

THE UPSIDE OF FOOD AT WORK

Smart food-at-work programs are powerful tools for increasing engagement, recruiting and retaining top talent, and even lowering insurance costs.

Google co-founder Sergey Brin urged the company's architects and designers to plan office space so that no one would be more than 200 feet from food. Because eating brings people together, Brin surmised that new products and services could be imagined when team members and leaders gathered around meals.

Forbes reports that many thought the tech giant's goal was selfish: to make food so accessible that workers wouldn't want to leave the office, thereby squeezing more work hours from staff. As it turns out, offering good food got people to work together. This early focus on culture earned Google its reputation as a highly rated place to work.

Creative cuisine can be the game-changer that companies need to build stronger organizations that fortify culture, encourage employee collaboration, and energize and inspire workers.

Harnessing the Power of Food

Fully customized dining and refreshment programs aren't just for hot tech companies or corporate giants. Continental, a Metro Detroit-based food service provider, helps customers define culture, create community, connect siloed teams, contribute to employee satisfaction and build a healthier workforce.

Collaboration and Community



GENTHERM an innovator in world-class thermal products, competes for a variety of skilled workers in research, product development and more.

As part of its corporate strategy to create benefits that attract and retain top talent, its CEO, Dan Coker, sought hot food service for the company's headquarters. His objective? To spur teamwork, make the business more attractive to talented workers, and fulfill the company's promise to keep employees healthy, fit, productive and happy.

The company converted its light-filled atrium to an inviting gathering spot equipped with kitchen prep space and a modern servery for dishing up meals.

Because people can simply leave their desks, walk to a pleasant dining space and choose from a great selection of food, they often hold impromptu meetings over lunch, leading to gains in collaboration and productivity.

Employees are energized, healthier, and feel more appreciated because they work for a company committed to providing them with a fast, on-trend and convenient dining option as appealing as anything from a local restaurant.

“On-site dining directly relates to our values of collaboration and respect; it is immersive, and it brings our people together and helps them engage,” says Coker. He adds that employees value the quality, the innovative offerings and not having to go out for lunch.

Food Defines Culture

China’s Yanfeng and automotive seating manufacturer Adient united to form  (YFAI). As leaders faced the task of merging companies, it was clear that existing Dilbert workspaces didn’t match up to the image of a company renowned for designing sophisticated vehicle interior solutions.

Mike Romanski, executive director for North American manufacturing engineering, determined that an open office with shared workspaces and on-site dining would set the bar for the future, and it would be the final step in integrating many cultures under one roof.

YFAI’s steering committee visited sites where workers enjoy chef-driven workplace dining by Continental. Seeing the enthusiastic support and teamwork prompted by the dining service sparked a partnership with Continental.

“Sitting across the lunch table with a co-worker, even if it’s for only 20 minutes, provides the type of environment that generates community and collaboration.”

— MIKE ROMANSKI
Executive Director, North America
Yanfeng Automotive Interiors

As workers settled in to YFAI’s new regional headquarters, they sampled two full weeks of meals “on the house”. Employees flocked to the open, airy dining and gathering space that’s just steps away from their desks to savor chef-crafted meals.

“Our biggest cultural gain from food on-site is a fully developed sense of community,” says Romanski. “This facility, which includes Continental, is a recruiting tool. We can’t wait to bring people in and show them why it’s different at YFAI,” he adds.

Convenience and Satisfaction



DETROIT™ (a heavy-duty engine, axle and

transmission manufacturer) strives to stay ahead of its competition by providing its skilled workforce with innovative incentives like on-site dining.

Workers enjoy the convenience of delicious, handcrafted meals in a full-service restaurant-style café and an in-plant self-checkout fresh food market. While enjoying flexible seating and integrated technology, employees make and strengthen interdisciplinary connections at the Detroit Diesel Café.

The company's employee development and communications manager, Kim Berg reports that the amenities significantly impact employee satisfaction, noting that providing quality food and service in fresh and inviting environments has everyone, right down to the team serving its guests, happy and engaged.

Conclusion

What's the upside of offering your workers food on-site? Creative cuisine can be the game-changer that companies need to build stronger organizations that fortify culture, encourage employee collaboration, and energize and inspire workers.

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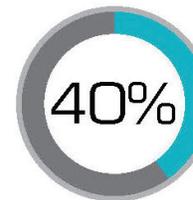
Inc. shared the results of a survey by Seamless, the online food-ordering service, showing that providing food is a morale booster.



60% of employees feel more "valued and appreciated"



60% say on-site meals encourage collaboration and strengthen company culture



40% say access to meals and snacks reduces stress

Sources

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