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ENTREPRENEURS
SHAPING FRANCHISE
FUTURES

17 PAGE SPECIAL

TOP OF THE WORLD

MEET THE GLOBAL
FRANCHISORS JUDGED
BEST IN THE INDUSTRY

Private Equity Decoded

MASTER THE DEAL
WITH OUR PLAYBOOK
FOR ATTRACTING
INVESTORS

SNAP FITNESS

Setting the standard for a new era in fitness franchising

Building resilience

How franchise leaders are thriving through adversity

Matthew Haller

On putting the "I" back into the IFA

Trade winds

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FROM THE EDITOR

The first quarter is always an exciting time in international franchising, with shows and expos hitting peak season, including the International Franchise Association's Convention in February. Always a vital event in the franchising calendar, this year the conference took place in Phoenix, Arizona, pulling in the great and good from all four corners of the world. It also provided the perfect platform for our very own Global Franchise Awards – the annual ceremony that brings together franchising's heavyweights to celebrate excellence in our industry.

Aided and supported by our congenial host, Jack Monson, and sponsored by last year's Grand Champion, School of Rock, we were delighted to recognize and reward some of this year's outstanding franchisors, including Anytime Fitness, which not only won its category but also bagged the Regional Champion and overall Grand Champion accolades. Find out who won what and read our interviews with some of the evening's biggest winners in our extended Powerbrands section starting on page 15.

Present at the event was IFA President and CEO Matthew Haller, who graciously accepted his invitation into the Global Franchise Hall of Fame for his influence and tenacity in advocating for international franchising in the face of stiff challenges. Later, at the International Franchise Show in London in April, I caught up with Matt again, where he reflected on some of the joys and challenges of leadership, and what his plans and ambitions are for the IFA. You can read the interview on page 20, as well as a full lowdown on the London IFS on page 49.



**NEXT ISSUE
ON SALE:**

**OCTOBER
2024**

Beyond the world of franchise expos, this issue we explore the opportunities presented by private equity investment, a topic that couldn't be covered better by anyone but Alicia Miller, author and co-founder of Emergent Growth Advisors. In our interview on page 42, Alicia demystifies this murky area and provides some valuable advice to franchisors on how to attract the eye of PE investors, a playbook for growth that can literally turn the fortunes of brands both established and emerging. It's a fascinating read.

To your success,

Charlotte Smith

Editor, Global Franchise
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 @globalfranmag

 Global Franchise

 Global Franchise Magazine

global-franchise.com



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CONTENTS

FRANCHISING OPPORTUNITIES

09 MIDAS

One of the biggest, best and most trusted automobile brands in the world is looking for partners to take it to new markets.

12 SNAP FITNESS

Setting the standard for a new era of fitness franchises, Snap is expanding rapidly with its forward-thinking approach.

24 SIGNARAMA

Brand President AJ Titus on being part of a leading franchising dynasty spanning three generations.



42



76

25 ALL POINTS PR

Jamie and Lauren Izaks have created a company culture that delivers big results for both clients and employees.

26 LITTLE KICKERS

Justin Bredeman, CEO of Soccer Shots Franchising, on how caring for the brand has created strong growth.

28 VENTURE X

Jason Anderson, President and CSO, explains how the Vast network is revolutionizing the coworking experience.

31 RESHIFT MEDIA

CEO and co-founder Steve Buors explains why franchise digital marketing commands a custom-made approach.

47 SLIM CHICKENS

How the restaurant plans to export its famed Southern hospitality to diners around the world.

68 CHICKEN COTTAGE

The U.K. halal, grilled, and fried chicken brand is inviting investors to be part of its global success story.

74 CHUCK E. CHEESE

How the iconic family funhouse is capturing hearts and markets abroad.

INSIGHT, ADVICE AND FEATURES

06 UPFRONT

Facts, figures and trends from the world of franchising.

11 EXPOSURE

The what, when and where for your franchising calendar.



15



78

ON THE COVER

19

Top of the world

Meet the world-beating franchise brands judged best in the business.

54

The celebrity factor

How the right partnerships can open a star-studded path to success.

42

Private equity decoded

Actionable insights from Alicia Miller for tapping into the vast power of PE.

64

Building resilience

The ability to navigate through uncertain times is the key to success and longevity.



15 GLOBAL FRANCHISE AWARDS 2024

Catch up on all the news, interviews and photos from the awards ceremony, including the full list of worthy winners.

32 FRANCHISING DOWN UNDER

Farrah Rose explores why New Zealand has been ranked among the world's top economies for doing business by the World Bank.

36 THE FINAL FRONTIER: KITCHEN AUTOMATION

Cost-effective robots that can cook is something the restaurant industry can benefit from, especially as labor costs rise.

49 KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE SHOW

With the IFA on board as a strategic partner, London's latest event broke its own records.

60 FRANCHISEE RECRUITMENT

Why franchisees are your secret weapon in growth and expansion, especially when they work together.

70 LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Monica Feid explains why women leaders are leading the franchise charge when it comes to vision, values and communication.

80 OUT OF OFFICE

We review the business world of podcasting, publishing and social media.

INTERVIEWS

20 MATT HALLER

We interviewed the President and CEO of the International Franchise Association about leadership, goals and advocating for franchising communities everywhere.

22 JACK MONSON

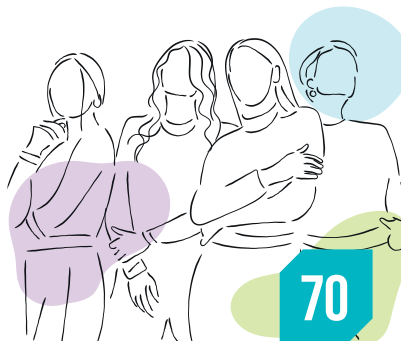
The marketing maestro on why next level storytelling is crucial for franchise brands to adopt.

76 5 MINUTES WITH CHAD PALMER

The newly appointed CMO on how he plans to leverage AI and data to drive forward UFG's huge portfolio of franchise brands.

78 A DAY IN THE LIFE OF LINDSAY JUNK

The President of boutique fitness brand YogaSix gives us a snapshot into her day.



70



54



32

UP FRONT

Introducing our star panel of franchise experts this issue

IN THIS ISSUE:

20 Matthew Haller

We caught up with the IFA President and our Hall of Fame inductee about what drives his unwavering commitment and passion to promote and advocate for franchising through some particularly challenging times.



32 Franchising down under

Farrah Rose reports on the incredible array of franchising opportunities to be found in New Zealand, the small-but-mighty island nation voted first out of 189 economies in the world for doing business (IFC).



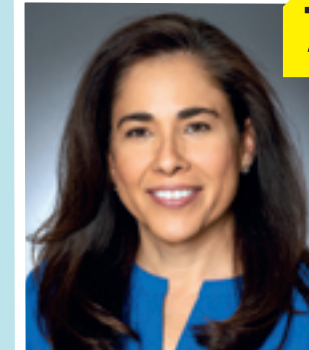
42 Going for growth

Private equity consultant Alicia Miller on why franchising systems are attracting the right kind of interest from Big Money, and the best ways in which franchisors can catch the eyes of investors.



70 Lessons in leadership

When it comes to women in executive roles, franchising is a great equalizer. Monica Feid explores why this is the case and shares many positive examples of how female leaders are influencing the industry in impactful ways.



64 Building resilience

Franchising's unique model helps many brands to thrive in turbulent times. But how do you plan for the unexpected? We put the question over to industry leaders.



FRANCHISING SHOWS GLOBAL GROWTH

The 2024 Franchising Economic Outlook is IFA's annual study in partnership with FRANdata, detailing the sector's performance for the past year and projected economic outlook for the months ahead. Here are this year's highlights:

1.9%

is the percentage increase of franchise units predicted to open in the U.S. this year, taking the overall number to 821,000



\$893.9

BILLION is the predicted output of franchised businesses, an increase of 4.1% from 2023



221,000

jobs will be created for the global economy, with total franchise employment forecasted to reach 8.9 million

4.3%

is the pace at which franchises' GDP will continue to grow

Personal services and quick service restaurants (QSRs) will experience the strongest growth of any industry



Growth in the Southeast and Southwest will outpace the rest of the U.S. franchise market. California and Washington are forecast to be the slowest-growing states (- 4.2% and -2.3%, respectively)



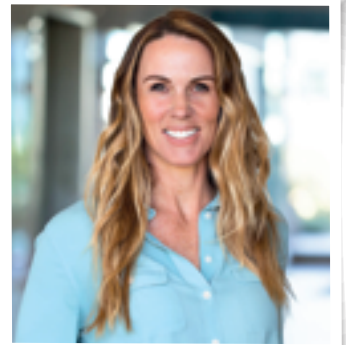
GLOBAL FRANCHISE MEETS JACK MONSON

"The focus of franchise development marketing – and indeed the hero of a franchise brand's story – must be the franchisee."

The Brand J president and host of the Social Geek Radio podcast hosted the Global Franchise Awards at the IFA Convention, a role he embraced with all his usual warmth and wisdom. But the award winners were not the only talk of the evening. Monson's company Brand J has recently merged with BizCom Associates, a formidable union that's set to further ignite digital marketing and storytelling in the franchising sphere. In our interview on page 22, Jack outlines the special ways in which the two marketing powerhouses will work together to further the impact and influence of franchising.

| A DAY IN THE LIFE

Lindsay Junk is President of YogaSix, one of the boutique fitness brands that make up the Xponential Fitness family and the largest yoga provider in the world. On page 78, the sport-loving CEO describes her career journey and why flexibility and balance are increasingly important when chasing goals and achievements.



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On track for success

Electric vehicles, diagnostic software, and tech experts... mechanics franchise Midas is preparing for the EV evolution

The mobility industry is changing drastically. Electric vehicles (EVs) with high-tech software are coming into favour with consumers, having been heavily backed by incoming regulations which promote net zero.

For vehicle repair and maintenance companies, such as Midas, this shift means that services need to begin accommodating digital innovations in the mobility space. However, despite these new complexities, consumers still expect rapid and intuitive services. In response, Midas is creating sustainability within its business model across three focus areas.

1. ELECTRIC EXPERTISE

Midas expects 30% of vehicles to be electric within 10 years, due to a rise in sales. This change will reduce demand for traditional maintenance services linked to internal combustion engines and increase activities concerning high-voltage batteries.

Those that venture into the EV sector will be big winners, with around 50% of car aftersales expected to link to electronics as opposed to traditional mechanics. Midas is among these frontrunners, having deployed technical bases which enable experts to diagnose issues and load new software into vehicles remotely.

2. HIGH-PERFORMANCE TOOLS

Running a rapid maintenance centre requires the use of high-performance tools throughout operations. Initially, customers are looking for easily bookable appointments and accurate estimations online, without needing to know anything about mechanics. Smart tools digitally enable this by identifying vehicles, the parts to be replaced, and where these parts can be sourced.

Once the vehicle is in the workshop, it's possible to make



Franchise Overview Midas

Established: 1956

Number of outlets:
2000 in 20 countries

Locations of units:
Europe, Africa, Middle East, America, Oceania

Min required capital:
Master franchise -
£1-3 million

Contact:
Laurent Pommier,
international
development director:
Lpommier@
midasint.com

www.midas.fr



a precise diagnosis of the vehicle's condition and return it to the customer. Tools are also able to keep track of customer satisfaction, monitor information on the internet, and use all databases to maintain repeat business. These tools can play an important role in

implementing sustainability within a business model, and as such, Midas has developed a whole series of proprietary tools to support its processes.

3. A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Innovating in isolation is not conducive to ensuring a franchise develops in the right direction. This is why Midas' highly experienced team works

alongside master franchisees to launch and monitor the business throughout the master franchise agreement.

For example, the team supported Caetano Group, the Portuguese master franchisee, for 200 days during its first two years in order to ensure a successful launch. Midas continues to provide this support at a rate of 50 days per year.



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Global
Franchise
AWARDS 2024
FINALIST

EXPOSURE

The what, when, and where for your franchising calendar

UPCOMING EXPOS

FRANCHISE EXPO MALAYSIA 2024

Malaysia has a steadily growing franchise industry spanning a wide range of industries, including food and beverage (which comprises almost 50% of all franchises in the region), education, healthcare, beauty, fashion and many more. Reflective of the buoyant franchising scene in Southeast Asia, Franchise Expo (FE) 2024 is the latest prestigious world-class stage for companies and brands, both locally and internationally, to meet potential franchisees from all over Malaysia and its neighboring regions. Previously known as the Malaysia International Retail and Franchise (MIRF) exhibition, FE MIRF 2024 has grown from a humble 230 booths to over 500 exhibitors from over 10 participating countries and is continuously expanding with the industry.



This event allows you to meet face-to-face with important Southeast Asian players, showcase to thousands of potential business partners and discover excellent opportunities to accelerate growth in this important region.

Things to do:

Malaysia's premier award-winning venue is positioned in the heart of Kuala Lumpur – the perfect location to soak in the capital's breathtaking views and vibrant culture. Situated close to the PETRONAS Twin Towers, the tallest twin towers in the world, visitors to the expo can scale the 88 storeys to get a bird's eye view of Kuala Lumpur's iconic skyline.

Also near to the venue's precinct is the 50 acre KLCC Park, home to many of South East Asia's unique tree and exotic plant species, as well as over 150 fountain animations set to music, it's a haven of peace and relaxation for tourists and business travellers alike.

Malaysia's food scene is world-renowned. Don't depart for home before sampling the authentic local flavors from the numerous restaurants and cafes fronting the KLCC Park and surrounding areas.

WHAT: FRANCHISE EXPO MALAYSIA
WHERE: KL CONVENTION CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR
WHEN: 11-13 JULY 2024

FRANCHISING & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES EXPO, MELBOURNE

Split into four events throughout the year – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth – this quartet of expos brings together Australia's dynamic and growing franchising and small business industry.



Each expo showcases companies from Australia's most successful franchises as well as seminars presented by leaders across all aspects of business, finance and franchising. For exhibitors, the expos provide the chance to meet face to face with quality visitors looking to join a franchise system.

In August it's the turn of Melbourne to host. Commenting on 2023's Sydney show held at the same time last year, Doug Downer from Franchise Ready highlighted the expo's role in fostering meaningful conversations with engaged and aspiring business owners. "This was the best show in the past five years," he remarked. "We had multiple stands and can report that our business and our clients all had an amazing result from exhibiting at this show."

Things to do:

Set on the banks of the Yarra River, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) is a 20-minute drive from Melbourne airport and a short stroll from the city centre.

Melbourne is Australia's cultural capital with art galleries galore, a vibrant nightlife, and a delightful brunch scene. Global audiences fill coveted seats at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and Etihad Stadium, but the beating heart of the city lies in its neighborhoods. Each enclave showcases the best things to do in Melbourne: cool bars and eateries in the CBD, flashy shops in South Yarra, and world-famous sandy beaches in St. Kilda. And, if you can tag a couple of free days onto your business tour, some of Victoria's most stunning natural attractions are just a day trip away.

WHAT: FRANCHISING & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES EXPO, MELBOURNE
WHERE: MELBOURNE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE
WHEN: 17-18 AUGUST 2024

Raising the bar

Snap Fitness is setting the standard for a new era in global fitness franchising



Snap Fitness has stood as a trailblazer in the fitness industry since its establishment in 2003. After all, sustaining a business in this dynamic sector for over two decades demands adaptability and innovation. However, the pandemic accelerated industry change at a rate never seen before.

While the world seemingly stood still, Snap Fitness seized the opportunity to reposition the brand and become an early adopter of holistic fitness. This strategic pivot ensured Snap Fitness maintained its alignment with rapidly changing needs and serves as a clear testament to the franchise's commitment to staying ahead of the curve and continuously evolving.

LEADING PHILOSOPHY

The gym's 'For the Feeling' initiative has been incredibly successful with both franchisees and members. The new

positioning aligns perfectly with the needs of modern gym-goers who are seeking more than just physical transformation. By emphasizing the intrinsic benefits of exercise, such as increased energy, reduced stress, improved mood, and enhanced self-confidence, Snap Fitness is tapping into a deeper, more meaningful motivation for members.

Dani Diab, Master Franchisee for Snap Fitness in Hong Kong and Taiwan, commended Snap Fitness for its unwavering resilience in an ever-changing market landscape. "Despite the macroeconomic challenges of the past three years, I have no regrets," Diab expressed. "Working closely with the Lift Brands team has been a pleasure – they provide unwavering support and understanding throughout the process. The enduring popularity of the Snap Fitness brand is a testament to its resilience, which has only been enhanced by the new brand positioning,

aesthetics and vibe. I'd like to thank Snap Fitness for empowering my team to contribute to the brand's rich history and promising future."

Snap Fitness is driven to provide experiences that encourage positive lifestyle habits and leave a lasting impact on both its franchisees and members. The team, and its community of franchisees, is proud to offer the most inclusive, empathetic and supportive fitness experience to every ability, based on a philosophy that's all about the feeling.

BESPOKE TECH

It's evident that delivering exceptional experiences for its membership extends far beyond the confines of the gym walls. Snap Fitness wholeheartedly embraces this philosophy, as reflected in its complimentary member app – the Snap App.

Through the Snap App, members gain access to a comprehensive suite of



“Every decision we make is with our members and franchisees in mind”

features designed to cater to their individual fitness needs, preferences, and schedules. The Snap App was designed to become a part of members’ daily routines, allowing them to access workout programs, on-demand fitness classes, track progress and access mindfulness content like meditations and podcasts. Whether at home, at the gym, or on the go, members can engage with personalized fitness, wellness and nutrition content that adapts to their evolving needs and preferences.

The wrap-around support the Snap App provides hasn’t gone unnoticed with members and franchisees, boasting a 198% rise in use of its bookings and on-demand content, and a 115% increase in user engagement in 2023 compared to 2022.

Ty Menzies, CEO of Snap Fitness, said: “Every decision we make is with our members and franchisees in mind. We are constantly analyzing feedback to see how we can build upon our offering and make fitness journeys more accessible, enjoyable and sustainable. Our brand repositioning and the launch of the Snap App exemplifies not only our adaptability, but our ability to successfully react to industry changes.”

RAPID EXPANSION

Over the past two years Snap Fitness has seen membership numbers rise by an average of 22% across its ever-expanding global footprint. The repositioning saw Snap Fitness expand

into new markets within the year, opening its first franchise in Saudi Arabia and Singapore in 2021 – as well as a further 18 new clubs in APAC and 10 in EMEA in the same year.

The team is continuing to build momentum too, with 96 gyms remodeled, 32 new gyms opened and 78 new territories sold in the past year alone.

Operating in over 18 countries through more than 1,000 gym franchises, Snap Fitness has a growing list of one million members. Right from the offset franchisees receive industry-leading support with a business model that focuses on meaningful connections and fantastic fitness experiences, rather than a reliance on sheer numbers.

Snap Fitness’ business model is proven to be a winner with members worldwide, offering 24/7 access, premium equipment and value-add technology, meaning every franchisee buys into the franchise with confidence.

FRANCHISEE FIRST

Snap Fitness’ dedicated team works closely with every franchisee to secure the perfect location and design their new gym with the right equipment to ensure a maximum return on investment. Expert interior designers then work to bring a franchisee’s vision to life, creating a club that is welcoming, on-trend and within budget.

Franchise Overview

Snap Fitness

Year Established: 2003

Number of franchised outlets: 1,000+

Location of units: 18+ countries including the U.S., U.K., Spain, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Canada

Investment range: 200k-600k

Minimum required capital: 200k

Contact: 952-474-5422

snapfitness.com



World-class support is available at every stage of the franchising journey, right from an initial call through to when a facility is fully operational. Franchisees benefit from a comprehensive training program, support through the presale and grand opening process, 1:1 operations coaching and ongoing training and webinars to ensure their business runs smoothly, successfully and bang on brand.

Rose Minar, Chief Marketing and Experience Officer at Snap Fitness, said: “We work tirelessly to ensure the simplicity of operations for franchisees. We focus on what’s important to our members, pushing the boundaries of fitness experiences – knowing that happy members bring rewards for all of us.

“Our mission is to ensure that everyone involved with Snap Fitness, whether it’s our franchisees, members, or our own team, feels fantastic about what we do and achieve together.”

Lift Brands is a leading innovator in the fitness industry as the parent brand to Snap Fitness and Fitness On Demand, and is a minority partner in the 9Round global franchise and functional-based fitness brand Fitstop. Lift Brands delivers results through the most rewarding fitness experiences in the world, changing lives daily. For more information on Lift Brands, please visit liftbrands.com.



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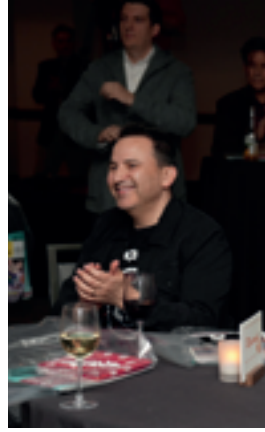
Global Franchise AWARDS 2024

Recognizing excellence

Winners were announced at a special ceremony ahead of the IFA Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, with Anytime Fitness scooping the international industry's biggest accolade



Lathrop GPM



Rob Price, School Of Rock

An elite gathering of international franchising's brightest stars celebrated winning global recognition with their peers at the Global Franchise Awards 2024 reception on February 16, ahead of the 2024 IFA Annual Convention in Phoenix, which started the following day.

Hosted by Jack Monson, CEO of Brand J and founder host of Social Geek podcast, the ceremony awarded 30 winners across 18 categories, each judged by a panel of franchise experts and international association leaders. This year's judges included Farrah Rose, Head of International Development at The Franchising Centre, Sherry McNeal, President and CEO of the Canadian Franchise Association and Jennifer Brandeen, COO of IFA.

