



Case Study Canteen Eurofins

Eurofins is a world leader in bio-analytical testing of biological substances and products (i.e. food, environmental and pharmaceutical products), as well as for innovative clinical diagnostic. One of Eurofins Group Service Centers are located in Brussels, Belgium, with about 150 employees working there. Since the company is highly involved in the testing and analysis of food, there is a high awareness about the pollution of food on the one hand, and the impact that food has on health on the other hand. As a consequence, Eurofins operates its own canteen - contrary to most other companies, who outsource their canteens to service providers such as Sodexo. Employees can choose every day between a meat, a fish and a vegetarian option. The meal is completed with a salad, a soup, bread, and fruit as dessert.

Claudia Kaiser was contracted as a Nutrition Consultant in early 2016. Her task was – and continues to be – the optimization of the canteen from a nutritional, health and sustainability perspective - in close collaboration with the cooks. The first step was a thorough analysis of status quo. The assessment report incl. the suggested recommendations for change turned out to be more than 100 pages long – basically everything had to be changed.

- All powders, highly processed foods (such as store-bought vegetarian meat alternatives, ready-to-bake bread rolls, UHT milk...) and certain “kitchen helpers”, such as colorants (to keep the color of the vegetables “fresh”), carrageen (to thicken sauces) or gas (to create a nice potato puree foam) were eliminated.
- All ingredients were upgraded to organic – as much as possible to non-industrial, small-scale, local organic.
- All ingredients were upgraded to their most “real” and unprocessed form: whole-grains and legumes instead of pasta, traditionally-made whole-grain sourdough bread instead of industrial white wheat bread, raw or “fresh” dairy instead of ultra-pasteurized dairy, wild-caught fish instead of farmed fish, home-made veggie burgers free of soy, gluten and additives, extra virgin olive and coconut oil instead of refined, industrial vegetable oils, unrefined Guerande sea salt instead of refined table salt...
- Foods are preferably bought in paper or glass packaging to minimize plastic. The left-over soup that employees can take home is offered in glass jars of different sizes (single person vs. family) and only in plastic containers in case of insufficient return of the jars.
- The menus are optimized from a nutritional perspective, making sure there are plenty of vegetables, a good balance between slow carbohydrates, clean proteins and healthy fats (both from animal and plant sources). Especially the vegetarian meals used to be very carb-heavy and contained a lot of industrially processed foods, unhealthy fats and pro-inflammatory ingredients. We now alternate eggs and dairy (that supply important nutrients not available in plant foods) with creations based on vegetables, nuts, quinoa, lentils and beans. The meat portion has been reduced from 150g to 120g per person.



Instead of pasta, we work with whole grains, lentils/beans and potatoes. At least one day per week there is an additional vegetable instead of a starch. Fermented foods and drinks are offered for additional health benefits. Details about the ingredients and the nutrients contained in the meals are made available to employees on a regular basis.

- The drinks and snacks available to employees and supplied in the conference rooms were upgraded in quality and to organic, too. Real juices instead of fruit nectar, high quality dark chocolate instead of milk chocolate, nuts, cheese & fruit instead of cookies.

Finding suppliers has been the biggest challenge. Whether it's logistics or communication, most organic food suppliers are not yet adapted to the needs of professional canteens. Logistically, they often cannot deliver at the needed time (i.e. beginning of the week, in the morning, or several times per week). They also cannot always guarantee the availability of the ordered product in the ordered quantity – and do not necessarily communicate well when a product is missing – which led to more than one unpleasant surprise at the moment of delivery, when the kitchen found that an ingredient they needed for the lunch had not been delivered. Over the years we worked with different suppliers. By now we found reliable quality suppliers for each and every food item that is used in the kitchen and things are running relatively smoothly.

Goal	Result
Local & seasonal produce	All of the meat and bread is local. Depending on the season, a big portion of the fruits and vegetables are local, too. We reduced the variety of exotic fruits (also to optimize budget). Many of the dried foods, i.e. lentils or olive oil, are from Europe. Some foods, such as certain types of grains or legumes are from outside of Europe.
Organic produce	All fruits, vegetables, bread, dry ingredients, dairy, eggs, meat, drinks and snacks are organic. The fish is wild-caught from sustainable fishing sources.
Quality upgrade	All industrial and highly-processed food products were eliminated. We work only with “real” food and drinks.
Nutritional balance	All meals are balanced from a nutrition perspective, providing a good balance of slow carbohydrates, clean proteins and healthy fats (both from animal and plant sources)
Food Waste	Food waste was and is generally low. Meal sizes are flexible on employee demand to adapt to individual appetite.