills

Instamart

₹364

payable

Items	₹317
Handling fee	₹12
Extra fee	₹35.40
Delivery fee	₹0*
Estimate	23 min

Blinkit

₹453

payable

Items	₹410
Handling fee	₹13
Extra fee	₹30
Delivery fee	not listed
Estimate	22 min

Zepto

₹357

payable

Items	₹357
Handling fee	₹0
Extra fee	₹0
Delivery fee	₹0
Estimate	5 min*

Instamart's delivery fee was waived through Swiggy One. Instamart showed a ₹35.40 late-night fee; Blinkit showed a ₹30 rain surge charge; Zepto showed delivery, handling and late-night fees as waived. Product variants and pack sizes differed, so this is not a like-for-like price comparison. Delivery estimates reflect one session and do not establish typical delivery speeds.

What I can say, and what I can't

What I can say

- The three captured checkouts showed different fee structures.
- Instamart and Blinkit showed extra charges. Zepto showed them as waived in this basket.
- Instamart didn't have Amul Taaza or regular Amul Vanilla in this session.

What I can't say

- That one app is cheaper or faster overall.
- That fees cause abandonment. Seeing a fee isn't the same as leaving because of it.
- What fees or stock look like at other addresses or times.

Three ideas, one to test first

A 1 • Test first

Clearer total-cost communication

Two interviewees raised price or fee concerns; one reported abandoning orders over price. Checkouts showed different charges.

Main doubt: Does clearer presentation change behaviour, or is the price itself the barrier?

B 2 • Investigate next

Better discovery and assortment

Some items needed scrolling. Two products were missing on Instamart in this session.

Main doubt: How often does this cause exits or substitutions?

C 3 • Validate first

Stronger Instamart identity

One participant said it looks too similar to Swiggy.

Main doubt: Does a distinct look drive purchase or loyalty?

“Test first” means worth testing, not proven. If funnel data shows discovery or stock-outs lose more orders, the ranking changes.

The test: Clear Basket

HYPOTHESIS

If Instamart shows the expected payable amount and fee conditions earlier, more carts become orders, without hurting contribution margin.

PRIMARY METRIC

Cart-to-order conversion: eligible cart users who place an order, divided by all eligible cart users. Compared between groups over a sample size and duration agreed in advance.

CONTROL Today's cart and checkout.

TREATMENT A cost summary in the cart, before payment: subtotal and discounts, applicable charges, estimated total and fee conditions in plain language.

RANDOMISATION Eligible users are randomly assigned to control or treatment, and each user keeps the same group.

GUARDRAILS Contribution margin is a guardrail: if conversion rises but margin falls past an agreed limit, don't scale. Also watch abandonment, order value, repeat purchase, complaints and errors.

How I'd decide, and a proposed 30 days

Scale

Credible, commercially meaningful lift, with guardrails inside agreed limits.

Iterate

Directionally positive, or comprehension improves but no clear lift. Dig into segments and feedback.

Stop or roll back

Conversion drops, guardrails breach, or shoppers get confused or spend more than they want.

Week 1

Check funnel data and fee-related exits. Is the problem big enough?

Week 2

Prototype the clear summary. Test comprehension with a few users.

Week 3

Set up events, agree thresholds, work out sample size.

Week 4+

Launch the random test. Watch guardrails. Scale, iterate or stop.

The timeline is a proposal. No uplift target yet: I don't have a baseline conversion rate.

What could make this wrong

- The price itself may be the barrier, not how it's shown.
- Funnel data may show search misses or stock-outs lose more orders than checkout.
- 15 interviews and one late-night basket can't speak for Instamart's customers.
- Showing fees earlier could scare people off as easily as reassure them.

MY CLOSING TAKE

The goal isn't more orders. It's an informed decision, an order when the value works, and a reason to come back.

Next: check checkout abandonment and fee-related exits in Instamart's funnel data. If material, run Clear Basket. If discovery misses or stock-outs lose more orders, prioritise those instead.