

THE **LUNCH** **REPORT**



WHY LUNCH AT WORK MATTERS

ez cater

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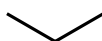
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INTRODUCTION

Can one meal really change the way people feel about work? That's a question we wanted to answer, so we asked 1,000 workers to tell us when and how they eat lunch – and what impact that midday meal makes on their mental health, productivity, and overall happiness at work.

What we found is that 1 in 10 people don't ever take a lunch break, but 78% of the workers we surveyed agree that breaking for lunch improves their job performance.

We also learned that there's a generational divide when it comes to who takes lunch, and that many workers are missing out on health and wellness benefits by skipping their noontime meal.

What's preventing people from breaking for lunch? And how can companies encourage their teams to stop and re-fuel?

Dig into our findings to learn more about why lunch really matters to your employees.



Methodology

In April 2022, we surveyed 1,000 workers nationwide, from all types of workplaces, to better understand lunch patterns and trends, and how the “most important meal of the work day” affects the workforce.



KEY FINDINGS

1

FREE LUNCH IS A POWERFUL BENEFIT:

1 in 4 workers said they would return to the office in-person, full-time, if catered lunches were available.

2

LUNCH IS *ACTUALLY* THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY

78% of workers agree that taking a lunch break away from their desks improves their job performance.

3

MOST WORKERS EAT LUNCH AT THEIR DESK:

1 in 10 employees NEVER take a break away from their desks – and 70% eat while they work at least once a week.

4

YOUNGER WORKERS ARE MOST HESITANT TO TAKE BREAKS:

1 in 4 Gen Z workers are worried their employer won't look favorably on them if they take lunch.

5

THE COST OF LUNCH IS TOP OF MIND FOR EMPLOYEES:

With 52% spending \$11 or more per lunch, it's no wonder respondents cite saving money as the best feature of getting free lunch at work.

DIG IN TO THE OTHER TRENDS IN THE LUNCH REPORT

GIMME A BREAK

Why aren't America's workers taking the break they deserve?



1 in 10

employees NEVER take a lunch break

43%

Almost half eat lunch at their desks three or more times per week

70%

eat lunch at their desk at least 1 day a week



And it could be because they're getting mixed messages

Higher-ups could be setting a poor example:

56% of Director-level and 51% of VPs (and above) work at their desks while eating lunch at least 3 times per week

▶ 1 in 4 Gen Z workers are worried that their employer won't look favorably on them taking a lunch break

SECTION TWO

THE GENERATIONAL LUNCH-BREAK DIVIDE

Defining the Generations in our Survey

GEN Z

GEN X

AGE 25 AND YOUNGER

26 TO 41

42-58

59 AND OLDER

MILLENNIALS

BOOMERS



Younger employees are more likely to be “desktop diners” who work through lunch:

While half (48%) of Boomers say they never eat lunch at their desk, just 10% of Gen Z and 26% of Millennials said the same.

So what’s stopping younger workers from taking regular lunch breaks? Too much work!

- 21% said they don’t have enough time in their day to get their work done if they take a break
- 1 in 5 said they avoid breaks so they can finish their workday as soon as possible (27% of Gen Z)
- 19% said there are too many meetings or meetings during the lunch hour (26% of Millennials!)

TREND ALERTS

TREND ONE

Rise of the “Office Lunch”

When workers forget to pack lunch, they resort to desperate means: 6 in 10 workers (61%) have made an “office lunch.”

Office Lunch (*noun*): lunch assembled from random office snacks. i.e, “I’m having an **office lunch** today because I forgot to pack mine.”

TREND TWO

Scrolling is the top lunchtime activity

- Scrolling social media (46%)
- Reading the news (27%)
- Watching TV or a movie (24%)
- Reading a book (16%)

**TIP****Get 'em while they're hungry!**

Gen Z will dominate the workforce by 2030, so it makes sense to up your food for work game now.

**EMPLOYER FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Catered meals bring co-workers together and show younger workers that taking a daily lunch break is not just OK. It's encouraged.

EMPLOYEES ARE BATTLING LUNCH-FLATION

Buying lunch is expensive (and prices keep increasing!), which means a free office lunch just became more valuable.

