



# Desk Research

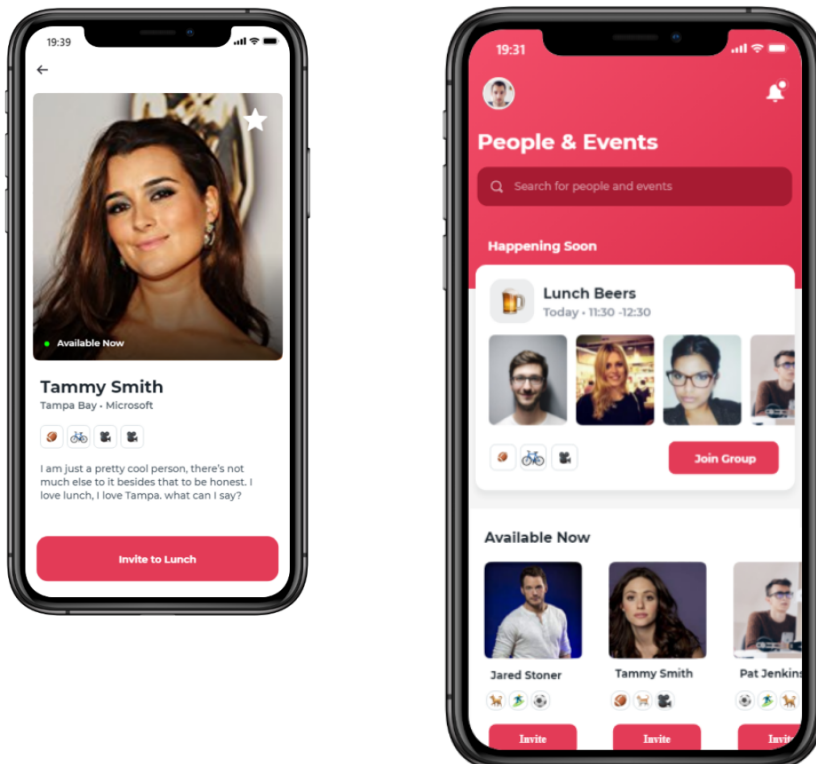
## Research Notes

### **Lunchpool**

Lunchpool kicked off as a startup idea back in 2019, aiming to help colleagues connect and network over lunch. We got in touch with CEO Alexander Abell and learned that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they shifted their focus to virtual events. Nonetheless, the original idea provided us with some valuable insights.

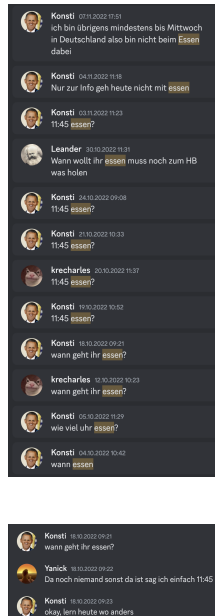
Initially, the app was designed for in-company use. On Lunchpool, users set up profiles with info ranging from dietary needs to favorite movies. This setup encourages users to meet new people, as shared interests can break the ice and prevent any awkward silences. Users can let others know they're "down for lunch" and can then be invited by others or they can start their own lunch event that others can join. After connecting once you become "lunch buddies" for repeat lunch plans. It was also meant to integrate with common calendar apps and also provide you with restaurant recommendations.

We liked the user-friendly interface and functionality but were wondering at which point the profile with interests etc. becomes too complicated and closer to a full-fledged social media than a casual everyday lunch planner.



