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Step one in corporate wellness: Ditch the donuts

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Company Kitchen

Kansas City-based Company Kitchen retrofits office break rooms with unmanned kiosks of salads, sandwiches and other healthy options not typically found in office vending machines.



Brianne Pfannenstiel

Reporter-Kansas City Business Journal

Healthy eating, step one: Remove the temptation.

At home, this can mean clearing your cabinets of candy, sugary sodas and potato chips. At the office, it means losing the traditional break room vending machine and swapping out those donuts for a bowl of fruit.

That's where Kansas City-based Company Kitchen steps in.

They're willing to retrofit an office break room with unmanned kiosks of salads, sandwiches and other healthy options not typically found in office vending machines.



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Employees can walk up at any time and pay for food using a credit card or a pre-paid Company Kitchen card, which sends nutrition information to their online account.

And as long as your office has about 200 employees, they install it for free. They make up the costs, and then some, through employee purchases.

The company was founded in January 2011 as a subsidiary of [Treat America Food Services](#), a corporate dining service that also did vending. Since then, the company has installed more than 500 units across the country.

"I think the growth is really coming from consumers being very excited about the proposition of having healthier options in their workplace environment," said Company Kitchen President [Jim Mitchell](#). "And I think HR departments are looking for ways to bring value to their associates in ways that don't cut into the company's budget but still provide a real employee benefit."

But don't everyone panic at once; they don't remove all sugar from the kiosks, Mitchell said.

"Certainly some people jump right in and want a salad," he said. "But other people who are in the habit of eating a Snickers bar or some other candy bar for lunch may need some other encouragement."

Right now, employers can add money to employee Company Kitchen cards. But the company is currently in the process of creating tools that will allow employers to subsidize only the healthy options available at the kiosks, Mitchell said.

He said the challenge now becomes working with these employers to figure out how to use the model to impact their health insurance costs.

"We measure the nutritional value of everything that's purchased through the store and we can report against that to the client," Mitchell said. "Our goal is to give employers some tools and some measurements to be able to see the impact they're having with their dollars."

Brianne covers legal affairs, health care, life sciences, animal health and biosciences.