



# Hoppier research

The year is 2019. Millennials are running the workforce. Healthy habits are on the rise. Mental health is more important than ever. Employees lost interest in high salaries. HR managers fear increasing turnover. Snacks are the talk of the town and company-paid house cleaners are now a thing... sounds familiar doesn't it?

It's no secret that workforce trends have significantly shifted over the past couple of years. Specifically, there's been a lot of talk about office food as an emerging trend of employee satisfaction. Hoppier set out to find the truth about the impact of office snacks on current and potential employees, as well as the trends to look for in 2019.

This research report is written with the HR/Office Manager in mind who may be considering bringing snacks into the workplace. To facilitate a better understanding of the impact of office snacks, the following topics will be covered:

- **Productivity**
- **Job satisfaction**
- **Financial and social benefits**
- **Mental health**
- **And the future of office snacking**

Inside, you'll find a combination of case study findings and survey results, which were pulled from influential HR managers, employees and and researchers. In addition, each section ends with a **bite-sized fact** to highlight the key takeaway.

*\*Complete sources of the studies and surveys referenced in the report can be found at the end of the document.*

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# Productivity

## Office snacking programs are proven productivity boosters.

*The magic word in any office setting—productivity—is the evergreen metric that most businesses rely on to pinpoint which workplace programs are worth investing in, following employee happiness and budget management.*

Productivity can be measured in many different ways, but some things never change. If employees are being drawn away from their work due to hunger, chances are, productivity suffers as a result.

A 2011 study done by Staples found that each year, 2.4 billion hours were lost in US worker productivity because employees would leave their offices for coffee and snack runs. As many as 57% of office workers reported leaving the office to buy coffee or snacks daily, resulting in the alarming number mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

This is a major drain on time, not to mention employees wallets, so it's no surprise that businesses are turning to office snack delivery.

Furthermore, another survey of 100 office managers found that 88% of employers say "meals save their employees time by not leaving the office for lunch". Indeed, 70% of the surveyed population believe office food directly improves their productivity.

### **Bite-sized fact**

Office-provided snacks are a sound investment for businesses, since uninterrupted work is the foundation for increased productivity.

# Job satisfaction

## Office snacking programs are consistent with happier employees.

*As top talent becomes increasingly harder to find, companies are placing a greater focus on improving job satisfaction to aid retention.*

Job satisfaction and employee productivity go hand-in-hand due to the simple fact that happy employees are willing to go the extra mile. Many factors can play into one's satisfaction levels, but one thing we know for sure - snacks are a small gesture that can yield big results. Here's how:

In 2015, U.S. Today polled 1000 office workers, asking if they were happy at their job. Of these, 56% of respondents answered "very happy", or "extremely happy". However, when respondents had access to office-provided food, the number of "very" and "extremely" happy workers rose to 67% - an 11% increase based on snacking alone.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, additional studies show that the rate of happy office workers is consistent with the prevalence of office snacks. 75% of participants who had access to free food reported being happy at work.<sup>3</sup>

### **Bite-sized fact**

Access to free food in the office increases employee happiness by 11% and is strongly correlated with job satisfaction.

# Employee retention

**Office snacking programs do not directly aid employee retention, but solve issues related to employee dissatisfaction.**

*Turnover is a scary reality for many managers, and with the rise of workplace review sites such as Glassdoor, reducing internal churn is being given greater attention.*

In a market where employees place a high value on intangible work benefits such as culture and satisfaction, managers are looking for creative solutions to decrease turnover. The truth is, talent attraction and retention strategies cannot depend upon office food alone.

A Gallup poll found that no respondents defined office food as the key feature to job retention. Not surprising when reading the other options; 60% said they want a job that they are best suited for in terms of ability; 53% wanted a better work/life balance; 41% would prefer a better pay grade.<sup>4</sup>

While office food was not a top choice, it's important to note that one of the highest-picked options included employee satisfaction, which has been proven to increase via the presence of office food.

## **Bite-sized facts**

Office snacking programs do increase employee satisfaction, provided that the other collaterals for a healthy workplace are also present.

# Financial benefit

## Office snacking programs highlight an immediate benefit to workers without significant cost to employers.

Any plan that puts money back into the pocket of employees will be well received by the workforce. The advantages of office snacks are twofold; providing a tasty treat, as well as financial savings for employees.

Many managers prefer to focus on concrete benefits that can make a difference, now. Financial incentives may seem a little bland, but they make a lot of cents!

The Productivity section, takes note of the fact that providing office snacks keeps employees from leaving the workplace. Since they aren't rushing out to buy something from the nearest store, less time is spent re-focusing on tasks at hand.

In addition, employers are saving their teams money by offering office treats; but by how much?

Over 61% of employees reported that free office snacks saved them money throughout the work week.<sup>5</sup> Let's break that number down:

From participant polled, 35% of employees said they saved an average of \$20 per week with the introduction of a snacking program. The remaining 26% of employees claimed to be saving as much as \$50 per week due to free food at work.

That's an average of \$35 per week per employee, or \$1750 a year in value that employers were delivering into the hands of their workplace.

Can you say *ka-ching*?

This is how offices can turn candy bars into gold bars; or at the very least, a kick-ass vacation!

### **Bite-sized facts**

Management can save their employees thousands of dollars per year by offering cost-effective solutions that make a measurable difference in their daily lives.