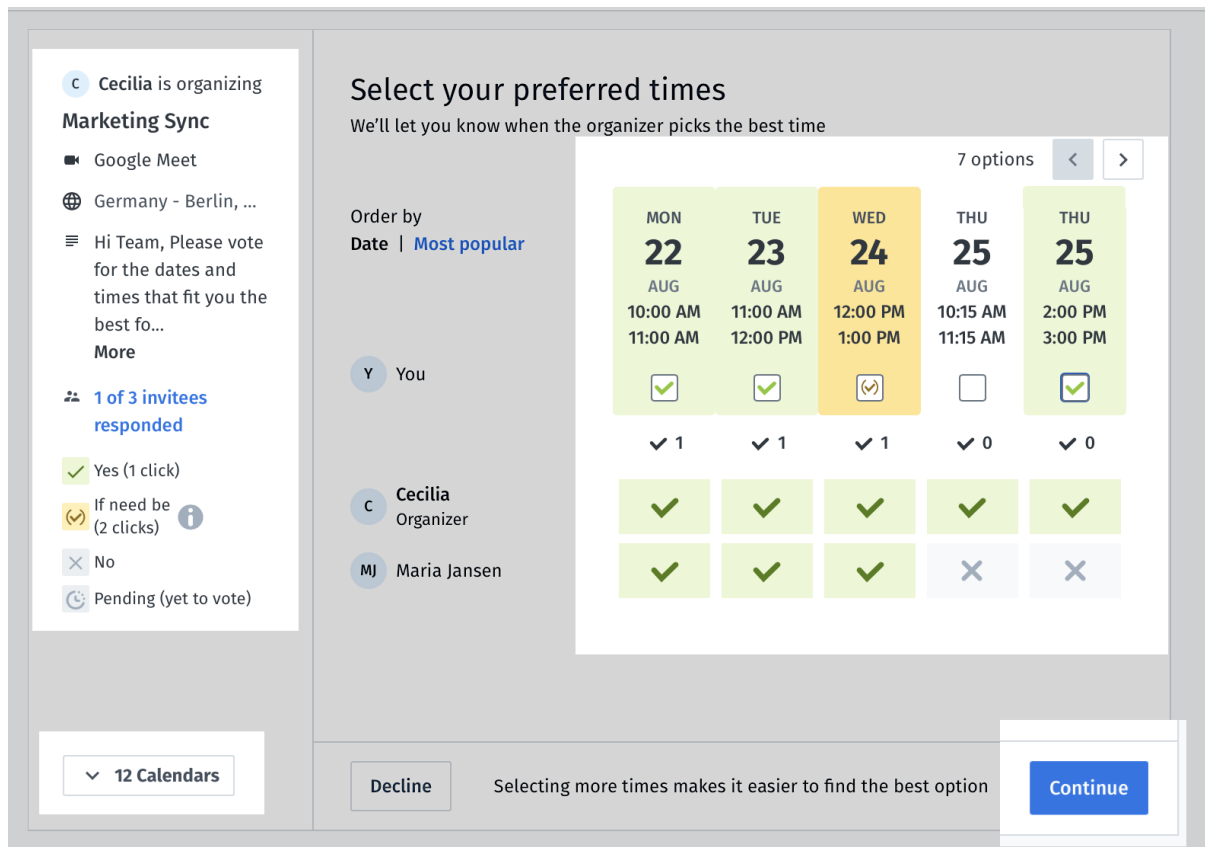
## Group Chats

Group chats are the natural solution that almost every potential user is using to plan their lunches. They exist on every major messaging service like whatsapp, discord, etc. In these group chats of friends, one person proposes the time and everyone gives some kind of reaction to the plan to indicate if they will join or not. This is also the most flexible solution as no framework is imposed on how to plan the lunch and thus allows for any kind of irregularity. However, since group chats tend to be used for different reasons as well, the lunch messages can be lost in the amount of sent messages. The other problem is that a group chat does not always include everyone joining the meal and thus doesn't solve the problem in its most general form. We found that the messages exchanged in order to plan a lunch are often repetitive, thus indicated that there is an opportunity for optimization. Below are a few screenshots of how these group chats might look like.



