

How a strong catering offering could help to boost employee well-being and engagement

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Insight from Ken MacIsaac, UK Business Leader at Lavazza Professional

With hybrid working here to stay and talent retention high on the agenda for many businesses, promoting staff engagement and well-being has never been more important. It's clear that employers must take a holistic approach, reviewing everything from working patterns to management styles. The workplace itself also shapes employee experience, and soft services – particularly catering – can help to drive engagement. Lavazza Professional developed its new [Micro Café](#) with this in mind, creating a self-service solution that brings colleagues together.

In this article, I'll look at some of the simple ways FM's can help to improve well-being and promote engagement, with a focus on the role catering offerings play in employee experience.

A new way of working

An Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey recently asked employees who had worked from home during the pandemic about their future plans, with more than 8 in 10 replying that they hoped to hybrid work. [1]

It seems that the hybrid model is here to stay, and employers must adapt – both to accommodate team members whose working hours are no longer the standard nine-to-five, and to bring these staff into the workplace as and when required.

In today's recruitment environment, businesses must also work harder to attract and retain talent, offering an engaging and enjoyable workplace experience.

It's a significant undertaking, but these easy wins could help to improve both well-being and engagement.

Encourage staff to take breaks with the right facilities

Employees are legally entitled to take adequate rest breaks throughout the day. The benefits of doing so are numerous, ranging from improved performance to reduced stress. However, a study by TotalJobs found that, of 7,135 UK workers surveyed, over half didn't take their full lunch break. [2]

Encouraging staff to take regular breaks is an easy way to improve well-being, and the right facilities can help. With fresh food, coffee, and comfortable breakout areas available onsite, employees are more likely to spend time recharging away from their desks.

It's a good idea to create spaces in which employees can come together for these breaks, connecting, relaxing, and even problem-solving. 2017 research from Oxford University even suggested that eating with others makes people more likely to feel happy and satisfied with their lives.[3] And a happier, more relaxed workforce translates to better retention rates.

Lavazza Professional designed its new Micro Café with a view to facilitating these workplace moments. More than just a self-service solution, our modular micro market serves as a vibrant hub, bringing teams together for premium Lavazza coffee and fresh food. As ever, this high-quality coffee is at the heart of the offer – but creating spaces in which staff could enjoy it was also a priority.

And, with many employees working remotely for at least part of the week, helping them to connect onsite is more important than ever.

Make the workplace somewhere employees want to be

The post-lockdown 'return to work' is an ongoing process, and encouraging employees to come onsite can prove challenging – particularly on Mondays and Fridays. A recent FM Director article reported that, in order to ensure workplaces remain occupied at the beginning and end of the week, managers must do more to make them comfortable and engaging. [4] A good catering offering can help, and progressive companies are introducing everything from coffee bars and street food days to full restaurants. This trend is supported by a recent Euresst-commissioned survey, which found that 52% of respondents would be tempted to return to the workplace if their employer offered restaurant facilities. [5]

For those without the resource for a manned canteen, self-service solutions are a cost-effective alternative. Lavazza Professional's Micro Café offers sandwiches, sushi, snacks, chocolate, and fruit, alongside the premium espresso-based drinks for which we're renowned.[\[WA1\]](#) Customers can choose from lattes, cappuccinos, flat whites, and other hot beverages, all made using Lavazza expertly roasted Arabica and Robusta beans.

With a variety of fresh, high-quality foods to choose from, employees are more likely to come – and stay – onsite.

Ensure facilities are available 24/7

As more employers adopt hybrid or flexible models, working hours are changing. Today, staff are more likely to come into the workplace outside the traditional nine-to-five window – and your catering offering should reflect this. Indeed, whether they're staying late or taking a break from a mid-afternoon meeting, it's important that staff have access to fresh food and drinks. This might mean adjusting canteen opening

hours or improving kitchen facilities. Self-service systems can also help, providing sandwiches, snacks, and hot drinks around the clock.

We designed the Micro Café to meet this need; products are paid for via unattended payment stations, a central kiosk, or a smartphone app, while smart fridges offer an extra layer of security. This all means that staff can help themselves to food or a premium Lavazza coffee, whenever they arrive onsite.

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While improving employee engagement and well-being is a complex endeavour, a strong catering offering could help to delight and incentivise your team. And, with research suggesting that quality espresso-based drinks improve both morale and productivity [6], there's every reason to bring coffee culture into the workplace.

To learn more about Lavazza Professional and its new Micro Café, visit lavazzapro.co.uk/systems/micro-café

[1] [Is hybrid working here to stay? – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

[2] [More UK workers are skipping lunch – and paying the price | Totaljobs](https://totaljobs.com)

[3] <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2017-03-16-social-eating-connects-communities>

[4] <https://issuu.com/fmbdmedia/docs/fmdsep22>

[5] <https://hrnews.co.uk/free-or-subsidised-food-and-beverage-is-key-to-tempting-employees-back-to-workplace/>

[6] McKinsey and Company <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/well-being-in-the-workplace>