Anytime Fitness was this year's highest achiever, scooping not only the Best Fitness Franchise category win, but also bagging Regional Champion (Americas) and the overall Grand Champion awards, marking yet another sensational year for this global success story. Judges commented on the brand's founding philosophy of People, Purpose, Profits and Play, which has helped cultivate the largest and fastest-growing fitness franchise network in the world.

"It's great to be amongst so many different great franchise systems out there," said Eric Keller, VP of Franchise Support at Anytime Fitness. This award is a testament to our great franchise partners around the globe and our small but mighty team that we have back at our corporate office - they're what makes

"Winning the Global Franchise Grand Champion award last year was particularly poignant because it rewarded and honored all our stakeholders, our franchisees, our team members and our customers - and, by extension, all the folks in this amazing industry sector that supports the growth of excellence, the growth of great customer differentiation and the growth of entrepreneurship"

ROB PRICE, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF SCHOOL OF ROCK, SPONSOR AND 2023 GRAND CHAMPION





Expense Reduction Analysts



“Being a part of a family of brands in the United Franchise Group, working together and gaining knowledge from each other, is extremely important”

AJ TITUS, PRESIDENT AT SIGNARAMA, BEST SIGNAGE & COMMUNICATIONS FRANCHISE

“I see this award as validation for the hard work that we put into building the company, to creating a legacy and the trust and belief our clients and team members have in us and the trust that we put in them. This award will help fuel what’s ahead. It absolutely speaks to the way we train our team members, the authentic way we develop our people, the way we handle our clients, and the way that the general industry feels about us”

JAMIE IZAKS, CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF ALL POINTS PR, BEST PR FIRM



AJ Titus, Signarama



what we do happen.”

Matt Haller, President and CEO of the International Franchise Association (IFA) also accepted his induction into Global Franchise’s prestigious Hall of Fame, which recognizes and rewards his immense impact as a powerful and tenacious advocate for franchising during recent challenging times.

Matt Haller accepted his award graciously, saying: “Thank you to the entire team at Global Franchise for selecting me for this award. I don’t view this award as about me – it’s for the entire team at the IFA, the staff who help protect, enhance and promote franchising every single day and on behalf of IFA members and the broader franchise community. We know that franchising is the greatest business model in the world.”

“It was a great honor to host the 2024 Global Franchise Awards ceremony and celebrate these fantastic achievements with such a vibrant and enthusiastic group of franchise superstars, added Rachael Wenham, Head of Global Development at Global Franchise. “We’re delighted to see so many brands, established and new, breaking ground, and excited to follow and report on their success and developments over the coming months. We’d like to extend our gratitude to all the brands who took the time to enter, our sponsors and supporters – including School of Rock (last year’s Grand Champion), IFA, Brand J and Social Geek – and of course our wonderful judging panel.”



All Points PR





Self Esteem Brands

"I would like to thank our millions of members, our many incredible master franchise partners who have taken the risk on this idea that we had 20 years ago, and of course, our thousands of franchisees around the globe. Our partners put their individual mark on our brand, making it appealing in every culture, and that's what really makes the magic happen"

ERIC KELLER, VP OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AT SELF ESTEEM BRANDS, GRAND CHAMPION (ANYTIME FITNESS)



Reshift Media



"We put a lot into this industry, not only the work we do with our clients but also in the committees we're involved in at the International Franchise Association and the Canadian Franchise Association. We love franchising. We support franchising, and probably about 90% of our customers are franchised"

KIRK ALLEN, CO-FOUNDER AT RESHIFT MEDIA, BEST MARKETING FIRM



Franchise Ready



"It's the second time we've won this award and we're very proud. But it's just the icing on the cake. We're even more proud of the work that we get given by our clients, the fact that they trust us to actually do this. Get the right franchise consulting firm on your side, let them do the feasibility and the due diligence for you, and put that business plan together – it's worth it in the long run"

DOUG DOWNER, PRINCIPAL AT FRANCHISE READY, BEST FRANCHISE CONSULTANCY

GLOBAL FRANCHISE AWARDS 2024: WHO WON WHAT?

Here's the full list of winning brands

Best Children's and Education Franchise

WINNER

Little Kickers

HIGHLY COMMENDED

School of Rock

Best Nursing and Care Franchise

WINNER

BrightStar Care

Best Franchise Consultancy

WINNER

Franchise Ready

HIGHLY COMMENDED

The Franchising Centre

Best Emerging Franchise

WINNER

Venture X

HIGHLY COMMENDED

GoliathTech Inc

Best Franchise Law Firm

WINNER

Lathrop GPM

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Rosen Karol Salis PLLC

Best Fitness Franchise

WINNER

Anytime Fitness

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Mayweather

Boxing + Fitness

Best Franchise Marketing Firm

WINNER

Reshift Media Inc

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BizCom Associates

Best Food and Drink Franchise

Franchise

WINNER

Ziggi's Coffee

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Wingstop

Best Franchise PR Firm

WINNER

All Points Public Relations

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BizCom Associates

Best Lifestyle Franchise

WINNER

Dogtopia

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Just Cuts

Regional Champion - Europe

WINNER

Fireaway Pizza

Best Property Maintenance Franchise

WINNER

Stratus Building Solutions

HIGHLY COMMENDED

EverLine Coatings and Services

Regional Champion - Asia Pacific

WINNER

KX Pilates

Best Signage and Communications Franchise

WINNER

Signarama

HIGHLY COMMENDED

FASTSIGNS

International Inc

Regional Champion - Americas

WINNER

Anytime Fitness

Best White-Collar Franchise

WINNER

Expense Reduction

Analysts

HIGHLY COMMENDED

InXpress

GRAND CHAMPION

Anytime Fitness

HALL OF FAME 2024

Matthew Haller



Allen Catlett, IFA



"Franchising is just such a great business model, not just here in the U.S., but globally. Winning this award is really on behalf of my entire IFA team, our membership and global franchising community that's doing so much to help people go into business for themselves, but not by themselves. It's my honor and privilege to do this work on behalf of each and every one of you, every single day"

IFA PRESIDENT MATT HALLER, GLOBAL FRANCHISE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



Matt Haller, IFA



For more information, photography and details on how to get involved with Global Franchise Awards 2025, please get in touch with the team at Global Franchise

POWER BRANDS

MATTHEW HALLER | PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION (IFA)



We're not a one-trick pony. We can service members'

needs on multiple issues, and elevate where we need to with Capitol Hill, the administration and in states," said Matthew Haller when he stepped up as IFA President and CEO in June 2021 after a decade at the organization in a variety of roles.

It's not a brief he's taken lightly. From the get-go, Haller has tenaciously advocated for franchising while maintaining even-handedness for all stakeholders - his trademark fairness, focus and approachability cementing him as a popular and respected figurehead.

In February, Haller was invited into Global Franchise's 2024 Hall of Fame in recognition of his impact as a powerful advocate for franchising during challenging times. "Thank you to Global Franchise for selecting me for this award. I don't view this award as about me - it's for the entire team at the IFA, the staff who help protect, enhance and promote franchising every single day and on behalf of IFA members and the broader franchise community," he said in his acceptance speech.

We caught up with the IFA CEO at the International Franchise Show in London where he sat down with Global Franchise editor, Charlotte Smith, to reflect on his role.

ON PERSONAL DRIVE...

I've been in franchising for over 12 years and what motivates me most is the people. Franchising is all about relationships and I'm driven to advocate for the improvement and the betterment of the business model on behalf of both franchisors and franchisees by working with government and the media to raise

awareness, as well as making the model even better through our work at the IFA.

ON LEADERSHIP...

Accessibility is important. At the IFA we have such a range of stakeholders from big global brands to small and emerging franchises, and they vary in their needs. You can get stuck if you create a bubble around yourself and don't have a full appreciation for the needs of the communities who you represent, and that's not a trap I want to fall into.

When I took this job, I made a point of putting myself out there and really listening to the needs of the franchising community. I went back to my team at the IFA and said, "Okay, here's what I'm hearing, now

how do we use it to build a strategy to best advance the interests of our members?"

ON DEFINING THE IFA'S STANCE...

The IFA is the kitchen table of franchising, bringing all the stakeholders together. Our board of directors is reflective of our broader community - big companies, small companies, big franchisees, small franchisees, suppliers - and all the different industries represented in franchising.

At the end of the day, we have a mission to protect, enhance and promote franchising. The model only works when franchisors and franchisees' interests are aligned and they're both generating profit and creating value for one another.

Hall of Fame criteria

Inductees will have influenced the past, present and future of franchising, and the winner is always someone who's name is synonymous with the industry



employer rule. Though we have the privilege of taking our members to Capitol Hill on a regular basis, it was a special honor to put a spotlight on franchising before a panel of congressional members with jurisdiction over our most critical policy matter. A whole lot of preparation goes into what amounts to a couple of hours in front of those cameras and I'm thankful for the IFA team who supported me throughout that process.

I also never forget the first time I came out on stage at the IFA convention after becoming the President and CEO of the Association. It's an honor to hold this position and to get to do what I love each and every day.

On a more regular basis, seeing my team members advance in their careers and step into their own limelight – that's always rewarding to see.

“You can get stuck if you create a bubble around yourself and don't have a full appreciation for the needs of the communities you represent, and that's not a trap I want to fall into”

This unique and inextricably linked relationship needs to be mutually beneficial, so the IFA's position must reflect the needs and the concerns of both parties. Ultimately, it's my job to ensure the IFA's resources and staff time are put to the needs of franchising – not only franchisors or franchisees.

ON MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES...

I'll always remember testifying in Congress on behalf of the franchising community. In December 2023, I had the opportunity to sit before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions to discuss the greatest issue facing franchising: the National Labor Relations Board's proposed joint

ON INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES...

Many countries are not as mature as the U.S. in terms of the number of franchises or breadth of the franchising communities. At the IFA we're focused on telling the story of franchising and educating the public about the unique opportunity the business model provides to go into business for yourself but not by yourself. That education is happening in the U.S. and we'd like to see more of it in communities around the world as well.

ON AMBITIONS AND LONG-TERM GOALS...

Oh gosh, I think continuing to expand the international reach of the IFA. I've talked about really putting the "I" back into the IFA. This is not about taking over the franchising world, it's about establishing closer relationships with our international partners and franchise associations around the globe.

We're never short of ideas at the IFA, although we're sometimes constrained in our ability to execute them. That's why partnerships can be a really rewarding way to get more out of what we do. One plus one can equal 11, rather than two.

ON LEAVING A LEGACY...

I think, more than anything, it's about leaving things in an even better place than when I came in.

JUDGING PANEL



Cristina Matos
CEO, Portuguese Franchise Association

Representing the Portuguese Franchise Association, Christina also works with the World Franchise Council (WFC), European Franchise Federation (EFF) and Ibero-American Franchise Federation.



Farrah Rose
QFP, Head of International Development, The Franchising Centre

A multi-award-winning franchise consultant involved in international franchising for 40 years, Farrah has worked with more than 300 top franchise brands from all around the globe.



Pip Wilkins
CEO, British Franchise Association

With more than 20 years' experience in the franchise sector, Pip has insight from all areas of the business and the franchise industry. She is well-known and highly regarded in franchising for her dedication and depth of knowledge.



Jennifer Brandeen
Chief Revenue Officer, International Franchise Association

Prior to joining the IFA in 2019 Jennifer served in roles ranging from sales and marketing to finance and consulting. Most recently, she led strategy and business development for Sylvan Learning.



Steven Wolfson
Founder, Israel Franchise Institute

Steven Wolfson is the founder of the Israel Franchise Institute (IFI). He is also chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of Franchise Regulation and Ethics for LAHAV (Israel Chamber of Independent Businesses).



Sherry McNeil
President & CEO, Canadian Franchise Association

A franchising expert with over 25 years of experience in assisting franchisors and franchisees in their growth and success, Sherry has consistently been named one of the world's Top 100 most influential women in franchising.

IN THE WORDS OF...

Jack Monson

“Brand stories should spotlight franchisees as heroes”

The marketing maestro on next-level storytelling and his takeaways from the IFA convention



Jack, thank you for doing such a great job of hosting our awards

“It was my pleasure. Global Franchise had so many great brands nominated this year! It was a great honor to be a part of the show. This awards event has become the perfect kick off for IFA’s Annual Convention. I hope to see even more attendees join us in 2025 in Las Vegas.”

What stood out for you at this year’s IFA event?

“The IFA’s theme of Franchise Smarter and all the discussions about “responsible franchising” were definitely reflected in the Global Franchise Awards winning brands. I think we’re all past the days of celebrating franchise brands strictly based on sales figures without looking at other qualities of the system and leadership.”

What excites you about our industry right now...

“As usual, challenges in the economy are creating opportunities for small business owners. The dramatic increase of the number of multi-unit and multi-brand owners is an exciting development that I don’t see levelling off anytime soon.”

“I would love to see more franchise professionals get involved in advocacy and support pro-business political leaders”

... And what progress would you like to see?

While concerns over funding, real estate, and other economic issues can be overcome, the growing anti-franchising and anti-small business factions in much of the U.S. Government and in many states is a bigger challenge. The IFA is doing an admirable job in fighting these forces, but I would love to see more franchise professionals get involved in advocacy and support pro-business political leaders.

Tell us why the Brand J and BizCom partnership is going to be awesome

It’s hard to believe, but no agency in the franchise space has yet helped brands with paid, earned, shared, and owned media. BizCom & Brand J are now the first resource to fully support the PESO model and we’ve won many awards for our client work in each of these areas.

We’re also very focused on boosting the personal branding of executives and influencers within a brand to give candidates someone to know, like, and trust. One of the best ways for franchise development leaders to share these stories is via short form videos that we create and push out daily to LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts and more. This is a relatively new service for us which has taken off drastically in the past year and no

one else is yet offering.

Along with our long-form videos and podcasts, we’re now mixing in thought leadership content and publicity. BizCom is leading the industry here with its A-list of franchise professionals!

What’s the secret to successful storytelling in franchise marketing?

Storytelling by many franchise marketers is focused on the history of the brand. While these origin stories are fine for consumer marketing and branding, the focus of franchise development marketing – and indeed the hero of a franchise brand’s story – must be the franchisee. Potential owners want to see what their lives will be like if they partner with a particular brand. These are the stories we must share.

WORK HISTORY

Jack Monson is president at Brand J, recently merged with BizCom Associates, and host of Social Geek Radio podcast, having previously held leadership positions at multiple marketing firms. He’s active in the IFA as a member of the Supplier Forum Advisory Board and host of the IFA Franchise Voice podcast.

Jack lives in Illinois and is a lifelong Chicago Bears and Chicago Cubs fan.



IFA[®]

INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION



2024 EVENTS

FRANCHISE EXPO SOUTH

September 6-7 | Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Partnership event with MFV Expositions/
Comexposium

IFA ADVOCACY SUMMIT

September 9-11 | Washington, DC

FRANCHISE LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

October 16-18 | Atlanta, GA

Partnership event with Franchise Update
Media

FRANCHISE EXPO AUSTIN

November 15-16 | Austin, TX

Partnership event with MFV Expositions/
Comexposium

EMERGING FRANCHISOR CONFERENCE

November 18-20 | Austin, TX

2025 EVENTS

IFA ANNUAL CONVENTION

February 10-13 | Las Vegas, NV

FRANCHISE EXPO WEST

Feb. 28-Mar. 1 | Los Angeles, CA

Partnership event with MFV Expositions/
Comexposium

FRANCHISE EXPO CHARLOTTEE

April 4-5 | Charlotte, NC

Partnership event with MFV Expositions/
Comexposium

INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE SHOW LONDON

April 11-12 | London, England

Partnership event with MFV NSE

LEGAL SYMPOSIUM

May 4-6 | Washington, DC

IBA/IFA JOINT CONFERENCE

May 6-7 | Washington, DC

INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE EXPO

May 29-31 | New York, NY

Partnership event with MFV Expositions/
Comexposium

FRANCHISE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CONFERENCE (FCXC)

June 24-26 | Atlanta, GA

Partnership event with Franchise Update
Media

Franchise SMARTer



franchise.org/events



Scan here to learn more
about these events and
plan your year with IFA!

“I’m not just doing it only to make money – we’re all in it to make money. I’m doing this for the next generation, just like my dad, and my grandfather before him. I want the business to be passed down to my kids and to my cousin’s kids and to my brother’s kids, so our focus is different”

A.J. TITUS, PRESIDENT



POWER BRANDS

BEST SIGNAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS FRANCHISE

Signarama, Winner

A.J. TITUS

President

A.J. Titus is not just the president of Signarama – he’s the rising star of a franchising dynasty spanning three generations. As the son of Ray Titus, CEO of Signarama and parent company United Franchise Group (UFG), and grandson of franchise legend, Roy Titus, A.J.’s business pedigree ensures he’s positioned to lead Signarama boldly into the future.

“At Signarama, we’re always looking towards what’s coming up next,” he told *Global Franchise*, “And I think that’s the difference between us and other brands. We’re a 37-year-old company so it’s very easy to get caught up in telling those war stories about what has happened in the past, but we’re not – we’re focused on the future.

Artificial intelligence is set to be an industry gamechanger, and as the world’s largest sign and graphics franchise, Signarama is utilizing rapidly evolving tech. “It’s really going to transform the design front of our business – designing signs, designing products,” A.J. continued. “I foresee a day when we’ll be having our first conversation with customers through AI, getting them straight through to design and speeding up the entire process.

Growing up with a family business means work is truly personal to A.J., who reports directly to his father, Ray, a mentorship that runs deeper than most. “I’ve gained the trust of our franchise owners because they can see and understand the seriousness in how we operate as a family,” he explained. “We put our personal lives into the brand. But I also know the blueprint of how to be successful. My dad did it, my grandfather did it. I have great examples before me who I can really lean on.”

signaramafranchise.com

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Best Children’s and Education Franchise, Highly Commended

The acclaimed music school has achieved global renown for its reimagined approach to music education. Children are enrolled in a rock performance-based program, where aspiring musicians master skills, unleash creativity and develop tools for life, including opportunities to gain confidence by playing on stage at festivals. Founded in 1998, the business has grown to 325 locations in 15 countries worldwide.

GOLIATH TECH

Best Emerging Franchise Highly Commended

The business is a construction manufacturer and installer operating in the helical (screw) pile industry. The franchise prides itself on providing exemplary customer service and tailored solutions using cutting-edge technology, durable materials, and smart designs to create anchoring systems for construction projects, including solar panels, underpinning, decks and home foundations.

ANYTIME FITNESS

Best Fitness Franchise, Regional Champion (Americas) and Grand Champion

With over 5,200 locations across the globe in seven continents, this 24/7 gym is growing rapidly, with an aim of providing members with a welcoming and supportive environment to help them achieve their fitness goals. Franchised gyms are equipped with work out apparatus and training spaces, which are overseen by qualified coaches, and best-in-class training and support for both franchise owners and members.



JAMIE & LAUREN IZAKS

Founders, All Points PR

Best PR Firm, Winner

We embrace a rally call in the agency – “Think Big, Act Big, Present Big.” This statement has been a centering point since our beginnings 13 years ago. Our clients need to stand apart from the competition, so we must go BIG, and an integrated, campaign-style approach enables us to do just that.

It also keeps us at the leading edge of public relations, imploring that we use a profound PR mix including media relations, social media, content marketing and digital marketing. Plus our ability to embrace, adapt, and adopt gives us a strong foundation to deliver innovative strategies, while serving as an invaluable extension of our clients’ strategic planning and execution.

The Best PR Firm award reaffirms what we’ve always believed – our team has unparalleled talent. With internal mantras like “Don’t Fear the F*** Up,” we embody a spirit of boldness and resilience. This Global Franchise recognition validates our commitment to delivering exceptional client results and invigorates us even more for the future.

“This award reaffirms what we’ve always believed – our team has unparalleled talent”

allpointspr.com



MAYWEATHER BOXING + FITNESS

Best Fitness Franchise, Highly Commended

Founded by retired professional boxer and promoter Floyd Mayweather – the most successful boxer in the history of the sport – the boutique gym offers high-energy group workouts which incorporate boxing punches, strength training and bodyweight exercises, all designed by the former world champion himself. The brand now has more than 80 locations and offers its customers heart rate monitors to help them achieve their optimum results.

ZIGGI'S COFFEE

Best Food and Drink Franchise, Winner

The cosy cafe franchise prioritizes high quality, ethically sourced coffee beans which it roasts in house for maximum flavor and has developed a franchise program focused on franchisee success. Locations offer eat in dining as well as a variety of drive-thru options, with the opportunity for customers to order before arrival using Zigi's app, which helps franchisees to retain customer footfall and loyalty.

WINGSTOP

Best Food and Drink Franchise, Highly Commended

The casual dining business, associated with legendary rapper Rick Ross who owns 30 stores, has capitalized on consumers' love for chicken wings, offering a range of sauces and rubs and enabling customers to customize their order by choosing their ideal wing style, spice level and dipping sauce. The chain currently has over 1700 locations around the world.

DOGTOPIA

Best Lifestyle Franchise, Winner

Founded in 2002, Dogtopia is the largest and fastest growing pet services franchise in the entire pet industry, thanks to the seasoned leadership team, unparalleled support provided to franchisees and a proven recurring revenue model. Outlets are equipped with spacious playrooms, areas tailored to different play styles and dog size, overnight accommodation, webcams for owners to check in, training classes, and a full-service spa.

