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Whatever industry you're looking to work in, we're sure that you'll be able to find the perfect brand

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Introduction to franchising

A speedy intro to the world of franchising, and how you can utilise the many benefits of business ownership

For millions of people around the world, the idea of business ownership can be a prohibitively intimidating one. Particularly if you've just come off the back of years of working for somebody else, the prospect of having nobody to answer to but yourself can seem unrealistic at best, and downright anxiety-inducing at worst.

Enter, franchising. While franchisees are indeed business owners within their own right, they can rest assured that their franchisor will offer all the support and guidance that they need to not only endure the challenges of something like a global pandemic, but come out the other end a stronger and more confident entrepreneur.

Sound appealing? Then maybe franchising is the right choice for you.

The best of both worlds

Running a franchise location for a brand that aligns with your values may seem like a huge step up from being an employee of an organisation, but there's actually a handful of similarities that the best franchisees use to their advantage.

Primarily, the support and experience that your franchisor can provide means that if you come across a challenge with seemingly no answer, odds are, they've already worked out a solution. This is why franchising is often known as being in business for yourself, but not by yourself – the hard work you put in is always rewarded, but problems are not yours alone to solve.

The life of a franchisee can also be a very flexible one; much more so than a traditional nine-to-five career. Particularly with the likes of management franchises, you can schedule work responsibilities around your everyday life, allowing for a truly customisable work-life balance.

Many first-time franchisees find this to be one of the biggest benefits of franchising, as it allows for other

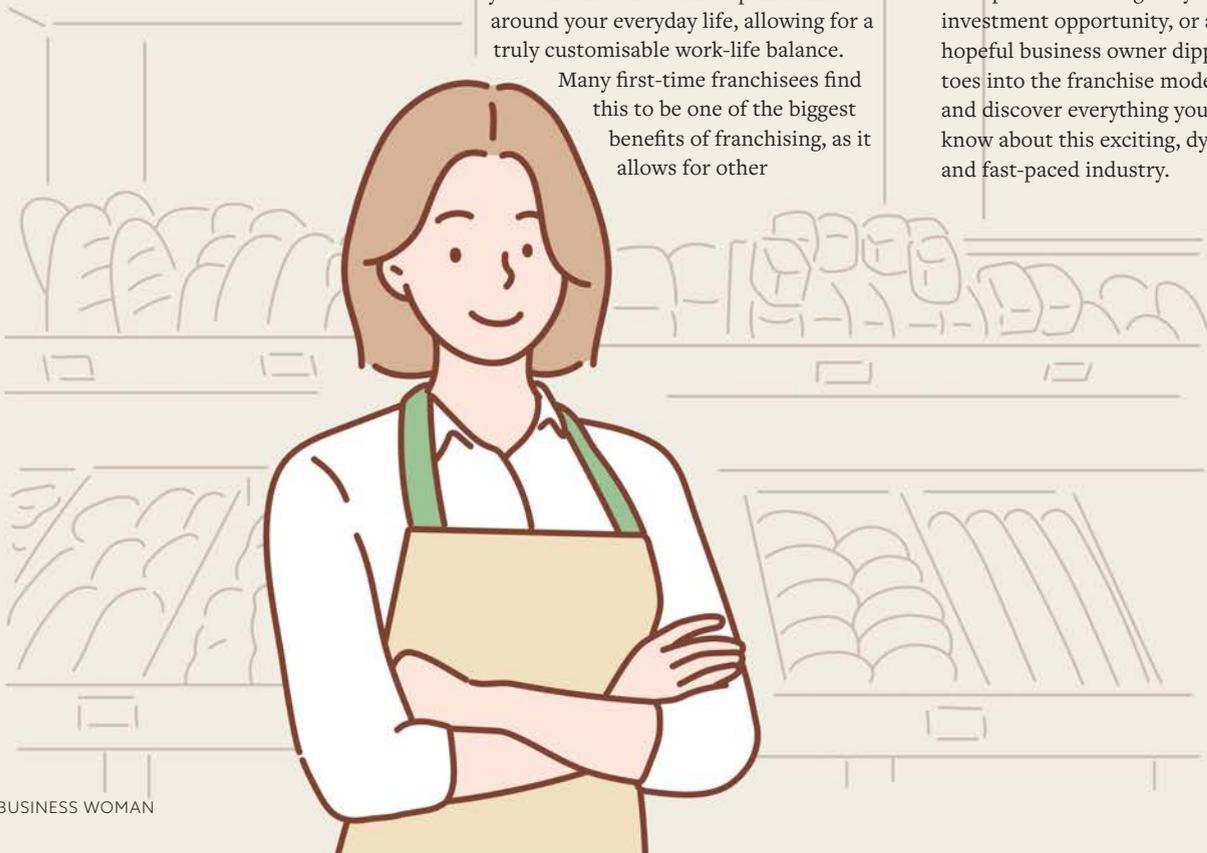
responsibilities such as childcare, or further part-time employment.