Budget-Busting-Bites

80%

of people buy lunch at work at least once a week

52%

spend \$11 or more when they buy lunch

43%

of people buy lunch three to five times per week



▶ Almost half of employees (46%) agree that spending less money during their workday is the best part of free lunch.

The anti-brown bag generation



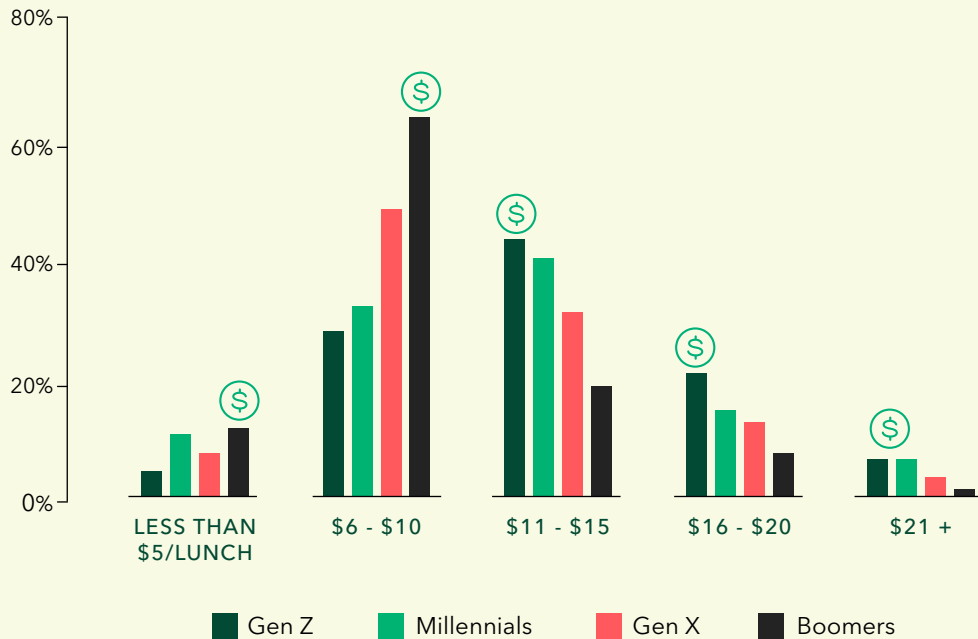
Only 9% of Gen Z bring lunch from home



73% of Gen Z and 68% of Millennials buy lunch at least 2 times a week, more so than their older co-workers (Boomers (44%), Gen X (58%))

SECTION THREE

Who's dishing out the most lunch money?



► The majority of Gen Z (68%) and Millennials (59%) spend at least \$11 when dining or ordering out for lunch. Most Boomers, on the other hand, spend less than \$10 (73%).

EMPLOYER FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Considering food-away-from-home prices are predicted to keep increasing through 2022, companies that provide free lunch (even once a week) will go a long way with their employees.



WHY LUNCH IS A WORK PERK TO CONSIDER

Catered lunches are valued by employees and have the power to get them to the office. Especially as workforces adopt more hybrid schedules, in-office perks like free lunch can be just the motivation needed to get back into the office groove.

**Free lunch is a big
motivation to work on-site** →

23%

Nearly 1 in 4 employees said they would return to the office full-time if free, catered lunches were available

20%

said they would plan on traveling to the office 3-4 days a week to reap the benefits of free meals

15%

were willing to commute in 1-2 days out of their week for free lunch

65%

The majority of respondents would plan to work on-site based on complimentary lunch being offered



Younger generations - your future workforce - are motivated by a free lunch:

- 87% of Gen Z said they'd work on-site "frequently" if free lunch were provided, followed by 75% of Millennials and 58% of Gen X, with Boomers last at 57%.
- Younger generations care more about free lunches and are most likely to plan their work week around the benefit. This is especially interesting considering only 1 in 3 Gen Z (29%) and Millennials (35%) employees take a lunch break 5 days a week.