JUST CUTS

Best Lifestyle Franchise, Highly Commended

The affordable turnkey salon franchise gives access to all the tools needed to set up and run a successful salon, including operational, ordering, and marketing systems that are already built-in. The model is fully digitalized, so franchisees can easily access support online, including the e-learning platform, print marketing ordering system, retail reward program and Point of Service tools, with support provided by the dedicated Academy team.

STRATUS BUILDING SOLUTIONS

Best Property Maintenance Franchise, Winner

Leaning into the demand for greener cleaning, the commercial cleaning and janitorial service provider uses environmentally friendly methods and kinder chemicals certified as safe by Green Seal. Its services, which range from floor care, restroom sanitation, and waste disposal, are driven by small business owners and regional support centers across North America with positive customer reviews.

BEST CHILDREN'S AND EDUCATION FRANCHISE

Little Kickers, Winner

JUSTIN BREDEMAN

CEO, Soccer Shots Franchising

Little Kickers has been offering age-appropriate football training sessions to children for nearly two decades. In that time, the franchise has been able to create an extensive network of franchisees across 25 countries. It's growth that CEO Justin Bredeman says has only been possible due to the care those within the business have for the brand and the children that participate in lessons.

"Ultimately, families enrol their children into Little Kickers because the coaches are caring, they're well trained to teach basic football skills, and the kids have a blast."

So far, expansion efforts have taken three forms: Little Kickers franchisees have moved countries and decided to take the brand with them; entrepreneurs have seen the brand in real-life and approached Little Kickers about a franchise agreement in an uncharted country; Little Kickers has actively identified an untapped market and sought out investors to make a business in this territory possible.

ONLY GOING UPWARDS

Justin has no plans to slow this growth down. "We're extremely bullish on the future of Little Kickers," he says.

"We'll continue to work with our franchise owners to grow in number of enrolments, growing their teams, improving the Little Kickers customer experience, and increasing operational efficiency."

The brand also recognises that scaling further won't be possible without initial investment, and it has pinpointed the Franchise Support Team, efficient operational technology, training programmes, and recruitment in new territories as key areas.

For more information, please visit littlekickers.co.uk

“I believe our success is due to several factors. First, we have some of the best franchise owners – people who care deeply about impacting children positively through football. Second, we’re a franchise community that learns from one another, supports each other, and shares best practices. Third, we have a strong Franchise Support Team that is dedicated, full-time, to equipping franchise partners in areas like marketing, technology, and operations.”

JUSTIN BREDEMAN, CEO

Little Kickers®



POWER BRANDS

BEST EMERGING FRANCHISE

Venture X, Winner

JASON ANDERSON

President of Vast Coworking Group

When we launched Venture X in 2016, we bucked convention in many ways – from our model to our growth strategy. Shared workspace concepts then catered mainly to freelancers, solo entrepreneurs and small businesses with large common areas focused on collaboration and networking, the antithesis of the traditional office.

With Venture X and the other brands in our Vast network, we've drawn inspiration from globally successful hotel chains like Marriott and Hilton in the way we cater for business professionals. With Venture X, we scaled coworking space to only 10-15% of our floorplan with a greater focus on private offices, elevating the best features of traditional workspaces with an impeccable level of design, hospitality-infused amenities and concierge-level member experiences. This approach has benefited us post-pandemic, where shared workspaces are now utilized by businesses of all types, including large enterprises that traditionally held long-term commercial leases.

Within our three brands – Venture X, Office Evolution, and Intelligent Office – we have developed a hub-and-spoke development model that allows franchise owners to diversify their portfolios while gaining more market share. We see this as an ongoing strategy to fuel our expansion. For example, Venture X, which caters more to a member base in densely populated urban metros, acts as the hub, whereas Office Evolution, with its suburban member base, acts as a spoke. So, franchise owners can open a Venture X in a city and Office Evolutions in surrounding areas.

For more information, please visit venturexfranchise.com

“Vast is pioneering a paradigm shift in the industry to revolutionize the coworking experience by creating an interconnected ecosystem of coworking brands, services, and amenities – just as Marriott Bonvoy has within the hotel industry. Venture X is a key player in this shift, serving a high-demand demographic within the marketplace. Our Vast network will continue to grow its global footprint this year with the acquisition of our fourth brand and first co-warehousing concept and 200+ new locations in the pipeline”

JASON ANDERSON, PRESIDENT AND CSO

EVERLINE COATINGS AND SERVICES

Best Property Maintenance Franchise, Highly Commended

The professional line striping and pavement maintenance company does vital work for commercial property owners and managers in Canada and the USA, emerging as the industry leading brand for all parking lot and pavement maintenance services. Franchisees offer services such as line painting, pavement maintenance, preventative pavement options, traffic control and more, providing a one-stop shop for the real estate industry.

FASTSIGNS INTERNATIONAL INC

Best Signage and Communications Franchise, Highly Commended

With its powerful franchise model, award-winning support and well-trained franchisees, the global signs and graphics company uses its world-class services to help clients increase brand awareness and attract new customers. This includes everything from producing business signs, outdoor banners, and vehicle wraps, to creating wall murals, stickers and trade show displays.

EXPENSE REDUCTION ANALYSTS

Best White Collar Franchise, Winner

With more than 750 franchisees in over 50 countries, ERA partners with businesses globally to identify cost-savings across various expense categories. Established since 1993, the brand leans into the latest technologies to support franchisees in operations and ensure optimum value is delivered to clients, capturing the attention of modern c-suites as they look to build agile strategies while facing unforeseen challenges.

INXPRESS

Best White Collar Franchise, Highly Commended

InXpress has been guiding businesses through shipping and logistics for more than two decades, providing the knowledge and means to ship economically and efficiently. Customers can access the franchise's platform to compare rates from different couriers and manage shipments, while also using services like e-commerce integration, warehousing, and international shipping, partnering with brands including DHL, UPS, Fedex and TNT.

BRIGHTSTAR CARE

Best Nursing and Care Franchise, Winner

The U.S.-based home care and medical staffing franchise has more than 380 locations, all providing medical and non-medical services to clients. Founded 20 years ago, the business has expanded through franchising, offering a scalable model, full support and strong brand awareness. Unlike its competitors, Brightstar Care uses a Registered Nurse to manage every case.

FRANCHISE READY

Best Franchise Consultancy, Winner

A B2B service franchise partnering with businesses that are looking to franchise their brands globally, as well as with those who are looking to invest. Franchise Ready has more than 200 partners in Australia, New Zealand, MENA, UK and India and those that have worked with the business for more than 12 years have seen a 200% year-on-year increase in annual sales and unit growth.

RESHIFT MEDIA IN NUMBERS

2 THIS IS THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR THE AGENCY HAS WON A GLOBAL FRANCHISE AWARD

200+

clients are serviced by the Reshift Media team

500%+
is the typical client improvement rate on social media while using the agency's software

25,000+ LOCATIONS
IN 22 COUNTRIES
are covered by Reshift Media clients



POWER BRANDS

FRANCHISE MARKETING FIRM

Reshift Media Inc., Winner

STEVE BUORS

CEO and co-founder

Canadian marketing agency Reshift Media develops digital marketing strategies, processes, and technology custom-tailored to the specific needs of franchise organizations. This decade-long focus on solving marketing problems for franchise companies has established Reshift Media as the global leader in franchise digital marketing.

"Having worked with hundreds of franchise systems around the world, we have seen the amazing growth potential of franchising first-hand," says Steve Buors, CEO. "There is no doubt that franchising is a unique business, so it requires a unique marketing approach."

In addition to solving issues for their franchise clients, Reshift Media has also been an active contributor to the international franchising community, working closely with organizations such as the Canadian Franchise Association and International Franchise Association to understand what the challenges are on the ground.

FRANCHISE TECHNOLOGY

Through their extensive experience working with franchise systems, the Reshift team has developed franchise-specific marketing platforms, including Brand Amplifier and Franify. These solutions allow franchise companies to rapidly scale their marketing by creating localised campaigns that remain aligned with head office messaging. The tools have been so successful that they've been licenced by other agencies that are servicing franchise customers. The next 12 months are a crucial growth period for Reshift Media. "We are looking to expand our presence even more internationally," confirms Steve. "The majority of our business is still in North America. We've targeted the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand as major areas of growth for us going forward."

reshiftmedia.com



THE FRANCHISING CENTRE

Best Franchise Consultancy, Highly Commended

The Franchising Centre has 76 international franchise consultants who partner with franchisors and franchisees to help them achieve their goals. In operation for more than 25 years, the business has garnered expertise to advise on strategy, international expansion, recruitment, training and support, and legal advice, boasting a very high client retention rate and delivering information to the industry via a variety of channels.

LATHROP GPM

Best Franchise Law Firm, Winner

The full-service law firm comprises 234 attorneys and staff across its practice areas, partnering with franchises to anticipate challenges and achieve goals at all stages of their development in markets throughout the world. It currently serves a wide range of sectors, offering expertise in areas such as corporate law, litigation, real estate, intellectual property and employment law, offering its clients tremendous value and experience in franchising.

ROSEN KAROL SALIS PLLC

Best Franchise Law Firm, Highly Commended

The New York-based law firm has been in operation for more than 35 years, providing specialized franchise services such as area development and franchise agreements. It has represented a huge number of notable brands including American Express, Burger King, UPS, Jani King and Dunkin' as well as many franchise associations and groups of franchisees.

BIZCOM ASSOCIATES

Best Franchise Marketing Firm and Best Franchise PR Firm, Highly Commended

This PR, marketing and advertising agency helps franchises to increase brand awareness and reach new customers by bringing stories of success into the public arena via strategic marketing comms, navigating the ever-evolving media landscape and leaning into trends. There's been a long list of results including national coverage and award-winning influencer campaigns – all backed by testimonials from happy clients.

FIREAWAY PIZZA

Regional Champion, Europe

Founded in 2016, the pizza restaurant now has more than 160 locations across the UK alone with ambitions for further growth across Europe. With a healthy and innovative approach to Italian pizzas, it uses local ingredients and makes the dough by hand, before cooking in a 400-degree fire oven. The results come in at around half the calories customers expect.

KX PILATES

Regional Champion, Asia Pacific

The boutique studio fitness franchise uses high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and reformer machines in small classes, ensuring individualized attention and real and ongoing results for clients who want to add resistance and target specific muscle groups. The brand is expanding internationally, with master franchisees in New Zealand, Singapore and Indonesia and plans to launch its first master franchise partnership for the USA later this year.

FRANCHISING DOWN UNDER

The small island nation of New Zealand ranks among the world's top economies for doing business by the World Bank. Farrah Rose investigates the opportunities for franchisors



My recent visit to this wonderful country has shown me that New Zealand is probably one of the most sophisticated, discerning, and well-developed franchise markets in the world. I was fortunate enough to meet with so many knowledgeable experts all up and down the North Island during my time there, taking in many key cities such as Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, Tauranga, Rotorua, and Palmerston North.

The experience left me feeling very positive about the country, its people, infrastructure and the sophisticated level of franchising knowledge which defines New Zealand as such an interesting

and appealing market. While geographically it's around two-thirds of the size of California, it's inhabited by a tiny fraction of the population: just five million compared to the Golden State's 40 million residents. However, this small country is a real giant when it comes to franchising with 590 franchise systems in operation.

Recent data from Massey University Survey of New Zealand Franchising – organised by the Franchising Association of New Zealand (FANZ) states that there are 32,000 franchise units currently operating there, employing around 157,000 people and contributing a whopping NZ\$36.8 billion dollars to the

economy. Most well-established, high profile franchise brands, particularly in food and beverage, have a strong presence in New Zealand in both its large and small cities, and the country has many local domestic and commercial cleaning, gardening and home maintenance franchises.

An appetite for all things franchising

Banks, such as Westpac and ASB, seem to be very well versed with franchising and provide funding to international systems which have proven their concepts and systems work well in New Zealand. The shared language and friendly bond with many English-speaking Western states makes



communication and shared goals especially easy for franchise systems.

There is also a significant level of knowledge about the mechanics of franchisor/franchisee relationships. Recent research conducted by Franchise Consultants and Franchise New Zealand Media demonstrates a very strong pool of potential franchisee candidates between the ages of 35-54 who have the available capital to invest in franchises. Data shows around 33% are interested in investment of franchises under NZ\$50K and 15% interested in investment around NZ\$300K+.

New Zealand franchisees have realistic expectations of earning potential, with some saying they would accept making a loss, or just breaking even in year one, but many do expect to draw some sort of income in year one, rising to NZ\$100,000 upwards from year two.

The strongest motivators for investing in a franchise are the ones which will be very familiar to us all and are the same reasons which make franchising such a popular growth strategy globally – namely, business ownership and greater control over work-life balance, higher income, and building equity for later life or legacy. There's also a very strong



“This small country is a real giant when it comes to franchising, with 590 franchise systems in operation”

desire for New Zealanders to move from a more mundane career into something for which they have a strong passion, and which challenges their entrepreneurial spirit. As we all know, franchising offers a way to all this and more, and potential franchisees in New Zealand are very knowledgeable about how franchising can also offer reduced risk of failure, as well as tried and tested systems, support and guidance in their

local market.

Thanks to these motivators and with the sophisticated knowledge of franchising which backs them up, the failure rate of franchising in New Zealand is relatively low. Potential franchisees start with a good awareness of what they are getting into and are more than willing to take the time necessary to thoroughly investigate a franchise before committing to the investment.

Geographical advantages

The country's geographic proximity to Australia can also be a plus point for those brands wishing to trial out their franchise in a smaller regional market before taking on the larger and more regulated market of Australia. However, it's important not to underestimate the differences between the two markets. From a distance, we might consider these neighboring countries to be much the same, but there are significant variations which can trip up the unwary franchisor!

For example, New Zealand is generally a highly regulated, safe and secure country where authorities are very keen to protect the wealth of the nation. When it comes to franchising, on the other hand, it has no specific franchising laws when compared to Australia, meaning that brands moving from one to the other will experience very different levels of legislation and red tape.

However, despite the lack of overt regulation, New Zealand can still be considered an extremely franchise-friendly environment with a strong ethical framework through bodies such as the Franchise Association of New Zealand (FANZ). Membership and association with FANZ can, and will, add huge value and credibility

to any brand looking to expand into the country.

Advice for international franchisors

Whilst the outlook for 2024 and 2025 remains extremely positive for franchise growth in New Zealand and most franchisors and stake holders are optimistic about the future, there are still some key challenges for brands to consider:

- **Franchisee funding:** While banks are clearly very prepared to supply funding to franchisees, they are only willing to do so if a franchise has been proven as a concept and demonstrated to work well when moved to New Zealand. Therefore, franchisors should be wary of premature entry into this territory. Once established, however, some banks may lend franchisees up to 50% of the total investment.
- **Geography:** New Zealand is a large country with a small population and low population density. The exception to this is Auckland, of course, which contains two million of the country's five million citizens, but population is otherwise concentrated in clusters with significant distance between them. While transport infrastructure is excellent, it



can mean the transportation of supplies might be costly.

- **Operational costs are higher than some nations,** but still reasonable compared to the neighboring country of Australia (higher COGS, labour costs, rent and site acquisition).
- **Pool of talent and labor shortages** are another issue which some labor-intensive local franchisees may have to face, due again to the low population density in most areas.
- **Cost and availability of real estate** can be challenging.
- **Time zone differences:** Huge time differences can make timely communication with franchisees more challenging. For instance, Auckland is 13

“New Zealand is one of the most sophisticated, discerning, and well-developed franchise markets in the world, with a strong ethical framework”





hours ahead of the UK, 17 hours ahead of New York and 20 hours ahead of California.

- **Imported goods can be expensive**, so many franchises who are reliant on them may have to switch over to locally sourced supplies.
- **Due to higher operating costs**, unit profitability could also be lower, but most still operate at a high level compared to other countries. Royalty percentages tend to run higher than other countries.

Furthermore, international franchisors are advised to consider faster scalability of their brands and a more expeditious development schedule to achieve market share. There are good



opportunities for themed F&B concepts, but the main gaps I saw in franchise concepts were mainly from B2B and B2C, such as kids' education, fitness development, domiciliary care and home services. Generally speaking, concepts like these are less reliant on international supply chains and have less of a need for large, expensive premises, so may represent an opportunity to circumvent many of the challenges faced above.

Find out more

My special thanks go to Robyn Pickerill of FANZ and Stewart Germann of SGL law office who facilitated my visit and allowed me to speak at their Franchise Seminar in Auckland. Also, a huge thank you to all the highly expert franchise specialists and stake holders in NZ for not only meeting with me and sharing their valuable knowledge, but for allowing me to extract some data from recent survey conducted by Massey University and Franchise Consultants and Franchise New Zealand Media. Further information and useful market surveys can be found at franchiseassociation.org.nz.

THE AUTHOR

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KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR INVESTORS

- **Sophisticated market:** New Zealand stands out as one of the most sophisticated and well-developed franchise markets globally, boasting 590 operational franchise systems
- **Robust economy:** Recent data reveals a thriving franchise sector contributing NZ\$36.8 billion to the economy, with major brands, especially in F&B, enjoying a strong presence across the nation's towns and cities
- **Favorable environment:** The country's franchise-friendly environment, coupled with a knowledgeable pool of potential franchisees, contributes to a relatively low failure rate in franchising ventures
- **Motivated franchisees:** Potential franchisees in New Zealand are driven by familiar factors like business ownership, work-life balance, and income potential, as well as a desire for entrepreneurial challenges and passion-driven careers
- **Regulatory landscape:** While lacking specific franchising laws compared to Australia, New Zealand offers a supportive regulatory framework through bodies like the Franchise Association of New Zealand (FANZ), enhancing credibility for brands entering the market.
- **Challenges for international brands:** Franchisors eyeing expansion into NZ must navigate challenges such as franchisee funding, geographic dispersion, higher operational costs, labor shortages, and time zone differences
- **Strategic considerations:** International franchisors are advised to prioritize scalability, adaptability, and market-specific concepts like themed F&B offerings and B2B/B2C services to overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities
- **Resource access:** Accessing local resources and expertise, along with understanding market nuances, is crucial for successful entry and growth in the New Zealand franchise landscape
- **Continuous monitoring:** Ongoing monitoring of market dynamics, regulatory changes, and consumer trends is essential for sustaining franchise success and maximizing growth potential.
- **Upcoming opportunities:** FANZ's National Franchise Conference ConnectXperience 2024 is taking place on the 28-30 July 2024, presenting a great opportunity to gain vital insights. The IFA's Matt Haller, Mary Kennedy-Thompson, COO of Neighborly and Jeremy Hassell, CEO & Co-Founder of City Cave, will be joining the cast of speakers in Tauranga.

THE FINAL FRONTIER: KITCHEN AUTOMATION

Cost-effective robots that can cook is something the food service industry can hugely benefit from, especially as labor costs continue to rise

WORDS BY AMANDA PETERS





he food business is a numbers game – it is all about time, margins and

efficiency. Over the years, restaurants have suffered on all three fronts, especially the last two. While labor costs have always moved in one direction, the pandemic poured accelerant on a growing problem.

The Great Resignation was covered in detail when people found the opportunity to break free of their jobs and move to new industries and areas that they preferred. As a result, food service brands had a smaller pool of employees to draw from who demanded higher wages. This has affected the margins of many franchisees who constantly bounce between profit and loss.

Coupled with the increasing unavailability of a dependable labor force throughout the U.S., franchisors and franchisees have looked for cost-cutting measures that doesn't compromise the quality of the products and services they provide.

While brands have always made technological updates to improve customer service, they've been more reticent to bring tech into the kitchen. Understandably so, any automated cooking process needs to be completely perfect, and demonstrate significant improvements in terms of time and cost to justify the learning curve that comes with replacing or augmenting human labor.

But brands are certainly making that plunge now. Chicken wing brand Wing Zone announced a partnership with Miso Robotics to have all its stores fitted with the Flippy 2 robot, a robotic fryer. And while Wing Zone will use Miso Robotics' products to fry foods, Jack in the Box will use them to flip burgers.

In 2022, Starbucks



sparked a major conversation when it debuted its prototype Siren System Cold Bar model on its Starbucks Partners TikTok account – the company's official account dedicated to employees. In the video, a Starbucks barista demonstrated the process of making a Frappuccino using this automated system with minimal input from the barista.

While many employees commented to express their excitement, others had a bone to pick with the proposed system. Some of the difficulties expressed were that busy locations would likely need multiple Siren System Cold Bars, especially during peak hours. Others had an issue with its order customization ability, with two in three drinks requiring

the time, but employees voiced a different opinion – that it would slow them down, increase wait times, and further complicate their already stressful workflows.

While the increased consistency in products is one element of adopting new tech, brands are also looking forward to regular operating hours and a dependable work force that never gets tired or puts a strain on management.

What do the new robots do?

For QSR brands operating in the world of burgers, fries and pizza, robotic solutions exist to ease the burden on kitchen staff. Miso Robotics is a popular manufacturer in the industry, as the major deal with Wing Zone

“Our job is to put great food on a plate, creating a reaction; how we get there is going to change”

customizations, according to Starbucks. But more importantly, employees expressed frustration with the company's decision to tentatively spend millions of dollars on the system while effectively ignoring their growing unionization efforts.

According to a Starbucks' press release, the system was intended to alleviate many of the daily struggles that employees faced when making beverages. It even claimed that certain drinks could be made with fewer steps and, in some cases, in half

suggests. The company produces four products, two of which perform a very similar job. The Flippy 2 and Flippy Lite are similar solutions that offer automatic fryer robots, and much more.

