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CONTRIBUTING TO A SUSTAINABLE FOOD ECOSYSTEM

By inventing the Ticket Restaurant meal voucher in 1962, Edenred has helped to connect restaurants and employees, extending the lunch break ritual across society. The Ticket Restaurant voucher was born from a societal challenge: to ensure workers have access to a lunch break and to promote healthy eating. Today, Edenred is present in 30 countries with meal and food vouchers to improve food purchasing power and facilitate access to food.

At Edenred, we believe that food is much more than a physiological need: it is a source of joy, health, social connection, and respect for our planet. With over 60 million users worldwide and a network of 2 million partner restaurants and merchants¹, we have both the responsibility and the opportunity to support the transition toward a food model that reconciles pleasure and well-being, protection of one's health and of the planet's, performance of actors, tradition and innovation.

Thanks to Edenred solutions, millions of meals are bought each day, making Edenred's commitment towards sustainable food crucial for our users and partner merchants. Our vision: to make every meal a moment of shared joy and a positive act for health, communities, and the planet.

Here are our 3 fundamental convictions:

1. Promote tasty and sustainable food: flexitarianism and fighting against food waste
2. Anchor our partner network locally and support employment in living territories
3. Value the lunch break: a time for joy and performance

1. PROMOTE TASTY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD: FLEXITARIANISM AND FIGHTING AGAINST FOOD WASTE

We believe that a transition to sustainable food will not happen through constraint or deprivation, but through the rediscovery of taste, diversity, and the pleasure of eating well for a better health and environmental impact.

- **From a health point of view: take care of you while enjoying yourself**

Food is our first medicine. The flexitarian diet, which prioritizes plant-based proteins while maintaining a moderate and quality consumption of animal products, offers proven health benefits while preserving the pleasure and conviviality of meals. The EAT-Lancet Commission recommends reducing some foods by 50% such as sugar and red meat and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption to lower the risks of cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers². In the professional context, adopting a balanced diet combined with good hydration not only supports physical health but also enhances energy, focus, and daily well-being, key for joy at work.

- **From a planet point of view: act by respecting natural resources**

The environmental impact of food is significant: around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions³. Yet adopting a flexitarian diet, thus limiting the consumption of animal products could mitigate around 25% of food related emissions (IPCC – 2022)⁴ and significantly reduce deforestation⁵.

A sustainable diet also means fighting against food waste. Globally, commercial catering wastes 162 billion dollars annually (FAO, 2023), representing 170 to 230 grams per meal served. Yet, putting in place food waste reduction initiatives has a positive financial impact for restaurants, 6 times the invested amount in such actions. (Champions 12.3, 2019)⁶.

Our commitment:

We support our restaurant partners to offer more attractive and flavourful flexitarian dishes and highlight these offerings in our communications with users. Edenred is also committed to fighting against food waste through innovative partnerships. On top of communication, and as the leader of meal vouchers, we assess our contribution to more sustainable and healthier choices. Meal voucher beneficiaries purchase more fresh products (11% more fresh vegetables and fruits in Italy and 7% more in Romania) than non-users⁷.

Our actions:

Edenred has long collaborated with public authorities to encourage better practices while preserving taste and accessibility. Edenred is the initiator of the FOOD program (Fighting Obesity through Offer and Demand) in Europe. Launched in 2009 with the support of the European Commission, the FOOD program aims to promote balanced eating among employees during their workday. As the coordinator and sole private actor within a consortium of 29 members, Edenred raises awareness of the importance of balanced nutrition across 11 European countries in restaurants. Since 2009, FOOD communication reached over 7.4 million employees, 251,000 companies, and 500,000 restaurants⁸.

Additionally, Edenred fights against food waste. Edenred has established partnerships with startups such as Too Good To Go, Phenix, and FoodObox to facilitate the purchase of

surplus food at discounted prices. In Brazil, a partnership with Mercado Diferente helps save products which don't comply with aesthetic standards. In 2025, Edenred had at least one local partner fighting food waste in more than 10 countries.

2. ANCHOR OUR PARTNER NETWORK LOCALLY AND SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT IN LIVING TERRITORIES

Our network of 2 million local restaurants and shops composes one of the beating hearts of communities. These establishments are much more than places to eat; they are spaces of life, social connection, local employment and promotion of diverse food that contribute to the richness and identity of our neighbourhoods and cities. At Edenred, the vast majority of our partners are merchants with only a single point of sale.

