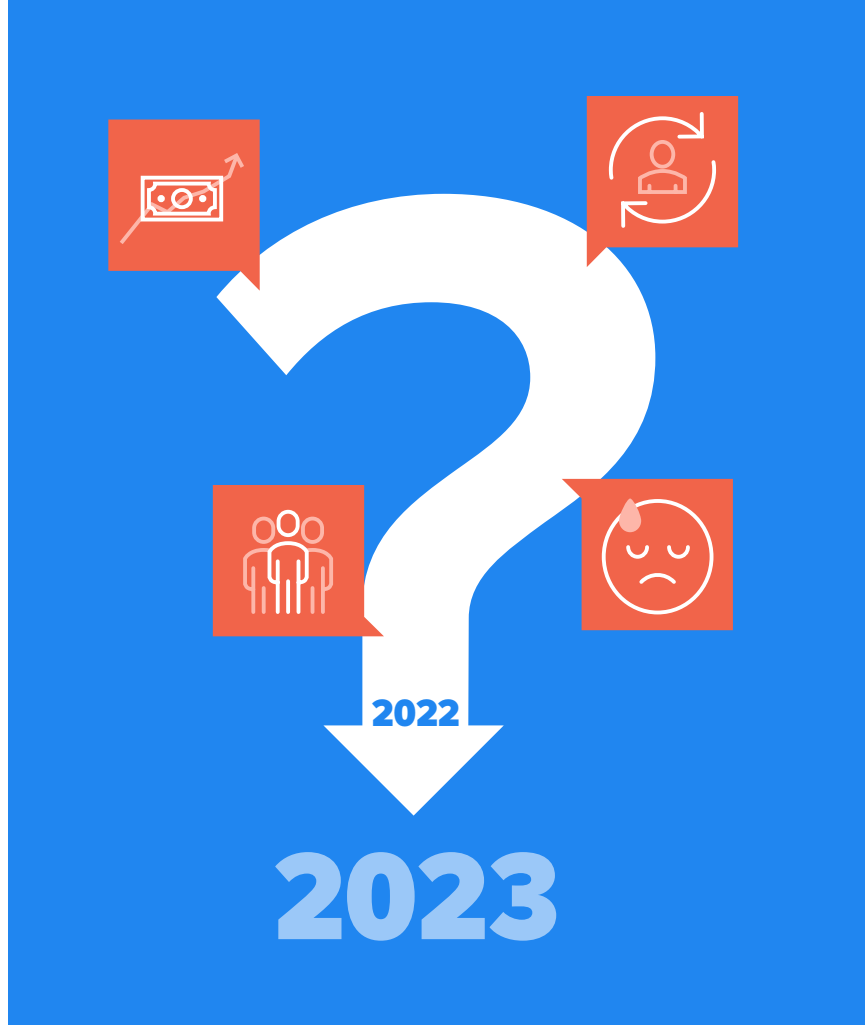




# Your Workplace Food Strategy for 2023

*3 key changes in the Food at Work  
landscape and what they mean  
for 2023*





## Each year presents unique challenges and opportunities to make meaningful change. This year is no different.

2023 puts employers in the face of change and uncertainty. With inflation reaching a 40-year high, the topic of recession looming overhead, and the continuous shifts in power dynamics between employers and employees, comes a lot to unpack. However, with every challenge there is an opportunity, and there are strategies and tactics (on-premise food being the one we'll cover) that people managers can implement in order to improve sinking employee engagement and raise enthusiasm about being in the workplace.

Our hope with this guide is to help you make informed decisions about the ever-changing workplace experience and to offer solutions that will benefit your organization and the people who count on you most. While we don't have all the answers, we aim to provide you with everything you need to know about food - our own subject matter expertise as it relates to the future of work.