The Flippy Lite is a compact tool, three feet deep and six feet wide, and comes with storage facilities too. It can even season the foods it fries. Its bigger counterpart, the Flippy 2, is larger and can handle more complex tasks. While the Flippy 2 robot starts a \$3,000 a month, the average cost of employee turnover can cost a franchisee \$150,000 a year.

Coffee is big business, with main streets and cities dotted



credit - Starbucks Partners TikTok

“We are in an industry that is evolving and at some point, there will be no human in the kitchen”

with coffee shops and bigger restaurant brands that serve on-the-go beverages. It's therefore no surprise that Miso Robotics have created an A.I.-powered system to deliver the perfect cup of coffee.

The CookRight Coffee system alerts staff to replace urns and ingredients to make sure customers always get a tasty, hot cup of coffee. The CookRight system isn't finished; it plans to add a grill system managed by A.I. where a camera watches the grill, and alerts staff members to flip whatever is cooking.

While some of these solutions do not remove the need for staff entirely, they greatly increase much sought-after consistency, and reduce the burden on employees.

Why are they needed?

In an industry that has its profits determined by small margins, it's not difficult to see why franchisors are chasing more efficient operations processes. In the average QSR, a fast-food worker is typically paid just above the federal minimum wage. Employees are fundamental to the smooth and successful running of a restaurant; technology hasn't even come close to replacing employees in most restaurants.

Menus are intentionally kept small, and franchisors are able to buy in large quantities, keeping the prices down. As time has gone on, so has the footprint of locations. As fewer customers eat in-store, brands have been more than happy to cut down on size, therefore reducing construction and running costs.



Staffing is one area where brands have not been able to truly innovate. Employees are needed to cook orders and serve customers, as well as clean tables and floors. The pay of food service workers has been an issue in the U.S. for a long time, but the COVID-19 pandemic brought it to the fore. Many worked through the pandemic as essential staff with little to no extra recompense, and many more just wanted to get away from the job.

This has all resulted in staff shortages for many QSR brands. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' figures from April 2021 showed that only one in five quick service operators reported employee counts at normal, meaning another four were operating with insufficient staff, or reduced operating hours. In January 2021, only eight per cent of restaurant operators cited staff retention and recruitment as their top concern, compared to 78 per cent in July.

Technological solutions also



DAVID BLOOM, CHIEF DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS OFFICER FOR CAPRIOTTI'S AND WING ZONE

What are the benefits of bringing robotics into the kitchen ?

There are a wide variety of benefits and potential competitive advantages that back-of-house robotics and automation create. Aside from the obvious increases in efficiency, dependability and consistency of operations, there are significant increases in employee satisfaction and employee wage growth potential as their jobs become more focused on hospitality and supporting the technology. Being able to staff restaurants during off-peak hours, late at night, or even 24 hours becomes so much more doable for brands or locations that have a demand. Additional benefits include smaller real estate footprints, speed of service and order accuracy, as well as a reduction in the transmission of food borne illnesses.

Are labor pressures why QSR brands, like yourselves, use robotics?

Reliability can certainly be a benefit, but I would focus more on the availability of

staff, particularly those that want to spend all day doing mundane tasks that can be easily handled by automation or rather, the lack thereof.

Are there any concerns about the cost and functionality of the robotics, and if they can truly provide efficiencies and consistency?

Think of software as a service and now robotics as a service when you think of the capital investment. Kind of like you are often leasing your POS system inclusive of service, equipment and software upgrades.

Is this something you'd like to roll out to every store, or is it only truly worth it in chosen locations?

We are certainly in the early stages of this technology adoption cycle. We believe that brands and companies who learn how to optimize and incorporate these technologies throughout their operation will have significant competitive advantages over time. That being said, we have a clear vision for what the future of Wing Zone will look like, and it's heavily centered on new advances in tech. How quickly we'll be able to get there without compromising efficiency on a location-by-location basis is yet to be determined.

Are there any other easily repeatable jobs in the kitchen that you're looking forward to seeing robots carry out?

Every repetitive task can be automated over time. It's the integration of these capabilities with the other technology platforms we employ that will begin to yield exponential returns.

appear to be the best way to safeguard customers against unclean practices and Taffer's Tavern has invested heavily into this concept.

"When I created Taffer's Tavern, I built a business model that included a clearly defined expectation and protocol for each restaurant when it came to safety," said Jon Taffer, the star of Paramount's *Bar Rescue* and founder of Taffer's Tavern.

"That became known as

The Taffer's Safe Dining System.

Concurrently, I created the 'kitchen and bar of the future' that was held to these same strict standards. For instance, at the bar, all glassware is cleaned using CO2 glass frosters to instantly chill and sanitize the glass upon contact.

"My goal was to make Taffer's Tavern the safest restaurant franchise brand to date, and with our safe dining system in place, I believe we have accomplished that."



Jon Taffer, founder of Taffer's Tavern

David Bloom, chief development and operations officer for Wing Zone and Capriotti's, points out that automation can actually help safeguard employee wage growth. "Aside from the obvious increases in efficiency, dependability and consistency of operations, there are significant increases in employee satisfaction and employee wage growth potential as their jobs become more focused on hospitality and supporting the technology," he explained.

"Being able to staff the restaurants during off peak hours, late at night or even 24 hours become so much more doable for brands or locations that have that demand. Additional benefits include smaller real estate footprints, speed of service and order accuracy improvements, as well as a reduction in the transmission of food-borne illnesses."

Even brands like McDonald's have had to curtail operating hours, choosing to forgo the late-night trade. Restaurant Brands International's QSR brands have also made similar decisions.

"We saw about an average of [a] one-hour reduction in operating hours at Popeyes during this quarter relative to pre-pandemic levels, which obviously, has an impact, and that was disproportionately impacting our late-night business, which historically over indexes in family



"Think of software and now robotics as a service when you think of the capital investment"

and which comes along with a pretty high check," said José Cil, CEO of Restaurant Brands International, on the company's Q3 earnings call.

As it stands, Flippy 2 is more expensive than an employee at that station, but the extra cost comes from the reliability and the fact that it will work 24/7. Included in the \$3,000 a month charge is repair and maintenance, so operators can expect the fixing of malfunctioning robots to not cost extra.

Robots in the kitchen, already?

Most sizeable QSR brands are investigating robotics, and many

have signed partnerships with companies, such as KFC with Hyundai Robotics to develop chicken cooking robots.

Wing Zone are not the only brand to make use of Miso Robotics' solutions, Jack in the Box has too. In April, the brand announced its trial in San Diego restaurant with the Flippy 2 and Sippy (drink-prepping machine) to free up staff time and allow them to spend more time with customers.

Panera, and two non-franchise brands, White Castle and Chipotle, have also opted to trial Miso Robotics' offering to ascertain whether or not it is for them.

Robotics has moved into the



world of pizza-making too with the Picnic pizza-assembly robot. While it's yet to find any big takers in major pizza chains, the relative difficulty in making consistent pizzas means that Picnic robots may become a more attractive proposition in the coming years.

Robotics is inevitable

As labor supply continues to exert pressure on franchise owners, franchisors will be forced to explore either more costly and elaborate recruitment programs or consider integrating a new technology to create a more long-term solution.

"Every repetitive task can be automated over time. It's the integration of these capabilities with all the other technology platforms we employ that will begin to yield exponential returns," said David Bloom.

Without significant rises in pay,

food service workers will continue leaving the industry. While non-compensation factors are the primary retainers of employees in more high-value roles, that wisdom should not be extended to food service workers.

QSR brands will greatly benefit from the increased consistency in orders, and automating repetitive tasks is also a reasonable form of progress in an industry hamstrung by the lack of labor.

"Our job is to put great food on a plate that creates a reaction," pondered Jon Taffer, "and how we get there is going to change.

"We are in an industry that is evolving and at some point, there will be no human in the kitchen. We need to understand that is the ultimate extreme and all of us are going to be forced to move in that direction, with introducing robotics and different types of cooking systems and technologies.

● Digital menu boards

One of the most common forms of automation, digital menu boards are dynamic, customizable and can be updated in real time.

● Self-ordering kiosks

They offer multiple ordering and payment points, additional advertising and upselling avenues, reduce wait times and minimize human contact, which lessens the threat of illness. It also minimizes the employee workload so that they can focus on high-value tasks.

● Automated table reservations

When things get hectic, it's easy to make errors. However, using table reservation software allows for the maximization of front-of-house to be as efficient and error-free as possible.

● Automated cooking process

While the best chefs can be considered artists creating great-tasting food, when the idea is conceptualized, cooking is a highly standardized, repetitive task that strives for consistency. And while the technology is not mainstream yet, brands are experimenting with robotics as they are highly customizable, standardized, hygienic and efficient.

● Automated deliveries

Big-name logistics and delivery companies are already experimenting with delivery drones. Since food delivery follows in similar footsteps, automated deliveries are set to revolutionize the food delivery industry.

● Digital loyalty programs

While paper coupons, cards, and discount passes have been the norm, they aren't the most efficient, often getting crumpled, lost or forgotten. A digital loyalty program not only solves this, but also provides round-the-clock tracking and the ability to personalized offers based on the customer's preferences.

Those who don't are going to get left behind.

"Anybody building a casual dining concept based on a traditional kitchen today is going to be economically destroyed, not to mention hitting consistency and supply side issues too."

As long as food service appears to be "undesirable", combined with an increasingly employee-friendly labor market, franchisors will have to bet on the increased development and implementation of kitchen robotics to match their ambitions.

Growth in the fast lane

Alicia Miller offers actionable insights for founders and franchisees eager to tap into the vast power of private equity

For expert guidance on maximizing private capital for business expansion, look no further than consultant Alicia Miller. As the founder and MD of Emergent Growth Advisors, Alicia offers unrivaled expertise in franchising and private capital, drawing from her experience as both an investor in brands and multi-unit franchise operators, as well as her background as a former multi-unit operator.

Now Alicia has written an invaluable book, *Big Money in Franchising: Scaling Your Enterprise in the Era of Private Equity*, shedding light on recent events like the monumental \$9.5 billion Subway acquisition by Roark Capital, unravelling the

“If there are any major flaws in your model, you’re unlikely to attract a PE buyer”

intricacies of how to leverage private capital for business growth, and empowering readers with the information needed to build enterprise value and climb the private equity profit ladder.

“I wanted to demystify how private equity operates in the context of franchising,” Alicia told *Global Franchise*. “Both franchising and private equity are often misunderstood and the mash up of the two even more so! I hope the book helps franchise stakeholders to make more informed choices.”

We caught up with Alicia for a fascinating conversation around PE growth playbooks, recent international case studies, and the latest investment trends shaking up the franchise scene.

GF: What has been the impact of private equity on franchising?

AM: More big money players are entering franchising with a mandate to deploy capital, which is creating incredible new liquidity options for founders of good systems. Valuations have been driven higher by this flurry of activity.

Another positive development is the entrance of PE investors at the unit level buying out franchisees. This activity is expanding and accelerating, creating exciting new liquidity options for franchisees as well. In some large systems, PE owns the majority of franchised units. This sets up a very interesting relationship dynamic with the

franchisor, especially if the franchisor itself is also backed by private equity!

PE capital and strategic assistance is exactly what many brands and multi-unit operators need to accelerate growth. With the right support these brands can go further, faster, than they would have on their own. Tropical Smoothie Café and Wingstop are two examples of brands that experienced blow-out success under their PE sponsors. Wingstop went public and continues to expand while TSC is rumored to be preparing for an initial public offering (IPO). Flynn Group, the largest franchisee in the world with more than 2,600 units is also PE-backed. Flynn recently announced its sixth recapitalization, bringing in new PE sponsors to help it continue its growth across new brands and markets.

However, numerous other businesses find themselves excluded from the process. The reality is that most brands will never catch the eye of a PE investor. Private equity



HOW PRIVATE EQUITY IS IMPACTING FRANCHISING

- New liquidity options at both brand and franchisee level
- Higher valuations for good businesses
- More capital and support to accelerate enterprise growth
- Fierce competition to recruit top franchisee talent
- Increased demand for outsourced services (e.g., franchise sales, marketing, real estate)
- More expensive and challenging to launch new concepts
- More new concepts entering the market

acquires a brand and invests in various areas like marketing, product/service enhancement, bolstering franchisee support, and streamlining construction processes to reduce costs and accelerate new site launches. Their goal is to prioritize initiatives that yield rapid returns, driving interest among franchisees for expansion. This growth trajectory can persist through multiple ownership changes within the PE realm, as long as there's a steadfast commitment to improving profitability at the unit level.

Private equity firms also love a buy-and-build approach known as "platforming." This strategy involves starting with a strong leadership team and flagship brand and then acquiring complementary businesses, known as tuck-in acquisitions. A prime illustration of this success is Neighborly, which has expanded to include over 30 brands under its platform. Throughout this journey, there have been multiple PE ownership changes, but sponsors kept the management team focused and maintained a focus on enhancing unit-level profitability and exploring new avenues to leverage the platform's capabilities.

Another example is Inspire Brands, currently owned by Roark but likely to go public. Franchisees enjoy multi-brand expansion opportunities and marketing and supply chain efficiencies that are tough to duplicate without the scale of the Inspire platform.

For founders and multi-unit franchisees, the potential for multiple arbitrage and wealth creation is stunning. That math is discussed extensively in the book.

firms carefully select investments according to their specific criteria and then inject capital to drive rapid growth in those chosen businesses. Consequently, the rest of the market experiences a significant uptick in competition, particularly in the recruitment of new franchisees. This heightened competition poses significant challenges for emerging brands, creating a tougher landscape than ever before.

Today, founders are not only competing with emerging brands but also contending with the challenge of competing against those already backed by deep-pocketed PE firms. Additionally, PE firms are actively consolidating fragmented sectors, such as home services, into multi-brand operating platforms. These platforms can leverage various efficiencies, including supply chain optimization, cross-marketing, and cross-selling. As a result, new concepts entering the market need to launch with stronger capitalization and a more robust strategy to stand out amidst

increased competition.

All this PE money encourages a record number of new franchise starts. For example, in the U.S. market, more than 400 per year are now launching – up from a running average of around 250 per year during the last few years according to FRANDATA. The shift has been a boon for brokers, outsourced sales organizations, and those who help new brands launch.

But many founders of new brands don't fully understand PE's impact and aren't prepared for its impact. They're just learning the ropes of the franchise model and don't realize there is now a PE dynamic to figure out as well.

How can PE accelerate brand growth?

Private equity firms have a straightforward playbook for growing their franchise acquisitions, but putting it all into action is no simple task. Here's how it works: PE

WHAT PE BUYERS ARE LOOKING FOR IN FRANCHISES

- Strong unit level economics, operating margins ideally 15-20% or higher
- Sustained, proven, and growing customer demand
- Proven resilience across different markets
- Good return on investment for franchisees
- Differentiated product/service; not a fad
- Any issues must be fixable within PE's hold period
- Good franchisee validation
- Some scale achieved (depends on buyer how much scale they want to see before investing)
- Strong demand for new franchise licenses, especially from existing franchisees
- Great management teams

What should franchisees do if their brand is acquired by private equity?

First, recognize that if the brand has a high-quality operating model and is growing, it will eventually attract PE attention. While some founders want to hold out or pass the business onto their children, for many there comes a time when a private equity transaction makes sense. Franchisees should be prepared for that possibility.

Second, post-acquisition there will be a push to lift same store sales. Often this is via marketing investments, new product and service launches, and other growth initiatives. But you can also expect corporate to accelerate efforts to exit underperforming franchisees and transfer outlets to better operators.

Franchisees often go into business without an end game in mind. Hopefully, owner or management team transitions bring positive changes. But if you don't like the changes, or it's no longer a fit for other reasons, you need to prepare to make a good exit and move on to other adventures. The book talks through how to prepare properly, and things for founders and franchisees to think about when preparing for an ownership change.

Finally, it's important for franchisors to establish a franchise advisory council (FAC) early on and really listen to feedback. FACs

can help filter change requests, provide franchisee feedback on new product or service trials, and promote best practices in the system, providing continuity and institutional memory across multiple ownership changes.

Change is part of business. A well-functioning FAC-franchisee-corporate relationship increases enterprise value, whereas a poor relationship and communication dynamic does the opposite.

How can franchisors position their businesses to attract interest from private equity?

Private equity looks for a strong operating model and open space to add units. Any challenges need to be fixable in the short term.

The best way to attract PE investors is to build right in the first place and to remain laser-focused on improving unit level profitability. If franchisees can't make good returns, the business can't grow. PE

you're unlikely to attract a PE buyer. Some firms have gotten burned taking on turnarounds and there are case studies in the book with some of those stories.

Although the average PE hold time is six years, PE often hold franchise businesses, especially multi-brand platforms, for longer.

Although a dominant player, PE has only invested (as one example) in less than 20% of active U.S. brands. That means there's a very long tail of brands that could yet be investment targets, but most will remain too small or aren't attractive without a change in approach.

When has PE not been successful in franchising and what were the lessons?

In the early days when PE first entered franchising, many underestimated how difficult franchise turnarounds can be and were too aggressive with debt. Franchisees are independent

"It's better to start planning early and build what buyers covet"

pays for growth potential.

Some business owners think, "If I build it, PE will knock on my door." But in truth, PE is looking for very specific attributes in the businesses they acquire. And they kick tires on many concepts simply to learn about the marketplace. Sellers can waste time and get false hope having conversations that either lead nowhere or generate disappointing valuation feedback. It's better to start planning early and build what buyers covet. If you're a franchisor, this approach coincidentally also creates value for your franchisees, so it's a win-win situation. This is the focus of my consulting practice.

Are there any misconceptions about private equity related to their franchise investments?

Yes – there's no bank truck rolling up to fix your problems! If there are any major flaws in your model,

PE'S PLAYBOOK FOR FRANCHISE GROWTH

- Improve unit level profitability
 - Invest in support & growth accelerators
 - Back office and enabling tech
 - Improve same store sales
 - Upgrade/add corporate talent
 - Monitor and improve key performance metrics
 - Add new products & services
 - Enter new markets
 - Create shared service platforms
 - Reduce unit level costs
 - Pursue tuck-in acquisitions accretive to the platform value proposition
-



business owners, and it takes time to turn the ship and get franchisees on board with change. As PE investors gained experience in the franchise model, their due diligence also improved. They're now much better at avoiding overly risky franchise bets in the first place. On the flipside, this also means that stall-outs often can't get the strategic assistance they need – at least not from PE.

Today, most private equity missteps boil down to unit level profitability issues and the relationship between the management team and franchisees. If this relationship isn't well tended to, franchisees can lose their appetite for growth and their faith in the direction of the business. PE investors move fast and can be a bit clinical in their approach to things. Even when filtered through the management team, their blunt communication style and decision-making speed (often without franchisee input) can rub franchisees up the wrong way.

For example, new fees and supply chain strategies can prompt swift rebuttal from franchisees. The fall-out from franchisee dissatisfaction may not be immediately visible in business metrics but by the time it is, PE may have a turnaround on their hands!

Roark's Subway acquisition is a significant milestone in franchising. What can we expect from this change?

Roark is one of the most prolific users of whole business securitization – debt backed by franchisee royalties. Subway will take on as much as \$5 billion of debt post-acquisition and we can expect Roark to take out large dividends over the next few years funded by the initial and subsequent securitizations.

We can hope – but not expect – that Roark will also put money back into the business to fund remodels and improvements to the business. Subway is still a work in progress, but has an incredible brand to lean on.

We can expect a huge push on international growth to offset challenges in over-stored mature markets like the U.S.

Roark prefers a relatively low profile which will be impossible here. Together with the big push for remodels and likely closures still to come, we can expect ongoing public scrutiny.

How Roark handles franchisees around those closures will be critically important, not only to Roark's success with Subway, but also in terms of public opinion and the opinion of franchise regulators about private equity.

'Big money' is fully on display here. The sheer number of franchisees in the Subway system makes their voices impossible to ignore. It won't be about just getting the turnaround mechanically correct. Together with good management, Roark must also demonstrate excellence in change management and relationship building to right the ship and uncover new growth. It will be interesting to watch.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Big Money in Franchising is an essential read for anyone keen to scale their franchise business. Available from Amazon and all good bookstores, it has received rave reviews from across the sector, and is one of our top business books of the year.



SLIM CHICKENS



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- Entrepreneur Fastest-Growing Franchises
- Franchise Times Fast & Serious List #5 Smartest-Growing Brands
- QSR Top 50 Contenders for 2023



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- Excellent Branding

Southern hospitality goes global

Slim Chickens is planning for its hand-breaded chicken to take the world by storm with the power of its franchisees

Slim Chickens is seeing rapid growth in the quick service restaurant industry. The better-chicken brand, known for its southern comfort food and hand-breaded chicken tenders, is rapidly expanding across the U.S. and worldwide.

The franchise is on track to open 70 locations per year, with a 50% increase in store openings by 2025.

Slim Chickens attributes its widespread interest and loyal following to its commitment to quality, ability to adapt to external factors, and a high-touch executive team that stays in tune with its franchisees' bottom line.

INNOVATING IN THE INDUSTRY

The restaurant scene is one that continues to evolve. In response, Slim Chickens constantly innovates to stay up to date with the latest technology, real estate trends, and expectations of established multi-unit operators.

Currently, operators are seeking increased flexibility. In response, Slim Chickens has developed a new store format which reduces costs while



Franchise Overview

Slim Chickens

Year established: 2003

Number of franchised outlets: 265+

Locations of units:
U.S., U.K., Turkey

Minimum required capital: \$3,000,000+

Contact:

Jackie Lobdell, vice president of franchise development:
jackie@slimchickens.com, 630-300-4798

[linkedin.com/company/slim-chickens/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/slim-chickens/)



maintaining the brand's distinctive atmosphere. In turn, franchisees can accommodate smaller footprints without compromising on quality or customer experience.