A business built for you

One of the most surprising things about the franchise industry for the uninitiated is that businesses of almost every imaginable industry can be franchised – far more than just fast-food, as many may initially believe.

What this means is that whatever your passion, hobby, or interest, there's often a franchise opportunity that perfectly suits your needs. Not only that, but the coronavirus pandemic has sped up the development of many businesses, meaning that things like remote learning and proprietary CRM systems have made owning a franchise more convenient and flexible than ever before.

So whether you're an experienced entrepreneur looking for your next investment opportunity, or a first-time hopeful business owner dipping your toes into the franchise model, read on and discover everything you need to know about this exciting, dynamic, and fast-paced industry.



FRANCHISING

FACTS AND FIGURES

Need-to-know numbers and trends about the franchise industry

30%

of all franchisees in the U.K. are **women**



Between

2011 and 2017

female franchise ownership in the U.S. increased by

83%

The average female business owner has operated their company for

11 years

Women-owned businesses account for

39%

of all privately held firms in the U.S., and generated

\$1.9tr

in revenue for the economy in

2019



FROM 2014 TO 2019, THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES OWNED BY WOMEN OF — COLOR INCREASED BY 43% —

8 FRANCHISE BRANDS PERFECT FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

A handful of brands that could be a great first franchising step

Sometimes it can be tricky to know where to begin when looking for a franchise brand that aligns with your needs as an entrepreneur. Which sector do you want to enter? Do you want to work remotely, or operate out of a brick-and-mortar location?

Here's a handful of great franchise brands that are not only brimming with female franchisees, but could be the next step in your entrepreneurial journey.



PINK SPAGHETTI

A virtual personal assistant business that can be operated entirely from the comfort of your own home, Pink Spaghetti is perfect for communication-focused franchisees who want their business to be as flexible as their lifestyle. Lots of its current franchise network consists of career-driven women wanting a break from the standard nine-to-five, and it currently has over 40 locations across the United Kingdom.

“A Pink Spaghetti franchise is a flexible and rewarding business opportunity, which lets you reach your full potential and take control of your life and career,” says co-founder Vicky Matthews, who launched the brand with Caroline Gowing in 2009. “It has the potential to fulfill your career aspirations and adapt to a busy lifestyle whilst also giving you the opportunity to achieve financially.”

ACTIONCOACH

For women looking to support fellow businesses while making a name for themselves in the B2B world, ActionCOACH could be the perfect franchise opportunity. Not only do ActionCOACH franchisees enjoy the fulfillment of helping other entrepreneurs to succeed, but they can rely on the brand's global network of experts and truly become part of this international white-collar community.

“I'm now in control of my destiny,” says Helen Pethybridge, an ActionCOACH franchisee, “where the speed of progression is my choice and it's up to me to decide when I want to reduce my hours, when to retire, and what work I choose to do.”



POPOLO CERAMICO

When Christina Taylor-Chisolm had her first child, she realised that her inflexible IT project manager role, which often demanded over 60 hours of her time every week, wasn't as viable as it had previously seemed. So, taking her career into her own hands, she created Popolo Ceramico; a lifestyle franchise perfect for family-oriented entrepreneurs.

