

# Healthy eating strategies for the workplace

To inspire confidence and spread knowledge, we have developed bartlett mitchell's recipe for success guides for workplace and contract catering. You can download other guides from our website [www.bartlettmitchell.co.uk/category/expert-guides](http://www.bartlettmitchell.co.uk/category/expert-guides)



Healthy eating in the workplace is a priority for bartlett mitchell. In 2017, workplace absenteeism averaged 4.1 sickness absence days<sup>[1]</sup>. The causes of workplace absenteeism, and productivity losses, are complex and multi-factorial. As a workplace caterer we are in a unique position to support our clients improve their workplace well-being.

Factors that affect dietary behaviours are complex<sup>[2]</sup>. Poor dietary behaviours have been attributed to an increased risk of chronic/ill health conditions which impacts on workplace productivity.

We align ourselves with the current government guidelines about healthy eating<sup>[3]</sup>. They include Public Health England's responsibility deal<sup>[4]</sup> and the Food Foundation's Peas Please Pledge<sup>[5]</sup>. We use up-to-date evidence in nutritional science to promote workplace well-being. We aim to reduce our customers' intake of saturated fat, free sugars and salt as well as increase intakes of fibre, some vitamins and minerals<sup>[6]</sup>.

Read our 10 point guide to see how catering can be a positive force in promoting health, well-being and productivity in the workplace.

## 1. Promotion

Relevant and evidence-based nutritional information displayed in the workplace has the potential to reach a wide audience. Improvements in food literacy are associated with improvements in healthy eating patterns<sup>[7]</sup>. We have created a healthy eating programme, known as Vitality, which we consistently promote to engage customers. Employers who actively promote well-being in the workplace are eight times more likely to have employees fully engaged in their work<sup>(13)</sup>.

## 2. Make the healthy choice the easy choice

The eating environment can have significant effects on customer decision making. In food retail, promotions account for 40% of take home food expenditure<sup>[8]</sup>. These promotions increase sales by 22%. Most promotions are for foods that are high in sugar. When these promotional 'nudging strategies' are used they tap into customers' preference for convenience. We use this approach to increase sales of healthy choices<sup>[9]</sup>.

The physical structure of the eating environment can have significant impacts on food selection. By placing healthier items at eye-level we can for instance, nudge customers to buy an apple instead of a chocolate bar.

## 3. Education for chefs

We provide our chefs with nutritional training so they can educate customers. To increase their knowledge of healthy eating our chefs work alongside our nutritionist. They learn how to select healthier ingredients and become familiar with adapting menus to make them healthier.

## 4. Engagement with national campaigns

Our health-related campaigns highlight our commitment to national well-being initiatives. These include the Peas Please Pledge to increase the amount of vegetables we serve. Themes are linked to our regular events, like Vitality Kitchen pop-ups to support customers to make healthier choices.



## 5. Spread the word

To make sure we are communicating consistently, we regularly review our healthy eating strategy. We ensure that nutritional messages remain relevant and accessible for all customers.

Our Vitality Kitchen recipe cards improve customers' awareness of healthy eating. Vitality recipe cards are always displayed for customers to take and cook at home. This helps our customers to improve their food knowledge away from the workplace. This is part of our commitment to educate and inform our customers.

## 6. Tariff incentives

A range of factors can be influential in why customers struggle to eat healthily. Price, is often quoted as the main barrier. This can have a consequence on our dietary health. Foods that are the cheapest and most heavily promoted are often the highest in sugar<sup>(10)</sup>. Customers want to eat healthier, with a survey by YouGov showing that 66% of consumers support cutting price promotions on junk food<sup>(11)</sup>.

Increasing the price on products higher in sugar has seen a reduced demand in many cases<sup>(12)</sup>. This shows there is room for a shift of tariff and promotions towards healthier products<sup>(13)</sup>.

The British Heart Foundation states the potential economic return on investment (ROI) for a UK business that invests in workplace health initiatives is £4.17 for every £1 spent<sup>(14)</sup>.

We have estimated that if a less than 0.05% improvement in absenteeism was achieved it would deliver a ROI.