While Slim Chickens seeks to embrace the new, it's also committed to remaining consistent in terms of its brand and reputation. It believes that customers should be greeted with mouthwatering food and a welcoming contemporary southern ambiance regardless of whether they're on the go or dining in.

GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS

Within the past six months, Slim Chickens has signed more than 50 new development deals, with 50+

new openings and 10 new territories, including Turkey, Nevada, and Wisconsin. It has also celebrated non-traditional openings at Istanbul Airport and the University of Arkansas Fort Smith, which have consequently yielded attractive returns for investors and continued to garner a following.

Currently, Slim Chickens has over 265 stores and more than 1,100 signed agreements in the pipeline. The franchise is also projecting to have secured an additional 80 development deals in key markets, including Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, Connecticut, Canada, Europe, the GCC, Asia, and beyond.

The franchise is looking to continue its strong trajectory of global expansion and, in turn, is inviting multi-unit operators to join their journey of growth and redefine the fast-casual and quick-service dining experience.



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KEY INSIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE SHOW 2024

With the International Franchise Association on board as a strategic partner, London's IFS was a record-breaking event

BY MOLLY RAYCRAFT

Around 11,000 people descended upon the London Excel Centre across two days in April 2024. They were there to visit the 250+ franchises exhibiting their latest investment opportunities as well as listen to more than 60 seminars which aimed to shed light on how to make a franchise business model successful from day one.

This is not the first year that the International Franchise Show has taken place, but it was by far the most significant. The backing of the International Franchise Association (IFA) has provided additional clout to the event, and as well as raising a few eyebrows from national organizations that have previously exclusively occupied the exhibitor scene, its credibility encouraged more than 50 global players to exhibit in the U.K.

For potential investors, particularly those who are hoping to purchase master or area development franchise agreements, the IFA's weight was beneficial in creating more choice and brand comparison opportunities. This was evident from where the crowds began to cluster on the day, and a notable favorite was clearly the QSR brands on offer – particularly those looking to capture new markets across Europe, South America, Africa, the Middle East, and beyond. However, more unique brand offerings also managed to galvanize a large volume of enquiries.

"It was a record for us in terms of people signing up for one of our upcoming discovery days," confirms Tim Slesinger, CEO at easyStorage – a franchise under the Easy group which specializes in smart storage solutions.



Meanwhile, Joel Bissitt, VFP at Infinity Business Growth Network, said footfall at the B2B stand was also heavy, with interest well and truly piqued. “Business signed at the show plus tons in the pipeline... it’s going to be a very busy few weeks,” he said after the show.

The event’s popularity has sung out loud and clear in support of franchising. Perhaps potential investors are not so perturbed by current economic turbulence if the brand is right.

Attendee demographics also ranged broadly, from those entering their first foray into entrepreneurship and looking to buy an individual location, all the way through to seasoned investors hoping to bring an already thriving brand to a new region around the world.

If anything, the diversity of IFS attendees reflected how drastically the franchise model can be flexed depending a brand’s goals and its network’s needs, which is advantageous for those looking for an investment opportunity that really fits their personal endeavors.

However, it also gives more reason to conduct due diligence into the legal set up of franchise agreements prior to signing as they’re not all the same and it could be very easy to land on in a contract that is simply unsuitable (something David W Oppenheim ran through during his seminar – page 52).

Regardless, meeting these brands in-person was the first step into really vetting those that are currently expanding into the world’s markets – and we’re likely to see this continue as an increasing number of brands set their sights on



global domination.

This was a sentiment shared by event organizer Christian Yandell, CEO of Business Show, who has already booked up the majority of stands for next year’s event, and is hoping for future backing from the International Franchise Association.

“Our 2024 event was our biggest show to date with a record-breaking number of attendees to celebrate our 15th edition,” he says. “We were so happy to see how many of our visitors were

truly inspired and ready to explore the multitude of opportunities at the show. We are also incredibly proud to have the support of The International Franchise Association and we’re looking forward to seeing where this partnership takes us in the future.”

GATEWAY INTO EUROPE

The global franchise market is expected to be valued at \$175955 million by 2027 – a 9.73% CAGR on the market’s 2021 value, according to forecasting by Precision Milestone Reports.

North America, the founding continent of franchising, is the front runner in this expansion, with the United States, Canada, and Mexico firmly married to franchise business models.

However, many of the brands operating in this territory, such as 7-Eleven, Marriott International, and Baskin Robbins, have already firmly rooted themselves in the region. Now, for stakeholders, it’s time to look at further establishing the empire overseas, and often Europe is the first port of call.

The U.K. – a country that shares the same language and cultural parallels with North America – can be seen as the starting point for entering Europe, as well as a route to Commonwealth countries around the world – despite Brexit implications. It’s this interest that has no doubt encouraged the International Franchise Show to coax investors to British shores, hoping that a wider expanse lays ahead.

“The U.K. is often one of the first international markets that a U.S. franchise brand will expand to,” confirmed

QSRS MASTER FRANCHISES

Quick service restaurants are a common choice for investors, and there are numerous brands currently looking to sign regional franchise agreements with the right entrepreneurs. These include:

- Aboutea
- Bagelstein
- Black Sheep Coffee
- Bombay Bites
- Burger & Sauce
- Burger Boi
- Café Barbera 1870
- Caprinos Pizza
- Chaiwala of London
- CHEAT DAZE & BRGR LAB
- Ci Gusta
- Fireaway Pizza
- Fresh Post
- Heavenly Desserts
- iLunch
- KOKODOO
- Morley’s Chicken
- Oodles
- Scooperb
- The Fat Pizza
- The Great Greek Mediterranean
- The Pantry
- Treatz Desserts
- Wienerschitzel
- Zócalo



Matthew Haller, President and CEO at the International Franchise Association.

“We’re supporting those franchise brands with a vision to take the leap from the U.S. and Canada into the U.K. and beyond – really putting the I in IFA. And we were also at the show for franchisors from the U.K. and Europe interested in taking the leap to the United States.”

Current research indicates that food, hotels, children’s services, and consumer experiences are proving the most transferrable when moving into new markets, and the IFS aimed to reflect this in the opportunities it presented to potential investors. This was made clear by the dedicated children’s services pavilion, which showcased established behemoths such as 2inspire, Engino, and The Creation Station, each looking to tighten their market grasps further.

“This year at IFS, U.S.-based exhibitors ranged from hospitality and food brands to health and beauty franchises,” added Haller. “The children’s services sector is always well represented at this expo, and the 2024 show was no exception – it’s clearly a strong market in the U.K.”

However, despite the evident U.K. and U.S. parallels that qualify the country as a potential ‘gateway to Europe’ there are plenty of examples of why potential investors must conduct a hefty amount of due diligence before signing a franchise agreement, especially one that requires scaling. Even some the most reputable and beloved brands have previously overlooked market nuances to make their grand entrance into Europe an epic fail.

There’s a clear risk here. And event organizers were wary to provide enough responsible handholding before thrusting visitors in front of the latest big brand opportunities.

Kevin Hein, partner and co-chair of the franchising and licence sector group at Akerman LLP was one such voice of caution. He aimed to educate current franchise owners, brand managers, and international development managers about the processes, best practices, and key considerations that come with launching and establishing a U.K. brand in the buzzing U.S. market.

“The U.S. represents a vibrant market for expanding brands and so I discussed some of the opportunities and challenges of taking a U.K. brand to the U.S. market, in particular the very different regulatory environment.”

Hein touched on a vital point; it’s not just U.S. brands who are making moves into U.K. markets, but vice versa. Beyond this, the show also showed there was a significant appetite for cultural exchanges in other regions.

CHILDREN’S SERVICES MASTER FRANCHISES

- 2inspire
- Baby College
- Daisy First Aid
- Drama Kids
- Engino
- Mind Marvels
- Swimtime
- Tappy Toes
- The Creation Station
- We Do Play
- XplorerGroup – Computer Xplorers

“What a fantastic show to attend. Not seen a franchise show that busy for 20 or more years. Hope the energy and enthusiasm from the show continues into a load of new franchisees”

Martin Hawthorne, Franchise Business Development, Co-Op

KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT: FRANCHISING IN THE U.S. "CAN BE A DREAM OR A NIGHTMARE"

Taking your franchise international requires a solid plan. David W. Oppenheim, shareholder at Greenberg Traurig, LLP, is the legal force behind some of the biggest brand's entries into new markets. He outlines numerous franchise agreement models out there, but ultimately says his firm's preferred method is area development agreements.

The models he outlined were:

- Area development agreements
- Master franchise agreements
- Area representative agreements
- Unit franchise agreements
- Joint ventures
- Partnerships
- Company operations

South Korean franchise group J S Holdings Group Ltd – owner of restaurant chain YORI – was exhibiting its self-service photobooth business Life4Cuts. The K-Pop-esque brand is rapidly expanding across Europe – having already opened booths in the U.K., it's looking for more investors and is in the process of signing agreements in new markets, such as France.

Irish food and beverage franchise, The Pantry, is also on the hunt for investors looking to take the successful café chain to the U.K. – following on from the gateway rhetoric. However, the investment opportunity here has enticed several investors in other markets such as the Middle East – a region that was also very much present at the event with brands including beauty business, N.Bar.

WHY IS THE IFA SIGNIFICANT FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS?

In 1960, American entrepreneur and founder of Dunkin' Donuts established the International Franchise Association. At the time, it focused on the interests of U.S. businesses, particularly those looking to expand worldwide. While this global

focus hasn't changed, the organization has evolved to become more inclusive of businesses outside of the states.

"Now, the organization has grown into an unstoppable global resource that advocates for and protects our members, their businesses, and the people they service around the world," said Matthew Haller.

This year was the first year the IFA was the exclusive title sponsor of the International Franchise Show. This move, according to Haller, was intended to further advance the future of franchising globally.

However, the sponsorship has raised questions within the franchising community. What will this mean for various markets? Are we likely to see big hitters being ushered through to new markets more regularly? Could there be greater weight put behind calls for regulatory changes in regions outside North America?

"As the world's oldest and largest association representing franchising, the IFA is in the unique position to be the objective source of information for franchising at large, dedicated to helping the public, policy makers, and the entire franchising community with the resources and education they need to expand and strengthen franchising," said Haller.

It's too early to tell what impact that the IFA's greater involvement globally will have on the industry, but investors will be watching this space as the organization's influence continues to manifest further afield.

LEADING NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY

Taking the helm of national or global operations is the ultimate leadership test, especially when managing staff



across various time zones, cultures, and locations. Tom Krouse, CEO at Donatos Pizzeria, doubled down on the importance of this for those looking to invest in multiple locations.

"Leaders must learn how to focus their teams on the most critical strategic issues to ensure growth," he advised. "Learning how to balance passion with the science of strategy is critical."

The CEO emphasized the need to combine soft skills with strategic tools designed to improve the chances of success for first time business owners, while outlining risk assessment, modelling, capitalization, and processes for scaling.

"I hope visitors took away the importance of brand strategy, collaboration, humility, and perseverance as leadership characteristics required for national and global excellence," he said.

KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT: WHAT TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE COMMITTING TO GLOBAL GIANTS

Martin Hancock, managing partner at World Franchise Associates has worked with numerous international franchises in areas such as Malaysia and Dubai. He has seen first-hand what makes the best franchise partnerships as well as the realities of launching. He advised if you're looking to bring an international brand to a new market (which will usually require you to open multiple locations) to ask yourself:

- Are you willing to put in the hard work?
- Are you willing to follow the franchise system?
- Are you likely to be successful in managing a team?
- Can you afford the investment (an important consideration)?
- Are you willing to do some of the menial tasks?
- Will you enjoy running the business?



KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT: CAPACITY TO CONDENSE

There are often unseen efficiencies to be found in businesses that have swollen to a global size. Here are several reasons why you might want to look at cutting or consolidating your suppliers, according to ERA Group's Simon Drake: These include:

- Lessening suppliers to manage, which creates time costs
- Reducing the number of transactions to reconcile
- Positioning your business as a better client by channelling more money into (fewer) brands without additional cost
- Actively reducing carbon footprint by consolidating deliveries
- Giving your business more leverage with suppliers.

ZOR TO ZOR

Brands looking to partner with existing franchise businesses to expand further:

- Cheat Daze & BRGR Lab
- Regal Booths
- Simply Business Club
- The Creation Station
- Wienerschnitzel
- Wix.com

“Great wrap-up to day one. Non-stop meetings, sound lead generation, meeting friends, and franchisees. Well done the International Franchise Show in London, what a show.”

Helen Doron Educational Group

AVOIDING THE DISTRACTION OF BRIGHT LIGHT BRANDS

Businesses with established world domination status (i.e. the McDonald's of this world) may seem like a sure win, but it's crucial to avoid being blinded by the brand. Instead, investors need to dig deep beneath the surface to really ascertain whether this opportunity is best suited to what they stand for and what they want to achieve. Undertaking such thorough research on these global giants was a common theme throughout the show.

“We took show visitors back to basics – how they should begin the process of assessing a business opportunity,” confirmed Jesse Keyser, CEO at Keyser Enterprises, who ran one of the education seminars.

“By providing a proven concept, brand recognition, and business support, purchasing a franchise eliminates the enormous burden of launching a business from scratch for many people. So, our session

concentrated on the critical questions and tangible research needed to make the best franchise decision for each individual. What industry, brand and structure would best fit their personal business ownership vision?”

However, the show was also conscientious in outlining the assessment's flipside: who are these international brands looking for? And how can investors ensure they're the right person to reassuringly introduce the franchise into new markets?

It's something that Martin Hancock, Managing Partner at World Franchise Associates, dedicated his education seminar to on both show days.

“Those aspiring franchisees and entrepreneurs took away with them an in-depth understanding of the key attributes and qualifications that top U.S. franchise brands look for in international franchisee candidates,” he said. “Financial requirements, business experience, and market understanding stood out as essentials, giving visitors plenty of food for thought.”

The celebrity franchise phenomenon

Franchising has always offered huge opportunities for collaboration, but some partnerships can open a star-studded path to success for all parties involved



Jon Taffer, found of Taffer's Tavern

Drawn by the opportunity to create a legacy as well as another lucrative string to their bow, celebrities have found a new stage on which to shine – franchising. But what advantages does star power really bring to brands and businesses, and how can franchising serve the needs of those already in the public eye? We talk to brands who have teamed up with famous faces to find out what impact the partnerships have for all parties.

Why celebrities choose franchising

While talent and a dash of business acumen may propel the

lucky ones into the limelight of fame and fortune, the appeal of franchising resides in its promise of enduring financial stability and entrepreneurial satisfaction, qualities often elusive in the volatile world of showbiz.

Franchising presents celebrities with an opportunity to broaden their revenue streams beyond their main pursuits in sport and entertainment, ensuring long-term security and fostering additional sources of income.

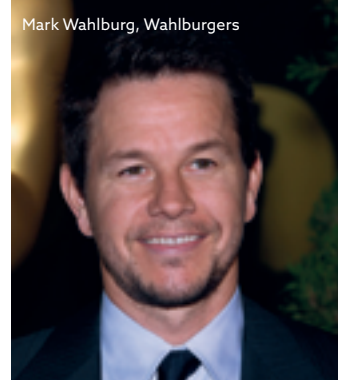
In fact, franchising appeals to celebrities for the same reasons as many others with capital to invest. Focusing an entire career on performance doesn't necessarily teach real world

business skills, but franchising provides a ready-made business model along with comprehensive support, particularly appealing to those who may lack experience in running a business but keen to explore entrepreneurship.

In other instances, it's precisely their expertise and business acumen that catapult individuals into elite celebrity status. Take Jon Taffer, for example. His renowned reputation across the entertainment and hospitality sectors stems from years spent honing and disseminating his expertise in the art of crafting successful bars. His hit television show, *Bar Rescue*, has solidified his position as one of the most



Shaq O'Neal,
Big Chicken
founder



Mark Wahlburg, Wahlburgers

popular and prominent figures in the culinary world. With his recognizable and trustworthy presence, Taffer now lends credibility to his franchise venture, Taffer's Tavern, leading to trust from both consumers and investors alike.

"Taffer's Tavern is an ascending brand," said Jon Taffer. "We're growing, we're energetic, we're promotionally dynamic. But there's a big difference between our ascending brand and other ascending brands. You see, we're a national brand before we even started. We have a fan base. We create curiosity. We're an ascending brand that has the power of a strong existing brand that gives us a competitive advantage. We're not spending money to build the brand. We're spending money to build traffic."

Leading lights in franchising

When it comes to celebrity franchise owners, not many could rival Shaquille O'Neal in terms of scale and impact. The world-famous basketball player and founder of Big Chicken – the rapidly-expanding sandwich franchise concept – also owns nine Papa John's, 17 Auntie Anne's, 27 Krispy Kreme locations as well as an endorsement deal with Papa John's worth \$10 million. And Shaq is a well-seasoned investor. Previously, he owned 155 Five Guys restaurants which he bought for \$100 million and sold on in 2016, capitalizing on their increased value. In an interview with Wall Street Journal, Shaq revealed what he found so attractive in franchising. "It's just partnering up with another

reliable, excellent brand. Being in business with people, and just owning stuff."

But Shaq's not the only entrepreneurial basketball star with business nous. Magic Johnson owns over 100 franchise units across several chains, including Starbucks (his investment group owns over 150 locations, the most operated by any Starbucks franchisee) and T.G.I. Fridays. In 2016 he sold off his 30 Jamba locations – a healthy juice franchise also loved and

"We're a national brand before we even started. We have a fan base. We create curiosity"

endorsed by tennis legend and icon Venus Williams, who owns multiple locations in the Washington area.

Franchising spans all backgrounds and sectors, and the same is true for its celebrity investors. Actor Mark Wahlberg, along with two of his eight siblings, singer and producer Donnie and chef Paul, owns franchise network Wahlburgers, with more than 90 restaurants across the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The showbiz brothers shrewdly leveraged their brand's success with a popular reality TV show which aired for 10 seasons, flipping the famous Boston family's burger joint straight into the homes of millions of fans.

Meanwhile multiplatinum artist Chris Brown quietly expanded his business empire with investments in 14 Burger King franchise locations, while Grammy award-winner Megan Thee Stallion made a bigger splash when she recently signed a franchise deal with Popeyes, launching her first location in Louisiana along with her very own hot sauce and co-branded merch, an endorsement that's significantly enhanced the franchise's visibility and credibility along with the rapper's.

By aligning themselves with well-known personalities, franchise brands benefit by attracting publicity and new customers, driving sales, and strengthening their market position, but the deal breaks two ways – franchising also offers a new platform for celebs to engage with fans and build deeper connections.



Megan Thee Stallion,
Popeyes franchisee



Venus Williams,
Jamba investor

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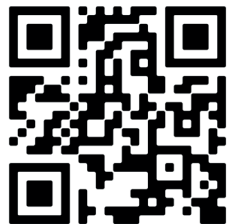
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“Just like when dropping a pebble into water creates rings, celebrities bring the same impact to a brand”

The power of personal endorsement

Celebrity endorsement works best when it comes from a heartfelt and genuine place. Savvy consumers can spot a sell out a mile off, and disingenuous marketing has been known to result in the loss of fans and followers. Much better, therefore, to partner with a star who has a genuine love for the product or service you provide.

Robyn Dixon, star of Bravo Network’s *Real Housewives of Potomac*, recently signed a franchise deal for Glo30, a doctor-led, subscription-based skincare studio, to expand the brand in her home state of Maryland. As an avid personal consumer and Glo30’s former publicist, she was in a good position to do so. “After being a member for more than 10 years, I’ve seen firsthand how the treatments have outlasted skincare trends and brought life-changing results,” Dixon explained. “As soon as I heard the brand was franchising, I jumped at the chance to expand the Glo30 franchise, starting in Columbia. Glo30’s hyper-focused, highly effective services are the best in the industry, and I didn’t want to miss the opportunity to invest early.”

Founder Dr. Arleen Lamba

expressed her excitement about the reality star’s new role as a Glo30 franchisee. “Having Robyn, who has been a member and huge advocate for over a decade, partner with us to grow throughout Maryland is meaningful,” said Dr. Lamba. “It speaks volumes to the connection we’ve fostered with our members and communities when members like Robyn want to take part in our growth across the country.” The franchise opening will be documented on an upcoming season of *Real Housewives* – a storyline that’s likely to impact franchising as positively as Glo30. “It will definitely be something that we’ll hopefully see develop and grow and be inspiring for people to want to be franchise owners or business owners as well,” said Dixon.

Creating a legacy

“Just like when dropping a pebble into a pool creates rings, celebrities bring the same impact to a brand,” says Dan Rowe, founder of global franchising leader Fransmart, which specializes in developing growing and emerging brands, including Glo30. “In busy social feeds, celebrities make people stop to focus on what they are talking about. A celebrity endorsement brings new awareness, amplifies

existing awareness and adds an additional degree of credibility. This technique has been used forever for a reason – it works.”

During Dan’s experience in working with celebrities in franchising over the years, he’s noticed something special about them. “They’re driven by a deep desire to leave a positive mark on the world and uplift others,” he remarked. “Some express this through food, others help folks to build wealth or start their own businesses, nurturing a diverse community of business leaders. Take Fabio Viviani from JARS, for instance. He’s about as down-to-earth as they come, genuinely dedicated to spreading happiness through food and innovation. He saw franchising as a way in which to bring that joy to even more people.