“Popolo Ceramico is a personalised ceramics business that specialises in capturing hand and footprints in paint, clay, and plaster, and also paint-your-own-pottery takeaway boxes,” says Taylor-Chisolm. “Our creative franchises are perfect for individuals who want to work flexible, mainly from home, and still earn a good income.”



SKINHQ

SkinHQ is one of the U.K.'s leading tech-driven skin clinics, and is looking to work with empathetic franchisees who share its passion for inclusivity and wellbeing, and who can help the brand to create a unique experience for patients seeking unparalleled beauty support.

"I am passionate about helping people," says Haroon Danis, founder. "I believe that everyone should be given an equal opportunity when it comes to building a bright and successful future. Creating an accessible franchise program has been a huge part of helping to turn this dream into a reality."

BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL



Established in 2007, Bright & Beautiful has been improving the lives of its many franchise owners and clients for over a decade. By providing such a premium cleaning service, the brand ensures many repeat customers that ensure recurring revenues; in fact, 90 per cent of Bright & Beautiful clients go on to use its services multiple times.

Primarily managing an adept team of house cleaners, franchisees can deliver a premium service while working from the comfort of their own homes, so that they can spend quality time with friends and family, and maintain a successful career. Don't just take our word for it; the brand has been the recipient of several female-empowerment awards, including the Barclays Women in Business Award.



AIMS ACCOUNTANTS FOR BUSINESS

As well as being fully set up for remote working – a huge benefit even before the pandemic changed our work lives forever – AIMS Accountants for Business provides franchisees with a client generating system to encourage growth. The brand also establishes fees with its clients in advance rather than hourly rates, keeping things transparent and ethical.

"Accountants have been joining AIMS for the last 26 years to escape corporate life, but in the last five or so years we have seen a marked increase in the number of women joining us," says Jessica Rajwan, head of recruitment. "For many, that's because of the flexibility our model offers to run your own business, and to do so around family obligations – so those who want to do the school run, or load their work to outside of school holidays or evenings, can do so."

A rapidly growing Aussie franchise brand, Xpresso Delight has managed to find success in numerous international markets with its popular coffee-as-a-service business model, which allows businesses to remain financially savvy while getting their caffeine fix.

It's also a surefire moneymaker for franchisees, with the semi-passive business model allowing for a steady flow of recurring revenue after spending only half a dozen or so hours on operations every week. This is down to Xpresso Delight's franchisees primarily pitching its services to other business owners; franchise partners can hire their own staff to run other aspects of admin or maintenance, keeping the overall time commitment to the concept low.

XPRESSO DELIGHT



GET AHEAD VA

One of the best things about the Get Ahead VA franchise opportunity is that it can be scaled up or down to suit an entrepreneur's needs. If you're looking to prioritise the 'life' side of your work-life balance, then fewer clients can be taken on to accommodate other commitments. Alternatively, franchisees can hire a vast team to truly create their own network of success.

"The Get Ahead VA franchise is totally flexible, which means it is suitable for women who want to work around other commitments, such as children or other family members," says Rebecca Newenham, founder. "It's an opportunity to be your own boss and enjoy work-life balance whilst still being part of an award-winning and profitable brand."

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Andy Simpson,
FASTSIGNS Leeds

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Solving the solitude of self-employment

Franchising can help overcome the common obstacles you face if you want to be your own boss

WORDS BY CATHRYN HAYES

In these uncertain times, during a global pandemic with recessionary pressures rising, you wouldn't think that starting a business would be high on people's agenda.

However, according to recent research, 64 per cent of the U.K. workforce want to set up their own business, rising to 83 per cent among 18 to 24 year olds.

What's driving this desire for self-employment? One in three want flexible working and to be able to work from home, while around the same number dislike their current job.

And yet, according to the same research, 43 per cent of these aspiring business owners don't believe they will set up on their own. A quarter are concerned it will be too stressful. Men fear competition and failure and women worry about whether they have the

"The franchisor has already operated the business to prove the model works"

relevant skills and are also significantly less confident of fulfilling their business dreams.

Franchising could help you overcome many of these obstacles, providing a route into self-employment by offering training and support, as well as a format to follow.

