



# Creating a Workplace Where People Want to Work

How on-site food and other perks drive workplace attendance, improve culture, and boost employee satisfaction and retention.







# Making the workplace exciting again

More and more companies are still adjusting to the hybrid work model and trying to encourage more in-person days by making extraordinary on-site employee experiences the norm. In fact, some are taking a page from the hospitality industry playbook and treating employees like customers.

Here's why: Smart employers realize that workers who report on-site because they want to — not because they have to — are far more productive,

have more meaningful collaborations, and are more inspired to innovate. In fact, [Deloitte research](#) found that workers who think their organization cares about their well-being are 2x less likely to quit.

In this guide, we'll share inspiring examples from companies that are providing convenience and enjoyment in the workplace, and help you develop a game plan for creating your own employee-centric culture.

SECTION 1

# Take a hospitality approach to employee experience

Think about how you feel when you arrive at your hotel room after a long day of sightseeing and there's a chocolate on your pillow. Or, when a local restaurant brings over a complimentary cocktail or dessert to your table because you're celebrating a special occasion. The hospitality industry goes out of its way to surprise and delight its customers with amenities and special touches that make them feel valued. Brands that do this well are rewarded with repeat business.

Likewise, companies that adopt a hospitality mindset to show appreciation to their hard-working employees can benefit in similar ways. Treating your employees like customers isn't just a nice thing to do — it's good for the bottom line. Employees who look forward to

being at work each day have stronger on-site attendance, increased productivity, and higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention.

## What hospitality workplace culture looks like

Most employers are already doing a good job of providing workers with the basic tools and resources they need to do their best work. But in a competitive talent landscape, that's the bare minimum. To truly stand out as a great place to work, implementing strategies and programs that transform an ordinary workplace into a warm, inviting and fun home-away-from-home environment can go a long way.

## Some high-value workplace perks to consider:

### Food & Beverage

- Free breakfast
- Free lunch
- On-site barista
- Grab and go snacks
- Company-wide midday snack break

### Time Savers

- Dry cleaning
- Dog walking
- On-site dog park
- Laundry service
- Personal package delivery
- Car washing/detailing

### Personal Care

- Manicures and pedicures
- Haircuts
- On-site medical or dental clinics
- Subscriptions to mindfulness and meditation apps

### Health and Wellness Support

- On-site therapist
- On-site massage therapists
- Meditation room
- Healthy snacks
- Yoga classes

### Financial Advice

- In-person tax services
- On-site financial coach
- Lectures
- Trainings

### Professional Development

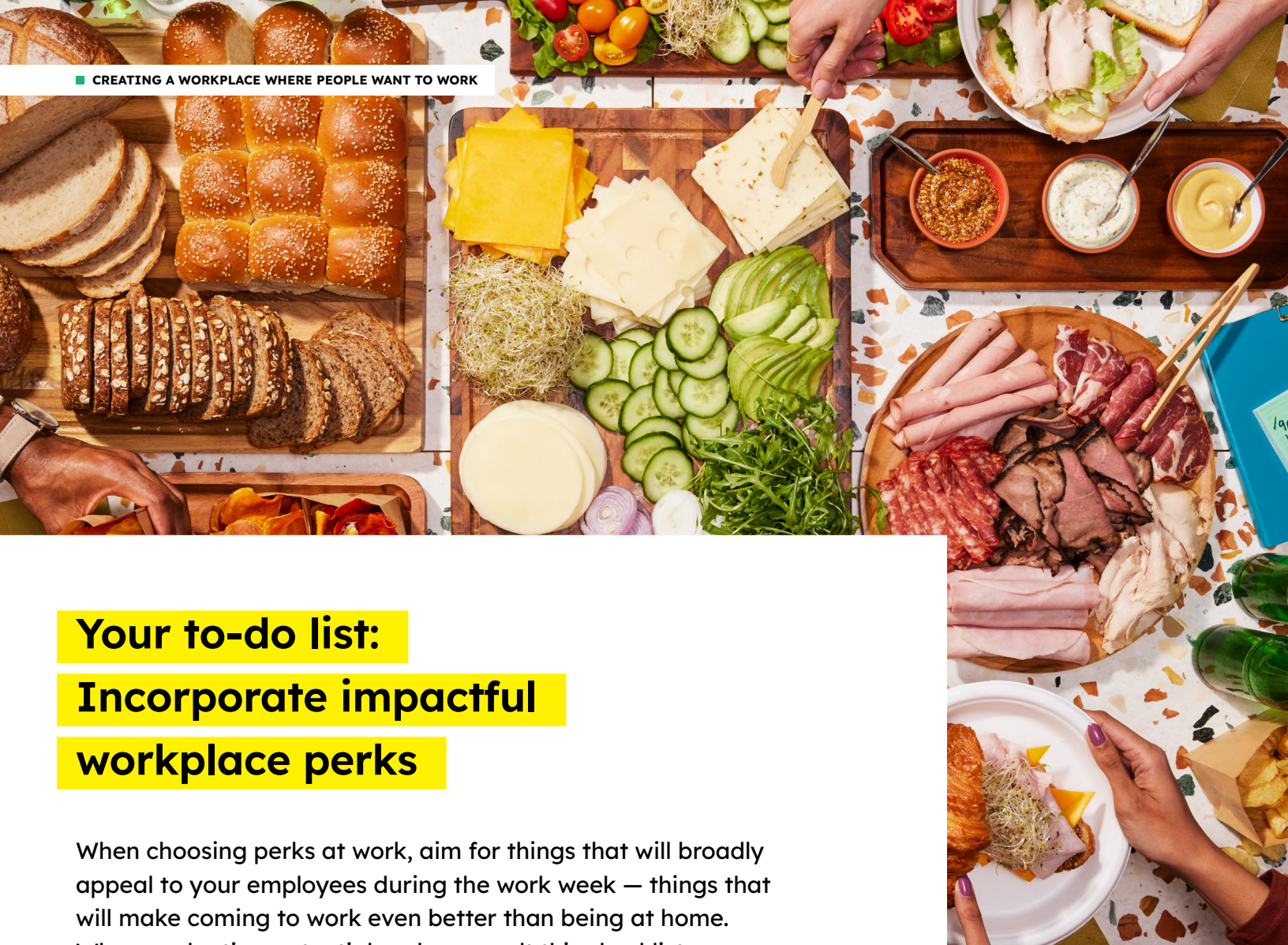
- Lunch and learn workshops
- Motivational speakers
- Leadership programs

