

South Africans are ditching their lunch breaks and losing precious time and money

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People often describe South Africa as a laid-back nation and they wouldn't be wrong. However, when it comes to South Africans' work ethic, we are among the world's most hardworking people and [CareerJunction](#), one of SA's top job boards, have the numbers to prove it!



CareerJunction recently conducted a survey which explores lunch break habits among the South African workforce. Over 3,000 people participated and the results were eye-opening.

Burning the candle at both ends

If you thought that skipping lunch was a trend unique to you or your employer, think again. According to the study, two thirds of South Africans don't use their full lunch breaks. This is more than in the UK, where a similar survey revealed an average of 44% of Brits don't use their full lunch breaks.

If that's not enough of an eye-opener, a shocking 20% of workers said that they skip their lunch breaks altogether and a further 35% said they never leave their desks until their work day ends, except to use the bathroom.

CareerJunction dug a little deeper to find out exactly why workers aren't taking their well-deserved breaks. As it turns out, most respondents are encouraged to take their lunch breaks but over 70% listed too much work as a reason for skipping it.

The fight for a job

Considering SA's current economic climate and high unemployment rate, one cannot help but wonder if job security plays a key role in the work culture of South Africans. With the ever-increasing scarcity of jobs, are South Africans voluntarily working overtime to prove their worth within their organisation and become irreplaceable? Why else would we, as a nation, freely give our time away?

While the fight for employment is an obvious contributor, money, or the lack thereof, also seems to play a part. Even though only 13% of respondents admitted that they can't afford to take lunch every day, it turns out that, although 100% of respondents have access to lunch amenities within a 10-minute walk from their offices, less than half use these and only on occasion. Instead, nearly 60% bring their own lunch from home and 45% spend less than R100 per week on lunch.

Time is money... and happiness

It's not surprising that when asked how skipping their lunch breaks make them feel, most respondents listed unhappy, indifferent and stressed as emotions that accompany them when working through their lunch breaks. If this isn't enough reason to make you want to start taking your well-deserved lunch break, this might:



According to the study, the average South African works a total of *2.2 years overtime during their lifetime due to unused lunch breaks. Wait, there's more...

This amounts to over half-a-million-rand's worth of free work and unnecessary time spent at your desk.

So next time you decide that work is more important than taking a break, perhaps think about how much it's costing you?

To read the full report, visit <https://www.careerjunction.co.za/marketing/cost-of-a-lunch-break>.

***Full-time work life from 18 to 65 years old. Working days in a year: 260 days (365 days minus weekends). StatsSA average earnings paid to employees in the formal non-agricultural sector at R19,858 a month.**

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