

As stated in the **European Commission White Paper** in 2007 on nutrition strategy: **“Businesses can also support the development of healthy lifestyles in the workplace. Together with employee organisations, they should also develop proposals/guidelines for ways in which companies of different sizes can introduce simple, cost-effective measures to promote healthy lifestyles of employees”.**

► **Companies have a key role to play in preventing obesity.**

THE FOOD PROGRAMME

Eating at a restaurant can be compatible with a balanced diet within the context of professional life. The FOOD programme aims at promoting healthy eating by influencing both offer and demand: it improves the nutritional quality of the food restaurants offer, and helps informed employees make choices by providing keys to understand and take action.

Main objectives:

- To sensitise employees in order to help them to improve their eating habits
- To evaluate the needs and expectations regarding nutritional information for the two targets

Specific objectives:

- To evaluate the needs and expectations regarding nutrition information of the two targets
- To collect experts' recommendations after the understanding of the needs
- To adapt the recommendations into practical communication tools
- To adapt the offer to the demand of the consumers
- To organise useful trainings according to the countries
- To enable a large access to detailed information to the targets.

From a project co-funded by the European Commission to a self-run programme, **FOOD** is an example of a successful sustainable public-private partnership

THE WORKPLACE - A KEY VECTOR OF INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

According to our surveys*: **A balanced nutrition is becoming increasingly important to consumers, who are looking for a lunch offer that combines balance and variety. Lunch breaks are becoming shorter and some employees say they feel trapped in a sedentary lifestyle that curbs their efforts to live a healthy life.**

Balanced eating promotes employee well-being and productivity, which in turn reduces absenteeism at work.

A UNIQUE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL BETWEEN ENTREPRISES AND RESTAURANTS

Through its Ticket Restaurant® network, Edenred is a vector of communication, information and exchange of best practices between businesses and restaurants. With the help of over **30 partners** – experts in the fields of nutrition, public health and research – a public-private consortium was created to promote a **quality-oriented programme in 7 countries in Europe: Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.**

5 successive and mutually-reinforcing stages to meet these objectives:

- INVENTORY OF THE EXISTING PROGRAMMES** (760 pages document, 139 programmes), **2 TYPES OF SURVEYS** (quantitative: 52 000 employees and 5 000 restaurants) to know and understand better the needs (qualitative: 50 interviews with restaurants in 12 countries)
- COMPARATIVE STUDY** of the results and **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the partners
- PILOTS IN RESTAURANTS** on the one hand **AND COMPANIES** on the other one: development of simple tools adapted to each target: pedagogical guides, training, posters, e-learning DVD, etc.
- EVALUATION** of the pilots
- NEWTOLS** created and **DISSEMINATION** of best practices in Europe and beyond

Based on the analysis of the 2 surveys, the actions have met the demand of the target groups and have been adapted to their professional constraints.

The results from the questionnaires demonstrated that information should be simple, not too scientific and very practical. From the lack of information and wrong beliefs encountered, a common principle was identified as a priority: to clarify the messages and information towards professionals, to give them clear and understandable facts, examples and practices.

- Restaurant owners and cooks still keep many prejudices and false ideas about balanced eating and nutrition and should be more sensitised about the importance to offer more balanced options to their customers.
- On the other hand, the employees are looking for ready to use tools and information.

The important link between the offer and demand sides was reconnected through a network of FOOD restaurants. In May 2011, the network numbered almost **1800 restaurants applying the national recommendations**, only a few months after the beginning of the actions towards restaurants.