## Level up your food for work programs

Deliver high-value hospitality through food with ezCater.

[Learn more >](#)





## Your to-do list: Incorporate impactful workplace perks

When choosing perks at work, aim for things that will broadly appeal to your employees during the work week — things that will make coming to work even better than being at home. When evaluating potential perks, consult this checklist:

✓ **Does it acknowledge the employees' full lives and responsibilities outside of the office?**

Though after-work happy hours might seem fun, it can actually feel like a burden for employees who need to get home to care for kids or aging parents, or for those who don't drink alcohol.

✓ **Does the perk provide a high return on investment?**

Just as hotels have recognized that offering free breakfast can help drive repeat business, think about how your "employee hospitality" can benefit your bottom line. For example, does a particular perk drive productivity or help with employee retention? Those are two metrics that have a direct impact on your organization's success.

✓ **Is the perk equitable?**

Some perks only benefit a small segment of your workforce, such as pet insurance or child care. And those are great ideas as long as you also include equitable perks that apply to a multigenerational workforce with different lifestyles. That's why something like free food is so popular, because everyone needs to eat.



### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**ezCater research found more than half (53%) of employees say they feel more productive when their company provides food, and 46% of workers say that employer-provided food makes them more likely to stay at their current company.**



SECTION 2

# Make the business case for work perks

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**Our culture has changed drastically because lunch is an easy thing for us to gather for.”**

**Melissa Allinder**

Office Operations Manager,  
NorthPoint

[NorthPoint Development](#), a Kansas City, Missouri-based commercial real estate operating company, wanted to find a way to give back to their workforce while offering them an opportunity to bond and collaborate with team members on a daily basis. They decided to invest in an in-office lunch program for their employees, offering free lunch for their 300+ person workforce five days a week. And, by using Relish by ezCater, employees get to select the meals they want from a rotating list of local restaurants.

“Our culture has changed drastically because lunch is an easy thing for us to gather for,” explains Melissa Allinder, NorthPoint’s Office Operations Manager. “Food is core.” What’s more, she adds, the perk has helped attract new hires. It’s a “jaw-dropper” for job candidates, she says.

Then there’s [Trupanion](#), an insurance provider for cats and dogs, which offers a corporate dog walking service — a perfect pick for their pet-friendly company culture. Not only do employees get to bring their dogs to work,

but there are full-time staffers who will make sure they are walked, and there’s a doggie play area, too.

And at the biotechnology corporation [Genentech](#), workers have access to a slew of on-site perks including haircuts, spa treatments, and car washes.

Other companies create library or reading nook areas for break time, provide employee discounts or free samples of the products and services they offer, or even take the concept of happy hour to the next level, as LinkedIn’s [speakeasy-style bar](#) in its Empire State Building office does.

What these very different companies have in common is that they have found ways to make their employees feel appreciated while saving them time, money, or both. It’s also no coincidence that these organizations also regularly find themselves on “best places to work” lists thanks to their differentiated and thoughtful suite of benefits and perks.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The most common per person food budget reported by employers in an ezCater survey is \$14 to \$16 per meal. So, if it costs \$3,600 per year to feed a full-time employee every day, that’s 12 months of daily appreciation for a relatively small investment.