## 7. Sustainable

Diets rich in plant-based foods, with fewer animal sources are the most beneficial for health and the environment<sup>(15)</sup>. Our focus is on modest amounts of fish, meat and dairy foods. Where fish, meat and dairy products are served the focus is on seasonality and high welfare foods.

## 8. Combating food waste

Ten million tonnes of food and drink is wasted annually in the food chain, hospitality being responsible for 17%<sup>(16)</sup>. In workplace catering, food waste costs £44 million each year, 45% from preparation, 21% from spoilage, and 34% from customer plates<sup>(17)</sup>. Ways we aim to reduce food waste include;

- Providing portion size options
- Allow customers to choose side dish options
- Redistribute food waste through London City Harvest

## 9. Lunch and learn

We hold fun lunchtime sessions for customers. Alongside tasty snacks, the topics including;

- Portion control
- Reading food labels
- General healthy eating
- How to reduce sugar, salt and saturated fat in your diet.

In addition, we host repeated peer support and group discussions. These empower customers with nutritional knowledge and increased food literacy. This enables them make the best possible food choices both at work and at home.



## 10. Informed opinion

We look at the science behind the headlines to clear up mixed messages. Our expert nutritionist, Hebe Richardson examines the body of evidence, not just one isolated study before presenting the information as fact. We never make a recommendation just because it's 'trendy'.

We are committed to governmental targets to improve healthy eating at work. This includes industry targets for sugar, and salt reduction as well as PHE's responsibility deal<sup>(4)</sup>. We review our healthy eating policy in response to nutritional science and governmental guidelines.



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# 5 ways bartlett mitchell powers your business

Great food, eaten in great surroundings, can make a huge difference to your business. It's our job to help you make the most of this, in five ways...

## 1. Attracting the best people

Today's employees expect more from their workplace, and the food you provide is a crucial part of that – especially as many people now care more about what they eat. We can help you enhance your 'employer brand' by creating a food and drink offer that sets you apart from other companies. You'll have a happier, healthier, more engaged workforce, and find it easier to recruit and retain the most talented people.

## 2. Improving productivity

Well-fed employees are more productive. In 2013, the Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine argued that employees who eat well are 25% more likely to perform better. And, of course, if there's an appealing restaurant or café in the workplace, they will stay on site. More importantly, taking lunch and coffee breaks with colleagues encourages interaction. People talk more freely, information flows more easily, and your business benefits.

## 3. Enhancing your reputation with customers

When customers and other guests visit, you want them to enjoy the experience and be impressed by your workplace. An appealing, well-run café, restaurant or executive dining facility, serving great food, says a lot about your business. We can ensure your food, drink and hospitality reflect your brand style and values, and uphold its reputation.

## 4. Providing return on investment

Every square foot of your business premises is highly valuable, and the space you dedicate to catering and hospitality has to work hard for you. We ensure these facilities work efficiently and cost-effectively, making best use of your resources. Also, choosing us to manage your food and drink services leaves you and your team free to focus on running all the other vital aspects of your business.

## 5. Collaboration

You want your business to have a positive impact on the environment and your community – and your customers, staff and shareholders want to know about it. We can boost your reputation as a responsible organisation through our strong track record in sustainability. Our achievements become your achievements. And inspiring stories – like the Thirsty Planet water we sell helping to pay for clean water in Malawi – can be associated with your brand.

[bartlettmitchell.co.uk](http://bartlettmitchell.co.uk)

## About bartlett mitchell

bartlett mitchell is a multi-award-winning contract caterer. Our experienced, energetic and enthusiastic team takes a fresh approach to food and drink – with delicious results for you and your business.

We've grown steadily to a team of over 900 experienced foodies, serving 45,000 customers every day in over 90 locations in the UK.

We're also a responsible company, and can help yours to be one, too. We were the first contract caterer to achieve the Sustainable Restaurant Association Three Star Champion Status, known as the Michelin stars of sustainability.



## Fresh ideas every time

Because we're an entrepreneurial business, we don't have a one-size-fits-all template that we attempt to force on each client. Our catering focuses on tailor-made solutions using innovation. We take time to develop bespoke ideas to match the client culture, employees' tastes and the physical environment.

We also recognise the importance of value for money. We work as a tight, agile team to develop solutions that reduce costs and use resources more smartly.



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