

Tyson invests in Smart-Oven Startup Tovala

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Tovala's smart oven can steam, bake and broil in minutes by scanning a code on the box. No recipes or meal preparation are required. This Chicago-based startup company develops its own food, software and hardware for cooking.

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As part of the deal, Tyson will add an observer to Tovala's board in Tyson Ventures managing director Reese Schroeder.

According to Tovala CEO David Rabie, the deal made sense for them as they started to look toward expanding the Tovala platform beyond their own meals.

"Over time, we will have other brands on the platform where we can automate the cooking, similar to how it works with Tovala meals," said Rabie in an interview with The Spoon. "This (Tyson) is the first brand and harbinger of what's to come."

The move comes at an interesting time for big food companies like Tyson. Consumer packaged good providers are continuing to look for ways to reach the consumer as Amazon continues to wreak havoc on the retail landscape and consumers are increasingly exploring fresh food choices. Home food delivery is seen a potentially interesting – if still yet somewhat unproven – route to the consumer. The move by Tyson follows investments by other big food companies like Nestle, Unilever and Campbell into the home food delivery space.