

The pocket guide to creating (*and keeping*) **The Ideal Office Kitchen & Pantry**



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Crafty is a centralized platform for workplaces to manage food, beverage, and supplies for their in-office, remote, and hybrid teams across the globe: craftydelivers.com

We also regularly share our thoughts on food & beverage, the future of work, and more on our blog: info.craftydelivers.com/learn

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Intro: **The kitchen is the center of office life.**

From those much-needed morning coffees to red-carpet recaps at lunch, workplace eating spaces give employees a place to take a break from their to-do's and recharge before returning to their desks. In today's world of work, in-office eating experiences have also become an easy hack to driving up office attendance. It's the modern workplace's take on the old adage "build it and they will come."

But all office kitchens are not created equal. Whether you refer to it as the "pantry" or stick with the "kitchen," a crowded room with lousy equipment and an empty fridge won't have the same effect as an accessible and social space with endless snacking options. We don't blame you if you're confused about where to start. But without the effort, you can't guarantee your employees will have a place to reset and connect or be enticed to trade the comforts of home for the office. That can have enormous consequences for the entire business. *When was the last time you heard about a tired, hungry employee performing their best?*

According to a survey conducted by KRC Research firm,

"72 percent [of surveyed office workers] viewed the office kitchen as more than just a place to get coffee. To them, it represents a place for impromptu meetings and a space to help keep energy levels high. This provides an opportunity for employers to create a workplace kitchen that boosts their workforce's productivity and camaraderie."

Now that you know the *why*, let's focus on the *how*. You can't build an ideal office kitchen and pantry space by snapping your fingers (if only it were that easy). Whether you're building from scratch, moving into a new space, or giving what you've got a refresh, you'll want to spend some time thinking about all of the ways your team will interact with this area and model the space to meet those needs.

We've filled this guide with quick tips for rating and upgrading your office kitchen and pantry. First, we'll show you how proper layouts support accessibility and connection. Then we'll dive into equipment and discuss how the right machinery can make mealtime more exciting. Next, we'll tackle product variety, the fastest route to employee satisfaction. Finally, we'll explore how the look and feel of your space can impact employee mood and performance.

Happy reading!