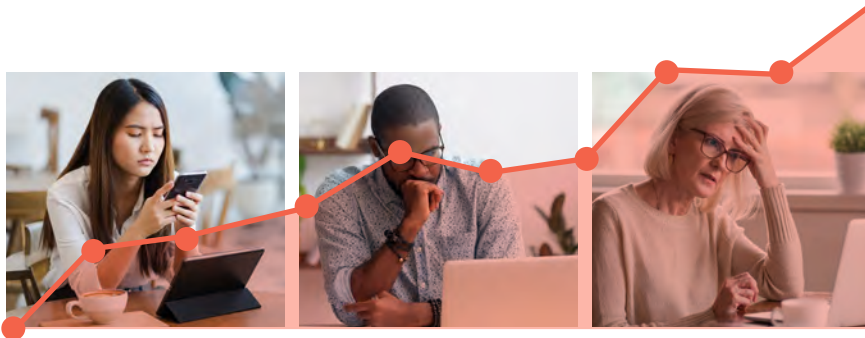
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# What 2022 Taught Us

Over the course of 2022, there were three major shifts that were evident, all of which impacted business and employees alike: economic uncertainty, retaining employees amid the great resignation/quiet quitting era, and increasing pressure to return back to the office.

To really understand and learn from 2022, we need to break down each defining period and recognize how certain results will impact the year ahead and specifically, food at work.



## Shift 1: Economic Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a word that can make anyone uncomfortable, especially employees and those responsible for their employment. When the topics of ‘recession’ and ‘inflation’ start being muttered throughout the office, your team will immediately think of the worst. However, something most leaders learned throughout the early days of the pandemic is that being transparent and sharing frequent communication with your teams is vital for keeping employees at ease, a lesson that great leaders understand and continue to practice today.

But even with frequent and honest communication, employees can still feel anxiety about the state of their company amid a potential recession and other ongoing issues, like inflation. This is why it’s not only important but essential to show your employees that you understand the external factors at play and you are actively working on enhancing their workplace experience.

While like most complex challenges, there are no silver bullets, food is undeniably a great tactic that is proving to positively impact morale and onsite attendance right now. As a result, we continue to see food programs prioritized by employers.

**Investing in the workplace experience sends a clear signal to your teams that employee morale is a high priority and that your company is in good standing.**

A major social media company in New York, for example, added fully subsidized boxed lunch delivery to offer some relief for onsite employees whose normal lunch options were suddenly doubled in price due to inflation. As a result of their food-at-work program, leadership saw a more engaged and productive workforce as well as double the number of onsite employees.



## Shift 2: Employee Retention

Retention is an obvious North Star Metric for HR departments. Not obvious is why employees leave. Better opportunity, perhaps? Maybe a lack of company engagement? Whatever the reason may be, HR teams need to be creative and proactive about keeping employees happy and engaged. Offering food at work is a tactic that we know is effective.

Data from a 2022 workplace survey shows that **85% of employees believe companies should invest more resources in increasing morale right now**. Even with the possibility of a recession looming overhead, food is a worthwhile investment to continue, rather than take away. As with any relationship, when employees feel a lack of appreciation from their company, their first instinct is to explore other options. How can your organization be creative and go the extra mile within the category of appreciation?

Offering great food from local restaurants shows your employees that you care about their happiness, that you want to make their onsite lunch experience easier for them, and that you are adamant about having a culture that is admired by others.

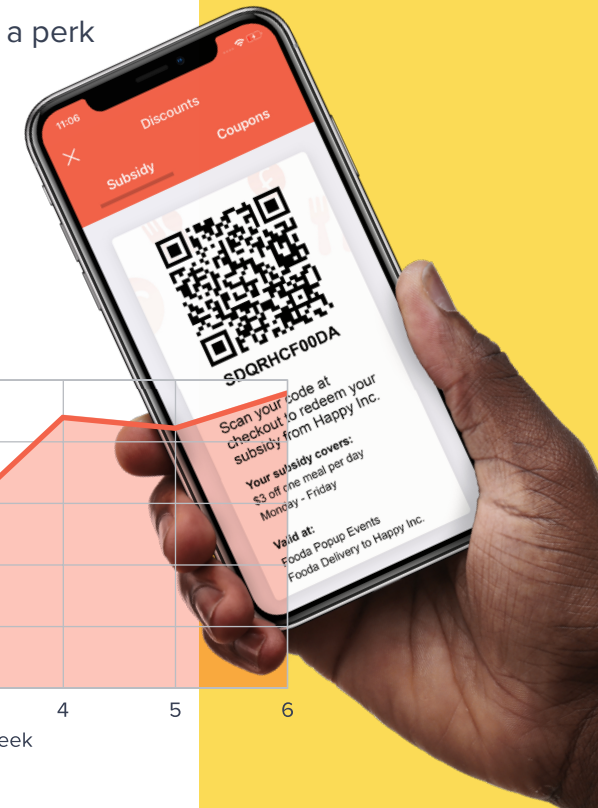
As we enter into a new era, how do you think about attracting and retaining talent?

