



Nourishing Staff Engagement Workshop:

Coming together to address wasted food in our workplace

Length of workshop - Approx. 85 minutes (could stretch to 90 minutes with a few different rounds of ideation, or brainstorming)

Materials List (* = not a necessity but good to have)

- Sticky notes
- Markers
- Tape
- Sheets of sticky dots cut into strips of 3-5
- Map of your facility that food travels through
- Print-outs of images to represent different people, entities, and perspectives (e.g. scientist, toddler, grandparent, political figure, climate activist, queen, Google, Beyonce, Homer Simpson, animals, plants, students, etc..)
- * Name Tags (for surfacing activity)

1- Intro (5 min)

Starting the workshop with introductions of ourselves and the workshop, we also used this time to mention system impact and acknowledge the feelings of helplessness that arise. It is important to level with participants and let them know that it's not wrong to question initiatives like this. Especially when working within a big messy complex challenge like the food sector, these initiatives, activities or actions can feel like a small drop in the ocean of problems but these small actions, these tiny drops, can lead the way to significant systemic change.

2- Warm Up/Ice Breaker (15 min)

This is just a fun and somewhat silly way to break the ice, get the staff thinking about food and allow everyone to learn a little bit about each other!

Invite participants to work in pairs.

Partner One describes their favourite meal from their culture/childhood.

Partner Two listens and draws what they think the meal looks like from the description.

3- Surfacing (25 min)

Pull out the floorplan/map of the facility.

This is when the real legwork of the workshop begins.

Tell participants that they are starting a journey from the perspective of a food.

They choose a food to embody, write a name tag for themselves, and become that food.

They then lead the group on their personal journey through the location.

Prompt the participants to explain:

- Where do you come from, where do you enter, who do you interact with, which people are responsible for dealing with you, etc?
- Although our embodied food person is leading the mapping of their journey, they are encouraged to ask their colleagues if they are not sure what happens at every point in their journey.



Once the path has been completed and before the next food journey begins, everyone is invited to place a sticker down on the areas on the map where they see the possibility for intervention.

Whether they know how they would intervene or not, the desire is to identify areas where there could be improvement.

Once all the food journeys are mapped and participants have returned to their regular selves, we are left with a map that has four or five clusters of stickers, revealing to us the areas where your colleagues see the most opportunity for change.

4.A- Ideation pt. 1 (15 min) - What would Beyoncé Do?

Now continuing to push participants out of their comfort zone, the ideation activity doubles down on the embodiment exercise and pulls the staff into new and strange points of view.

Share the images you've assembled of different people, entities and perspectives. Using the areas of intervention identified on the map as areas of focus, invite participants to choose a character or persona from the images provided and try to approach the problem, and possible solutions, from that perspective.

Example: How would Beyoncé, Homer Simpson, a toddler, a scientist or any number of other viewpoints address this problem?

Participants write down as many ideas from their chosen point of view as possible.

Ideation tips to share with participants:

- Be sure to give time and space for participants to step into this activity
- Encourage quantity over quality, reiterating that in this space of blue sky thinking
- There truly are no bad ideas
- Stay focused on the topic
- Defer judgment - verbal and non-verbal

Example: If someone chooses the scientist image, an idea might be: Scientists create hunger inhibitor pills to stop guests from taking more food from the buffet that they can eat

4.B - Ideation pt.2 (10 min)

Armed with their plethora of wild ideas, invite participants to choose their two favourites.

This decision does not have to be based on feasibility or how close to a tangible concept it is. Simply which two inspire them the most. They then pair up and together break down the ideas that they have chosen. Attempting to find the guiding themes and values within the idea.

Example: Scientists create hunger inhibitor pills to stop guests from taking more food from the buffet that they can eat

→ Guiding Themes: Guest behaviour/ portion control

Once these themes are identified the participants can then start making their way back into a more realistic space.

Now that we have used these generative techniques to show us the core issues behind our current practices, we can ask ourselves: what are solutions/strategies that we can implement that are within our capabilities?



Example: Scientists create hunger inhibitor pills to stop guests from taking more food from the buffet that they can eat

→ Guiding Themes: Guest behaviour/ portion control

→ Practical Solutions or Strategies:

- Smaller quantities at the buffet that can be refilled upon empty, offer individual portions, or provide smaller dishware to combat the “eyes are bigger than the stomach” effect.
- Start the service with a smaller ‘starter buffet’ so that guests won’t overfill their plates when the mains come out.

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5- Prioritization/Voting (15 mins)

Post the solutions/strategies on a scroll on the wall. Provide a sheet of stickers to each participant and invite everyone to gather around.

They read the other ideas generated by the group and use their stickers to identify ones that stick out to them. Prompt them to pick ideas that they would be excited to try out, ones they think could have a high level of impact, etc.

6- Synthesis/TakeAway

You are then left with a sheet full of ideas generated by your brilliant colleagues, ranked by level of excitement or impact. This is an amazing tool to take back to the business as it is a direct reflection of how staff experience the problems they are facing every day as well as a treasure trove of ideas you know they are already thinking about applying and testing.

There are many different ways to further build on these ideas. Here are some suggestions:

- Invite management or colleagues to work collectively on these issues raised and potential ideas.
- Develop some criteria for how to determine which ideas to pursue further. [Here are some we use as an innovation unit.](#)
- Further develop these ideas by [storyboarding](#). This helps to uncover additional questions or areas that need to be considered in order to determine where to go next with a certain idea.