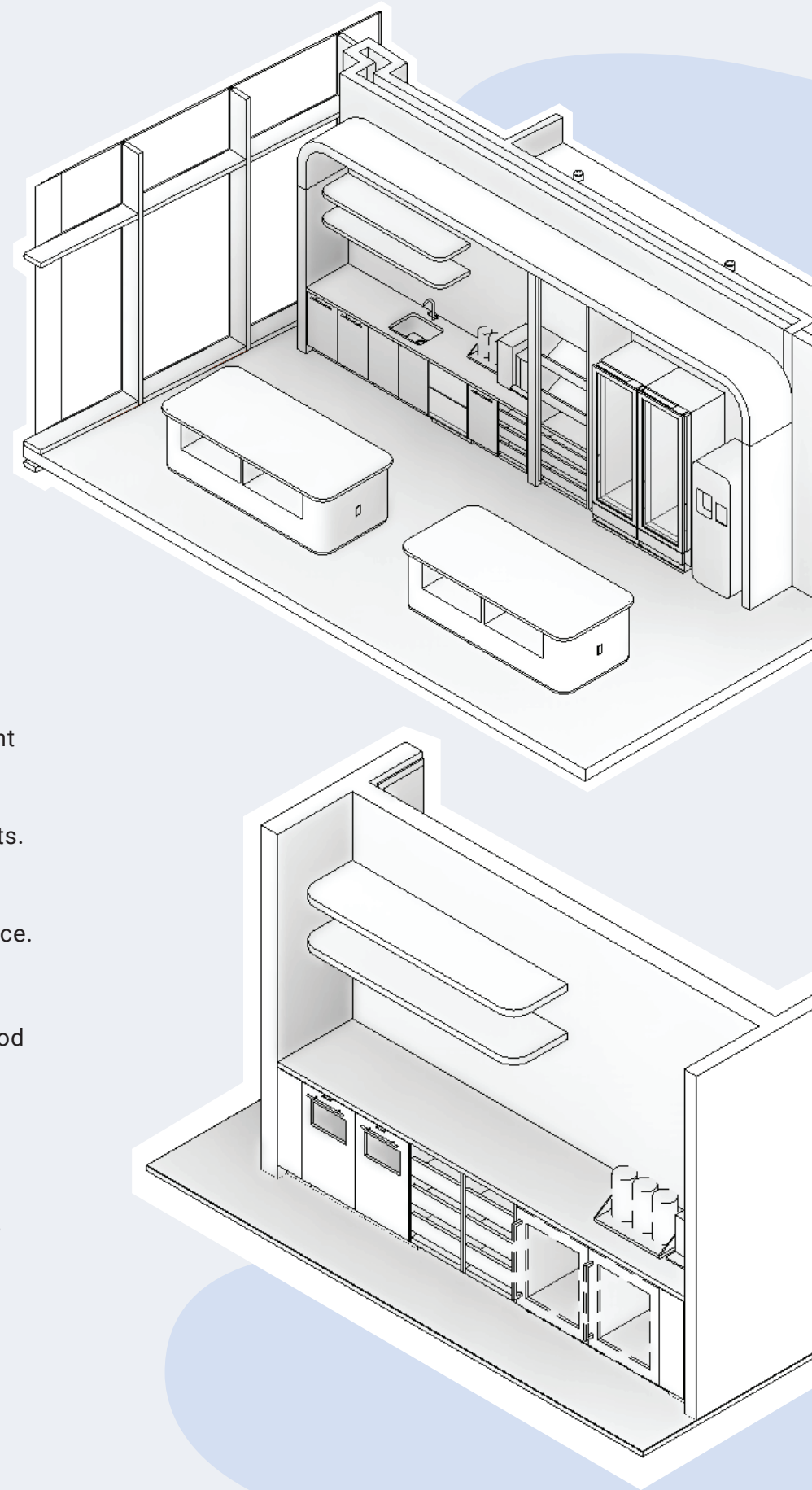
Step One: Level Up Your Layout

Designing the perfect office kitchen and pantry means thinking carefully about how you've laid out your space, from countertop dimensions to appliance placement and storage. Consider what employees will need to move around easily to prep and enjoy food. Then, work with partners you trust to bring your vision to life.

- 1. Try the work triangle:** The “work triangle” is a time-tested trick for measuring kitchen space that accounts for the distance between the sink, stove (or microwave, since we are talking about offices here), and fridge. The three points should form a triangle, with each point about four to nine feet apart, to ensure easy movement between tasks.
- 2. Give them space:** There's nothing worse than prepping food in a space where there's...well...no space. Aim for at least 36 inches of countertop space beside a sink or hot cooking appliance and at least 24 inches next to other machines (coffee makers, blenders, sous vide cookers—if you're feeling fancy).
- 3. Go with the flow:** Plan for traffic flow and ensure enough space for people to move around comfortably and freely. We may be biased, but we like to think that if there isn't enough room for people to huddle and watch clips of the Renaissance tour, you're doing it wrong.
- 4. Celebrate collisions:** When it comes to office planning, “collisions,” the chance meetings that encourage team members to connect in ways that wouldn't happen on a normal workday, are highly encouraged.

Famously, Apple founder Steve Jobs insisted on making space for collisions when he designed the company's headquarters. Make sure you place popular machines and snacks in places that encourage people to connect with others outside of their team.

- 5. Light it up:** We can all agree that natural light is an instant mood booster. If you're building from the ground up, think strategically about where you place windows, doors, and skylights. If your kitchen space lacks natural light, use a combination of overhead, task, and accent lighting to create a well-lit and functional space.
- 6. Stick with sturdy materials:** If you're building out your kitchen or pantry space, there's a good chance you want it to last. Extend its life by picking durable and easy-to-clean materials, such as granite or quartz countertops, tile or hardwood floors, and stainless steel appliances. Good quality materials can stand up to anything—even red wine happy hours or that one colleague's “special” tomato sauce.



Step Two: Evaluate Your Equipment

Everyone has an opinion when it comes to kitchen equipment. Some people like sparkling water machines, others like simple water jugs. And coffee lovers have lots...and lots...and lots of thoughts about which appliances make the best brews. But unlike your home kitchen, deciding which machines your team needs to cook (and clean) at the office means thinking about what will satisfy the most people.



