

Water Trends in the Workplace



An Overview from



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WATER TRENDS IN THE WORKPLACE

There's no question that water consumption is on the rise. Whether as part of a health and nutrition regimen, or simply because they prefer the taste, more adults are drinking water than ever before.

Water offers several health benefits over other beverages. It includes zero calories, zero carbohydrates, zero fat, zero sugars and zero caffeine – making it the perfect beverage for every type of nutrition plan.

As a result, the average person consumes 24 gallons of bottled water a year – up from 9 gallons in 1991, according to *Foodservice* magazine.

Water Options at Work

People aren't just drinking water at home or in the gym. More frequently, quality drinking water is in greater demand in the workplace. In recent surveys, ARAMARK found that 65 percent of consumers want bottled water as a free office refreshment service, while 40 percent of consumers desire bottled water from a vending machine. In addition, nearly 70 percent of workplaces offer free filtered or jugged water to employees and visitors – making free water service second only to free hot coffee at work.

Many employers are also finding that drinking water is a health benefit that is easily provided. Office coffee service providers can easily incorporate water products and services into a comprehensive office refreshment program, so that there are no additional services to manage. Water options are also inexpensive as a health benefit, costing far less than other workplace health and nutrition programs such as lunch-and-learns, fitness centers and nutrition newsletters.

One key stipulation in adults' increasing interest in drinking water is that many individuals are looking for more upscale water options, particularly filtered water and natural spring waters that remove sediment and other contaminants. This means that employers looking to provide water to employees typically evaluate between four different options:

- **Individual bottles of water.** Name-brand bottled water can be made available free of charge to employees as part of an office coffee program. Typically, employers also make other cold beverages available, including iced tea, carbonated soft drinks and juices. However, this option can be more expensive than competing options, and many businesses do not have extensive refrigerated space available for storage.
- **Vended water.** Alternatively, individual bottles of water can be made available for purchase in a workplace vending machine. Employees and employers alike find this an attractive option because it provides access to a variety of options, with employees bearing the burden of the expense. This is often implemented in conjunction with a program that provides other water options free of charge to employees and visitors for a broader array of choice and optimal workplace satisfaction.
- **Jugged water.** Jugged water coolers are still the most prevalent of all water options in the workplace. However, many employers are finding that this offering has several shortcomings:
 - Water jugs must be replaced once they are empty. Many employees shirk the responsibility because the jugs are heavy and difficult to maneuver, and if not lifted properly these jugs can cause physical injury.
 - Water jugs require storage space, while office space is at an increasing premium. They also get dusty, which detracts from the physical appeal of a breakroom.
 - Jugged water is often delivered by a separate provider, requiring management of another vendor and another monthly invoice.

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- Water from water coolers is not regulated to ensure it is clean or purified. In addition, water coolers are often not regularly sanitized or maintained, which can compromise the quality of the water and the water system.
- Employees are limited in how much water they can consume by how much water is delivered each week.
- **Filtered water.** Filtered water units are gaining in popularity. These units are plumbed in directly to an office's water supply. Water travels into the filter unit, where it is processed to reduce sediment, lead, parasitic microorganisms and chemicals such as chlorine.

Water is then stored in the water tank, where it is either heated or cooled to provide hot and cold water for employees at the touch of a button. Some units, such as the AquaMark®LX system from ARAMARK, also include ultraviolet technology to ensure water stays clean and fresh while it is in the tank waiting to be dispensed.

There are several benefits to filtered water systems, including:

- **Minimal space requirements.** Filtered water units are available in a variety of sizes and styles, including countertop models, to ensure they fit into different workplace environments. They also do not require storage space for bottles or other equipment. Many water units also come in various color schemes to match the décor of different breakrooms for a more pleasing appearance.
- **An unending water supply.** Because these units are plumbed in directly to a water line, employees can drink as much clean, good-tasting water as they wish—without additional cost to the company, and without additional visits from a delivery person.
- **Less management.** Office coffee service providers such as ARAMARK can manage both breakroom refreshments and filtered water needs. Office managers can have a single point of contact for their office refreshments, as well as a single invoice to manage at the end of the month.
- **Guaranteed service.** Providers of filtered water units will typically schedule a few visits each year to ensure proper operation of the water unit, including services such as installment of new filters, sanitization of the unit and replacement of other components. This ensures quality drinking water year round.

Additionally, some filtered water units can be connected directly to office coffee equipment, so that coffee is made with better-tasting water. Many upscale coffeehouses use water filtration to ensure their coffee and tea taste great. Employers can offer their employees the same level of quality and satisfaction, particularly if they choose to offer an office coffee selection from marquee brands like Starbucks®, Seattle's Best Coffee®, Dunkin' Donuts®, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters® and FLAVIA®. Cocoas, soups, drink mixes and other refreshments can also be made with filtered water, making these treats taste even better and helping employees feel more refreshed after their break.

To begin a cost analysis for your organization, the worksheet on the next page can help calculate differences in cost between a generic jugged water service and a filtered water service from ARAMARK. Office managers looking to explore various water options also can talk with their office coffee service provider, who can discuss their needs and the economics of each option and consult on which implementation will work best.

About ARAMARK Refreshment Services

ARAMARK provides workplace refreshments to thousands of locations throughout North America, offering clients a single source for office coffee service, water filtration, brand-name beverages and food and breakroom essentials. Through The Complete Breaktime Experience™, ARAMARK offers a holistic approach to providing outstanding client service. For more information on ARAMARK, visit www.aramarkrefreshments.com.

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Water Service Worksheet

Cost of Jugged Water

	Per Month	Per Year
1. Cost of water cooler rental:	_____	_____
2. Number of bottles used:	_____	_____
3. Cost of bottles used:	_____	_____
4. Space required to store water bottles:	_____	_____
5. Cost of bottle storage space:	_____	_____
6. Additional service expenses:	_____	_____
7. TOTAL COST OF JUGGED WATER: (Add questions 1, 3, 5 and 6)	_____	_____

Cost of Filtered Water

	Per Month	Per Year
1. Cost of AquaMark®LX water system*:	_____	_____
2. Space required to store bottles/equipment:	<u> N/A </u>	<u> N/A </u>
3. Cost of bottle/equipment storage space:	<u> \$0.00 </u>	<u> \$0.00 </u>
4. Additional service expenses:	_____	_____
5. TOTAL COST OF AQUAMARK®LX WATER: (Add questions 1, 3 and 4)	_____	_____

Jugged Water vs. Filtered Water

	Per Month	Per Year
Cost difference between jugged water and AquaMark®LX system: (Calculate difference between Total Cost line items)	_____	_____

* Contact an ARAMARK Refreshment Services representative to talk further about the value of an AquaMark®LX system for your location, 800-233-3181.