

How Is A Meatball Like Business?

This week we had our office party to celebrate Christmas and the end of another great year. Instead of going out to a fancy restaurant like we normally do, I decided to have it at my house and cook a big meal. I put together a dinner of Italian Sunday Pork Gravy and Rigatoni with Meatballs.



I don't cook often, but when I do, for a meal like this, I put a lot of work into it. As the team had gathered around and we were having some drinks and snacks, our creative director Tori Rose asked about the story with the meal. I explained that my grandfather from Italy would make this wonderful food, and when I tasted the food at what would become my favorite restaurant, [Café Martorano](#), it was just alike.

After many trips to Ft Lauderdale to eat at [Café Martorano](#), I became more and more intrigued with learning how to cook like my grandfather had cooked. As I got to know the café's owner Steve Martorano and talked to my mother and father about what they remembered of his cooking, I experimented until I got what has become my version of my grandfather's Sunday Pork Gravy and Meatballs.

Upon hearing my story, Tori pointed out, "When you look at it, isn't making meatballs like this kind of like business?" I agreed. You know, cooking this meal takes a lot of care and work (business also takes time, effort, and lots of work). You have to bring together a variety of ingredients (like people and resources). You have to mix the pork, veal, beef, eggs, bread crumbs, bread, parsley, and olive oil a certain way and cook them just right (in business mixing the people the right

way and in the right amount).

I enjoy making this meal and was happy that all the care, patience, watching over, making the refinements, stirring things up when needed, throwing some new things in when needed to rebalance, and even giving it a little love makes for a great tasting meatball and a strong performing business.

Merry Christmas everyone and hope your holidays and new year are as wonderful as you desire to make them!

Three Things Scrooge Would Say About Our Business

As we approach Christmas and get to spend more time with our family and friends in a spirited, colorful environment full of lights, we open our hearts and our pocket books to give and share what we have with others. While I cannot speak for you, it makes me feel good to give to others. When it is done with sincerity, I feel it has that effect similar to when the [Grinch's](#) heart grows three sizes. It changed him. I look to the holidays to have that growing heart experience and hope the holidays have the same effect on you.

However, in certain areas of your business, I feel it is necessary to have a [Scrooge](#) mindset. I have experienced this in the areas of operations management, stop doing , and cash!



For operations management, I find it useful to go through all the expenses on a periodic basis and for each ask, “is this expense necessary and does this add value to my business?” I always do this at the end of the year and prefer to do it quarterly. I often discover things we are paying for that no longer need to be paid or that could be modified or reduced.

For example, during this end of year review, I found that we were paying to store outdated documents off-site. These can now be destroyed, thus stopping that expense. My team is also reviewing our servers for potential consolidation and fee reduction. What expenses could you reduce or end?

What can we STOP doing in the true Scrooge fashion? Many times we take on too much and have to stand up and be a scrooge and say, “No, I can’t do that at this time because it will affect my other work.” It can be most difficult to say no to clients, but as I have experienced, it can be the most important thing you say in business. You can read much more

on this in last week's [blog](#).

The last and most important area I'll discuss is cash. We all know that not having the cash to pay our bills is a bad place to be. Therefore, being cautious and miserly in this area is prudent in the right context. Ask the question, "what can we do in order to get cash in faster and pay it out slower?" Extending cash outflow for thirty days by putting some of our expenses on credit cards could be an option. What are the opportunities to negotiate getting paid upfront or sooner from clients in exchange for some benefit to our clients? We have lines of credit in place and credit card availability as a back-up in this area.

As we go into this holiday season and the New Year, I am shooting for balance between being a scrooge in some business areas and growing my heart three times. Wishing you all a wonderful giving and sharing holiday season!

Energizing for the New Year!

As this year ends like all the ones before it, we strive to go into the New Year with a fresh outlook and usually one or more resolutions to improve our lives. I often ask others around me about their resolutions and usually find that at least one always has to do with improving health. For an entrepreneur whose world is filled with constant changes, ups, and downs, health and energy are key to pushing forward.

We often hear about how much time we need and how there are

never enough hours in a day and so on. We cannot add time. We all have the same number of hours in a day. The level of effort and energy we put into that time can be changed. Much is being written about our need to manage our energy and approach our day and schedule with an energy focus instead of a time focus.



The book [“The Power of Full Engagement”](#) discusses this in great detail. It says, “Managing energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance.” It also emphasizes the importance of having positive energy rituals that are

highly specific routines for managing energy. A ritual is a carefully defined, highly structured behavior that is in contrast to will and discipline, thus it requires pushing yourself. A ritual pulls at you.

When we have an energetic lifestyle, it translates into better brain output and greater productivity. This happens the most for me when I focus my energy on the things that are most important to my work or business. Our brains are made up of about 78% water and have greater output when we are hydrated. When we wake up, we are usually dehydrated, and our bodies need water to kick us back into full performance. Some say to drink a liter of water when you first wake up. I drink that liter of water along with a protein drink and feel so much better once I get the water and protein into my system rather than loads of carbs that will make me crash.

My son Tony and I work out together and have been doing the [P90X](#) DVDs for a couple of years to give us an overall strength, cardio, and flexibility workout. The power yoga and stretching workouts are vital for overall energy and flexibility. I just gave Tony the new [P90X2](#) DVDs for Christmas, and we will start doing this series of workouts together to step up our conditioning and energy levels. This is one of my New Year Resolutions to up my game, so I can bring the highest level of energy possible to my work and company.

Good luck to you on whatever resolutions you create for yourself. As I wrote in last year's [blog](#), I experience the best results to my resolutions and goals when I create a habit or ritual around them.

By the way, if any of you are doing your yearly planning around this time and would like a free tool to help, go to www.meetinghabits.com and check out our [SWOT](#) tool that we use to pull out all the ideas from the team and make our meetings more productive.