

Is Your Team Working Through Lunch?

More than likely.

According to a web survey conducted last year by Right Management, only a third of American workers say they take a lunch break. The survey suggested that 65 percent of workers eat at their desks and don't take a break at all. I imagine that there are a lot of project teams buried in those statistics.

CareerBuilder found that less than one-fifth of executives surveyed eat lunch at a sit-down restaurant anymore. Their survey suggests that 40 percent are brown-bagging it and 17 percent are eating fast food.

It probably doesn't come as a shock to anyone that the volume of work and fewer resources have really made a difference in how, or even if, workers take a lunch break or not.

USAToday/Money suggests, "Today's fast-paced work environment and sluggish economy have left many employees with more work and less time to do it, making the once-cherished midday lunch break a disappearing option."

I don't think there's any question that stepping away from the desk for a lunch break is important to foster a productive and creative work environment. Larry Muhammed for The (Louisville, KY) Courier Journal writes, "Experts say taking an uninterrupted meal break is healthy, increases job efficiency and improves morale, benefiting both employees and their companies."

Lyle Sussman, a University of Louisville professor suggests that research on creativity and productivity "...shows a lot of good stuff comes about when employees get away from their work and their desks, and smart managers and smart companies find a way to make that happen."

Part of a project leader's role is to foster an environment where people can perform at their best—sometimes that might mean making sure the team steps away from the desk from time to time to eat lunch or otherwise take a break.

What are you doing to keep everyone productive and engaged?

—Ty Kiisel, AtTask