1. Keep coffee (and tea) front and center:

If there's one thing all offices have in common, it's employees who crave caffeine. Make them happy with [coffee machines](#) that deliver their cuppa joe just how they like it. For people whose coffee orders come with hyphens, a state-of-the-art espresso machine like the [De Jong Duke Nio](#) offers milk froth options and a menu of specialties. Decaf devotees will appreciate a drip coffee machine like the [Bunn-o-Matic Infusion Coffee Brewer](#), and Earth-friendly tea drinkers will light up if they see a [Nespresso Gemini](#) and its recyclable pods.

2. Stay chill: A refrigerator is a must for storing perishable food and beverages—unless we missed the memo about warm salads trending. Consider the size of your office, the number of employees who might need to use the fridge, and if you have enough space for people to use its doors and drawers comfortably. If you really want to make your kitchen pop, invest in a [glass door fridge](#) (or two). They're not only a celebrity and chef favorite, they've been proven to make rooms feel bigger and helpful in reminding employees to stop for snack breaks.

3. Remember, some like it hot: Your team will want hot meals just as often as cold ones. Help them heat leftovers, frozen foods, and packaged meals with microwaves that have multiple power levels and are large enough to handle multiple dishes at once.

Modern office-grade microwave ovens are precise enough to evenly heat frozen burritos, “bake” potatoes, and ensure every popcorn kernel is popped to perfection.

4. Double down on drink machines:

Water coolers are nice, but the modern marketplace is filled with intelligent and interactive machines that offer a range of drink options. Our research (a.k.a. years of happy client interactions) has shown that nothing excites people more than customizing what goes in their cups. From [Bevi's bubbly, bottleless water dispensers](#) to Coca-Cola's Freestyle, you can wave goodbye to boring hydration breaks.

5. Bet on blenders: From summer smoothies to winter soups, someone on your team will want to use a blender at mealtime. Opt for a model with multiple speeds, texture settings, and a large enough bowl to turn whole ingredients into smooth, nutritious blends.

6. Tidy up with dishwashers: The truth is, kitchens that serve a lot of people get dirty quickly. A dishwasher can be a time-saver for offices that use a lot of dishes and utensils. Opt for an industrial-sized machine if you have a high headcount, or consider a compact or countertop model if space is limited.



Step Three: Assess Product Variety

Having a wide variety of snacks, beverages, and fresh foods is the easiest way to show your team that you're invested in their happiness and well-being. Today's workforce is filled with people who have unique dietary restrictions, nutritional goals, interest in foods that align with their values, and curiosity about the sustainability of the snacks they choose. Providing options guarantees there's a little something for everyone.

- 1. Flavors:** The best snacks selections have sweet and savory options. Sweet snacks include chocolate, candy, or [dried fruits](#), while savory snacks include [crackers](#), [chips](#), [nuts](#), and [jerky](#). You can also treat your team to more adventurous flavor combos like spicy mango strips or honey mustard nuts, to meet their taste buds in the middle.
- 2. Textures:** As a snack eater, you know that crunchy potato chips and a silky spoonful of yogurt delight the senses differently. Offering a variety of textures can make snacking more interesting and satisfying. Make sure you have crunchy snacks like [popcorn](#), [pretzels](#), or rice crackers, as well as softer snacks like [fruit](#), [string cheese](#), and nut butter on hand.
- 3. Dietary needs:** From [keto](#) to kosher, people want to see that there are snacking options that fit their dietary needs. For [gluten-free](#) team members, make sure you have gluten-free crackers or rice cakes. For [vegans](#), ensure you have snacks that don't contain animal products such as [almond butter packets](#) or [apple chips](#). A good snack supplier will have resources to make finding snacks for all diets easy.

- 4. Fresh produce:** There's nothing quite as satisfying as biting into fresh fruits and veggies. Bring the produce aisle to the pantry with a ripe selection of blueberries, watermelon, carrots, avocados and more. Produce is delicious on its own, but you can make it go further by encouraging your team to pair tangy fruit with oatmeal and smoothies or dress up salads and sandwiches with crisp vegetables.
- 5. Sizes:** A jumbo-sized bag of popcorn is great for family movie night, but it is probably not what a person looking for a quick bite between meetings is looking for. Make it easy for your team to grab what they like by offering a single serving of the foods they love. You can also [program drink machines](#) and dispensers to serve grab-and-go portions. Fun fact: Sharing by serving is a great way to avoid overspending.
- 6. Stock:** It's a good idea to [regularly take stock of your snack inventory](#). If you notice that you have too many of one type of snack and need more of another, make a note to purchase more products you're missing next time you place an order. A strong snack partner [usually has an app](#) to manage stock and staff who can provide recommendations.



