

Maximizing Productivity with a Focus on Food

GSO CAPITAL
Margaret Smith, Office Manager



The Challenge

Margaret Smith is the Office Manager for GSO Capital (GSO), a 200-person financial services operation in NYC associated with Blackstone Group. Like many companies whose business depends so heavily on the financial markets, time is literally money. Any time an employee spends away from his or her desk is a significant drain on productivity and business opportunities.

In addition to driving greater business productivity, GSO also wanted to provide new perks to reward hard-working employees and help attract new talent.

Margaret and her team oversee the office services and administrative-related duties, and the charge to develop the company's meal program fell squarely on their shoulders. The challenge for Margaret was to develop a meal program that would provide enough cuisine variety to keep people from leaving the office, while also ensuring the costs for this new food perk didn't spiral out of control.

Lastly, they wanted to make sure that lunch was always viewed by employees as a perk and reward for their hard work instead of a mechanism to keep them tied to their desks with no say or choice for their meals. Margaret knew she needed a solution where employees would be able to select their own individual meals.

The Seamless Solution

GSO explored several options for the meal program and selected Seamless. "The biggest reason we went with Seamless was the ability to offer control over food choices to employees, while giving us the ability to monitor costs and limit the amount of time that we spent managing the program," said Margaret.

GSO leverages Seamless to create a streamlined way for the entire company to order as a group. Each day at 7 a.m. employees receive an email invitation to the day's group lunch. They are presented with 3 – 5 restaurant choices, selected by someone on Margaret's team who tries to keep it diverse by typically selecting a pizza place, salad/soup/sandwich shop, a kosher deli,

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and one ad hoc daily special like Japanese, Mexican or Indian. Employees place their order any time before 11:30 a.m., whenever it's convenient for them, and their lunch arrives individually bagged and labeled at 12:30 p.m. with the rest of the office's lunch orders. Everyone orders their own meals without leaving their desks.

While GSO wanted the food to be a perk for their employees, they also needed to implement financial controls. To do this, GSO created set budgets for each meal period. Using Seamless, the company implemented a \$15 budget for anyone ordering lunch, and a different \$25 budget for employees staying late and ordering dinner. At checkout, if someone exceeded his or her budget, they would be prompted to put the overage on a personal credit card.

Finally, to give the company additional fiscal oversight, they required everyone to enter a cost center code at checkout. This enables the company to track spend by department and easily determine which groups are working late and/or where budget adjustments are needed.

The Result

At first, the firm only had 30 employees. Today, they have grown to more than 200 and have found that Seamless is very scalable and flexible for a rapidly expanding employee base. All 200 employees enjoy lunch via Seamless every day. "Everyone works so hard around here, and they have trouble getting away from the desk. Seamless is perfect because it means we can feed everyone really well but no one has to miss anything work-wise.

Seamless has become part of their company culture. "People would definitely be more than a little upset if we tried to take Seamless away from them, because lunch has become part of our culture," said Margaret. She then added, "We just really do love it. We all eat so well every day and a little thing like lunch makes everyone so happy. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that lunch is the best part of the day around here."



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