

Invite your coworkers to Lunch Roulette!

A simple, hands-on, way to strengthen social connections between colleagues.

Employees sign up to have lunch with a random coworker they normally don't have lunch with.

A chance to get to know new colleagues, discover things that usually wouldn't come up in your day-to-day, and have some fun!



Swedish company Kungsleden has consistently been awarded 'Great place to work' year after year. But it wasn't always like that.

When Cecilia Gannedahl, the HR & Communications Director, took on the challenge to improve their workplace the company was struggling with employee engagement. In fact their numbers were below average.

Fast forward 3 years later the company was named "Great place to work". How did they do it?

Cecilia is a big believer in building strong corporate cultures, hands-on. And having fun while you're at it! One of their most successful first actions was "The Lunch Roulette", an initiative that was actually suggested by one of their employees.

As simple as it may seem, good workplaces require a strong social fabric. How well do you know your teammates? Help your colleagues break the ice by organizing a Lunch Roulette!

How does Lunch Roulette work?

- ✓ Employees volunteer to go for lunch with a random colleague
- ✓ The company pays for lunch (below we'll explain why we recommend this)
- ✓ Afterwards employees quickly share their experience with the rest of their colleagues

The Lunch Roulette helps:

- ✓ Improve the social fabric at work
- ✓ Improves trust and communication. Particularly during workplace tensions.
- ✓ Breaks silo mentalities
- ✓ Discover local restaurants when moving site location
- ✓ New employees feel welcome and settle faster
- ✓ Encouraging knowledge sharing between departments and areas of expertise
- ✓ Mentoring opportunities

Measure your Lunch Roulette impact

Curious to see if this works in your work culture?

If you're continuously measuring your employee engagement levels through devices like the [Celpax](#) you automatically see how your employees react as you launch and execute your lunch roulette.



Lunch Roulette Start Kit

Everything you need to know to successfully launch in 15 minutes:

- ✓ How-To check list
- ✓ Hints & tips of what worked for other companies
- ✓ Invitation messages
- ✓ Ice-breaking questions, follow-up material...

What happens when you mix people that normally don't have lunch together?

Get to know another side of your colleagues over lunch!



Get to know another side of your colleagues over lunch!

Let's dive in and plan:



1. Decide on Budget

- **We strongly recommend** the company/department paying for the lunch so your people feel included. Not everyone has the budget to eat out, or they might resent having to spend their own money and time on something work related. These might be the people you most want to join your activity. You'll also get more people to participate if it includes a free meal. Lunch on-site works too, but it's nice to get out of your normal settings. Away from preying eyes :)
- **One way to keep the cost down** is to limit the number of people that can go. Although this limits the effect as less people will join the activity, you can always repeat the Lunch Roulette if it's a success. Keeping the numbers down, it's also easier to show a "win" if you're in a situation where you need good news. 'We have so many people interested that we have 140% overbooking!'
- **How will you reimburse people?** Who will handle it? Will they get the money before or after the lunch? You could also use food vouchers. Or if you only have one local diner: cut a deal with them ☺.

2. Prepare the Timing

- **Pick a short time period** to create hype, build momentum and avoid your activity to drag out.
 - Day 1. Monday: Announce at daily huddles, on team boards and other channels
 - Day 3. Wednesday: Reminder
 - Day 5. Friday: Last reminder & the draw to find the winners!
 - Day 8. Monday: Colleagues have 10 days to go for lunch. The lunch offer expires after this ☺.
 - Day 16. Send reminder
 - Day 18. Last day! And last day to ask for lunch reimbursement.
- Keep in mind bank holidays, travels, upcoming deadlines, etc. when planning.
- If you're measuring your employee mood in real-time, the Day Analysis section will give feedback to how your employees reacted to your announcement, and during the execution.
- *You might want to:* Give coworkers an extra 30 minutes off to enjoy the lunch break without stress.

3. Prepare the invitation

- Get inspiration from our templates:

Join our Lunch Roulette

Hi there! As simple as it may seem, we believe that when you know the people you work with it's easier to create a good workplace. We'd like to challenge you all to join our LUNCH ROULETTE! It's voluntary (of course!) but we hope you'll find it fun. The idea is to give randomly chosen colleagues a chance to get to know each other better by having lunch in pairs.

Lunch is on us! All we ask is that you quickly share your experience afterwards. It could be a quick post-it note, at the daily huddle or using our intranet to share something: who you went with, what you ate, if you learned anything new.... Let us know before this Friday if you're interested! We hope you'll join, we're starting next week! ☺

Reminder to join our Lunch Roulette

Hi everyone,

Our Lunch Roulette is happening next week. The draw is on Friday at 15h in the reception, join us to find out who's having lunch with who next week. The name lists will be posted on the team boards. See you there! XX

You might want to: Ask your marketing department for a fun banner. Design ideas [here](#).



4. Match employees to go for lunch

- **The draw.** Write the employee names on post-it notes, fold them and put them into a box. Then randomly match "Lunch buddies". You could do this openly in the reception area or canteen and invite your colleagues to join during breaks. *If you think this part might be an 'issue' you can also use a web based matching service.* Write the winners names on a big board and on team boards. People love seeing who's eating with who!
- **Ask employees to contact their Lunch Buddy** to decide on when and where to go for lunch. Clarify how the reimbursement works.
- **Optional Ice-breaking questions.** Hand out if needed: 1. Who was the first person you ever spoke to in our company? 2. Share a fun thing that happened at work. 3. What's in the trunk of your car today? (Hopefully nothing incriminating hehe). Or if it works in your culture, go for more work related questions like recent strategies or activities or "If you were the CEO for a day, what's the 1 thing you would change in our company?". Then pray you don't get paired to lunch with your CEO ☺.
- **Optional:** Be *open* about it before if you don't plan on a totally open roulette, i.e. mix pairs based on time spent in the company, age, link departments, etc. "Controlling" your Lunch Roulette could backfire if people feel there's ulterior motives. Not everyone might be up for it if it takes away the

fun. Keep in mind that the idea is “just” having lunch and hopefully, building trust. You might have more employees signing up from one department than other. Transparency rocks.

- *You might want to:* Take pictures of the draw for employer branding purposes.

5. Feedback mechanism

- Getting people to share their experience helps to improve basic communication in your workplace. Keep it simple! It's enough with a simple post-it note on a team board where Jeff says he had an onion burger with Jess while discovering that they both drive a vintage Volvo. If people want to say more, they will.
- Print a local map where people can mark the restaurant they went to with pins (“We had weird cactus ice cream here!”) If you have a (well)-working intranet, coworkers could use it to write a note about the food, the experience, or what they learned. They could use Google maps showing where they ate or just post a picture. Colleagues can then comment.
- Those who have the Celpax device installed can see the daily impact on the mood at work.
- Say thanks on the last day. You can take a selection of photos, funny reviews or whatever’s worth sharing, and hang it in a prominent place.
- Get line managers to talk with their teams. Worth repeating? Or what’s next?
- Get marketing to write a blog post for your web? Great material for employer branding.
- *You might want to:* Hang a fun example post-it note to set the tone.

Hints!

- ✓ Keep it simple. You can always polish and repeat.
- ✓ Not a dime to spend? Some companies organize coffee chats or brown-bag lunches instead of eating out. You might not get as many to join, but hey, if it gets people mingling – go for it.
- ✓ Should managers go? Discuss what works best for you.
- ✓ Have FUN!



A lunch packed with good intentions



Like what you've read? Get more [hands-on activities](#).