

Three-Store Subway® Franchisee Takes Control with RemoteMgr.com

Owner:
Mike Harbold

Franchise:
Subway®

Store Locations:
Portland,
Oregon;
Vancouver,
Washington (2)

**Total
Employees:**
35

Mike Harbold came to the franchise world with no experience whatsoever in the restaurant business. "I had a deep agricultural background on the east coast, raising turkeys among other farming endeavors," Mike recalled. "While I enjoyed the aspects of running my own business, farming required a great deal of capital – and had too many uncertainties for my comfort level. I decided I wanted a change, and a business broker friend told me about an opportunity out in Portland, Oregon; it was a Subway store. I like the idea of a Subway franchise for two reasons:

- 1. They had a good name and reputation**
- 2. There was template in place; I didn't have to make up menus, pricing, etc.**

"Not long after, I signed on the dotted line and move out to Oregon. The first nine months were a bit of a struggle, as this was completely new terrain for me. But then things came together. By the time I'd been a Subway owner for a year, I began looking into adding a second store."

A Need to Be in Two Places at Once

It wasn't too long before Mike acquired a second Subway store, in Vancouver, Washington, across the Columbia River from Portland. Suddenly, he felt a need to be in several places at one time. "When I added the second store in Washington, I looked into setting up cameras with digital recording, so I could observe one store from the other location, or both stores from home," Mike continued. "I purchased one such remote surveillance system, but it didn't work very well. About this time, I heard about a new service from a local company that was called

RemoteMgr.com. It was designed from the ground up to work over the Internet, and allowed remote surveillance – plus a host of other functionalities that would capture all the information I'd need to manage my stores without actually having to be in the stores around the clock."

RemoteMgr.com is a web-based application that provides an end-to-end management solution designed just for QSR franchisees. It gives owners/managers insights into all aspects of their QSR business -- Food Cost, HR Functions, Business Risk and overall Store Performance – on a location by location basis. It was designed by a restaurant owner who realized that his time would be better dedicated to streamlining operations and boosting sales than cracking eggs and flipping burgers. RemoteMgr.com helps franchisees spend less time working in their stores and more time working on their business.

Food Costs Decrease 5%, Morale Goes Up

After installing the surveillance cameras (provided as part of one of RemoteMgr.com's packages) and connecting RemoteMgr.com to the store's Point of Sale (POS) system, Mike Harbold's food costs quickly dropped by almost 5%. "I suspected that one of my employees might be dipping into the till, and once I put the cameras in, that pretty much stopped. I don't watch the cameras all the time, but my employees know that I might be watching. The savings add up quickly. Say that on an average week, a store's sales are around \$9,000. Food costs amount to 28% to 30% of sales. Taking the lower end, that means savings of around \$125 a week, or \$500 a month – and that's

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just for one store. The licensing fee is less than \$150/month, so the ROI is significant and immediate.

Response to the system on his employees' part has also been quite positive. "I thought employees might react negatively to the cameras," Harbold continued, "but only non-performers have a problem with the surveillance. Good employees like it, because they know that we can see who's doing a good job and who is not. They also know that the system is capturing their attendance information. All of this data goes into their automated employee file." It's worth noting that the system also captures any emails concerning a given employee, as well as any write-ups the employee may have received. This information can prove invaluable should a terminated employee attempt to file a frivolous wrongful termination lawsuit against the store owner.

Complete Control of POS, Scheduling & More

RemoteMgr.com helps franchisees control food cost and document activities that happen in their store. But that's only the beginning.

"RemoteMgr.com bundles all the functions I need to manage my stores together," Harbold continued. "I'm really comfortable using all aspects of the system. One function I use a great deal is the ability to tie into the POS system from home. My POS vendor has an application that permits remote viewing, but it was just too difficult for me to use. The RemoteMgr.com system is easy. I sometimes will have employees call, needing to make a change to the POS. I can do it right then and

there from my home office. Likewise, I can easily change prices, or perform overrides, as necessary. The POS connection also can send me hourly profitability reports – food costs, employee costs and total revenue. I can have them sent by email or even texted to my cell phone.

"RemoteMgr.com is also extremely useful for keeping employees current on their schedules. I used to get so many calls, 'What time am I working today?' Now I tell them that they don't need to call. 'Just check your schedule on RemoteMgr.com.' They can also check the hours they've accrued for the pay period. And I can download their time to do payroll. I used to have to go into each store each week to get timecards. Now I don't have to go in to pick up paperwork much more than once a month."

A Four-Week Back Injury, and Stores Keep Performing

Harbold shared a recent story that testifies to the power and possibilities of remotely managing one's QSR stores. "I was traveling back east a few months back, and I suffered a back injury," he said. "I ended up staying there for almost 4 weeks. Of course, I couldn't visit my stores during that time, but with RemoteMgr.com, I was able to stay on top of everything. In fact, sales were as good as the previous four weeks when I'd been in town!

"If I had to choose one benefit of using RemoteMgr.com, it's the time I save – at least 8 to 10 hours a week of driving to stores, shuffling paperwork, etc. If you need more of your time, you need this system. The more you crave your independence, the more you need it."