Do you have a benefits program that makes it competitive for all employees during these times? When planning for your recruitment and retention strategy in 2023 and beyond, we hope you keep food at work top of mind.



## Real Estate Management Company offers a Partial Subsidy as Part of Their Employee Engagement and Retention Strategy

Recognizing the need to improve employee engagement and retention in an increasingly competitive labor market, the company began to partially subsidize their delivery and restaurant Popup programs in the amount of \$3 per meal served. The employer wanted to offer a perk and encourage teams to share meals together, without a “unicorn budget”. After six weeks, the company saw daily orders increase by 60%.



### CASE STUDY

**PROGRAM**  
Popup & Delivery

**SUBSIDY**  
\$3 per meal

**PROGRAM OUTCOMES**  
**60% increase**  
in daily orders  
*after 6 weeks*





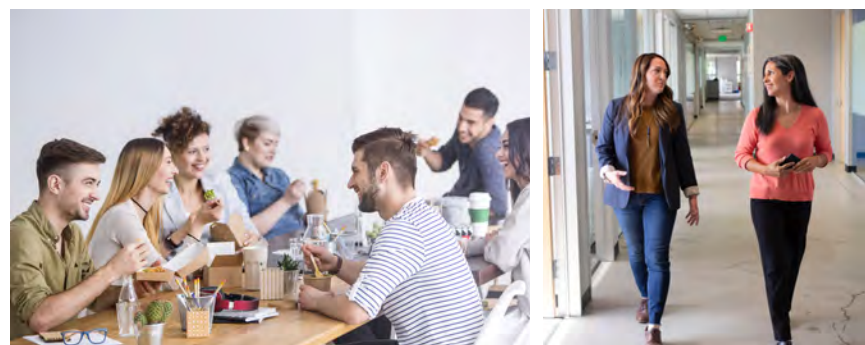
## Shift 3: Prolonged Resistance to Return to Office

After multiple years of remote work, some employees are still hesitant to return back to the office. Many find the comfort and ease of working at home to be the new normal and simply have no desire to commute to the office each day.

The good but not great news. While there is still resistance, we are seeing a steady increase in onsite employees. According to Kastle Systems, a security company that tracks key-card entries into office buildings, about 50% of teams are back onsite. RTO is the highest it's been since March of 2020. And the number will only go up from here. The security company predicts that by January 2023, 54% of workers will be back onsite. In progressive and tech-heavy Austin, this number is even higher, with 64% of teams back onsite already.

Why are teams returning onsite? **Working onsite provides benefits that you simply don't get at home.** Impromptu chats by the water cooler, the opportunity to meet new hires face to face, or perhaps a spontaneous happy hour after work, where you can connect with each other on another level. The importance of these interactions can not be overstated. Then there's the collaborative and creative aspect of brainstorming over a whiteboard, something that is almost impossible to replicate over a video call.

Because of these priceless benefits, throughout 2022, we've seen many tech and finance companies invest more in food programs in order to bring their workplace community back on site, and the results have been meaningfully effective. As an incentive to encourage teams back onsite, a tech company in the Bay Area decided to invest in daily lunch catering. As a result, leadership saw their food program participation double each month as more employees returned onsite.