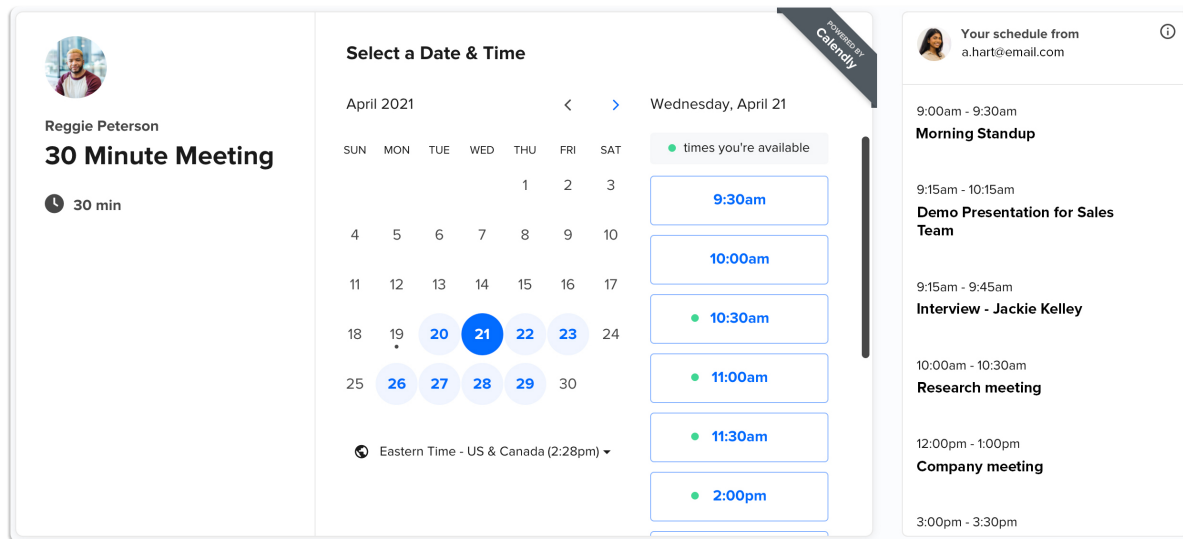
## Doodle

Doodle is one of the most famous scheduling platforms out there. Before they changed concept one could suggest a bunch of dates and then every involved person could fill in whether they are free at that date too. This could potentially be a good app to look at for our app. However the problem is that it can be a bit tedious to click through all available slots everyday for lunch and an easier solution is needed for us. Below a screenshot with how a doodle might look like:



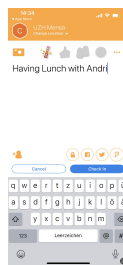
## Calendly

It's a one to many meeting planner. People can book a meeting with you based on your calendar and still available slots. All the scheduling is then automated. The main problem it solves is the many messages you usually need to appoint a meeting will be gone. This therefore increases productivity in companies a lot. However it's probably not too well suited for lunch planning because it's based on one person shares the calendar and many people can book a meeting with the person. And changing that to many person sharing their calendar might be a bit too much and would rob the simplicity from our lunch app. Below a screenshot of a calendly meeting from somebody who wants to book a meeting.



## Swarm by Foursquare

Swarm gives users the option to check in to a location, which notifies their friends, allowing spontaneous meet-ups. This could at most be used for a retrospective lunch solution where people join an existing group at lunch as the app doesn't have a planning feature. The app received a lot of bad reviews because some users are reluctant to give location permission, even as usage not very transparent.



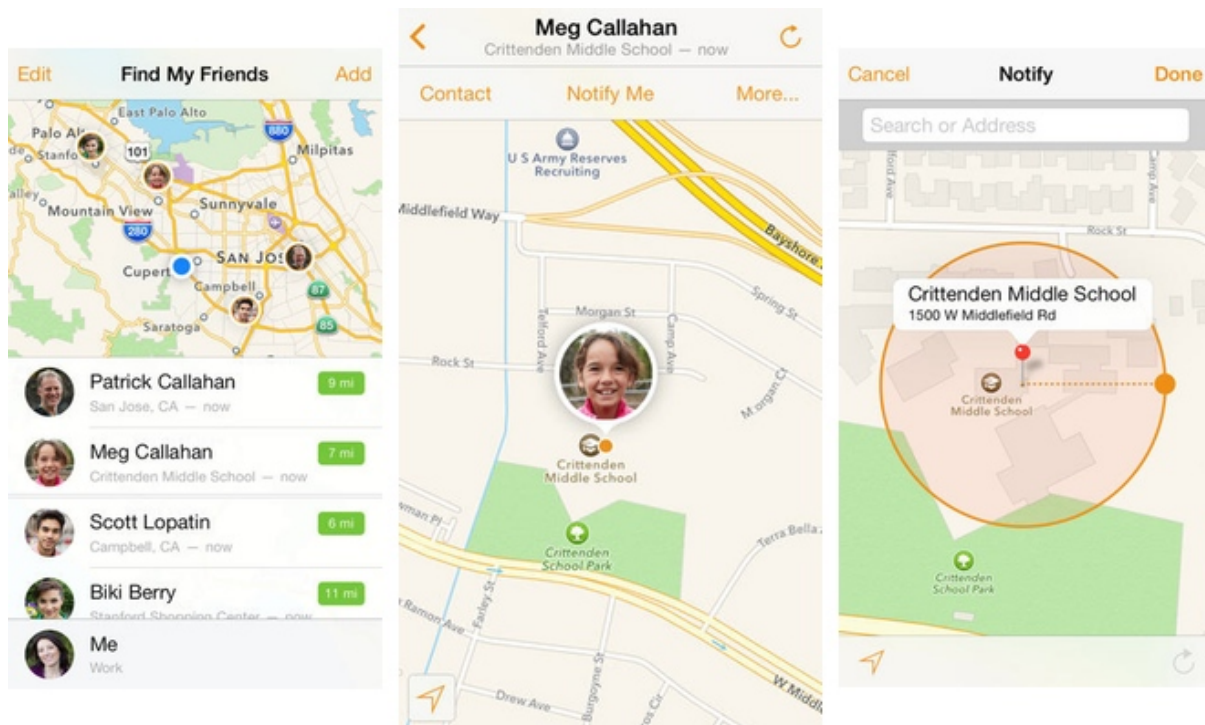
## Microsoft Outlook's FindTime

FindTime was designed to help co-workers coordinate meeting times. It is integrated into Outlook and lets you send meeting polls via email (one-to-many meeting planner). However, it has received some criticism for its functionality, like not being able to automatically add time slots or invite co-organizers. It works well in office settings where everyone is on their computers most of the time but for casual everyday lunch planning, it seems inconvenient as it relies on email communication.



