



There is a Free Lunch

It takes humor to tell the boss he or she is micromanaging. Yes, humor. Production manager Andy Hannan and estimator Kirk Van Camp of MARK IV Builders in Bethesda, Maryland found a non-threatening way to approach the difficult task. When owner Mark Scott got stressed, according to Hannan, he would walk onto a jobsite and concern himself with minutia, things a superintendent may have had a different plan for. So Hannan and Van Camp developed a friendly way to say “butt out”: the **Free Lunch Card**, which entitles the giver to a free lunch from the receiver of the card.

The first time Hannan gave the card to Scott, it threw the boss off guard. “{Scott} said, “Touché,” says Hannan, because he realized he’d been caught. By diffusing a difficult situation, Hannan was able to get Scott to talk about things in his purview—higher-level issues. Scott bought \$60 worth of pizza that day.

Now, three years later, everyone on staff has a card and uses it. “I’ve bought lunch,” says Hannan, “especially when I’ve made that follow-up phone call I’m not supposed to make. {The card is} nothing more than trying to keep your sense of priorities straight.”