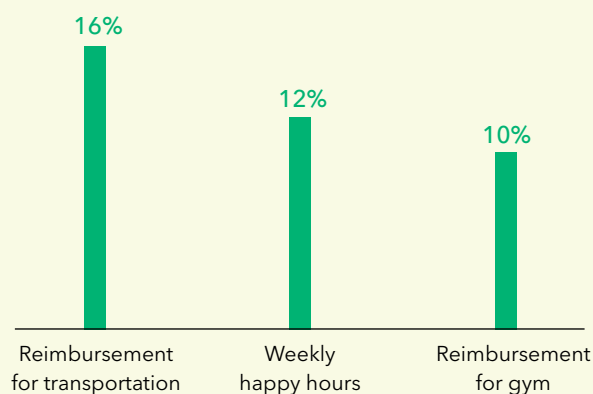
LUNCH IS A HIGHLY VALUED WORK PERK



44%

of employees ranked free lunch in their top two work perks (only getting five extra vacation days ranked higher)

1 IN 5 SAID FREE LUNCH WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERK, BEATING OUT:



EMPLOYER FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In a tight labor market, free lunch as a perk or benefit can help employers differentiate themselves from their competitors.

FOOD BREAKS FUEL PERFORMANCE AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING

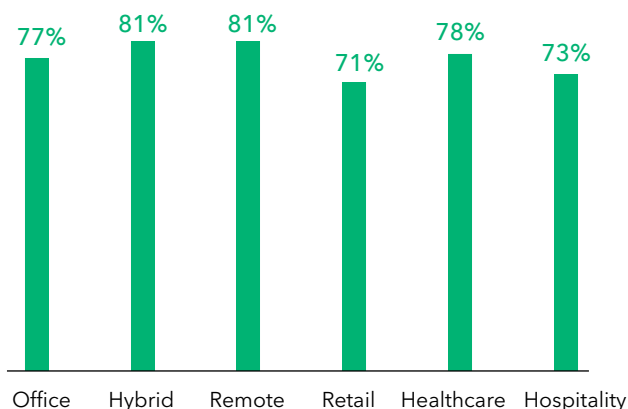
Proper lunch breaks improve job performance, according to employees who cite increased productivity and mental clarity as a result of taking a break for lunch. Perhaps more importantly, stopping to eat and taking mental breaks can prevent burnout – especially in the context of the extra stressful times workers have faced over the past few years. After all, there’s a reason why so many people took part in “The Great Resignation.”



**TAKING BREAKS MAKES US BETTER AT OUR JOBS:
(THIS IS TRUE ACROSS A VARIETY OF WORKPLACE SETTINGS)**

78%

of employees agree that taking a lunch break away from their desks improves job performance



Lunch breaks help employees chill out

40%

of employees said taking a lunch break makes them feel less stressed

39%

attribute taking lunch to improved work/life balance

39%

feel more productive and able to accomplish more work

37%

feel less burnt out



The ideal lunch break sweet spot

Respondents who said taking lunch has a big impact on their productivity break for this long:

| BREAK TIME | Less than 15 minutes | 15 - 30 minutes | 30 - 45 minutes | 45 minutes to an hour | More than an hour |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY | 4% | 34% | 32% | 26% | 4% |

Most likely to be "quick-bite" lunchers (15 - 30 minutes): Gen Z (46%)

Most likely to take longer lunches 45+ minutes: Gen X (32%)

SECTION FIVE

EMPLOYEES ALSO SAID THAT TAKING LUNCH:



provides them with
better mental clarity (47%)



makes them
happier (46%)



leads to more creativity in the
second half of their workday (25%)

IT'S ABOUT CONNECTION



About 3 in 10 of employees said they looked forward to the
social connection that comes from eating lunch with their coworkers

I LOOK FORWARD TO LUNCH



35%

of workers say lunch is their
favorite part of the day

EMPLOYER FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Maybe the way to your employees' hearts (and brains) is through their stomachs. Catered lunches can help promote healthier work habits, increase productivity levels, and even potentially alleviate burnout.

THE POWER OF LUNCH

1

BRING TEAMS TOGETHER

Work is much more fun when free lunch (and connecting with co-workers) is part of the deal. Add recurring meal delivery to your hybrid or full-time on-site workplace.

2

SHOW THEM YOU CARE

It can be employee appreciation day any day with a catered lunch. Who doesn't love tacos or cupcakes at work?

3

LUNCH AND LEARN

Food boosts brainpower, so add a catered lunch to your next training, onboarding, or lunch and learn.



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