



Improving Workplace Menus

YOUR 5-STEP GUIDE



balanced



LET'S GET TO WORK!

If you've ever thought about getting healthier foods served in your community - such as where you work - you might have asked yourself how exactly you were going to make it happen.

Don't worry! We're here to help every step of the way.

In this guide, you'll find multiple resources designed to help you make the case for healthier menus at your worksite.

With public health at a critical tipping point, now is the time to advocate for change, and we're so glad you're taking the lead. Now, let's get to work!

Step 1

IDENTIFY THE DECISION MAKERS



Did you know? Many health insurance companies will reduce premiums for companies with healthy-living initiatives in place. It's worth asking if improving your worksite menus would qualify your company for savings!

While this step may seem pretty obvious, it's important to take the time to consider *all* the key stakeholders you need to influence. Reach out to as many decision makers as you can and set up a time to meet to talk about the changes you'd like to see.

Decision makers may include:

- The cafeteria food service director
- The CEO of your company
- The HR Director
- Head of Operations
- The Food Service Provider (Aramark, Sodexo, Compass, etc.)

Step 2

MAKE THE CASE



Prior to meeting with any decision maker, it's important you do your research. You can find recommendations on where to start on the Helpful Resources page of this guide.

Knowing **why** your proposed changes will benefit your colleagues and the company will set you up for success. Knowing **how** your company will make the change is less important initially - and it's something you and your food service director can figure out together!

We've created a presentation for you to use called "Making the Case for Healthier Menus" in which we share staggering public health data, highlight the link between meat overconsumption and disease, and make the case for improving your workplace's menus. Reach out to us for a copy at advocate@balanced.org and take it to your meeting with decision makers.

TOP 3 REASONS TO BALANCE WORKPLACE MENUS

Employee Health



Employed people spend at least 25% of their time at the office—often eating one or more meals

where they work. By improving worksite menus' healthfulness, companies have the opportunity to influence at least 1/3 of employees' meals. Improving even one meal a day is a HUGE step toward a healthier workforce.

Cost Savings



Not only are plant-based proteins significantly better for employee health, they're often cheaper than animal proteins. Additionally, 61 percent of employers say employees' health habits are a top challenge to controlling healthcare costs. By serving fewer foods linked to chronic disease, employers are helping their bottom lines as well.

Productivity



Healthy employees are more productive employees. Not only do they report 27% fewer incidence of absenteeism, but they actually report higher rates of job satisfaction and engagement. Employees who eat healthy are 25% more likely to have higher job performance. That's a LOT of extra productivity!



Step 3 ENCOURAGE OTHERS

If other members of your team are already on board with your proposed changes, encourage them to speak up! Organize a team meeting with the food service director, have them drop a note to your boss, or highlight specific examples of support when you're talking to key decision makers.

The more voices in support of the change, the more likely it is to happen.

For the team members who don't yet know the impact your worksite menus are having on their health, take the opportunity

to share what you've learned. We've found that most people want to eat better, but feel limited by what is available. Help your team members make the connection between healthier menus and healthier outcomes, and you'll build a great team to support the changes you'd like to see.

A smiling man with dark, wavy hair and a beard, wearing a maroon sweater, is seated at a light-colored wooden table. He is looking towards the camera with a warm smile. On the table in front of him are several white takeout containers. One container holds a colorful salad with red, orange, and green pieces. Another container holds a golden-brown fried item, possibly a pancake or a piece of bread. There are also some loose pieces of fruit, like orange slices, on the table. In the background, another person is partially visible, and a window with a grid pattern is letting in natural light.

Step 4 DON'T GIVE UP

Even in the most supportive of environments, change takes time and can be tricky. A shift this major may require asking multiple times, in different ways, with different people.

Many institutions are happy to add plant-based options to the menu, but feel nervous

about reducing their meat offerings. We get that. *But!* To do the most good, reducing disease-linked ingredients like meat, eggs, and refined grains is essential to reducing diet-related disease.

Fortunately, the facts are on your side and there's huge momentum toward plant-forward menus in institutions across the country.

Getting to your end goal may require accepting baby steps along the way. So keep working on your powers of persuasion, stay positive, and don't give up!



Step 5 GET SUPPORT

Our organization, *Balanced*, was created to support healthy food champions like ***you***.

At any point in the process, you're welcome to contact our expert Advocacy Team for support. We're available to help troubleshoot problems, share extra resources, and provide personalized guidance.

When you're ready, email us at **advocate@balanced.org**.



Helpful Resources

Use these resources to build your own knowledge or share with your team as you make the case for replacing meat on the menu.

Helpful websites

Nutrition Facts, [NutritionFacts.org](https://www.nutritionfacts.org)

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, [PCRM.org](https://www.pcrm.org)

Peer-Reviewed Studies

New England Journal of Medicine, "Association of Changes in Diet Quality with Total and Cause-Specific Mortality"

The Journal of American Osteopathic Association, "Is Meat Killing Us?"

For additional peer-reviewed studies, please email info@balanced.org

Recommendations from Leading Healthcare Organizations

American Medical Association Resolution, <https://bit.ly/2lwTBHN>

American College of Cardiology Resolution, <https://bit.ly/2lxtJeM>

Kaiser Permanente Guide for Employers, <https://k-p.li/2nk1B86>

The MAYO Clinic, "Boiling Down the Dietary Guidelines"



On behalf of Balanced and public-health advocates everywhere, thank you for taking on the critical work of improving your company's menu. We know how difficult the work can be, but we're continually inspired by people like you.

The work you're doing will save lives.

Thank you,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Audrey Lawson- Sanchez
Founder and Executive Director