easy to see where they are on a map. If they're nearby, you can simply reach out and invite them for lunch.

However, there are a few things to keep in mind. Not everyone may be comfortable sharing their location, and your friends might not always be free for lunch, even if they're close by. So, while this method might not be the most reliable way to plan every lunch, it can be quite handy for those occasional spontaneous meetups



## Talking to people after lectures

When it comes to figuring out where to grab a bite and who to hang out with after class, striking up conversations with our fellow students can be a bit of a mixed bag. On one hand, it's a neat way to solve the 'what's for lunch?' puzzle and potentially make some new friends. However, it's important to be aware of a few potential hiccups:

**Social Anxiety:** Chatting up strangers can be a tad nerve-wracking, especially for folks dealing with social anxiety.

**Rejection:** You got to brace yourself for the fact that some people you approach might not be up for a chat or might kindly turn down your lunch invitation, and that can be a bit of a downer.

**Mismatched Interests:** Even if you do make some new friends, it's not a guarantee that you'll all have loads in common. This can sometimes lead to, well, let's say,

slightly awkward interactions.

Time Crunch: After class, we're often running against the clock, thanks to our hectic schedules, which can make it tough to forge deep connections in those brief moments.

Considering these potential challenges, reaching out to others after lectures can be a cool way to find lunch buddies and widen your social circle. However, keeping it real and managing your expectations is key.

## **Lunchzeit:**

Lunchzeit, a German firm established in 2017 with a team of three professionals, focuses on fostering workplace connections and enhancing overall well-being. Their lunchlottery function is designed to facilitate diverse and engaging connections among employees. Their core philosophy is built upon the idea that fostering comfortable and connected employees leads to quantifiable benefits, such as reduced sick days, increased loyalty, and heightened productivity and creativity.

One notable aspect of Lunchzeit's approach is its adaptability. They tailor their matchmaking algorithm to meet the specific requirements of each partnering company, offering bespoke solutions. Whether it's the creation of a user-friendly web app or the seamless integration of their services into a company's intranet, Lunchzeit provides tailored solutions.

Furthermore, Lunchzeit offers its services at 49€ per month, presenting an affordable option for companies aiming to improve their corporate culture and boost employee morale.



Remove silo thinking



Exchange knowledge and improve communication



Retain employees long-term



Accelerate onboarding



Increase satisfaction & productivity



Foster innovation

This is something that could also be great for students, since feeling connected as a student and having people to ask questions can also improve a student's grades and morale.



Thus it might be beneficial to try to connect people not only with their best friends for lunch, but maybe add other students from time to time.

## Slack integration

As many companies, institutions and teams move to slack as their main organisation and communication tool, new integrations have emerged to facilitate setting up lunches with colleagues. These integrations are usually created by third parties and offer a variety of different features, such as a lunch lottery, pairing you up with other co-workers, lunch trains etc.

All of these solutions have the benefit that they integrate flawlessly into slack channels and don't significantly clutter them.

However, as there are a plethora of different integrations, finding one that fulfils all your needs can be tricky. On top of that all of the solutions that were tested followed the same basic principle when it comes to scheduling lunches: one person opens a slot for a certain time and other people can either join this time slot or decline it, with no easy option to reschedule or propose another time.

## Google calendars

Shared google calendars have been used to schedule lunches between a (relatively) fixed group of people by setting up a shared calendar and having everyone who receives an invite link being able to add the times at which they are busy. Using this, it can be deciphered when everyone (or a majority of the group) has time.

One advantage of this method is that it happens within one's calendar, which means that most people should have access to this information at all times and requires no further installations other than setting up the shared calendar.

However, this method also has a few drawbacks. The first and most glaring one is that the decision of where lunch will be eaten cannot happen within the app, resulting in it having to be discussed over some messaging app. This defeats the purpose of having this solution, as alternatively all of this could also just happen within a

whatsapp chat. Furthermore, adding and removing people from this calendar can be tedious and doesn't leave much room for going to lunch outside of a fixed group.