

What's in your lunch box?

By  Cari Coetzee

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People working a 9-5 job often forget to eat healthily - they opt for the closest takeaway restaurant or make do with what's available at the office, which is often not the healthiest option, especially if the office isn't health conscious. [FOODwelope](#), founded by Christina Thomas and Stephanie Schwatlo, aims to change all that, offering desk jockeys the option to have a healthy and wholesome lunch delivered in a cleverly designed box, straight to their desk. We spoke to co-founder Schwatlo and asked her to tell us what it's all about.



Christina Thomas and Stephanie Schwatlo

Tell us about FOODwelope and how it all started.

Stephanie Schwatlo: We started FOODwelope as a Deli at the Palms Centre in Woodstock in December 2015. The idea for our healthy office lunches delivered directly to your desk was born last year February and we started with our first clients in March 2016.

Besides coming from a healthy background ourselves, I guess Christina, my business partner and I saw the need to provide a lunch service which is not only convenient but also affordable and most importantly offers healthy options. People always get a bit nervous when they hear healthy. They think lettuce and cucumbers topped with tomatoes... but our dishes are so much more. We are offering four to six different meals every day, the main meals for R69 and the light lunch for R45.

These meals are changing every day and every week - at FOODwelope we are constantly changing our menu according to seasons, what our local suppliers are offering, preferences of our customers and of course the latest health trends.

Our signature dish, the Healthy Lunch Box, is a composition of carefully selected grains, veggies, and protein. This is also available as a Low Carb option which is naturally gluten free, and a vegetarian option. For example, the Rainbow Buddha Box comes with roasted butternut, crunchy cabbage, grilled broccoli and yellow pepper, served on steamed buckwheat and topped with pan fried chicken and avocado dressing. For a more comforting and feel good meal, we offer a Comfort Classic lunch. This is a hearty and home-cooked dish with a healthy twist. Additionally, we have a vegan and a light lunch choice.



■ ***What inspired you to start FOODwelope?***

Schwatlo: Our main aim at FOODwelope is to transform the way offices eat. We want to engage with the companies directly so they see the value in having happy and healthy staff. If they want to subsidise, pay in full or simply promote our service to their employees, either way, it is in the company's interest to offer healthy and nutritious meals to boost not only the productivity and performance but also happiness and inter-office connection.

■ ***What makes FOODwelope special – what differentiates it from other food delivery solutions?***

Schwatlo: FOODwelope is constantly creating a wide range of affordable meals that are not only delicious but also balanced, healthy and free from preservatives, artificial additives, and refined sugar. We produce every meal fresh from scratch every morning, supported by our local suppliers. Basically we cater for everyone who is in need of a healthy, nutritious lunch which keeps you going through your work day without any regrets.

And let's not forget: Convenience is key! So, no excuses to eat junk or simply forget to eat because you don't have time... the lunch is delivered directly to your desk!

The food industry is a very competitive industry, but we at FOODwelope believe in what we do and how we do it. Not only do we offer consistent quality, constantly changing and exciting menus but also deliver an extraordinary service. Our clients are king and we are very passionate about to keep them happy and well fed... Hence our slogan - FOODwelope, nice to feed you.

■ ***Where do you get your produce?***

Schwatlo: We are sourcing all our ingredients from local suppliers, starting from butcheries to vegetables and fruits. Everything is local because we believe "local is lekker."

■ ***Tell us about the design of the food boxes***

Schwatlo: We are trying to use as much biodegradable packaging as possible for our delivery service. Based on the newest trends, we are constantly looking for new suppliers who offer a range of containers which are suitable for our meals. The environment is important to us.

The personal touch comes from us directly, with a FOODwelope sticker and your name handwritten on it. Sometimes even a personal message, if it is your Birthday or Christmas or the like.

“ Transform the way your office eats. [@Bizcommunity](#) is loving [@FOODwelopeSA](#)' #healthy, tasty #lunchdelivery options! [#weloveFOODwelope pic.twitter.com/HfHFr5H4NM](#)— BizLounge (@Biz_Lounge) [February 9, 2017](#) ”

▣ How do you decide what goes into each box?

Schwatlo: Every box is filled manually in the morning with the meal chosen by the customer for that day.

The recipes for those meals are created, changed, enhanced and developed by Christina herself who is a professional chef. Christina owned a restaurant and catering service in Germany before moving to South Africa and has a lot of experience when it comes down to creating a healthy composition of ingredients which will eventually form one of our lunches.



FOODwelope deli

Inspirations, trends, etc. you can get everywhere - local, worldwide, you name it. We normally cook dishes and testing them before allowing them on our menu to guarantee the 100% quality we promise our clients.

▣ What would you like to achieve with FOODwelope?

Schwatlo: We would like to change how offices and perhaps even homes, eat. We want to show people that eating healthily can be also fun, exciting and easy. Some people never really have the opportunity to be exposed to healthy food. By encouraging companies to subsidise lunches or contributing towards them and including our service to their employee benefits, they are making healthy eating available to every staff member. People get inspired by the fresh, healthy food and hopefully take ideas to their families at home and start to eat more healthily even in their private time. Obesity and diabetes are major problems here in South Africa and if you are looking around what the majority of people eat, it is not surprising.

Companies can make a change by simply offering healthy lunches to their staff, making it available to everyone and start the change and education of how important it is to eat the right things. Not only will people feel better, more energised, and happier, they will see all the health benefits too.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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