# Using Experiential Food Programs to Bring Gen Z Back Onsite

Although there are still employees who prefer the remote lifestyle, there are many on the flip side of that argument, the majority of which are young professionals between the ages of 22 and 28 that find excitement in going back to the office<sup>1</sup>. In fact, because of their craving for in-person memorable experiences, Gen Z is now being nicknamed ‘The Experience Generation’, and it’s no surprise to us. To this day, we are seeing more companies invest in experiential food events than ever before. Popup restaurants, afternoon boba tea drop offs, and personalized in-office baristas are becoming the new normal for companies looking for a way to entice those younger professionals into the office.

By incorporating an experiential aspect into their food programs, companies are seeing an increasing number of onsite employees, higher retention and recruitment rates, and more employee engagement through the communal aspect of shared experiences. With so much success, the trend has taken off and is here to stay. In fact, 83% of professionals believe that live, onsite experiential events will become more popular in workplaces in the near future. Read more about the latest trend in our [Guide to Experiential Food Programs](#).





# How Food at Work Can Impact the Greater Good

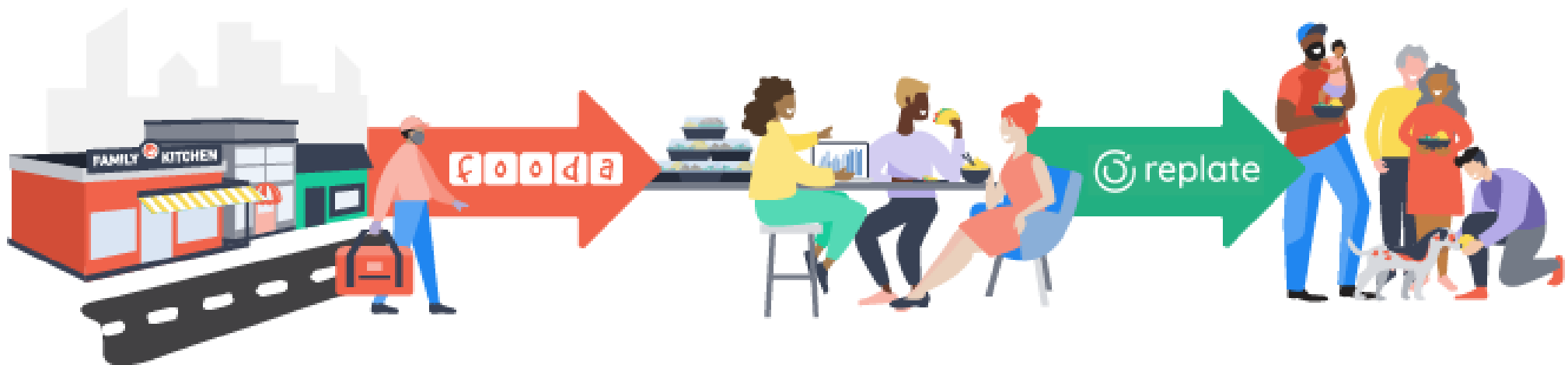
The social movement to support local restaurants continues to be a top priority for consumers throughout the country. In a survey of workplace professionals, 92% of respondents believe that it is important to support local restaurants right now. A great way to help restore local restaurants is to provide the opportunity for them to serve your team. By making restaurants a part of their meal program, employers spark a connection with the local community. Restaurants in turn, bring not only delicious food, but also authenticity and diversity to today's workplace.



# 92%

of office workers believe it is **important to support local restaurants right now**

The community support doesn't end with local restaurants. Fooda recently partnered with Replate, a technology-based organization that connects and delivers surplus food from businesses to communities in need. With Replate, companies can feel good about ordering a bit more than they can chew, especially with inconsistent onsite attendance. Any excess food from lunch or dinner will be picked up by a Replate food rescuer and delivered to a local nonprofit. Now, companies will not only support their local restaurants by ordering with Fooda, but when utilizing Replate, they will also be giving back to those in need. Read more about [Fooda's Partnership with Replate](#) on our blog.