“Another great example, and one of my favorite stories, is how Pitbull and I met and partnered up to build Cilantro Taco Grill. He came to me fired up about the lack of Latino-owned chains, eager to use his star power for good. By teaming up with Cilantro and Fransmart, Armando Perez (Pitbull) is turning his dream of making a difference into reality. It’s a powerful reminder of how franchising can truly impact communities in so many ways.”

In an industry that more often

Michael McDowell,
Famous Toastery



KSI and Logan Paul,
aka The Sidemen, Sides



sees non-Latinos getting wealthy from owning or leading franchise brands serving Latin food, Cilantro Taco Grill is breaking barriers by supporting Latino workers. It's one of the only Mexican food franchises owned by Mexicans and has reached massive success while supporting employees in becoming franchise owners themselves. The intended long-term impact on Mexican communities is significant – the brand plans to open 1000 locations over the next 10 years.

By providing marketing support, Perez is doing much more than just putting his face on the front of the franchise. He is a true advocate,

lending his voice, star power, and talent to grow the franchise across the world. This includes promoting the brand and new openings on his social media channels and at concerts, partnering with founder and fellow Latino Temoc Morfin on media appearances, and even connecting Cilantro with key industry players interested in the brand.

Perez speaks passionately of his own “American dream” accomplishments and the responsibility he feels to help others achieve theirs. In both Temoc and Cilantro, he feels a kindred spirit. “What really made

“Armando Perez is doing much more than just putting his face on the front of the franchise”

me fall in love with the opportunity and with them as human beings is the story,” said Perez. “If we relate to each other’s stories, then that means we will always find ways to create solutions in the business.”

Another brand benefitting from having a genuine famous fan is Famous Toastery, a North Carolina-based brunch restaurant chain enjoying national exposure thanks to its partnership with NASCAR driver Michael McDowell. “Michael and his family have been avid fans and loyal guests of Famous Toastery for nearly a decade, said president Mike Sebazco. “As discussions of a partnership came about organically, it was only fitting that we would formalize an agreement. Michael’s synergies with Famous Toastery range from being a pillar in the community to sharing values in common, as well as a mutual desire to grow our brands.

The partnership evolved from appearances and social media to custom race-day gear and impactful messaging showcased in marketing campaigns focused on McDowell.

“Michael serves as a respected ambassador and voice in the NASCAR world – allowing Famous Toastery to be part of

conversations and communities which we may not have been involved in prior to the partnership,” continued Sebazco. We are now able to speak to diversified outlets including, but not limited to, NASCAR and sports-centric distributors. Michael races nationwide and has an avid following of fans across the U.S., allowing Famous Toastery to grow outside of its regional roots. McDowell’s partnership also led to Famous Toastery hosting the Famous Toastery Bowl in December 2023 alongside ESPN, again landing Famous Toastery on the national stage.”

Michael McDowell isn’t the only racing driver focused on franchising. NASCAR champion Joey Logano, renowned for his outstanding career achievements, recently teamed up with The Good Feet Store, significantly elevating the brand’s visibility and credibility. Logano’s sincere endorsement, boosted by his personal experience of the product’s benefits, serves as a compelling marketing asset, bolstering the brand’s reputation as leading arch support specialists, and resonating strongly with customers through his authenticity.

Eric Kaplan, the owner of

Joey Logano, The
Good Feet Store





multiple Good Feet Store locations, underscores Logano's sincere endorsement of the product, derived from his personal experience of its benefits. This authenticity resonates strongly with customers. QUOTE TO ADD

New wave of influencers

Ever since the rise of YouTube and social media, brands have jostled to meet consumers where they're at – on their mobile devices. The prospect of 'going viral' is greatly enhanced if you have an endorsement from an influencer with millions of followers.

Britain's most famous YouTube collective, the Sidemen, regularly attract over 10 million views from a loyal and dedicated Gen Z audience each week. In 2022, members KSI and Logan Paul branched off to launch Prime Hydration, a sports drink that became a sensational sell-out hit. Now the group has targeted the food industry with a franchised restaurant chain, Sides.

"The Sidemen are probably the biggest YouTube content creator groups in Europe, said Faisal Butt, CEO at Skyview Brands Group. "Our vision was to create a brand that taps not only into the Sidemen's audience, but also to reach a wider customer base. We've collaborated to put together an inviting concept and a fantastic menu, while the Sidemen's ability to reach large audiences quickly via their social media enables the brand to communicate directly to



Neil Hershman and Danny Duncan

its audience in an unparalleled way, telling them about new store openings and product launches, and therefore helping to build loyalty."

According to Faisal, landlords now actively seek out Sides due to the increased footfall and dwell time the social media stars bring to an area. The ability to create audiences and drive traffic is an attractive proposition for potential franchisees, but it can occasionally have downsides too – at a recent UK store opening the police and local council banned the Sidemen's presence, due to concerns that more than 10,000 people were planning on coming to visit them at the store.

"It's difficult to measure the total impact, but you can see the mass attraction and demand for expansion that the Sidemen create," continued Faisal. "They are focused on building brands and intellectual property above brand deals. It's a creator economy currently and we see this as the future for franchising."

Another YouTuber, comedian Danny Duncan who's amassed over 1.5 billion views on the platform and generated millions in merchandise sales, invested in New York City's leading self-serve frozen yogurt shop, 16 Handles, after being particularly impressed as a customer in the Manhattan store. The 30+ unit franchise brand was purchased by New York entrepreneur Neil Hershman in 2022, with plans to grow beyond

MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN: WHY FRANCHISING LURES IN STARS

- **Increased potential for business success.** By investing in a franchise, celebrities can leverage existing brand success and customer loyalty to drive their own business ventures with less risk.
- **Capitalize on their own brand.** Franchising offers celebrities a chance to capitalize on their personal brand and popularity. With a built-in fan base, celebrities can attract customers to their franchise locations, creating a buzz and driving foot traffic. This not only translates into increased sales but also provides an opportunity for celebrities to engage with their fans in a different capacity, fostering deeper connections and supporting communities.
- **Turn-key business model.** Franchising provides celebrities with a turnkey business model that comes with comprehensive support and training. This is particularly appealing for those who may not have prior experience in running a business. Franchise systems offer operational guidelines, marketing support, and ongoing assistance, allowing celebrities to focus on their strengths while leaning on the expertise of the franchisor.
- **Long-term financial stability.** Franchising offers celebrities a chance for long-term financial success. Unlike endorsement deals or acting roles that may have a limited lifespan, a well-run franchise can generate steady revenue for years to come as well as grow into a valuable asset. This financial stability can provide celebrities with the security and freedom to pursue other passions or philanthropic endeavors.

the Tri-State area through an aggressive franchise push across the East Coast. Co-owner Danny serves as the brand's Chief Creative Officer and has featured 16 Handles in a number of his vlogs, including visiting stores, building a 16 Handles Froyo truck, and sharing with his audience his behind-the-scenes journey. His involvement has helped to attract a new consumer base of young males and aided franchise expansion over five states.

"We have a lot of big projects on the horizon featuring Danny and his network of celebrity Youtubers," said Hershman. "We plan to launch collaborative flavors, unique experiences, and engageable social media content over the coming months including Danny and his vast network of online influencers."

Utilizing franchisee power to aid recruitment and retainment

Franchisees can be the best form of advertisement for potential franchisees, and when they work together, can help to create a healthy system-wide culture

WORDS BY RAGHAV PATEL

In a successful and healthy franchise system, franchisees are the best form of advertisement of a brand's offering. While franchisors tinker with operational manuals and pump out fresh marketing material, franchisees are on the ground running the wider business and bringing in the revenue.

It's often why many franchisee candidates want to meet existing franchisees to get an understanding of life after signing on the dotted line, and why many brands now pro-actively serve up franchisees at trade shows and events to espouse the benefits of joining their brand.

Regular interaction between franchisees also

promotes a healthy, system-wide culture. Regular interaction helps to break down barriers and most importantly, share best practice. It gives existing franchisees little reason to look elsewhere, as they are being given opportunities to continue learning within the brand as well becoming a part of a community.

The ideal franchisee can be seen as an extension of the sales team. Their enthusiasm, combined with the quality of their location(s) can be what turns a potential candidate, into a franchisee. This exciting method of having franchisees assist

other franchisees is likely to become an export from the U.S.A. to global and domestic franchise systems around the world.

How are franchisee ambassadors identified?

The most important job of a franchisee is to turn a profit in their franchise. Franchisees who can demonstrate a consistently high level of financial performance will always be noticed by the franchisor, and efforts will always be made to keep those franchisees. The source of this success is important to understand, as certain locations lend themselves to stronger performance due to higher footfall or the profile of customer in that location.

Husband and wife duo, Steve and Andrea Peterson own multiple Christian Brothers Automotive locations across Colorado.

"I think they look at performance, they don't want underperformers in these roles. They're looking



for owners that do a good job in the businesses that they're responsible for, so they can replicate that operational mindset to others," said Steve.

"The other, intangible quality they're looking for is leadership ability. You have to convince these people, you can't coerce these people into doing things a certain way."

If it's down to a franchisee's commitment to perfecting operations, motivating staff and increasing profitability at every turn, franchisors will seek to understand what is driving this success in attempt to replicate it across the network.

Enthusiasm

It's entirely possible to have franchisees with no emotional bond to the brand who still achieve strong profits, but the best franchisees are deeply tied into the system by virtue of their love for it. They believe strongly in the brand's mission, what they do on a daily basis, and it is clearly visible to others.

"It's about looking for that particular person who has a passion for service, and who really wants to help the franchisees grow and develop their business," said Brian Tietz, vice president of franchise support at Lift Brands.

"Owners have a great

"I think they look at performance, they don't want underperformers in these roles. They're looking for owners that do a good job in the businesses that they're responsible for, so they can replicate that operational mindset to others"

perspective on how to do that right, especially some of our franchise business coaches, who are some of our top owners that have been in the system."

These are the types of franchisees that franchisors aim to take with them to conferences and record marketing material with. They need to be amiable and be able to convince others of their ideas.

"They want folks who are upbeat, friendly, who are carrying themselves in a way that's going to represent the brand well," said Andrea.

"You don't want someone with an incredibly strong ego who is not going to draw others towards them."

Lift Brands makes use of business coaches, but they're not all franchisees. Having coaches from different backgrounds allows for a wider breadth of practice to be covered.

"What's interesting with our coaches is that we've got a little bit of a combination effect. That means that we've got some coaches who are owners and we have some coaches who are actually managers in the system as well," said Tietz.

as one of the biggest advantages of franchising, especially for those who have left behind a conventional salaried role.

"We all know that we all succeed when we all do well. Particularly in Colorado, Steve and I got involved right away with the other owners," said Andrea.

"If we teach people to do it the right way, and to support each other in the right way, that's a win-win for everyone."

Franchisee-franchisor relationships are essential to maintain and keep healthy, but forming bonds amongst franchisees can create a wider and stronger support network. During the recruitment process, candidates are likely to meet and shadow existing franchisees to get an understanding of the brand and business. Continuing those relationships after the candidate has signed can drive future success and revenue.

The best brands utilize the top-performing franchisees and put them forward for awards and honors. The annual IFA Convention in Phoenix, Arizona in February proved this, with numerous franchisees being presented with awards during the course of the convention. This invariably serves as inspiration to owners across the franchise network, many of whom will desire the same level of recognition.

Best practice

Every franchise thrives on best practice. Operations are reduced to their most efficient size and process, and the operations manual is often the guide by which many franchisees run their locations. That said, there are often small improvements that individual franchisees can make which help them stand over their peers.

Granular improvements in customer experience and service can drive

The best franchisees foster a healthy system-wide culture

People choose to go into the world of franchising for a variety of reasons; but working for yourself but not by yourself is often cited



revenue and interaction, something which could be replicated with other franchisees. Franchisees may even compete against one another to see who can find the most efficiencies in a healthy manner.

“There’s always a friendly competition within our ownership group, our franchisees, and I think that’s how we harvest best practice,” said Tietz.

“The reason being is because there are so many good best practices, so we work collaboratively as much as we can.”

This creates a flatter system, in which franchisees can look to each other for support, as well as to the franchisor. While franchisors are expected to invest in their franchisee support systems and cannot offset their responsibility to franchisee ambassadors, creating a self-reliant franchise system is inherently more resilient. When once-in-a-lifetime events like the COVID-19 pandemic strike, well-knitted systems can share information to relieve pressure.

“We are competitive. I think the most successful owners are competitive, because you allow the performance of other franchisees to drive you to higher levels,” said Steve. “I think that is important, it was for us then and I think it’s important for potential franchisees today.”

How this aids recruitment

Many potential franchise candidates are first-timers. The majority of franchise systems are relatively small and don’t solely target multi-brand and multi-unit operators because they tend to opt for steadier franchisees.

“With potential owners they [the franchisor] do weekly validation calls, where they will invite anybody who is interested in the Christian Brothers opportunity to jump on a Zoom call. I happened to be on one with another owner last week,” said Steve.

Attracting those candidates who are considering owning their own business, or want to leave a previous corporate life behind, can be done effectively with effective peer-to-peer support. Existing franchisees should serve as an example of what is possible to achieve with the brand.

Why isn’t every brand doing this?

It seems a no-brainer to utilize the wealth of knowledge that franchisees have at hand to support fledgling or failing franchisees.

“In organizations, you run into the idea of mentorship. And it’s such a great programme. But then getting it going and getting people to actually do it, somebody’s got to do the work,” said Andrea.

“If there are franchise organizations that aren’t doing it, they’ve probably run up against the fact that they don’t have the right people to step up and do it.”

For global brands, this American method of stitching a franchise system together with the intention of sharing best practice should be the standard by which they operate. As long as the brand has willing and enthusiastic franchisees at its disposal, and is willing to cover costs, there is no reason why it shouldn’t run a franchise ambassador program.

If a franchise owner in Colorado can learn from another owner in New York, there may be even more learnings to be made in locations abroad. Sharing best practice and creating a healthy, competitive environment is most efficient and profitable way for a franchise system to arrange itself, no matter where it is in the world.

“Franchisee-franchisor relationships are essential to maintain and keep healthy, but forming bonds amongst franchisees can create a wider and stronger support network”



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Navigating through uncertainty

Franchises often seem to sail through turbulent storms, but what's the secret to their resilience? We put the question over to industry leaders

In an era defined by unprecedented uncertainty, the need for businesses to cultivate resilience against a myriad of threats has never been more pressing. From the insidious menace of cyber attacks to the capricious whims of economic downturns, environmental catastrophes and global pandemics, the landscape of risk to businesses is vast and varied. Add to this the spectre of war, along with disruptive upheavals wrought by emerging competitors, and the need for organizations to fortify themselves against future shocks is underscored in red.

The ability to anticipate, adapt, and withstand adversities in a dynamic and unpredictable landscape is paramount if franchises are to thrive. Resilience has emerged as a cornerstone of organizational survival and success, with the most successful businesses being those that have not merely weathered storms, but thrived in the face of turbulence. You don't have to delve too deep into the franchising sector to find shining examples of resilience in action. Drawing from battle-tested wisdom and insights of a cross-section of franchise leaders, we explore the strategies, principles and philosophies that underpin successful brands, from robust crisis communications to entrepreneurial acumen and foresight.

Learn from experience

Ray Titus, founder and CEO of United Franchise Group, has been through it all – pandemic, wars, recession and every crisis in between – and come out stronger the other side. “Good times are always the best time to prepare

for the worst,” is his advice, a lesson he's learned through decades of experience. With over 1600 franchisees in more than 60 countries business is booming, but in 2008 the worldwide financial crisis delivered a hard knock to Signarama, one of UFG's flagship brands. The recession of 2008/2009 was the worst in our 38 years of business,” said Ray. “It seemed like it was never going to get back to normal times. I learned so much during that period.” Signarama's eventual bounce-back was testament to its ability to divert strategy and respond quickly to opportunities presented, but it required proactive teamwork and agile leadership.

“We focused on working with the companies that were willing

“The biggest key is to save money when times are good”

to spend money,” Titus explained. “They are easy to spot on billboards and TV commercials. We looked for the ‘silver linings’ and promoted the success stories to our team to boost morale and we facilitated any good ideas out to the system. And, importantly, we helped our key customers through it all, so they would remember and stay with us.”

The crisis shaped the franchise's approach to risk management and contingency planning, which has further evolved since experiencing major crises like the pandemic. “The biggest key is to save money when times are good,” continued Titus. “We have a strong saving plan each year and implemented Profit First from Mike Michalowicz. The answer is to work with and train

owners to be prepared for down times. We must lead by example, spend our resources wisely and save for bad times. We never know what's next, but we need to constantly question today and prepare the best we can for tomorrow.”

For Titus, the secret to surviving curveballs and thriving in a volatile business world hinges on both market need and open-minded leadership. “Have a great business that people need and listen to the franchise owners, he advises. You must always be brand building and looking at ways to connect with the owners and if you make a mistake, admit it and own it, then correct it and move forward.”





Build franchisee resilience

There are many proven business strategies to build resilience for future security, but franchising has a distinct advantage – its unique model. “Franchisors should be encouraging their franchisees to follow their own proven systems, as they’ve often spent years perfecting operational processes, business planning, sales and marketing tactics, staff training and development, customer service levels, sharing best practice between franchisees and embracing innovation,” advised Julie Wagstaff, MD of ActionCOACH UK, the world’s number one business coaching franchise.

But while they should take advantage of all the support on offer from their franchisor, franchisees must also be held accountable for the success of their own business. “Franchisors should be encouraging their franchisees

to adopt a strategic mindset, to keep their finger on the pulse of local markets, and to focus on core areas to build a resilient business,” she continues. “This includes regularly reviewing financials, operations and market trends and managing cash flow carefully. Using forecasting tools and keeping cash reserves for unforeseen expenses is critical to any business’s ability to withstand shocks.”

Julie also urges franchisees to network with other business owners and professionals outside the franchise network. “While sharing best practice within your network of fellow franchisees is fantastic, new collaborations can open more channels and opportunities for growth and stability,” she advises.

Avoid reputational damage

While franchising systems provide many advantages, there’s one obvious risk for a franchisor that other businesses don’t have to deal with – its network of franchisees. “The most common crises I’ve seen resulting from the actions of a franchisee is where they manage to hide things going wrong operationally and financially in the business rather than asking for support in the early days of difficulties,” explains crisis communications specialist

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SURVIVING RECESSION

As CEO, Ray Titus navigated Signarama through 2008’s devastating global financial crisis. He shares his takeaways from surviving this difficult patch:

- 1 Stay positive with everyone, even when times are terribly negative.
- 2 Get back to basics and what made you successful. Sales are the key.
- 3 Focus on cutting unnecessary spending – every little bit helps.
- 4 Calm down and don’t rush into making a bad decision.
- 5 Review your assets. Consider borrowing against them, or selling some.
- 6 Promote the success stories.
- 7 Get face to face with all your customers and leads.
- 8 Speed often wins. Make incisive decisions.
- 9 Review all expenses weekly and negotiate everything.
- 10 Work closely with your CFO. We met every day!

CASE STUDY

APEX LEADERSHIP COMPANY

“How we tripled our revenue growth after COVID hit us hard” Jamie Krasnov, CEO

When I took over Apex Leadership Company in 2021, the brand was still reeling from the impact of the pandemic which had shut down in-person learning and fundraising activities in schools, taking its toll on our franchisees.

The first strategy was to revitalize Apex's executive structure. We expanded our marketing team, hiring key leaders with experience in boosting brands across different industries. We brought on a seasoned franchise development executive to support our franchisees on their road to success.

And we assembled a group of experienced franchise investors, consulting and leveraging their knowledge to implement best practices to propel Apex forward.

Whether looking for franchisees or new leadership

hires, we strategically prioritize individuals who are resilient, deeply passionate about our mission and aligned with our company vision. This hiring approach has been pivotal to Apex's success. I believe when you onboard individuals who share your commitment to making a meaningful difference, everything tends to fall into place. At Apex, this means fundraising for schools and nurturing tomorrow's leaders.

As a result of these initiatives, we've been able to provide franchisees with a robust home office, unwavering support and fresh ideas on how to expand. All these efforts are why Apex generated an outstanding 200% revenue growth, expanded presence into new markets and raised a record of more than \$60 million for schools a year.

and co-founder of Rev PR, Sally Ann Butters. “Whether it's due to ego, negligence or just plain embarrassment, the issues are not shared with the franchise team and become too big to remedy, resulting in the business having to be rescued by the franchisor, or closed in the worst cases. The negative fallout in terms of dissatisfied customers, jobless staff and reputational damage can spread far wider than the franchisee's local area.

“We recommend all franchise brands have a crisis comms plan and prepare holding statements and comms processes for common risk areas, but this is particularly important for those providing services or caring for children and the elderly – you can imagine the potential for a media crisis with these types of brands,” adds Sally. “As a crisis comms specialist, it's not up to me to interfere in the franchisor's systems of operation but one thing I do insist on within my projects is that

they have a robust risk register to flag struggling franchisees at an earlier stage. That could be through financial management data, physical touch points or satisfaction surveys.”

Putting people first pays back

When staff turnover rates are high, it can throw a wrench in operations, drain resources with constant hiring and training, and leave companies scrambling to fill gaps in knowledge and expertise. On the flip side, having a stable team that's committed to the cause can be a game-changer, fostering consistency, boosting productivity, and making it easier for businesses to adapt to whatever curveballs the market throws their way. Essentially, the rate of turnover plays a crucial role in determining a company's resilience.

