

BALANCED

5-STEP GUIDE TO IMPROVING YOUR WORKSITE MENUS



Your step-by-step resource
for balancing menus
where you work



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 - now, and 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!

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the top left, there are several dark grey pencils and two red erasers. In the top right, there is a white mug filled with black coffee. The background is a light-colored wooden surface. A white semi-transparent box with a green border is overlaid on the desk, containing text. A green vine with small leaves is visible on the right side of the image.

STEP 1:

IDENTIFY THE DECISION MAKERS

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

Potential decision makers may include:

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

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!

TOP THREE REASONS FOR BALANCING WORKSITE MENUS

➔ Employee Health



Employed people spend 25% of their time at the office—often eating one or more meals where they work.

By improving worksite menus, 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.



STEP 2: MAKE THE CASE

➔ 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 health-care costs. By serving fewer foods linked to chronic-disease, employers are helping their bottom lines as well.

Prior to meeting with any key decision maker, it's important you do your research. 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!

There are many reasons to balance the menus where you work, but we've found the most **compelling and effective argument for doing so is employee health.**

➔ 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!

We've created a presentation called "**Making the Case for Healthier Menus**" to help you communicate the reasons for replacing meat and eggs with plant-based alternatives at your workplace. In it, we share staggering public health data, highlight the link between meat consumption and disease, and make the case for improving worksite menus. Download it for free and take it to your meeting with decision makers.

Later in this document, we included a list of articles, websites, and peer-reviewed studies you can use to learn more.



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 choices!



STEP 4:

DON'T GIVE UP

If you find your company is hesitant to make changes - specifically replacing meat on their menus - don't give up.

Change takes time and a shift this major may require you asking multiple times, in different ways, with different people.

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

STAY POSITIVE

Even in the most supportive environments, change can be tricky. Getting the outcomes you want may require accepting baby steps along the way.

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, the meat reduction component is essential. Keep working on your powers of persuasion, stay positive, and never lose sight of the end-goal.



Step 5: GET SUPPORT

Numerous public-health and cross-industry advocacy organizations exist to support healthy food champions like you!

Our organization, Balanced, was created just for that purpose. At any point in the process, you're welcome to contact our team for support. We're available to help troubleshoot problems, share extra resources, and provide guidance.

Similarly, we can connect you with a network of advocates working on menu reform as well!



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

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

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

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"

Obesity Action Coalition, "Rethink Your Plate"

Defeat Diabetes, "My Plate"



THANK YOU

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,
Audrey Sanchez
Founder and Executive Director



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