

Foods for a Productive Breakfast Meeting

Make the Morning Meetings More Productive with Brain Stimulating Foods



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(May 17, 2011) Sarah Vining is the marketing manager for The National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia, one of the leading conference centers in the U.S. She, along with executive chef Craig Mason and Andrea Sullivan of

BrainStrength Systems, a consulting firm, has authored a study called, "The Science of Food for Thought: Enhancing Meetings Through Food."

The findings from the study showed that the kinds of foods served at extended conferences affected attendance, alertness, and productivity of attendees. Among the findings was that red meat served at lunch made people sluggish, and that light, high-protein, low-sugar breakfasts made for a more productive day.

You may not have to organize meals for a three day conference, but you may have to arrange for food for an early- or late- morning breakfast meeting. Supply the attendees with brain stimulating foods for higher productivity.

Fruit Plate

Fruits were high on the list of brain foods in the study. Grapes, bananas and berries are natural sources of energy and stimulate the brain. Serve cubed cantaloupe, papaya and watermelon in small cups for extra servings of natural sweetness.

Bagels

Bagels are a classic breakfast food, and whole grain bagels are preferable to those made with refined flours. A complex carbohydrate, whole grains relax the mind and improve cognitive function, according to Andrea Sullivan, one of the study's authors. Include a choice of toppings as well. Cream cheese is of course the traditional spread, but low-fat herbal butters and sugar-free jellies also taste great on bagels.

Muffins

Zucchini, strawberry or banana muffins can add a touch of comfort food to the breakfast meeting fare. As with the bagels, whole grain muffins are the healthier option. Mini-muffins may also be the better option for a breakfast meeting. Attendees are more likely to eat a balance of fruits and breads, and remain more productive, if they don't fill up on one large muffin at the start of the meeting.

Provide small cups filled with a low-sodium trail mix, particularly if the meeting is longer than 30 minutes. Having a little bit of trail mix to nibble keeps the mind nimble. Select a mix with a balance of seeds, nuts and raisins for a healthy blend of protein and carbohydrates.

Sandwiches

Sandwiches may be traditional lunch fare, but they may be appealing if the meeting is a little later in the morning. Choose whole grain breads and offer slices of lean turkey or chicken and thinly sliced cheeses, but avoid high-sodium packaged meats. Provide [vegetarian](#) options as well with sliced avocado, cucumber, tomato and greens. Add a fruit plate to make the late morning meeting menu complete.

Drinks

Coffee and tea are standard fare at morning meetings, and it may not be an option to exclude these caffeinated drinks. But do include bottled water and juice as well. If the meeting runs long, these may prove a welcome alternative to coffee or tea.

Be Mindful of Presentation

Arrange the plates of the breakfast foods along the center of the table so everyone can reach different foods without having to stretch. Having several smaller plates of fruit and breads grouped together the length of the table ensures everyone can reach without having to stretch over another person. Include small plates, knives and forks, and napkins at each chair. Attendees are more likely to feel comfortable about eating if the table is "set".

Be Mindful of Food Sensitivities

Take the time to inquire if any attendees have food allergies or sensitivities. For example, if anyone in the group is allergic to nuts, skip the trail mix. For those sensitive to gluten, include gluten-free bagels or muffins.

References:

[The Science of Food for Thought: Enhancing Meetings Through Food](#)
[Travel Market Report](#)
[BrainStrength.net](#)

[Foodie Lifestyle Reduces Risk for Heart Disease](#) and Treats Celiac Disease
Creating Artistic Table Settings
[Betty Crocker Goes Gluten Free](#)

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