# Product Offerings

Fooda offers several ways for employers to provide their employees with exciting meals. In all of our models, employers can subsidize individual employee meals at any dollar amount - or not at all (in cases where population numbers allow for sustainable, unsubsidized programs).



## Cafeteria Replacement

Legacy cafeterias are evolving into a next generation solution that saves money and never gets boring. Fooda replaces traditional food service providers with local, authentic restaurants that people love outside of work.

[Learn more »](#)

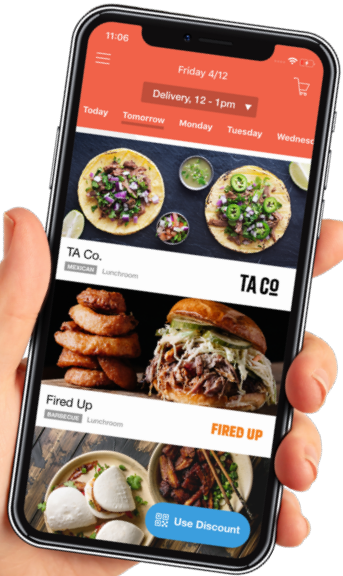
## Popup Restaurants

A daily rotating Popup restaurant program managed by Fooda is like having indoor food trucks scheduled far in advance, with the option to subsidize meals for employees (fully, partially, or not at all).

[Learn more »](#)







## Individual Lunch Delivery

Employees place their own orders, picking from rotating restaurants. All orders are delivered at once by a dedicated staff member, certified according to the highest health standards and trained to work inside your building.

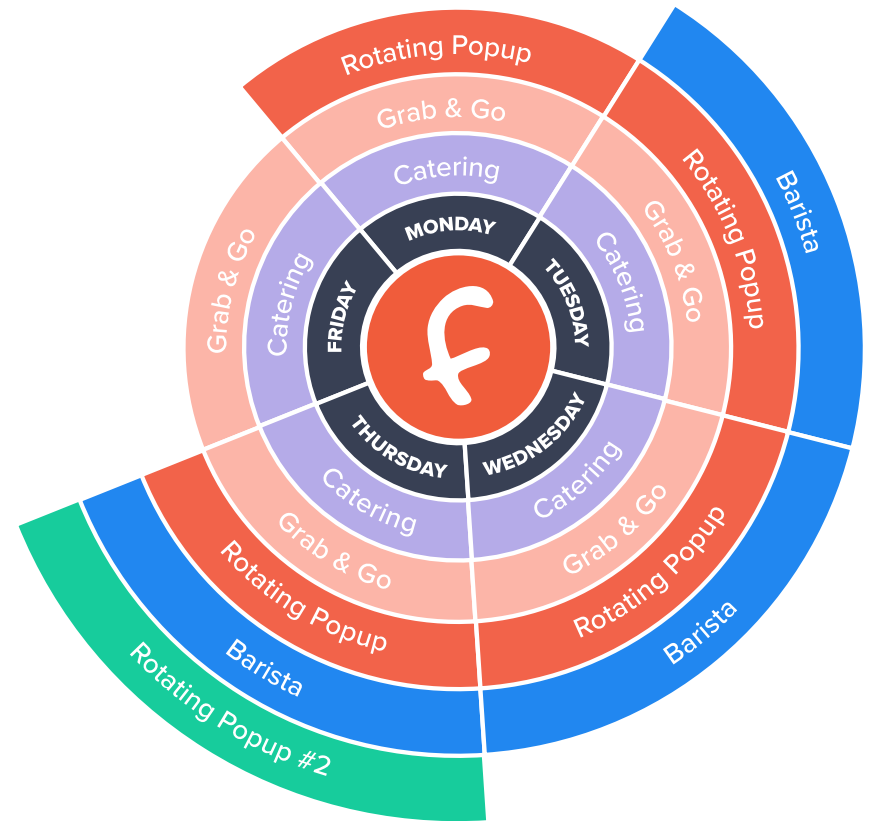
[Learn More »](#)



## Workplace Convenience Services

Elevated self service market with 24/7 convenience. Fresh Food and beverage options, gourmet coffee, healthy fruits, salads and wraps. All with contactless self-payment kiosks. Combine this option with any of our other services to add hot food options and authentic restaurant experiences.

