

How a Program Manager Moves Mountains with Meatball Subs

By Nick Pietrocarlo

I grew up in a small rust belt neighborhood in South Buffalo, New York where most of the workers were motivated by free turkeys at Thanksgiving and an extra \$50 in their paycheck at Christmas. When I was in school discovering what a computer was my father used to bring donuts to the dispatchers at work before he started his shift as a taxi driver. His hopes were to motivate the dispatchers to send the better fares his way so he could accomplish his goals of achieving a high earnings day. He soon became known as 'Donut

Nick' to peers and supervisors.

It was ironic decades later when I found myself using food to help motivate the team to achieve the desired results in my own profession as a Program Manager. Times have changed though and the folks I work with today do seem to prefer meatball subs, Cuban sandwiches, or pizza as opposed to donuts.

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Scientifically we know food is converted to energy which drives our bodies and in society we see food bonding people in various ways. Through religious ceremonies, fund raising or other networking events, or simply parent baby bonding.

Food can certainly be a great motivator for the team. Whether it is a tight schedule, small budget, or vague scope, feeding and nurturing the team certainly helps them achieve great things. A few months ago a team member even called

me 'Donut Nick' after I brought in a few dozen donuts on the way into work that day.

In times like these when raises are scarce and bonuses are even scarcer it is also important to remember how little things like food can spark the motivation of the team to work better and more efficiently together. Not just to accomplish the goals of the project but also to consistently strive and successfully achieve the goals of the company. In many cases a Program Manager can become very fixated on cost, schedule, and scope without realizing that without the people none of the points of this triangle would even matter.

As a Program Manager I regularly challenge my peers to consider how the people are often the core foundation of the critical path on all projects. America may run on Dunkin™, but Projects run on People. As we know people don't just ensure the success of the project, they also ensure the future success of the company. On your way to work tomorrow try picking up a few dozen donuts for the team or a round of

meatball subs for lunch and
you will see what I mean. I
guarantee it!

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avid networker and very
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