By prioritizing things like employee development, cultivating a positive work culture, and offering



attractive perks, companies can keep their best people for the long haul. And that's not just good for team morale—it's a smart business move that pays back long-term.

Visiting Angels was established in the U.S. in 1998 and has grown into a global care giant with community-based values. Today, the home care franchise is one of the largest care franchises in America, supporting more than 850 franchisees across five countries.

But what makes Visiting Angels particularly resilient within its sector is its carer-centric approach. When the brand launched in the U.K. it set out to specifically address the U.K. care sector's key challenge to its resilience – recruiting and retaining care staff. By keeping these carer-centric values at the center, Visiting Angels has built a network of franchisees across the country and maintained an exceptional staff retention rate – the care staff turnover is down at approximately 12% compared to the



sector average of around 70%, creating a more stable business to provide continuity of care for clients.

“When we launched in the U.K., we could only be carer-centric by repeating none of the mistakes other providers were making,” explains Visiting Angels U.K. CEO Dan Archer. “We analysed what was wrong with the sector and what we needed to do differently to fix it. Our market research involved looking at close to 50 care business competitors – franchises, corporate and independent. We found that all of them had service-focused mission statements, which did not make sense to us as we operate in a people industry. So, our vision, mission and culture were developed exclusively for the benefit of our caregivers.”

Central to the brand’s ethos is to address this problem. “Part of the solution is retaining valuable team members with a raft of innovative solutions, rather than relentlessly

recruiting. We haven’t prioritised staff retention; we’ve prioritised rewarding staff fairly, which results in better staff retention,” says Dan. “We’ve done this from day one, leading us to our mission to lead the U.K. care sector as an Employer of Choice by 2030, creating an environment where our carers can care more, clients can live better, and families can feel assured.

“Staff who are competent and confident in their skills can better cope with the high demands of the care sector, contributing to a more resilient organisation which can sustain operations during difficult times. We place carers before anyone else, providing specialist training, a clear career path, numerous perks and rewards, and wages above the national average. Our culture is paving the way for the future by reducing staff turnover, which enables families to choose their own caregiver and ensuring stability, continuity and quality of care.”

DAMAGE LIMITATION

Solid pre-crisis planning will make a business more resilient, but what steps should a franchise take to ensure its well-prepared? Sally Ann Butters shares her three-step plan:



1 Create a crisis comms plan. Share it across the business, highlight elements during your initial franchisee training and review it regularly.

Once you’ve got a plan, crises can still arise but you can react quickly and with intention. Having draft holding statements for stakeholders and the media for key risks means that in the event of a crisis, you’re not starting from scratch. Creating these in advance gives you time to reflect on the appropriate way to phrase responses and what methods to use to share those out. You can then add key details to tailor should the need arise to use them.



2 Maintain a risk register. This should be a live document available to your management team, kept up to date as new information arises

and reviewed in a monthly team meeting. Creating a crisis comms plan will allow you to determine common risks within your business and the general environment within which you operate. Alerting your team to these common risks helps them to identify and log issues with the potential to escalate into a crisis on your risk register, giving you the chance to also de-escalate quickly with appropriate support.



3 Have a centralized crisis communication strategy. A good franchise network thrives on mutually beneficial outcomes.

In the case of a crisis, people can be nervous to face the media as the brand spokesperson, so I generally find franchisees are happy for the franchisor to offer to step in to manage stakeholder communication. They will often compose statements from head office, share with the franchisee and use local systems to share with the location’s stakeholders. Then head office can move on to communicate more widely as appropriate.

Fired up for growth

Get ready to join the flock as Chicken Cottage invites investors to be part of its global success story



Established in 1994 in the heart of London, UK, Chicken Cottage has become a global household name, thanks to its strong, ethical franchising model and its uncompromising commitment to delivering both quality and sustainability. Back in the early 90s, the fast-food scene was very different. Chicken Cottage revolutionized the British fast-food landscape, particularly in the fried chicken market, setting standards that others would later follow. The brand's origin story is rooted in identifying a gap in the market for quality fast food which catered to a growing population of Muslim customers. Chicken Cottage was the first to introduce halal chicken, offering both grilled and fried options with a range of delicious coatings and sauces. This commitment to quality and ethical sourcing, ensuring that all chicken is locally sourced wherever possible and traceable from farm to kitchen, remains a cornerstone of the brand's identity, extending to international outlets as well as those rooted in the UK.

Despite witnessing many brands come and go over the past three decades, Chicken Cottage has stood the test of time, standing firmly by its core principles and emerging even stronger through market fluctuations. Its appeal extends to millennials and Gen Zs, who expect nothing less than the highest quality from their fast-food outlets.

Recognized for its excellence, Chicken Cottage has earned a spot on HSBC's Elite Franchise Top 100 List for two consecutive years. With 66 stores spread across the UK, Africa, and South Asia, the brand is now eyeing further global expansion.

CEO Greg Milne reflects proudly on Chicken Cottage's 30-year legacy of providing top-tier halal, grilled, and fried chicken, underscoring the brand's ethical foundation and unwavering commitment to supporting local communities.

"For the last 30 years, Chicken Cottage has led the way in providing 100% halal, grilled, and fried chicken to our loyal customers," he says. "In that



time, we have built a reputation for being ethical in our approach to everything we do, and we are proud of the fact that we were the first in the UK to recognise that our customers wanted a halal fried and grilled chicken option. Our franchisees would agree that our halal approach has helped to embed our brand and their businesses into their local communities at large.”

As Chicken Cottage gears up for another surge of global growth, it's inviting international partners to join its journey, offering tempting master franchise opportunities backed by a robust support system along with the brand's trademark sense of social responsibility.

RAPID GLOBAL GROWTH

Chicken Cottage franchisees benefit strongly from belonging to an aspirational legacy brand with a strong presence, instant recognition and a nurtured and loyal customer base, qualities that lend themselves to further expansion.

“As the Chicken Cottage brand continues to gain popularity within all communities, we are embarking on a major recruitment campaign to attract new franchisees to help us continue our international growth, says Greg. “Initially, we're targeting whole of Europe, strategically focussing on countries such as Ireland, France, Germany and Turkey. Our target is to be at 100 stores by 2027. At the same time, we are continuing our expansion in North Africa, where we will have six stores trading in Kenya by the end of the year, and agreements in place to open stores in Somalia. It's going to be a busy few years!”

EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTORS

To power the growth strategy, Chicken Cottage is looking for international partners to develop the brand in their respective country or territory. The program offers full rights to manage operations, lead marketing strategy, manage supply chain and drive the growth of the brand with the support of the UK headquarters, but the prospects will need to fulfil three important criteria:

- Capacity to invest in the business over an initial period of 10 years as a franchisee
- Capability to develop the business through very strong contacts/network and a good understanding of the regional market



“For the last 30 years, Chicken Cottage has led the way in providing 100% halal, grilled and fried chicken to loyal customers”

- A strong understanding of the operations of a QSR business, either through direct involvement in the industry, or through having a very strong operations and business development management team in place. Ideally, the prospects should already be involved in the QSR or hospitality business in their territory and have a good understanding of the market sector. Better still, they will already be a master franchisee for another global restaurant brand and looking to expand further into the fried and grilled chicken business.

EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Chicken Cottage HQ provides ongoing support to all its franchisees through every step of their journey. From site selection and store setup to marketing campaigns and operational guidance, the experienced team is always on hand to ensure their success.

As such, its master franchise partners will also have access to a wealth of experience, developed through 30 years of operation. “Beyond this, they will also leverage off our reputable and recognizable brand,” adds Greg.

EMBEDDED IN COMMUNITIES

In the UK, Chicken Cottage is committed to sustainable growth and investment in its local communities.

The brand's multi-unit franchise opportunities require franchisees to open at least three outlets in their territories within five years, creating employment opportunities at every level and bringing much-needed stability and vitality to local communities and high streets.

“We don't just operate in communities; we are an active part of them,” says Greg. “As a socially responsible brand, we continually build trust and relationships with our customers and neighbors. Our franchisees foster connections and collaborations within their local business communities and many of our stores support their local mosques and sporting clubs, as well as donating leftover food to homeless charities and providing discounted meals for emergency services workers.”

Franchise Overview

Chicken Cottage

Established: 1994

Number of franchised outlets: 66

Location of units: UK, South East Asia, Africa

Minimum capital required: £500,000

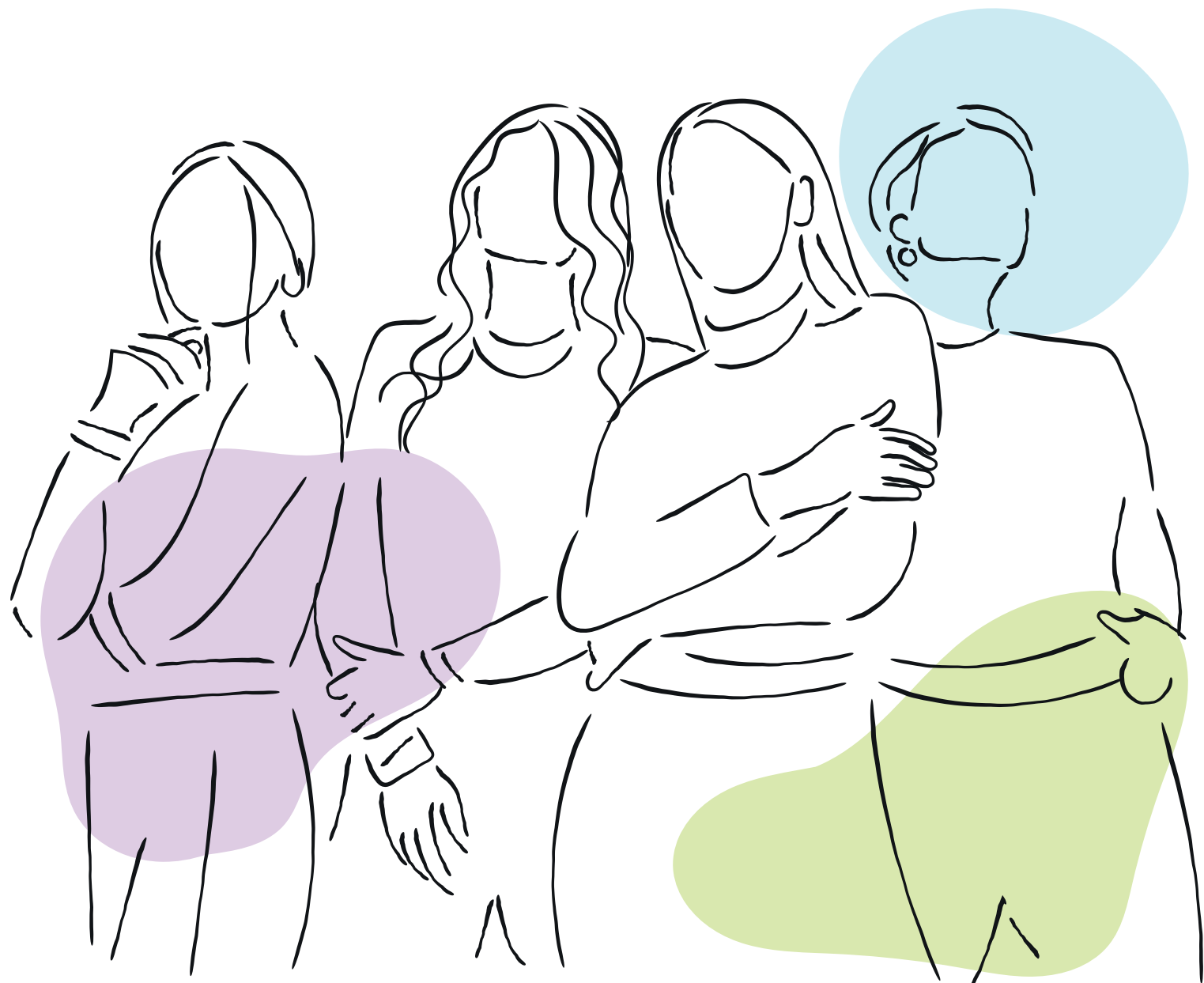
Contact: Franchise@chickencottage.com

chickencottage.com



WOMEN LEADING THE FRANCHISE CHARGE

Monica Feid, COO of BizCom Associates, unveils the four key traits defining empowered leadership and how women are employing them to drive innovation and success in franchising



Leave it to the franchise community to defy the odds in tough economies, ensuring longevity for brilliant brands and providing opportunities to the masses. This trend includes a growing number of women in the c-suite among both franchisors and franchisees. While the Fortune 500 claims just 10% of female CEOs (who typically have much shorter tenures at the top than men, averaging just seven years at most) women in franchising by contrast are having a field day.

Following a year when the Barbie movie hit the headlines for promoting female empowerment, thank goodness franchising has been providing real-life examples for years. According to research by Guidant Financial, it's estimated that women account for approximately 31% of all small business and franchise ownership in the United States. A third of those have successfully owned and operated their businesses for 10 years or longer. Throw in franchisor leaders too, and there's reason to sit up and take notice around the world.

In the food space alone, Restaurant Business reported at least a dozen restaurant chains and major franchisees that have recruited women into the CEO spot in the past 15 months. They included Heather Neary at Taco John's, Beth Scott at MOD Pizza, Denise Nelson at Smashburger, Jennifer Schuler at Handel's Homemade Ice Cream, Liz Williams at El Pollo Loco, Suzie Tsai at Bonchon U.S. and Christine Barone at Dutch Bros. among others. Talk about igniting change.

This is not a new phenomenon. Women have been defying stereotypes in franchising for decades, taking advantage of equal opportunities already present in the business model and trailblazing a path for many more to follow in the process. They've also been displaying some important leadership qualities well worth sharing...

1 Strong communicators with visionary qualities

Strong leadership is most effective when communication is

“Women leaders who have honed their voices can articulate their vision, motivate others and foster trust”

clear and frequent. Women leaders who have honed their voices can articulate their vision, motivate others, provide clear direction, and foster trust among teams.

One franchise leader embodies all these qualities and more, offering 43 years of service and earning a spot in the Hall of Fame as her playbook. This year, at its annual convention, the International Franchise Association (IFA) did something that's only happened twice in the history of the organization: it inducted a sole female member into its prestigious Hall of Fame, honoring Catherine Monson, CEO of Propelled Brands, for her significant contributions to franchising.

“She has been a force in franchising for over four decades,” remarked Jay Duke, the national managing principal of advisory services for BDO USA.

From her beginnings at Sir Speedy to her tenure as CEO of FASTSIGNS and now her current role as CEO of Propelled Brands—a platform company encompassing FASTSIGNS, NerdsToGo, MY SALON Suite, and Camp Bow Wow—Monson has achieved more in her leadership journey so far than many do in a lifetime. Meanwhile, her advocacy efforts at home and globally challenge the constraints of time to accomplish it all.

“Her commitment to the advance of the franchise business model is absolutely unparalleled,” said Duke. “Appearing regularly on Capitol Hill, Catherine will always push for what's best for small businesses and the people who make franchising their home.”

Monson's two-year tenure as chairwoman of the IFA during the pandemic showcased her strength and resilience in advocating for the collective welfare of small business owners worldwide. Amidst companies facing vulnerabilities, government scrutiny over essential services, and people compelled to stay indoors, Monson steered the

association and the entire franchise community through challenging times to emerge stronger on the other side.

She spoke often and with authority. She rallied for the community, lobbied in Washington, authored articles and granted interviews while simultaneously running and growing her own organization with incredible prowess.

When the world went quiet, Monson got vocal. The IFA was heard. The PPP money flowed. Small business owners were saved. Survival turned into perseverance. And perseverance turned into flourishing success.

This fluent and confident communicator has given all of us a masterclass on the importance of speaking up for franchisee profitability and how to defend it, which continues through to today.

2 Clearly defined values that drive culture

Successful women franchise leaders also demonstrate a penchant for ethics and conducting business the ‘right’ way. Psychologically, society also tends to associate women with this character trait. According to a 2022 study by social psychologist Mansi P. Joshi, PhD, female leaders enhance the perceived level of organizational trust, and their presence alone promotes the concept of fair treatment.

One resilient figure stands out in this regard, a former U.S. Marine who excels at rallying the troops. It could be her commendable military service background that equipped her for success in civilian life, or her openness in advocating for embracing discomfort and fostering innovation, which has benefitted over 5,800 franchisees globally. Mary Thompson, COO of Neighborly, consistently emphasizes the company's Code of Values alongside the remarkable strengths evident daily within the world's largest home services organization.

Clearly articulating the brand's overarching mission resonates with diverse audiences when discussing Neighborly's Code of Values and the company's culture centered on Living R.I.C.H. around the principles of Respect, Integrity, Customer Focus, and Having Fun in the process. This mantra, coupled with a hardcore belief in how ethics drive profits, reverberates throughout the organization, spanning over 30 service brands. Moreover, Mary Thompson has influenced the private equity journey and Neighborly's collective \$4.3 billion in system-wide sales by always highlighting the strong values that have underpinned the company since its inception.

When Thompson underscores organizational success with the assertion that "we are the dream makers," her conviction is palpable and convincing. This statement reflects the essence of a leader who understands how to rally a united team on a winning mission, with clear and measurable values serving as the driving force behind her words.

Does possessing a robust mission make life easier? Far from it. In reality, it sets a higher standard in an age where society is growing increasingly disillusioned by subpar customer service, diminishing brand loyalty, and a persistent labor shortage that continues to lower expectations. Consider the impact of declaring to the world that your organization's ultimate aspiration is "to be so remarkable that we become a household name." Such a statement carries immense power and significance in today's landscape.

Live R.I.C.H., indeed.

3 Passion for mentorship and the power of connection

According to an article in Harvard Business Review, women don't need rescuing in the business world. Instead, "inclusive leaders are learning that women perform

better, advance faster and choose to stay at their organizations when they have effective mentors and sponsors in their life."

Likewise, numerous female franchise leaders attribute their success to the guidance of influential mentors. They view their own journeys up the leadership ladder as compelling motivation to assist future mentees in their paths to success.

In a recent interview on the Second in Command podcast with host Cameron Herold, Stacey Ryan, COO of School of Rock said: "When I was awarded the COO role a few years back, I felt an increased level of responsibility... for the women who were coming up after me." In addition to her busy day job for a global franchise brand that stretches across 19 countries and includes more than 65,000 enrolled students, Ryan made time to establish an organization called FrontWomen.org to support and encourage other women in leadership roles.

"A lot of it is just knowing you're not alone," Ryan explained. "We're going to continue to push and break the barriers."

Today, FrontWomen functions as a community resource group, offering a platform to share experiences, lessons, mentorship, and more. This sense of community is fundamental to School of Rock as a whole. Renowned as the foremost music education franchise globally, School of Rock not only promotes the arts in a vibrant and impactful manner but also advocates for diversity, inclusion, anti-bullying, suicide prevention, and a judgment-free environment for talented individuals. This inclusive ethos provides an ideal environment for female mentors to flourish, whether they're rocking it on stage, in schools and educational settings, among female franchisees, or yes, in the c-suite at headquarters too. Rock on!



4 Resilience and adaptability in an ever-changing world

Lastly, who can resist falling in love with grassroots success stories that symbolize what is achievable on a larger scale every day?

At the franchisee level, numerous small business owners make the monumental decision to take charge of their lives, careers, and future fortunes, often due to unforeseen circumstances. One can't help but admire the women leaders who navigate this path while balancing work and family, equipped with a mindset that carries them through tough times. These are the stories that underscore a vital leadership quality: sheer grit and

"Numerous female franchise leaders view their own journeys up the leadership ladder as compelling motivation to assist future mentees in their paths to success"



determination.

Melanie Whipple Ramos validates this perfectly. Recently named franchisee of the year for Blue Moon Estate Sales, one of the fastest-growing franchise networks in the Best Life Brands platform organization, her success doesn't even begin to reflect the incredible journey she's made to get there.

It all started when Ramos was furloughed from a job at Disney World where she had worked for 25 years. Having advanced to a prominent role overseeing the accurate time and payroll for more than 70,000 employees, it took one pandemic to close operations for the Fortune 50 company and leave her questioning her future.

As it turns out, job security is never a guarantee, even at the Happiest Place on Earth. However, Ramos found herself in possession of some of the best leadership skills and customer service training on the planet, courtesy of Disney, to put to use in a new career in franchising. Soon enough she was living in a new state with a baby to care for and a husband who had to finish his job back in Florida before he could join them. That's when she tackled an opportunity with a vengeance.

She networked with realtors. She grew her business for estate sales. She hired some 20 part-time employees in her market. She found her calling. She also became the system's number one franchisee in the process.

Today she provides a much-needed solution for countless others who are looking for resilience and adaptability in their lives too. Maybe they've lost a loved one, need to downsize, or are moving a relative to assisted living quarters. Whatever the reason, Ramos and her team help them to empty a house of its contents during an important time of need. She is solidly the boss of her kingdom, declaring, "I love being a business owner." How's that for a happy ending?

If I've learned anything in all the years that I've been supporting and promoting franchisors to help them grow, it's that franchising is a great equalizer in the business world. Countless women symbolize the absence of glass ceilings in the right franchise system. Women franchise leaders are reshaping the business world with their abilities to communicate well, to promote and live by strong values, to create communities and mentor others, and to adapt with incredible speed in a constantly evolving landscape. They are not just leading successful businesses; they are creating a legacy of leadership that is inclusive, inspirational and destined to continue.

In all my years of backing and boosting franchisors for growth, one thing rings loud and clear: franchising stands as a remarkable equalizer in the business arena. Countless women epitomize the breaking of glass ceilings within the right franchise systems. Women franchise leaders are reshaping the business landscape with their adept communication skills, unwavering commitment to strong values, knack for community-building, mentorship, and remarkable ability to adapt speedily to an ever-evolving environment. They're not just steering successful businesses; they're creating a legacy of inclusive, inspirational leadership set to endure.



