



## THE RIGHT COOKS IN THE KITCHEN: PROTEAM PARTNERS WITH VISUALZ TO BRAND PUEBLO CITY SCHOOLS

It's busy in the kitchen: there's a school lunch program to manage plus a host of federal child nutrition programs that run from fall to summer, and from breakfast to supper. An ambitious goal has been declared—to be the community's nutrition hub—and Pueblo City Schools is determined to make good on that promise.

"Our brand belief is that food is an authentic celebration," says Jill Kidd, Director of Nutrition Services for Pueblo City Schools (PCS). "Our food respects local traditions and kids have a lot of choice."

Choice is indeed important, especially when it comes to branding an entire school district. Kidd received a No Kid Hungry grant, which supported the creation of a brand to promote the district's work as a nutrition hub in the community. This also helped boost the budget for a large-scale cafeteria makeover. It became clear that choosing the right experts would determine the project's success—and if it went well, PCS would become a great case study in innovative brand marketing.

### Pueblo Power Team

Kidd's selection landed on not one, but two service providers: **Pro•Team Food Service Advisors** and **Visualz** (formerly Learning ZoneXpress). The duo launched an unprecedented branding collaboration, which sought to leverage their shared resources and expertise.

"This was a foray into a significant branding project together," explains Jean Ronnei of Pro•Team Foodservice Advisors (ProTeam). "Jill allowed us to work through the process, which has us now doing cafeteria makeovers in a robust and streamlined manner."

"Both our companies deeply understand school food service," adds Joyce Mattson, General Manager for **Visualz**. "With a partnership, we can assist the entire operation—from appeal and satisfaction of nutrition choices to appeal of the total environment. We look at everything from flow, equipment, floors, doors, windows, walls, banners and trucks. It's comprehensive for the customer, and it's unique from our combined skill sets."

### A Secret Ingredient

The project kicked off with strategic questions posed to the district: What is the community known for? What foods are important? What kind of atmosphere do students enjoy?

"You don't pick something out of a catalog if you want to develop your own brand," says Ronnei. That's why ProTeam conducted a two-day blitz that involved six Pueblo school site visits; three lunch and two breakfast observations; two student focus group sessions; and one staff focus group session.



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They discovered that the community—specifically students—disliked words like “healthy” and “nutritious” and much preferred words like “fresh” and the concept of building your own meal (an homage to the town’s history of steel production).

ProTeam also discovered the district’s secret ingredient: **the Pueblo green chile.**

“Green chile forms a powerful core of our menu,” explains Kidd. “We’re passionate about our green chile.”

“Pueblo chile was a good launching pad, as was the town’s steel mill,” adds Ronnei. “It gave rise to that industrial feel combined with depicting green chilis and vibrant colors.”

### In the Branding Kitchen

The group used “tough fresh” to guide the Pueblo brand—and from there, the creative process unfurled. They opted for black and gray colors to emphasize Pueblo’s industrial feel, and utilized the district’s preference for real food photography. This involved several iterations and the artistic brain of a graphic designer.

“The process was really collaborative,” shares Kidd. “And with Vomela [the parent company of Visualz], we didn’t have to outsource.” Visualz could handle all production and installation, including truck decals and graphics on walls.

Pueblo completed its first installation at the Pueblo Academy of the Arts, which is the district’s chosen prototype. Moving forward, Kidd intends to makeover the district middle schools in phase two. “This is an enormous upgrade,” shares Kidd. “We want to make the space better for kids.”

As for **ProTeam** and **Visualz**, they’re continuing the branding alliance—this time, with three major cafeteria makeovers for the remainder of 2019.

### ARE YOU READY TO DEVELOP YOUR BRAND?

Contact a Pro•Team advisor to discuss how a cafeteria makeover might be the next right step.

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