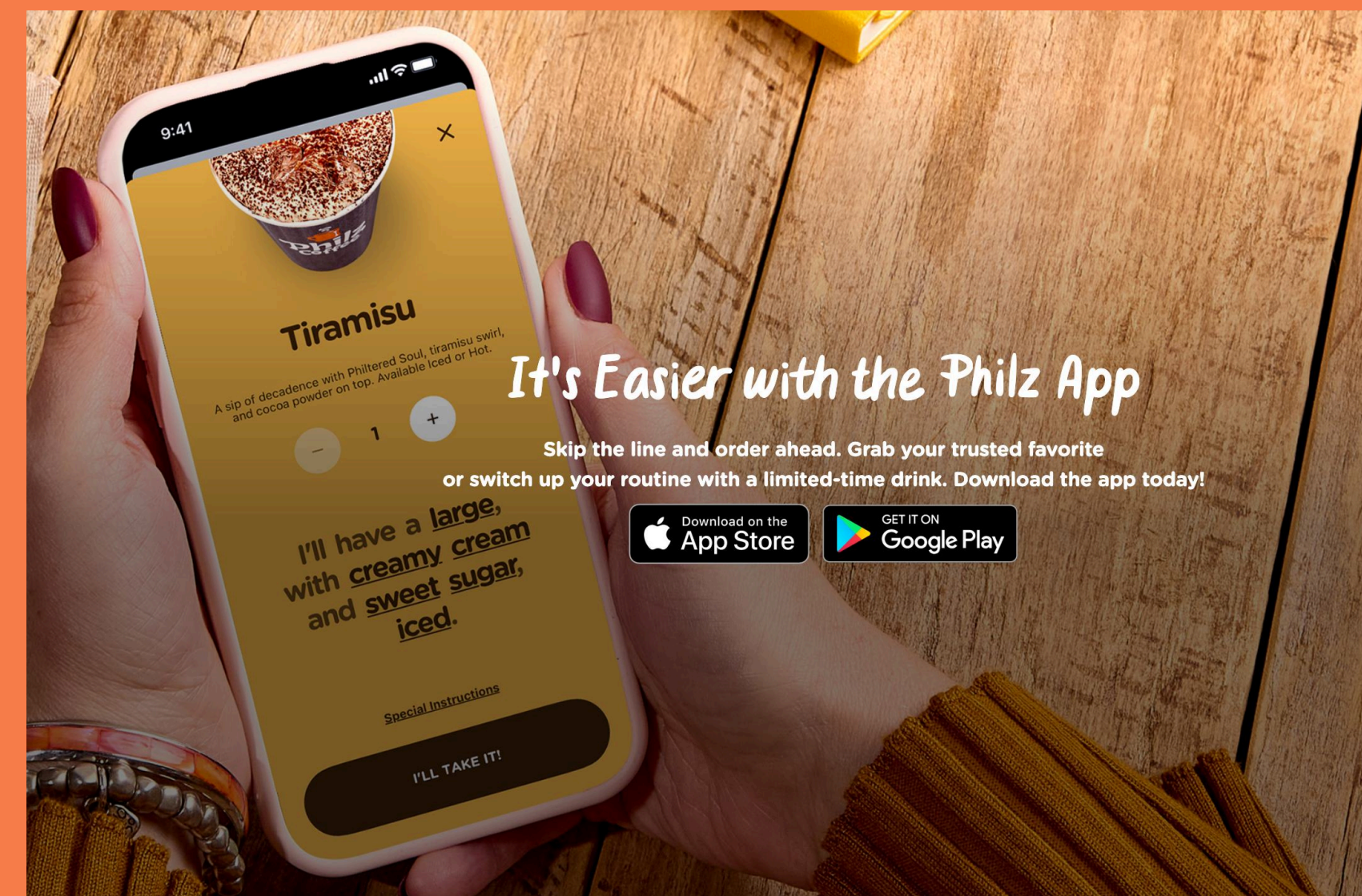
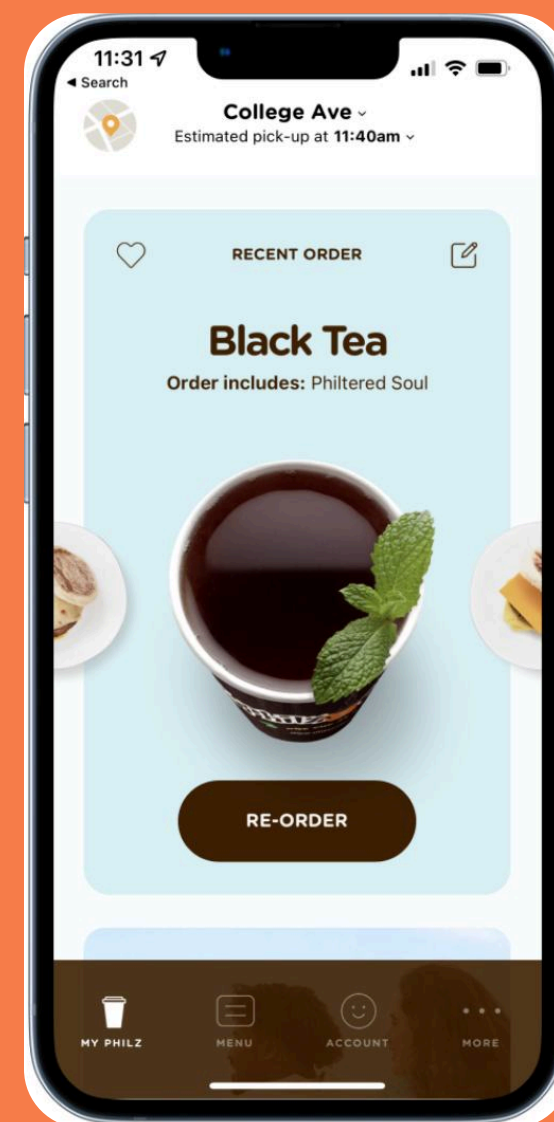
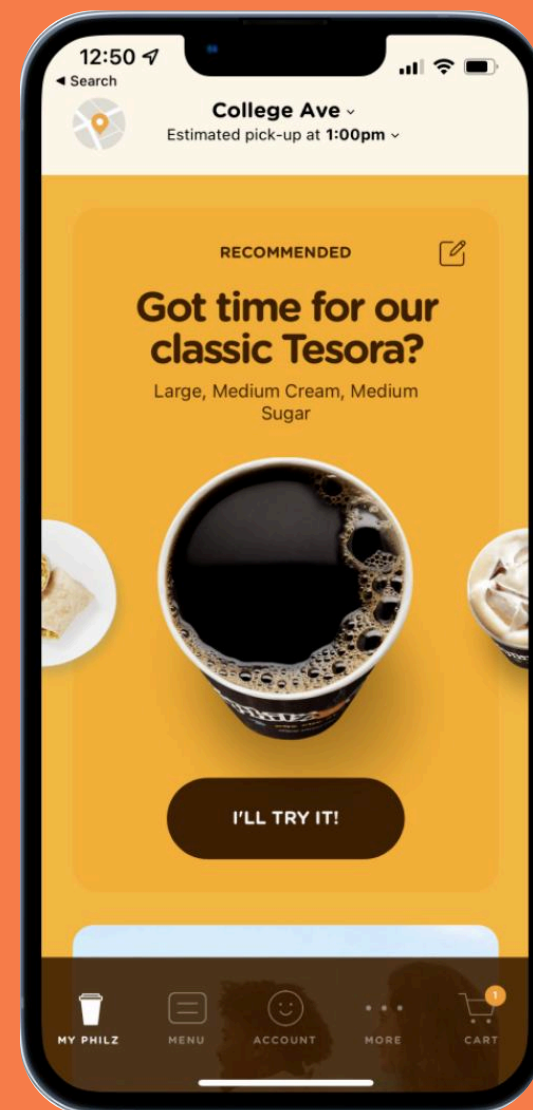