Step Four: Set the Vibe

You can build the perfect layout, buy a cool coffee machine and load the fridge and shelves with snacks, but if you don't make your office kitchen and pantry welcoming or, as we like to say, create good vibes, your hard work won't pay off. Help employees feel comfortable by incorporating calming design elements that encourage them to come in more often and mirror the comforts of working from home. You'll win bonus points if you fill the space with games or activities that encourage team members to unwind together.

- 1. Commit to comfortable seating:** Comfortable seating is a must if you want people to hang out in any room. Invest in comfortable chairs and stools, and if you have the space, consider sofas with pillows and throws. Then arrange the seating in a way that encourages conversation. Connecting is easy when couches face each other or a table has more than one chair. It's harder if your back is turned or there's a single seat.
- 2. Color your world:** Colors can significantly impact a room's atmosphere. Studies have shown that beiges, greens, and yellows are the most stress-reducing shades. Warm, inviting colors like earth tones or pastels create a cozy and welcoming space. If you can't change your wall color, consider bringing in colorful accessories and furniture to add personality to your space.
- 3. Spotlight entertainment options:** If you want people to hang out in a room, give them something to do. Add a T.V. and invite people to watch company-related events, big news events, and major sports competitions together. Your team won't feel like they're missing out on viewing events and may

even find common bonds. You can also add a gaming console or board games to create entertainment options that cater to different interests and ages.

- 4. Elevate the experience with experts:** The best office kitchens and pantries are staffed with experts in food and beverage who know how to handle everything from broken coffee machines to backorders. Having extra hands on site will help you stay focused on bigger tasks and ensure that f&b-related concerns are handled with care in real time.
- 5. Make it an event space:** Everyone loves an office celebration—in fact, they're usually the highlight of the week. Whether you're doing your version of The Dundies or observing a DEI holiday, you can make the office come alive by decorating the kitchen, bringing in a [catered meal](#), and inviting team members to bring their family and friends.



The Ideal Office Kitchen & Pantry Checklist

We rounded up our tips for building the ideal kitchen and pantry space into this handy dandy checklist. Feel free to rip it out, mark it up, and share it with your workplace services team.

Layout

- The sink, stove (or microwave), and fridge are four to nine feet apart and form a “work triangle”
- Adequate space, with at least 36 inches of countertop space beside a sink or hot cooking appliance and at least 24 inches next to other machines
- Enough flow to allow people to move around comfortably
- Collision friendly spaces
- Strategically placed windows and skylights or artificial lighting
- Durable materials such as granite, quartz, hardwood, tile and stainless steel

Equipment

- Coffee and tea machines
- A fridge for storing perishable food and beverages
- Hot appliances such as toaster ovens, microwaves and pop-up toasters
- Drink machines that allow users to customize their beverages
- Blenders to mix, crush and puree foods
- A dishwasher to make large cleanups easy

Product Variety

- An assortment of flavors including salty and sweet options
- A mix of textures including crunchy, creamy, crumbly and liquid
- Enough options to satisfy dietary needs such as kosher, keto, vegan and gluten free
- Multiple product sizes to make snacking on the go or sharing with a group easy
- A method for taking taking stock of inventory and ordering replacements

Vibes

- Comfortable seating
- Calming paint colors
- Entertainment including tv, board games and music
- Expert Staff who can assist with deliveries, restocking, repairs and more
- Plans for group experiences

Afterword

You did it! You got through our tips for building your ideal office kitchen and pantry. The knowledge you've gained from this small volume will help you create a space your whole team is excited to return to. Even more exciting, it will help you design a space that makes employees feel at home, encourages social interaction and supports their wellbeing.

Looking for expert support to craft and maintain the kitchen space of your dreams? Visit craftydelivers.com to learn more and get in touch.

About Crafty

Crafty is a centralized platform for workplaces to manage food, beverage, and supplies for their in-office, remote, and hybrid teams across the globe. Founded in 2015, our mission is to help companies craft better workplaces. From G2 to Paypal to Yelp, we work with the world's biggest brands to harness the power of food and beverage to foster a culture of employee connectivity and increase workplace productivity. Headquartered in Chicago, with offices in New York and the Bay area, Crafty manages over 260 international customer offices and serves over 300,000 employees per month.

