

Foodja Deliveries Geared For Returning Employees

FOOD: Irvine Co., Granite, Blizzard among customers

BYCHRISTOPHER TRELA

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The pandemic provided unexpected perks, including the luxury of working from home instead of making the daily trek to an office. But now that pandemic concerns are easing, how do you convince employees to return to the office?

According to **Steve Sprinkle**, it's food; or more specifically, **Foodja**.

Sprinkle is founder and CEO of Costa Mesa-based Foodja, a workplace restaurant delivery platform that launched a meal service called the **Foodja Cafe**, to provide a reliable and cost-effective workplace benefit to companies with 50 to 20,000 employees.

"Our cafe product launch was driven by the transition to accommodate individuals in the pandemic environment as employees return to the office," Sprinkle said. "Employees are looking to order their own personalized, individually packaged meals from local restaurants. Employers are looking to create a great workplace experience to welcome employees back to the office. Our cafe product provides both."

Rotating Restaurants

Here's how it works: Foodja Cafe allows individual employees to order their own meal from a list of rotating, local restaurants with plenty of options. The service is available for all meal periods including breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner, seven days a week.

Employees receive a text notification when their meal has arrived so they can pick up their individually packaged and labeled meal from the designated Foodja kiosk located inside or outside of their office.

Foodja Cafe operates in California, Arizona and Texas with plans to expand in additional U.S. markets. Among the corporations and businesses using Foodja Cafe are **Activision Blizzard, Irvine Co., and Granite Properties.**

The list of restaurants participating in Orange County alone is extensive, and includes **Rubio's, Luna Grill, Greenleaf, California Pizza Kitchen, Jersey Mike's,** and dozens more.

Culture Building

According to Sprinkle, by simplifying office meal delivery and encouraging co-workers to engage with one another during breaks, the contactless meal delivery program promotes productivity and a positive workplace culture where employees can have a group dining experience without having to leave the office.

Since launching Foodja last year, Sprinkle says the product has taken off.

“It’s a game changer. Employees expect to be able to order food from their phone and personalize their meals, and there’s a need because of the pandemic to have individual meals and not share utensils.”

Experiential Offerings

Employers are focused on the workplace experience, and this food delivery trend is going to become mainstream, Sprinkle suggests.

“If you are a corporation and you don’t have a lunch program for your employees where they can select their own meal, you’re not relevant anymore,” Sprinkle states. “Employers that are competing for employees need a lunch program ... Everyone will have some type of lunch program. Other employee benefits like health insurance look good but they don’t bring people back to the office.”

“There’s nothing more exciting than coming into the office and looking at what you can order and planning your week around what’s for lunch,” he said.

Foodja Cafe allows employers to use the service as a benefit with the option to sponsor an entire meal for employees, or just pay a portion of the cost so it works with any budget.

The service also helps local restaurants introduce their food to new customers. Rather than converting a restaurant’s existing in-store customers to delivery customers, Foodja Cafe aims to drive in-store traffic by exposing new customers to participating restaurants and encouraging them to visit in their free time with bounce-back offers.

Sprinkle says that Foodja Cafe uses an algorithm that predicts what the employees will probably like to eat based on what they have ordered in the past and what restaurants they have suggested.

“It’s demand aggregation, predicting what people want,” Sprinkle says.

“And we load balance the restaurants,” so if a certain restaurant can only handle a \$300 order on a Monday at lunch, once that capacity is reached other restaurants are available.

“Today with restaurants having labor shortages, that is critical,” Sprinkle said.

To learn more about Foodja or the Foodja Cafe visit foodja.com.