TOPLINE REPORT PHILZ COFFEE

"It makes me feel like a dummy."



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY + STUDY INFORMATION

This study evaluated the usability of the Philz Coffee mobile ordering app through moderated testing sessions conducted with 15 participants across five facilitator groups. Participants were tested on both iOS and Android devices, with some comparison sessions on the web interface. The goal was to identify friction points in the mobile ordering experience, with particular attention to whether users could understand and effectively interact with the app's touch-based controls.

Study Parameters:

- 15 participants across 5 facilitator groups (Stacy, Tarun, Liz, Paige, James)
- Platforms: iOS, Android, Web
- 5 tasks per session: find/download the app, select a store location, customize an order using modifiers, place a drink order with special instructions, manage the cart and check out

Key Findings:

- The modifier system was the single largest point of failure. Roughly 8-10 of 15 participants could not successfully customize a drink using the app's built-in modifier controls.
- Users consistently bypassed the modifier system by typing customizations into the special instructions field, only to hit an undisclosed character limit.
- The recommendations section dominated the screen and prevented users from finding the main menu, with some participants spending up to 5 minutes searching.
- Ingredient and allergen information was unintuitive, a gap with both usability and potential liability implications.
- The cart and checkout flow was the most consistently successful task across all sessions.

Primary Recommendation: Redesign the modifier interaction to use clearer visual affordances and tap feedback, reduce the visual dominance of the recommendations section, and surface ingredient information at the point of product selection.

