

# The Key to Creating a Positive Workplace Experience and Getting Employees Back In-Office

*With offices open again, employers must make coming to work enjoyable while fostering a positive, in-person environment.*

By **Steve Sprinkle** -December 16, 2022



During the pandemic, when many businesses were forced to adopt a 100 percent remote working model, many employees grew accustomed to this

lifestyle and found many advantages to working from home. Now that offices are open again, employers want employees to return to the workplace, either full-time or with a hybrid schedule. The challenge many employers face now is building a positive workplace experience that makes their staff excited about coming in and engaging with their colleagues face-to-face.

## Focus on connection and company culture

Now more than ever, it's essential to have a strong workplace culture that yields productive and happy, empowered, and invigorated employees. What many employees had missed most about being away from the office during the early stages of the pandemic was interacting with their colleagues.

Employees are more likely to come into the office or be more excited to go every day if they see it as an opportunity to get to know and socialize with their coworkers. Providing employees with a sense of community will improve company culture and even facilitate better teamwork and collaboration. When employees feel camaraderie, they will also be more effective in working together to solve problems more efficiently. Additionally, when people feel like they are a part of a strong team, they are much more likely to go that extra mile for their colleagues.

## Offer competitive benefits and incentives

While socializing with colleagues is a draw, since workplaces have been reopened for some time, this incentive alone may no longer be enough to lure

and keep many employees out of their home offices. Companies need to offer enticing benefits and incentives to build and maintain a positive workplace experience that motivates employees to come into the office. Many companies offer benefits like health care and a 401k that encourage candidates to apply for a position and stay at the company longer once hired. Still, these benefits do little to excite employees and motivate them to come to the office daily. Instead, employers should focus on providing incentives and benefits that motivate employees to return and keep coming into the office.\

## Unique and personalized benefits

According to a recent study by the Society of Human Resource Management, in 2022, more than half of the U.S. businesses surveyed offered complimentary beverages and snacks to employees, up from a third of companies in 2019. Getting free food is a perk, but employees don't just want to graze on a pizza shared by all in the breakroom or wait their turn in a buffet-style chow line. They want exciting food options and the ability to customize their order, like an acai bowl with organic chia seeds on top, a bento box with yuzu salmon poke and extra pickled ginger, or made-to-order Udon noodles served with sweet and savory chicken. **Foodja Cafe**, an employee lunch program often voted "favorite benefit" by employees, offers such expertly curated options that not only make employees excited to come into the office but ensure that they never experience "menu boredom" again.

The innovative platform allows employees to order customized meals from a rotating list of favorite local restaurants. It is an exciting and cost-effective workplace benefit that motivates employees to return to the office. Employees get to preview the featured restaurants each week and plan their in-office days based on the food that excites them the most. Employees can mingle with colleagues over lunch while employers save money, as plans start at only \$20 per month per employee, a fraction of the cost of a traditional employee benefit.

Through simplifying workplace restaurant delivery and encouraging coworkers to engage with one another during breaks, the contactless employee lunch program promotes productivity and a fun workplace culture where employees can have a group dining experience without ever having to leave the office. Furthermore, employees feel motivated when they enjoy what they are doing with people they enjoy spending time with.

## The takeaway

Employers can make coming into the office attractive again by creating a positive workplace experience that encourages in-person collaboration, regardless if the company model is 100 percent in-office or hybrid. This is achieved by creating an environment centered around employee connection and camaraderie and offering interesting incentives that excite employees to come into the office. Attributes like these help keep employees happy and

motivated, making companies that utilize these techniques more likely to appear on 'Best Places to Work' lists.