# Social benefit

## **Office snacking programs reinforce healthy fraternization between colleagues by creating opportunities for friendship.**

*Improving the workplace experiences of employees includes facilitating positive employee interactions to promote a sense of cross-department community.*

Truth is, getting along with colleagues has a huge impact on employee happiness, and how well one functions in their position. Close friendships in the workplace lead to increased productivity, an integral factor to job satisfaction.

Tom Hsieh, CEO of Zappos is a great example of how workplace bonding can have an impact on the bottom line. Zappos fosters a culture that focuses closely on building connections between team members through team-building exercises, departmental celebrations for employee milestones, and extended training for new employees on core values. With this focus on friendships and fun, Zappos improved employee engagement and job satisfaction, in turn, strengthening the bottom line of his billion dollar company.<sup>6</sup>

Office friendships are a strong predictor of employee success, and a survey by Gallup found that individuals with a best friend at work were seven times more engaged with their work.<sup>7</sup>

Office snacks encourage workers to share smaller meals together, and there are clear psychological benefits to having quick conversations with one's peers.

The theory holds that time spent eating together means more collaboration, brainstorming, and socialization. When Cubist Pharmaceuticals put sensors under the tables, where their workers ate, to track the tone and frequency of lunch conversations, results showed that employees who shared talkative lunches were more energized and productive throughout the day.<sup>8</sup>

### **Bite-sized facts**

Employees engaging in conversations frequently were more productive and energetic, leading to better productivity in their tasks.



# Mental health

## **Office snacks are a proven strategy in improving employee mental health.**

*With arising mental health concerns and awareness, employers are looking for creative strategies to facilitate a healthy and stress-free environment.*

Funding mental health resources has become a top priority for companies of all sizes, and it's no surprise that food has been a vital tool in this fight for good health. It's well known that proper nutrition and mental well-being go hand-in-hand, but only recently have companies integrated food as a part of their wellness strategy.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that companies spend a collective \$225 billion a year on employee health care, and one of their top recommendations for improving workplace wellness, is increasing healthy food options provided to employees.<sup>9</sup>

Another amazing example of a company doing it right is Johnson & Johnson. When the industry giant saw a struggling workforce in the early 2000s, they realized it was an opportunity for growth, rather than an obstacle.

They introduced the Wellness and Health Promotion Programs, which encouraged preventative care, healthy eating and fun on-site activities; the results were incredible.

Between 2000-2009, they saw a whopping 170% return on investment into office wellness, and an average of \$565 saved on employee spend.<sup>10</sup>

### **Bite-sized facts**

Employers see strategies for mental health as building blocks of office culture, and are willing to try creative initiatives.

## Glassdoor superstars

Company	Office snack friendly?
Facebook	<b>Yes</b> , three meals a day with no loopholes, fully stocked kitchens in every building, and employee family family dining strongly encouraged.
Bain & Company	<b>Yes</b> , their signature Bain Café offers healthy snacks and beverages which are free to employees.
Boston Consulting Group	<b>Yes</b> , free snacks (e.g. cereal, pretzels, seltzers, coffee, M&Ms, and trail mix) reportedly offered at many of BCG's offices.
In-N-Out Burger	<b>Yes</b> , free meals offered to employees with every shift, and they really love the food!
Google	<b>Yes</b> , Google's "microkitchen" break rooms are stocked with free drinks and snacks. "Google 15" was also coined to denote how many pounds the average employee gains upon joining a company.
Evernote	<b>Yes</b> , if iced coffee and pastries are your jam, then Evernote is the place for you! They even cater some lunches from trendy restaurants.

HubSpot	<b>Yes</b> , HubSpot offers many options to support healthy lifestyles, including “nutrition consultations” to help manage life in and out of the office.
AirBnB	<b>Yes</b> , if you work for this San Fran giant, you always know what you’re doing for lunch. Their in-house chef prepares dishes from around the world before calling them all to sit together and share.
Twitter	<b>Yes</b> , all Twitter employees have their meals catered by BonAppetit, and even send snacks home for kids too!
Ben & Jerry’s	<b>Yes</b> , this ice creamery corporation might have the coolest snaking program. Everyone in the office can grab 3 pints of ice cream per day! Yum!

# The future of office snacks in the workplace

There's no denying that snacks and food in the workplace have a big impact on employee productivity and satisfaction, but what does that mean for companies vying for talent?

Employee views on job satisfaction have shifted and a high salary alone, just doesn't cut it anymore. Companies have to look for ways to keep their employees engaged, productive and feeling appreciated. More focus will be placed on perks such as gym memberships, cleaning services and office food, in the commitment to employee satisfaction.

In regards to snacks, in particular, managers can expect the following:

- **Office snacking programs will be an expected workplace accessory.**  
More than 65% of employees considered healthy snacks to be important and 55% of employees want snacks tailored to their dietary restrictions and preferences.
- **Office food and snacks will see a big shift to health-focused options.**  
A study of 20,000 workers found that those who ate healthy through the day were 25% more likely to have a better job performance, compared to unhealthy eating which leads to a 66% increased risk of loss productivity.<sup>11</sup>
- **Companies will move away from catered meals towards daily snacking programs.**  
Over 88% of respondents consider snacks to be important, ahead (78%) of office meals.
- **There will be closer attention to measurable benefits of office culture.**  
Workplace happiness leads to a 12% increase in productivity compared to unhappy workers who are 10% less productive.<sup>12</sup>

So stock up on those veggie chips and jerky, and watch the stream of hungry millennials flock to your company!

Happy snacking!

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