## Your to-do list:

## Connect the dots between perks and employee recognition

There's a reason why hotels have loyalty programs that feature VIP perks for their top customers. So ask yourself: Are you treating your employees like the VIPs that they are? It's actually easier to do than you might think. You just have to make your employees feel appreciated, recognized, and valued during the work day.

In addition to a fair compensation package and a vibrant company culture, promoting your hospitable work perks can pay off.

### Qualities of a Hospitality-Inspired Work Perk

#### They reduce employees' mental load.

Think about how some hotels offer everything from laundry service to shuttle service to pet-sitting to fitness centers. Likewise, providing on-site services at work like dry cleaning, dog walking, or car washing can help free up employees' time and check items off of their after-work to-do lists.

#### They make you feel like a workplace VIP.

Remote days might allow for pajama bottoms, but if workers can go in and enjoy perks like a desk-side manicure, a mid-day massage, a well-balanced lunch superior to the can of soup or PB&J they eat at home, or participate in a group yoga session — all thanks to their employer's generosity — they'll want to make the effort to get into the office.

#### They help workers feel more financially stable.

A [recent survey](#) found that employees lose the equivalent of one day of work per week due to financial stress. Hospitality companies have long known that customers are drawn to loyalty programs that help save them money, whether it's free parking or a free night once a year. In the same vein, anything you can do as an employer to help reduce money worries is worth trying, from freebies and discounts that stretch monthly budgets, to financial wellness tools and coaching services to help with long-term planning.

#### They improve cross-department collaboration and break down organizational silos.

Bringing teams together to celebrate, give kudos, or bond with co-workers sets a "we're all in this together" tone. Consider organizing office meals or snack breaks, such as a family-style lunch or a breakfast bar to help build a sense of community.

### Ordering made easy

Food for work — delivered on time, as ordered.

[Learn more >](#)

SECTION 3

# Start earning your employees' commute — with free food

Companies looking to stand out from the competition by creating a vibrant in-person culture know they need to “earn the commute” — and a perk like free food is the perfect place to start. After all, ezCater data found that 89% of workers said free food makes them feel appreciated.

In fact, free or subsidized food was chosen as the #1 work perk by employees in ezCater’s survey, more so than gym memberships, education benefits, or even flex schedules.

It makes sense when you consider that free food checks off so many employee recognition boxes:

## Earn the commute:

Developing a workplace culture that makes it worthwhile for employees to leave the comforts of remote work to come to the office.



## Free food makes going into work worth it

ezCater data found that **86% of employers** say offering free, catered meals motivates their workers to come to the office.



**Try this:** Incorporate a free or subsidized meal twice a week and track badge swipes to see if it impacts attendance. If it does, ramp it up to three times per week.



## It improves collaboration when teams eat together

A recent Gallup study suggests that workers find virtual meetings **less effective** than in-person meetings, and companies report increased attendance at just about any meeting where food is provided.



**Try this:** Encourage departments to gather their teams at least once per month for a company-sponsored breakfast or lunch check-in that’s part meeting/part brainstorming/part team bonding session. Then, survey groups to see how it went, if something productive came from the session, etc.





## Employees are more productive when they fuel up with food

In our Lunch Report, **2 in 5 people (40%)** said free, catered meals make them more productive. And **35%** said catered food helps them to feel energized.



**Try this:** Make it clear that taking a break to recharge and refuel is not only allowed, but encouraged. When you invite workers to partake in free food — and they see higher-ups participating, too — they'll get that message loud and clear.

## Free food offers real-dollar value that impact employees' budgets

Considering that **63% of workers** say they spend at least \$10 per lunch (or around \$200 per month if full time), this perk can be a huge difference maker, especially during inflationary times.



**Try this:** Be sure your job recruiters and hiring managers are highlighting this perk with prospective candidates as a differentiator that will make your employer brand shine.



## Food has universal appeal and makes people feel loved

Employees simply want to be valued by their employers, and it's part of most world cultures that feeding others is a sign of caring. Plus, food is something that all of your workers can enjoy, whereas perks like childcare or dog walking may only apply to some staff members.



**Try this:** Use company meal gathering times to give kudos, celebrate milestones and birthdays, and share encouragement to get through a tough deadline or busy season. This will help employees make the connection between food for work and your overall culture of caring.





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# Up your hospitality game with a food for work program

ezCater provides flexible and scalable food solutions from company-wide lunches to catering for board meetings. It's never been easier to start up and manage a food for work perk using our customizable platform.

To explore corporate food solutions or place a catering order, visit [ezcater.com/corp](https://ezcater.com/corp)