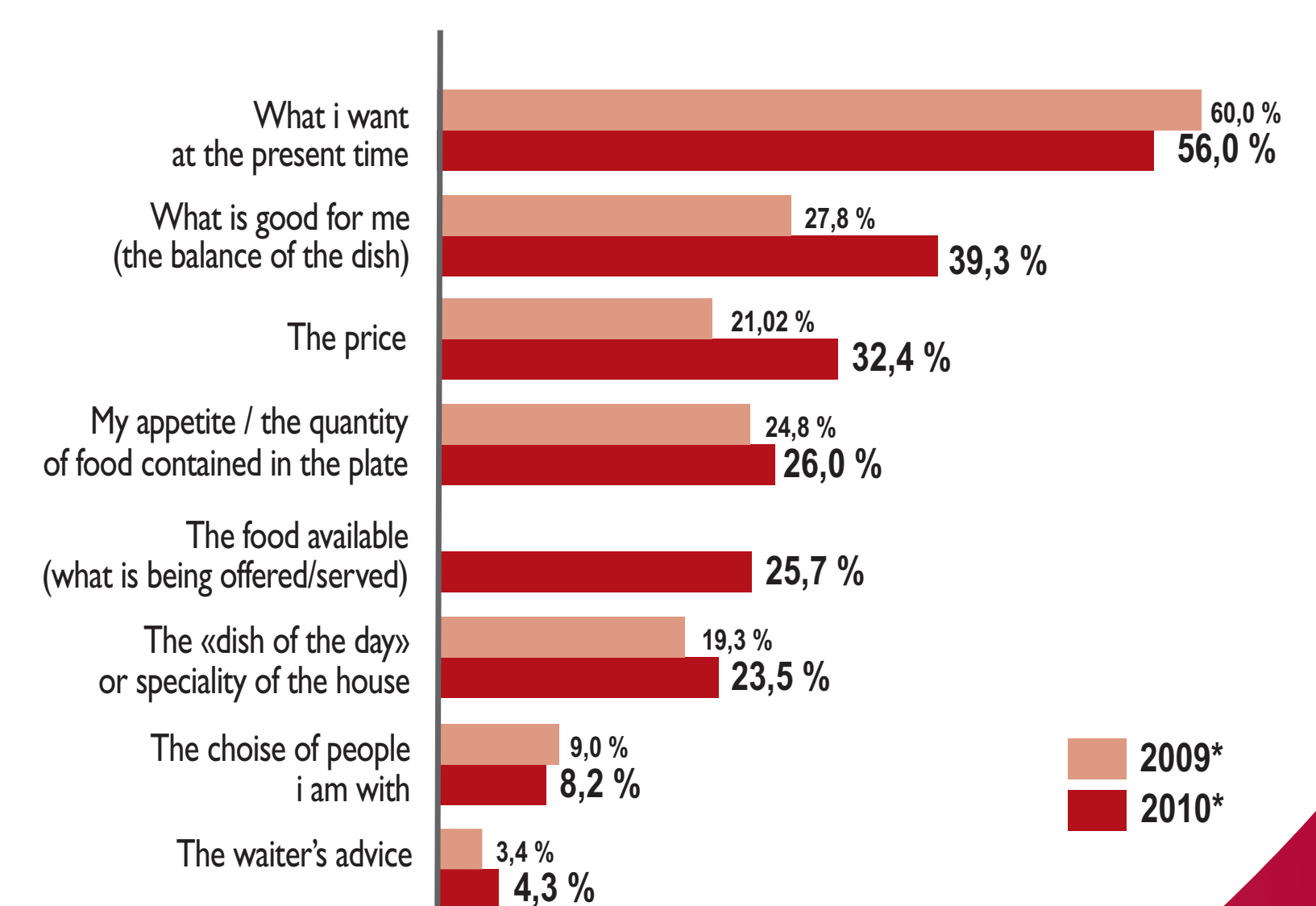
Findings from the restaurant survey make it clear that there is a need to demonstrate that changes can be made with little effort.

The reports from **150 unannounced visits** to the FOOD network restaurants, carried out in 6 countries, indicated that most of the restaurants visited were independently-run and the main point which should be improved is related to staff in restaurants. This **evaluation** suggested that although the owner had engaged the restaurant in the FOOD programme, the content of the recommendations had not been explained to all of the staff, and therefore, some of the recommendations were not always applied throughout the service (from cooking to meal service).

The main achievement of the project phase was to adapt the messages and the tools to the two main target groups.

Such messages are clear, simple, positive (suggestions rather than instructions), adapted to each culture and habits and to the different target audience (waiters, chefs, restaurants owners, customers, employers, employees, occupational health professionals, trade unions), and use as many channels of communication as possible. The complementarity of expertise had made this possible.

How many times per week do you take a break to have lunch during your working day?



The FOOD programme respects the professional constraints and meets the real needs of employees and restaurants.