THE AUTHOR

Monica Feid is the co-founder and COO of BizCom Associates, a full-service marketing agency that has helped franchisors grow around the world since 1999.

Chuck E. Cheese: a new era of family fun

Mario Centola and Rick Raison explain how the iconic family entertainment brand is conquering hearts (and markets)



In 1977, Nolan Bushnell, the mastermind behind Atari, created Chuck E. Cheese with one mission: create high energy family-friendly fun. Fast forward through decades of transformation, Chuck E. Cheese remains a go-to spot for families, now with a new look and entertainment lineup to appeal to an entirely new generation of fans around the world.

Despite these changes, frontmouse Chuck E. Cheese, alongside Pasqually, Helen Henny, Mr. Munch, Jasper T. Jowls, and Bella Bunny, continue to be central to the brand's experience.

The franchise promises a combination of high energy active play, arcade games, pizza, and birthday parties contributing to its tagline: "Where A Kid Can Be A Kid."

The entertainment experience has transitioned from traditional animatronics to cutting-edge features such as video walls and interactive dance floors. Vibrant new colors characterize the updated surroundings, while dynamic new additions, including high-energy options like trampolines and climbing walls, have expanded the lineup of games and activities internationally. Chuck E. Cheese has taken family entertainment to a global scale through its expansion into 16 countries.

The popularity of the brand has transcended outside of its traditional store locations with the franchise embarking on exciting partnerships. Collaborations with children's entertainment businesses KIDZ BOP and Roblox, as well as a deal with

Magical Elves to create an adult-based game show are bringing big results. Broadening licensing initiatives has also introduced a Chuck E. Cheese branded frozen pizza to more than 3,000 grocery stores. Additionally, the business' inaugural location-based entertainment deal has been signed to extend the brand to a water park.

How are you using technology? Mario Centola, COO of international operations:

Central to the brand's evolution is the integration of technology. We have focused on guest engagement, back of the house efficiency, and our entertainment offerings. We continue to evolve our platforms to make it easier for our partners with the goal of a turnkey onboarding model. A touchless PlayPass

system, video walls, and back of the house AI technology built around guest engagement have not only enhanced the guest experience but also facilitated our marketing teams to provide unique promotional offers.

Additionally, technology has streamlined the ordering process with video menu boards promoting offers and making price changes more dynamic. Behind the scenes we've launched tablet-based training materials and operational manuals that can be easily translated and localized by market.

How are you driving your efforts to expand around the world?

Rick Raison, manager, international development:

To drive international expansion, Chuck E. Cheese has identified key markets in Asia and Europe as a focus for 2024. Those markets are a logical choice due to a high percentage of kids under the age of 14, the growing middle-class, and a lack of high-quality kids-centric entertainment. China and India definitely have the population advantage, but we see markets throughout Europe lacking our mix of entertainment and food options which will be attractive for growth.

We also have a strong differentiator: our intellectual property. Chuck E. Cheese is not just our namesake - there is a large repertoire of audio-visual content that comes with the brand which provides ample opportunity to expand the IP outside of the physical concept. We have even established our own YouTube channel to promote the brand internationally which includes exclusive branded content.

What has contributed to the franchise's success?

First, we find good partners with a track record of success in food and beverage, retail, real estate, or entertainment. We want long-term relationships, with partners committing to multiple locations or a master franchise relationship in each market.

Second, we listen to and trust that our partners know the nuances of their market the best. We enter each market with an open mind on everything from menu items and operating hours, to the very iteration of the concept. Decades

Franchise Overview

Chuck E. Cheese

Established: 1977

Total number of locations: 569

Available markets: Worldwide

Liquidity requirement: \$800,000 in available liquid assets is our threshold for a partner to be considered

Contact: Rick Raison, International Development
rick.raison@cencentertainment.com

chuckecheese.com



“We have a strong differentiator: our intellectual property. Chuck E. Cheese is not just our namesake”

of franchising experience has taught us that what may work in the U.S., Mexico, or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may not work in another country.

Third, the hallmark of our franchising model is *flexibility*. We're willing to adapt our

concept as long as it lives up to our standards of kid-friendly family entertainment in a safe environment. We understand that the size, entertainment offering, and food at each location may differ. That is why you may find a zipline in Egypt, a climbing wall in Saudi Arabia, and a trampoline in Mexico. It's no different when it comes to food. Our fresh, handmade pizza is our hallmark menu offering, but pizza toppings or sides change by region along with special limited-time menu items.

Next, a significant driver of foot traffic and revenue is the birthday program, attracting kids who often experience their first visit at Chuck E. Cheese through a birthday party which creates repeat visits.

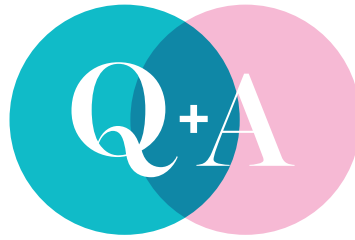
Lastly, Chuck E. Cheese's unique flexibility in local sourcing sets it apart from other international brands that rely on direct sourcing, which can drive up construction and ongoing operating costs. While maintaining a safety net of U.S.-based suppliers, the brand recognizes the significant cost advantages of sourcing locally. Chuck E. Cheese actively assists in selecting

suppliers that align with brand specifications for food ingredients, equipment, and construction materials. Through this approach, most items can be sourced in-country or regionally, ensuring the quality meets the brand's expectations.

What is on the horizon for Chuck E. Cheese?

Exciting developments are underway this year as Chuck E. Cheese plans to open new locations in Egypt and Kuwait, marking the brand's debut in Africa and expanding its footprint further in the Middle East and Latin America. The forthcoming Egyptian location will be the brand's inaugural venture into Africa, offering an action-packed lineup of games, including a zipline, soft play, a climbing wall, and a trampoline. Meanwhile, the Kuwait location is space-efficient, featuring the traditional mix of games and soft play, showcasing the brand's flexibility in adapting to different formats, from standalone to inline locations.

Looking ahead, we just announced a new development agreement in Australia. We see this as an untapped market where we can focus on tailoring the Chuck E. Cheese experience to the unique preferences of Australians. We plan to introduce a reimagined Chuck E. Cheese kid-friendly experience that seamlessly blends our classic offerings with cutting-edge interactive play.



5 minutes with...

CHAD PALMER

The United Franchising Group's newly appointed CMO on how he plans to leverage AI, data and digital advancements



United Franchise Group (UFG), the parent company behind several leading brands, has recently appointed Chad Palmer as its Chief Marketing Officer (CMO). Chad has been an integral part of UFG for six years, initially joining as a Digital Marketing Coordinator in 2018 and holding various positions since, including Vice of Franchise Development and VP of Digital Marketing. In his new role, Palmer will be responsible for overseeing the marketing strategies for UFG's huge portfolio of franchise brands, including Cannoli Kitchen Pizza,

Exit Factor, Big Flavor Brands, and Vast CoWorking. Additionally, UFG's Starpoint Brands division comprises well-known franchises such as Signarama, Office Evolution, Transworld Business Advisors, Venture X and more. Reflecting on his time with UFG, Palmer remarked on the company's remarkable growth trajectory over the past few years, describing it as "non-stop and incredible."

Palmer is primed for the challenge of the CMO role, leaning into future technology to lead the strategy. "We are already diving into using AI to make drastic improvements and are poised to be an AI leader in franchising," he says. "I'm excited to continue to find ways to synergize our marketing and sales teams to be both agile and effective in implementing strategies across our brands."

GF: Chad, congratulations on your promotion! Reflecting on your journey so far with the

company, what thoughts come to mind as you step into this new role?

I am thrilled and honored to serve as the new Chief Marketing Officer for United Franchise Group (UFG). My personal journey with the company has been incredibly rewarding, and I look forward to continuing to build upon our past achievements and more importantly contribute to our future success. It has been an amazing experience seeing our company grow and acquire more brands over the years that I've been here.

What excites you most about the marketing opportunities for UFG and what plans will you roll out first?

I'm excited about the opportunity to leverage artificial intelligence (AI), data-driven insights and innovative marketing strategies to elevate UFG and help drive our growth. One of my initial plans is to explore and implement AI in new areas of the company such as

"Ultimately, I hope to leave a legacy of innovation, growth, and inspiration"



franchise development, sales and of course, marketing!

Throughout your 20+ years of experience in digital marketing, what moments or experiences have shaped you and how do you plan to apply those lessons and experiences in your new position?

Over the course of my career, I've learned the importance of adaptability in leading successful marketing teams. I believe that understanding the unique perspectives of both our brands and our franchisees is essential to developing resonant messaging and to delivering exceptional results. Additionally, my background in diving into our analytics has taught me the value of leveraging data-driven insights to inform decision-making and measure campaign success. I plan to apply these lessons and experiences to foster a collaborative culture within the marketing department at UFG.

With your keen interest in AI and digital advancements, how do you intend to keep UFG at the forefront of innovation and adaptability in marketing?

AI and other new digital advancements represent exciting opportunities for marketers to deliver highly personalized and relevant experiences to audiences at a scale we have never been able to explore in the past. We have created an in-house innovation team specifically to keep up with the latest AI, app and software trends and anything else that we can leverage quickly to help our

franchisees pull ahead of the competition.

What are the challenges and opportunities facing UFG right now, and how do you plan to address them in your role as CMO?

Some of the key challenges facing UFG include navigating shifting market conditions, maintaining consistent brand images across diverse industries, and addressing evolving consumer expectations. To tackle these, I plan to closely monitor industry trends, regularly assess and refine our marketing strategies and encourage more open lines of communication between the marketing and sales departments to ensure alignment and consistency. Additionally, I will work closely with our franchisees to understand their unique needs and concerns and incorporate their feedback into our marketing efforts.

How do you plan to maintain a strong connection with franchisees, ensuring that their voices and needs are heard and addressed in the marketing strategies?

Maintaining a strong connection with franchisees is crucial to our collective success. Our World Expo is this year and is always a perfect event to connect with all our franchisees from around the world. I strive to empower franchisees by providing them (and their brands' marketing teams) with top strategies, training materials, best practices and marketing assets to best support their local marketing efforts.

“UFG is poised to be an AI leader in franchising”

As you embark on this new chapter in your career, what personal values or guiding principles do you hold dear that shape?

I firmly believe in fostering a positive work environment that encourages creativity, collaboration and continual learning. We focus on Franchisee Success, Revenue and Profit as our main KPIs here at UFG. So those are always in my mind as I shape any strategy ideas or evaluate a new vendor or new tool we may want to use.

At what point will you be satisfied with what you've achieved?

Success for me is defined by creating a positive and lasting impact on the lives of our franchisees and their customers. Ultimately, I hope to leave a legacy of innovation, growth, and inspiration – inspiring future generations of marketing professionals to push boundaries and challenge themselves to achieve greatness. Every day I try to learn something new and improve a little more so there's never a conclusion – just constant and never-ending improvement.

DAY IN THE LIFE OF A...
**BRAND
 PRESIDENT**

Lindsay Junk, President of boutique fitness franchise YogaSix, gives us a snapshot into her life

INTERVIEW BY CHARLOTTE SMITH



WORK FOCUS

Canadian-born Lindsay has worked her way up in the fitness industry to become one of fitness franchising's most influential leaders

What was your first ever job?

I was a ski instructor at Blackcomb Mountain in Whistler, British Columbia.

What were your career highlights leading up to now?

Teaching a bunch of four-year-olds into ski moguls! Kidding... I would say launching YogaSix, leading its expansion through the pandemic and now having 205 studios and being the largest provider of yoga in the world.

...and the low points?

Temporarily closing all our studios during the pandemic and talking with franchisees about how to do it.

What do you love most about your role?

Getting to know our franchisees who are from all over the country. We have a great group of smart and passionate people and it's a pleasure to help them launch their studios and see them succeed.

How did the 10-year-old you imagine your career panning out?

I was definitely going to be the first female to play in the NBA!

Can you define what success means to you?

Having a career that's exciting and fun and mostly positive. I like to work hard but it can't be the same all the time. I also want to have time for my family and my own health. I truly feel like I've been lucky enough to achieve that with YogaSix and Xponential.

"I've gravitated to positions that measure success like a competition. Businesses with leaderboards!"

THE HUSTLE

Lindsay's competitiveness drives her to success, along with her genuine love for her work

I am from a small town in Canada called Squamish. I grew up very active and was always outside. My dad loved his job and was always excited and happy to go to work. That was my example of work, so I have been striving to be like my dad in every job I have ever had. I was a competitive kid and enjoyed racing and competing. I've gravitated to positions that measure success like a competition. Businesses with leaderboards!

My morning routine starts at around 6am. I make the kids breakfast and lunch, work out, take the kids to school and head into the office.

I feel lucky that I can always access my work. I do have an office, but if I'm at a kid's event or on the road I can easily operate from my phone or laptop. I try to respond to issues quickly so things don't pile up. At the end of every week, I put everything important into my calendar. This includes workouts, family events,



work priorities and personal appointments. I try to stick to my calendar. Recently I have been learning to add in down time and factor in rest.

Nothing keeps me awake at night! I'm always exhausted at the end of each day. I think a lot about the people aspect of what I am doing, and it bothers me when I don't think people are happy. I know I cannot make everyone happy, but I always try.

I make my own health and wellbeing a priority. I'm lucky that I truly enjoy being active and it makes me happy to work out, so I rarely skip it. Lately I've been more focused on eating healthy and rest. I think this is a part of getting older.

I enjoy practicing yoga, but if I can't get to a class I'm always practicing yoga in the way I act and approach things. Yoga is about balance and that has helped me tremendously with balancing my own life.

I have three very active teenagers who all play multiple sports. I love watching them compete. Most of my fun time comes from hanging out with my husband and the parents of kids on my kiddos' team and cheering them on. We have gotten to go to some amazing places in the United States, watching baseball, volleyball, soccer and basketball. I still like to ski and make it a priority to go home to Canada once a year to hit the slopes.

My guilty pleasures are nothing really terrible... if no one is home, I would probably eat Nutella for dinner and watch the Hallmark channel and let our goldendoodle, Axel, up on the couch!

GET TO KNOW...



What makes Lindsay tick? Family, fitness and fun are high on her list of priorities

What's your greatest fear?

Being stuck in a car under water. I roll down my window when I drive over bridges just in case

What's your current state of mind?

I'm a pretty happy, positive person, so right now that's how I am feeling. Optimistic

Where would you most like to live/retire?

I have a weird dream of retiring to a vineyard where I could also raise puppies. I know these two dreams are an odd match!

Your favourite possession is...

This is going to sound very Yoga-esque, but nothing really. I am not that attached to things, although I love my new Y6 water bottle. It's huge, and it's helping me stay hydrated this year

The quality you most admire in yourself is...

That I genuinely like most people and I tend to find a way to see things from other people's perspectives

What do you value most in others?

Curiosity and passion. I like it when people ask questions and want to learn new things. I also appreciate people who are all in and excited about what they are doing, even if it's something I don't understand or not interested in. It's cool to see someone fired up

Which talent would you most like to possess?

My kids and husband can all either sing or dance really well and I wish I could dance or sing. If I had to perform at a talent show I would have to dribble a basketball or recite my times tables really fast

If you could eat one food/meal before you die it would be...

Stuffed crust pizza

The film you can watch over and over is...

I actually don't like watching the same show or movie more than once. That said, I have been forced to watch Money Ball a few times and always like it. Same with Rudy

Your favourite yoga asana is...

Savasana

OUT OF OFFICE

Need some business advice or feel stuck for inspiration? Take a moment to refresh your strategy with these off-duty resources

THE INFLUENCER WE FOLLOW FOR INTERNET MARKETING ADVICE AND INSPIRATION



RUSSELL BRUNSON

In 2003, Brunson had his first success as an online marketer selling a software called ZipBrander, a viral marketing tool that not only drove laser-targeted traffic to websites, but helped increase backend profits, automatically. This helped launch Brunson into the world of internet marketing, where he quickly became one of the top marketing minds in the world. Within a year of graduating college, he'd made his first million dollars selling his products from shakes and supplements, to coaching, books, consulting, coupons, t-shirts, technology services, and software. He reached top ranking status in several network marketing

companies, winning a Ferrari and generating 1.5 million leads in just six weeks.

The limitations and obstacles Russell encountered with the technology required to bring his sales funnels to life became the birthplace of the idea for his software company, ClickFunnels. Together with his partner Todd Dickerson, Russell launched their sales funnel software in October 2014, and the company grew to \$100,000,000 in the first three years. Currently, ClickFunnels has over 100,000 active users.

Over the past 14 years, Russell has built a following of over two million entrepreneurs, sold over 450,000 copies of his books, popularized the concept of sales funnels, and co-founded ClickFunnels, a software company that helps 90,000 entrepreneurs quickly get their message out to the marketplace.

PODCASTS

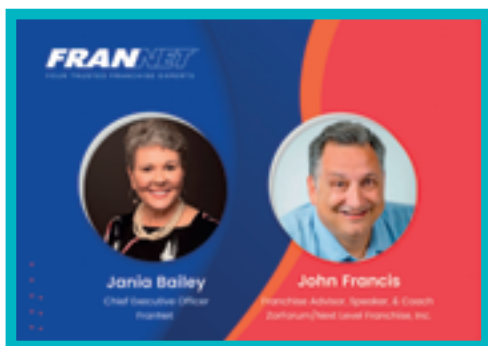


THE PODCAST WE TUNE INTO FOR FRANCHISE INSIGHTS

JUST JANIA

A podcast in the Social Geek Radio family, Just Jania is hosted by Jania Bailey, longtime CEO of FranNet, a national leader in the franchise consultancy world. Each episode features Jania and her expert guests discussing all things franchising.

Recent episodes include Tracy Rickman, President and COO of Qualifyi, FranNet's newest sister company, and most recently John Francis – aka Johnny Franchise, the nicest guy in franchising – who shares his experience in entrepreneurship and his newest venture with ZorForum.



MUST LISTEN EPISODE

Just Jania with John Francis

THE PODCAST WE TUNE INTO FOR TOP TRENDS IN FRANCHISE TECH

MODRN BUSINESS

Co-hosted by Ryan Hicks and Zack Fishman, Modrn Business is an award-winning, interview-style podcast that spotlights franchising's brightest executives. Follow along each week as the dynamic duo uncover franchising's top technology trends, the hottest franchise industries to invest in, ways to improve your own franchise business and how to potentially become a franchisee.



MUST LISTEN EPISODE

GaryVee on Franchising

BOOKS



THE BOOK WE READ TO GAIN AN INSIGHT INTO THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS BUSINESS BRAIN

Elon Musk

By Walter Isaacson

From the author of *Steve Jobs* and other bestselling biographies, this is the astonishingly intimate story of Elon Musk, the most fascinating and controversial innovator of our era – a rule-breaking visionary who helped to lead the world into the era of electric vehicles, private space exploration, and artificial intelligence. Oh, and took over Twitter.

At the beginning of 2022 – after a year marked by SpaceX launching 31 satellites, Tesla selling a million cars, and him becoming the richest man on earth – Musk spoke ruefully about his compulsion to stir up dramas. “I need to shift my mindset away from being in crisis mode, which it has been for about fourteen years now, or arguably most of my life,” he said.

It was a wistful comment, not a New Year’s resolution. But even as he said it, he was secretly buying up shares of Twitter, the world’s ultimate playground.

For two years, Isaacson shadowed Musk, attended his meetings, walked his factories with him, and spent hours interviewing him, his

family, friends, coworkers, and adversaries. The result is the revealing inside story, filled with amazing tales of triumphs and turmoil, that addresses the question: are the demons that drive Musk also what it takes to drive innovation and progress?



THE BOOK WE READ TO GROW A MONEY-MAKING MINDSET

Think And Grow Rich

By Napoleon Hill

Napoleon Hill, one of America’s most loved motivational authors, devoted 25 years to finding out how the wealthy became that way. After interviewing over 500 of the most affluent men and women of his time, he uncovered the secret to great wealth based on the notion that if we can learn to think like the rich, we can start to behave like them. By understanding and applying the 13 simple steps that constitute Hill’s formula, you can achieve your goals, change your life and join the ranks of the rich and successful.

In this updated edition, Dr. Arthur R. Pell provides examples of men and women who, in recent times, exemplify the principles that Hill promulgated. With the success stories of top achievers such as Bill Gates and Steven Spielberg, he proves that Hill’s philosophies are as valid today as they ever were.



THE BOOK WE READ FOR LEADERSHIP INSPIRATION AND SMARTER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Stop the SHIFT SHOW: How to Turn Your Struggling Hourly Workers Into a Top-Performing Team

By Scott Greenberg



Scott Greenberg’s anticipated follow-up to *The Wealthy Franchisee* hit the shelves in March.

In his trademark engaging style that combines candor, authenticity and humor with a wealth of actionable advice, Scott provides key insights to help you elevate your team’s performance and drive success for your business – an invaluable resource for anyone looking to build a high-performing powerhouse of a team. In particular, Scott focuses on the unique challenges of effectively managing and coaching hourly workers to perform at their best and go above and beyond, as well as overcoming common challenges connected to hourly workers, such as turnover and scheduling issues.

Whether you’re a new manager or a well-seasoned leader, Scott’s book is not just an entertaining and transformative read, it’s a gamechanger for anyone who knows the value of tapping into the needs, wants and mindsets of their workforce to achieve incredible results.



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*Source: Custom Market Insights