

Foodpanda partners startups to trial food delivery via autonomous robots in NUS, NTU, Punggol

Foodpanda has partnered with three autonomous robot startups to advance the progress of driverless deliveries in Singapore.

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Food delivery platform Foodpanda announced today (June 10) that it has partnered with three autonomous robot startups to advance the progress of driverless deliveries in Singapore.

They include Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) student startup, Whizz Mobility; local robotics company **OTSAW**; and Chinese autonomous vehicle startup Neolix.

The trials will be rolled out sequentially across separate locations in Singapore.

From mid-May onwards, customers within the different trial areas will have the chance to have their orders delivered by a striking pink droid from among the three startups.

The robots are intended to provide additional support to riders by completing last-mile deliveries, especially in accessing difficult locations, and ease strains on riders during peak hours or bad weather conditions.

According to a media release by Foodpanda, the launch of these pilot projects is also timed to meet the increasing demand for safer delivery following the pandemic.

How it works



Whizz Mobility's FoodBot / Image Credit: Foodpanda

Foodpanda's autonomous delivery projects began with the rollout of Whizz Mobility's FoodBots, which deliver across the entire NTU campus, spanning 200 hectares.

The self-driving electronically powered robots function as riders, picking up food and other items from merchants and delivering the orders to staff and students around the campus daily, from 11am to 7pm.

Select customers who place orders during the robots' operation hours will receive a notification, informing them that their orders will be delivered by the robot.

Merchants will load order items into the robot and once the robot arrives at the delivery location, customers will be required to show the order proof to the camera mounted on the robot to unlock the hatch and collect their order.

Foodpanda's trial with FoodBots will run from May to November 2021, with plans to expand to other areas in Singapore.



Otsaw's Camello robot / Image Credit: Foodpanda

Foodpanda is also recruiting Camello — OTSAW's autonomous delivery robot — to join its fleet to deliver food, groceries, and more from Punggol Oasis terrace mall to residents in surrounding HDB blocks.

The robots will deliver to approximately 10 HDB blocks.

Camello will pick up foodpanda orders from merchant partners, drive itself to the ground floor of the customers' location and upon arrival, send a One-Time Pin (OTP) to the customer. Customers can then enter the OTP to open the trunk to collect their order.

Foodpanda will launch its three-month trial with Otsaw's Camello robots in August, with plans to add more locations and expand the trial delivery area to reach more customers.



Neolix autonomous vehicle / Image Credit: Foodpanda

On the other hand, Neolix’s autonomous vehicles will not only be able to deliver food orders in National University of Singapore’s (NUS) University Town, but can also double as mobile convenience stores during off-peak mealtimes.

Its autonomous vehicles can store up to 100 bento boxes at once. Outside of peak hours, it will be stocked with coffee and snacks, transforming into a mobile convenience store.

Foodpanda’s partnership with Neolix will run from July to October 2021 at University Town, and marks the Chinese autonomous vehicle startup’s debut in Singapore.

Foodpanda’s use of robots for deliveries is also part of its wider strategy to leverage innovative technologies to progress towards a contactless, sustainable, and more efficient ecosystem of on-demand delivery services in Singapore.

“We are always thinking of ways to make our deliveries even more efficient, and we believe that robot delivery has plenty to offer in making our deliveries better and safer,” said Jorge Rubio, Operations Director of foodpanda Singapore.

“These robots, which are meant to complement our riders, will allow us to increase our delivery capacity and serve more customers in a more sustainable and cost-effective way,” he added.

Featured Image Credit: Foodpanda