- **Support of local employment and economic vitality**

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), the accommodation and food services sector, which includes catering and restaurants, accounts for approximately 330 million jobs worldwide. This sector is one of the largest employers globally, especially for women and young people.

The dynamism of small and medium enterprises (SME) supports stable, often local jobs, reinforcing local economies, reducing commuting, and helping to build a more resilient and sovereign food system. This territorial anchoring also helps diversify employment offers and values skills linked to foodservice and local commerce professions.

- **Short supply chains and quality serving food sovereignty**

Territorial anchoring also often favors short supply chains, synonymous with freshness, traceability, flavour profile and food sovereignty. Seasonal products, harvested at peak ripeness and stored for shorter periods, offer a superior culinary experience while reducing environmental impact. A study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (UK, 2023) shows that short supply chains reduce food transport-related CO₂ and ensure better product freshness¹⁰.

Our commitment:

By working with local actors, Edenred directly contributes to job creation and retention in territories, thereby strengthening economic and social vitality. We develop specific partnerships with local restaurants that promote local producers, support employment in territories, local food culture, and food sovereignty, close to the daily lives of users of our solutions. We celebrate culinary diversity and the craftsmanship of foodservice artisans.

Our actions:

By example, the « Țara lui Mai Bine » (The Land of Better)⁸, a program launched by Edenred Romania in partnership with the employer organization HORA, supports and grows its

merchant partners by creating the first national platform directly connecting restaurants with local producers across the country. Officially launched in 2024, the program contributes to attract and retain customers who consume locally and sustainably, while benefiting from increased visibility and strengthening the region's food sovereignty.

Edenred runs communication campaigns to promote merchants in its networks. In 2025, Edenred launched the "Best Lunch" operation in several countries (such as Finland, Romania, Brazil, Belgium, Portugal and Austria), enabling users to vote for the best restaurant of their choice, which is then rewarded by Edenred and promoted nationwide. This program illustrates Edenred's commitment to enhance the business development and visibility of our local partners.

3. VALUING THE LUNCH BREAKS FUELS JOY AND PERFORMANCE

In the context of hybrid remote work and an intensifying professional pace, the lunch break is often sacrificed. Yet this time is crucial for recharging, reconnecting with oneself and others, and fostering joy at work.

- **An essential moment to recharge and reconnect**

A Harvard business review study highlights that employees who take a regular lunch break are more engaged and display more loyalty toward their company¹¹. Other studies have shown that small breaks tend to reduce fatigue and improve employee vigor, while longer break tends to lead to a performance improvement¹².

- **Commensality: a source of joy, cohesion, and creativity**

In the professional environment, commensality is much more than a lunch break: it is an informal exchange time that strengthens bonds between colleagues, enhances team cohesion, and nurtures collective joy. Derived from the Latin *cum mensa* ("with the table"), commensality encompasses the social, cultural, and relational dimensions of eating together beyond purely nutritional functions.

Research confirms that sharing a meal at work improves cross-functional communication and sense of belonging, fosters collective intelligence, and reduces tensions.

Our commitment:

At Edenred, we believe that facilitating access to a quality, shared lunch break is no small matter. We raise awareness among employers and employees about the importance of the lunch break and develop tools to facilitate access to quality, varied, and balanced catering. Meal vouchers are a key tool to secure and even increase employees' meal and food budgets, helping users securing an access to food despite inflation, and accessing to better quality products⁷. Ticket Restaurant cardholders are more likely to dine together

as they have access to the same offers and comparable budgets for lunch, fostering conviviality.

Our actions:

In some countries, Edenred gives the users the option to identify engaged merchants through the Edenred app. The goal is to simplify the way users can find and access sustainable food for a lunch with colleagues, taking into account all requirements, from vegetarian meal to other types of healthy meals. Edenred is working to deploy and enhanced such functionalities in other countries and providing more option to our users to identify engaged merchants and restaurant truly aligned with their convictions or needs to insure a joyful lunch.

CONCLUSION: OUR RESPONSIBILITY, OUR COMMITMENT, OUR VISION

As a global leader in payment solutions for the foodservice industry, Edenred has a unique role to play in transforming the food system. Our vision: to make every meal a moment of shared joy, an act of care for oneself and others, and a positive contribution to the health of our planet and our territories. Together, with our restaurants and merchant partners, corporate clients, and millions of users, we will contribute to the joyfully sustainable food system of tomorrow.

Enrich connections.
 For good.

SOURCES

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