WHERE IT ALL BREAKS DOWN

The Modifier System Fails Users (Critical)

The drink customization system was the most consistent source of task failure across all 15 sessions. Participants could not find modifiers, did not recognize the underline as a tappable element, and were confused by quantity controls (especially selecting "none" for an ingredient). When modifiers were found, the tap interaction frequently did not register or produced unexpected results. One participant spent 2.5 minutes searching before giving up. Another said: *"It makes me feel like a dummy."*

The downstream effect: participants abandoned modifiers and typed their customizations into the special instructions field instead. This workaround then collided with an undisclosed character limit that forced users to truncate their requests. The character count was not visible to users, and at least 7 of 15 participants hit this wall.

Recommendations Obscure the Menu (High)

The recommended drinks section dominates the screen on first load, and multiple participants mistook it for the full menu. Users scrolled through recommendations repeatedly without realizing the actual menu existed elsewhere. Tarun's first participant took 5 minutes to locate the menu. His third participant spent 2-3 minutes scrolling back and forth. Observations from the sessions suggest that the Home and Menu navigation should be more visually prominent, the cards could be smaller, and that the Rewards and Account sections consume too much screen real estate relative to the core ordering function.

No Ingredients or Allergen Information (Critical)

Participants across multiple sessions noted the absence of ingredient lists and allergen information. The flavor descriptors used by Philz (e.g., "creamy," "sweet") were called "non-standard" and unintuitive.

While the ingredient emblems were present, only one participant out of 15 actually found them.

For a food and beverage ordering app, this gap affects both the user experience and the company's potential liability exposure. At least 5 participants explicitly noted this absence.

TAP AND HOPE

Modifier Tap Targets Don't Communicate Interactivity

The modifier controls rely on an underline visual convention to signal "tappable," but participants did not recognize this as an interactive element. The affordance failed across age groups and platform familiarity levels, but usability issues skewed towards older people.

Tarun's second participant "tried multiple times" with the tap motion and "action did not register." Users' natural tap behavior yielded null results, leading them to assume the controls were display-only rather than interactive.

One facilitator noted this was especially problematic for older participants.

Keyboard Obscures Text Input

When participants tapped into the special instructions field, the mobile keyboard covered the text entry area. Nik's participant "can't see word typing due to soft keyboard." The app does not scroll or reposition the input field above the keyboard, which is a standard mobile pattern that is missing here.

While partly an OS-level concern, the app is responsible for compensating.

Scrolling Behavior Traps Users in Recommendations

The app's default view surfaces a recommendations section that responds to standard vertical scroll and swipe gestures, but does not lead users to the main menu. Participants' natural scrolling behavior kept them cycling through recommended items, unaware that the full menu existed in a different section of the app.

Multiple participants were observed spending significant time scrolling through recommendations before discovering the menu, with some requiring facilitator intervention to move forward. The gesture works mechanically, but the information architecture means that a user's most instinctive mobile interaction, scrolling down to see more, actively delays them from reaching the core ordering functionality.

Desire to Use

Participant sentiment was mixed. One participant rated the app a 10, another called it "childish," and a third explicitly asked "Is there a search bar?" suggesting the app was missing functionality they expected. One younger participant found the experience "very intuitive" and finished in 5:39 total, which suggests the design can work once a user has learned the interaction patterns. However, the learning curve is steep enough that multiple first-time users expressed frustration and confusion during initial use. The overall UI was described as "clean" but "less intuitive" than expected.

WHAT WORKS. WHAT'S NEXT.

Successes:

Cart and checkout was the most consistently successful task. Participants found removing items, changing quantities, and completing checkout to be straightforward across both platforms.

Location selection also performed well, with most participants finding their store without difficulty. The drink category structure (coffee/tea separation) made sense to participants once they found it, and was described positively.

Notably, younger participants tended to navigate the interface with less friction, while older or less tech-familiar participants struggled more with the app's non-standard interaction patterns. This suggests the interface relies on conventions that are not yet widely understood across user demographics.

Recommendations

Redesign modifier interaction: Replace the underline-based tap pattern with a more visually prominent control (toggle switches, stepper controls, or clearly labeled buttons). Provide immediate visual feedback when a modifier is selected. Consider progressive disclosure to reduce cognitive overload rather than displaying all modifier options simultaneously.

Restructure information hierarchy: Reduce the screen real estate given to recommendations on the main ordering screen. Make the menu navigation more prominent. Consider moving recommendations below the menu or into a dedicated tab so they don't block the primary ordering path.

Surface product information: Add more prominent ingredient lists and allergen flags to each menu item at the point of selection. Replace ambiguous flavor adjectives with concrete descriptions. This addresses a usability gap and a potential business liability.

Fix the special instructions field: Display the character count. Increase the character limit, especially given that users are relying on this field as a modifier workaround. Ensure the keyboard does not obscure the text input area on mobile.

Improve onboarding: The "Let's Go" screen was skipped or misunderstood by several participants. Consider auto-detecting the nearest store location and simplifying the welcome flow to reduce initial orientation time and potential conversion loss.