



# Caribou Coffee Brews Up App Enhancements

NowSecure automated mobile application security testing helps the company speed time to market with confidence that its flagship app is secure.

## About

Founded in 1992, Caribou Coffee sells specialty coffees, teas, baked goods and merchandise. The privately held retailer is based in Minneapolis and operates stores in 18 U.S. states and nine countries. Forbes recently recognized Caribou as one of America's best mid-size employers.

## Executive Summary

Used by over half of its rewards program customers, Caribou Coffee's mobile app has become core to the business. The company uses it to engage with customers; sell food, beverages and merchandise; and reward loyalty.

The NowSecure automated mobile application security testing solution helps Caribou Coffee deeply test its mobile apps to realize the following benefits:

- Provides clear reporting that tells developers what they need to know
- Ensure PCI compliance and peace of mind that apps are secure
- Speed the release cycle by integrating into the existing mobile application development process

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***“One of the best things about moving to NowSecure is not having to fan through a 110-page security audit to figure out what bugs and security issues you need to address.”***

***— Eric Caron, Senior Director of IT Solutions, Caribou Coffee***

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## The Story

While Caribou Coffee had long offered a mobile application, the pandemic has made the app critical to safely serving customers through new features such as order ahead, curbside pickup and a pilot delivery program. The retailer was able to quickly update the app while ensuring it was secure thanks in part to automated mobile application security testing integrated into the software development lifecycle.

“The ability to launch new features quickly has become essential to our business growth,” says Eric Caron, senior director of IT solutions for Caribou Coffee. “Anything we can do to make more things contactless is a win for everybody.” For example, the company recently added beans, ready-to-drink cold brew and holiday merchandise to the app; rolled out new pickup options; incorporated rewards redemption and enabled employees to make discounted purchases using the app rather than a physical card.

## Painful Security Audits Posed a Problem

This level of security automation is relatively new for Caribou Coffee. The company previously endured a turnaround time of two months or more for a third party to conduct a manual application security review of its app binary. Then it took the Caribou team several weeks to pore through the findings and fix the bugs to achieve PCI compliance. “Using NowSecure, we took a 3-month process of binary-compiled to report-generated to bug-fixed down to 30 minutes. That’s a game changer,” Caron says.

In addition, Caron’s former solution was error prone and missed vulnerabilities it should have caught. Meanwhile, understanding and acting on the assessment reports presented another challenge. For instance, once a high-severity TLS issue wasn’t mentioned until Page 42 — that’s something Caribou needed to know upfront. “When your app has issues, you don’t want to read a 100+ page report – you want a fast summary to focus on what matters,” says Caron.

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**“We know that we are using a trusted solution that allows us to monitor our mobile app builds in a straightforward and automated way.”**  
— Heather Brinkhaus, Senior Business Analyst, Customer Apps, Caribou Coffee

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Caribou Coffee decided to evaluate automated mobile application security testing solutions to ease the pain of maintaining PCI compliance and continuously monitor security risks. After evaluating a few tools, the IT team chose the industry-leading solution from NowSecure because it met the requirements for automation, speed, depth of testing and ease of use.

Heather Brinkhaus, senior business analyst of customer apps for Caribou Coffee, notes the NowSecure platform was the only one that could test the latest Android and iOS builds. “The fact that NowSecure integrated into our existing app development process was a huge selling factor that continues to save us time and resources today,” she says. “Developers don’t have the hassle of manually executing and monitoring tests.”

## AppSec Integrated Into the DevOps Toolchain

Deploying the NowSecure solution into the DevOps toolchain as part of the mobile app build process took about a week. Developers said integrating it with the CircleCI CI/CD system was straightforward and took some extra time to ultimately save time in the long run.

Caribou Coffee uses NowSecure Platform to automatically test its mobile app binary when developers promote the code to quality assurance, and then again before deploying to production. Collapsing what used to be a two-month manual process into a matter of minutes, the NowSecure solution conducts deep testing using a mix of static, dynamic, interactive and API security testing. Brinkhaus explains, “Performing this review at two places in our development cycle allows us to catch issues early, promptly address them and confirm that we are putting out a safe and secure product.”

## Company Gains Full Visibility Into Risks

Brinkhaus, who joined Caribou Coffee’s mobile app team after the NowSecure deployment, said the development team lauds the productivity improvements they’ve gained from automated testing. “Being able to trigger tests when we promote code has saved us meaningful time,” she says. In fact, the company was able to increase its release frequency from quarterly to monthly for a 3x improvement.

NowSecure automatically prioritizes risk level and highlights where teams should focus on the highest priority items, making its dashboards, assessment score and reports easy for Caribou Coffee developers to understand. They can refer to the product’s contextual advice and recommendations to quickly fix issues. In addition, Brinkhaus appreciates that she can rely on NowSecure to stay abreast of the latest security risks and compliance standards and fold that research into its products.

Overall, Caribou Coffee enjoys the peace of mind, confidence and top-notch customer service that the NowSecure partnership brings. “Knowing that our system is secured lets us focus on the part of the business that drives sales,” Caron concludes.

[NowSecure](#) is the mobile app security and privacy software and services company trusted by the world’s most demanding Agile and DevOps organizations and most advanced security teams. Through fast, accurate, efficient automated continuous SAST/DAST/IAST/API testing on real devices, NowSecure identifies the broadest array of security threats, compliance gaps and privacy risks.