[Learn More »](#)



## Scale Up or Down, Based on Your Budget & Population

For most organizations, no two days of the week look the same anymore. As your population fluctuates during the week, Foda's service adjusts to accommodate with the right blend of services.



## Employer Paid Programs on the Rise

Fooda is fulfilling demand for employer paid programs in industries that traditionally did not pay for their employees' food. Examples include consulting, law, logistics, and healthcare - with a range of subsidy amounts. Employers want to welcome teams back into the office and are exploring all avenues of how to make that desirable to employees. For many, deep, hyper-focused work now happens at home while creative collaboration happens in-person at the office. It is important for employers to respect work/life boundaries while doing more to support collaboration onsite. Employee meals are a highly relevant piece of the equation.

## Making the Case for Employer Paid Programs

When presenting the case for employer paid food to decision makers such as a CFO, cost structure and projections are obvious questions.

Subsidizing on a per-meal basis as a “use it or lose it” benefit is one of the most logical and cost effective structures that works well in scenarios where populations are consistent or fluctuating. The employer can pay for all or a portion of the tab. With this model, the employer-sponsored amount is automatically deducted from the check total, and the employee pays the balance. We have compiled a chart that clearly outlines project costs based on historical data at different levels of subsidies, with 100 employees onsite (an easy number to use as a basis for your own calculations).

The first column is the subsidy amount per meal. The second column represents anticipated participation level based on the subsidy amount (not surprisingly, when the employer picks up a higher percentage of the tab, the subsidized lunch option becomes more appealing).

**Projected Costs - 100 Employees Onsite**

Subsidy Per Meal	Anticipated Participation	Daily Orders	Daily Subsidy
\$2	15%	15	\$30
\$3	20%	20	\$60
\$4	30%	30	\$120
\$5	40%	40	\$200
\$10	90%	90	\$900

## Food Program ROI

Number of Employees	100
Subsidy (in dollars/per meal)	\$5.00
Days per Week	5
Participation Rate	40%
Daily Participating Employees	40
Cost per Employee per Month	\$40
<b>Monthly Program Cost</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>

Average Annual Employee Salary	\$65,000
Average Employee Salary per Hour	\$34
Travel Time Saved at Lunch (hours)	0.5
Daily Productivity Savings	\$677
<b>Monthly Productivity Savings</b>	<b>\$13,542</b>

**Monthly ROI** **339%**

## Calculating ROI

As we've stated, factors such as retention, employee engagement, and encouraging enthusiasm about returning onsite are as important as productivity (if not more so). Smart HR and finance professionals can find ways to calculate ROI for these softer factors. But when calculating hard numbers, productivity is the most straightforward way to show ROI.

This chart will help justify the cost of a food program by demonstrating the return on a program based on the productivity gains realized when employees are not leaving the office for 30 minutes to get lunch. Once again we base the calculation on a 100 person office. From our experience, a \$5 subsidy will yield a 40% participation rate, or 40 orders per day. With an average employee salary of \$65,000 and a thirty minute offsite lunch break, we can see \$677 in productivity gains each day. This model program would cost \$4,000 per month, yielding a 339% return on investment. Remember, this is based on productivity alone and does not factor in the "softer" returns realized when meals are shared together onsite.





# What's In Store for 2023

As we listen to our clients and speak with them about their future plans, many trends have become apparent:

- **Added investment in programs that increase morale and reduce fear, during times of economic uncertainty**
- **Utilizing food programs to remain competitive in both recruitment and retention**
- **Incorporating experiential food events to encourage teams back onsite**

As you look at your department's priorities for this year and beyond, we are happy to help you think about how food can make an impact.





# Interested in Bringing Fooda to Your Workplace?

**info@fooda.com**

**312.662.6539**

1 N Dearborn St, Ste 600, Chicago, IL 60602