Three key benefits

Here are three key benefits of buying a franchise:

- You have a proven format to follow

The franchisor has already operated the business to prove the model works and should have evidence of successful trading to demonstrate this.

As a new franchisee, you'll start your business under the umbrella of the existing brand, with a structure to work to, which should reduce the stress of having to think of everything yourself.

- The risks are lower with franchising than starting up on your own

The latest British Franchise Association/NatWest research shows that commercial failure accounted for under one per cent of franchise unit changes. The same survey revealed 93 per cent of franchisees reported profitability and over 90 per cent were happy with their relationship with their franchisor.

- Training and support will be provided

As a new franchisee, you should receive comprehensive training in the operation of your business, enabling you to run it with confidence.

The franchisor should be there to support you, especially in the early days of trading - this is an important part of why franchise businesses are less likely to fail.

There should be ongoing training, too, as you build your business and gain in experience, helping you to develop your skills as a franchisee.

Less stressful experience

Franchising can be a great way to get into business for yourself, with support, training and a proven format combining to make it a less stressful experience than trying to go it alone.

Of course, not everyone is cut out to be a business owner. It involves lots of hard work and is never going to be entirely risk free.

However, if it's something you've always dreamed of, at some point you should take action if those dreams are ever to become a reality. Don't let a lack of confidence stop you.



THE AUTHOR

Cathryn Hayes is franchise director at Revive! Auto Innovations

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

A run-down of how the industry's biggest brands are making business ownership possible for every kind of entrepreneur



One of the main benefits of franchising is its accessibility. It has the inherent benefits and

independence that come with opening your own business, but provides a support network to help first-time entrepreneurs or even established franchisees to make the most of their respective market.

Don't just take out word for it, though. To highlight just how accessible franchising is across a variety of industries, we reached out to the most successful franchise brands to find out how they're making business ownership more possible than ever before.

VISITING ANGELS

Established:
1998 (U.S.), 2017 (U.K.)

Number of locations:
Over 700

Interviewee:
Dan Archer, managing director (U.K.)



What steps are in place to help entrepreneurs to become Visiting Angels franchisees?

Initial training provides the opportunity to learn from our industry experts; people who have spent decades in both the care and the franchise industry, and who know how to make this business work. We would usually fly franchisees to our worldwide HQ in Philadelphia for classroom-style training but, whilst that's not possible, the programme is conducted virtually – with a week of learning coming directly from the U.K. head office.

We don't believe in training franchisees once and sending them on their way. We provide regular, ongoing training for the life of their franchise: a combination of e-learning, live webinars, group, and one-to-one sessions provide a comprehensive program, designed to help them to be the best business owner they can be.

What kind of experience or personality traits are important for your franchisees?

Franchisees don't need a background in health or social care, or need to have run their own business before, but there are some skills and experiences that are essential for making a success. These include:

- **People management:** Franchisees run a big team and need to delegate effectively
- **Resilience:** As a care provider, we have the usual setbacks and rejections, alongside contending with challenges such as recruitment, retention of caregivers, and even the death of beloved clients
- **Advanced communication:** As the face of the business, franchisees need the ability to engage with all manner of people, articulating how and why Visiting Angels is different
- **Emotional intelligence:** Our business is steeped in emotion, from clients and their families to our caregivers, and franchisees must truly be in tune with our carer-centric mission.





SCHOOL OF ROCK

Established: 2002

Number of locations: 280

Interviewee: Stacey Ryan, COO

How do you support entrepreneurs from inquiring, all the way to owning a School of Rock location?

Many of our inquiries are results of a direct or indirect experience with School of Rock. Their child attends a school, they have friends who attend, or they saw a show and were amazed. It

doesn't take long for people to get hooked on School of Rock.

From the signing of the franchise agreement to the opening of their doors, all new schools are closely supported by our New School Openings team. This team works diligently to support all milestones from lease signing to day-to-day operations. We are all working together toward the same goal and it is a team approach every step of the way.

What kind of personality fits the School of Rock franchise opportunity best?

School of Rock is looking for well-qualified candidates who have either an existing franchise background, or who have had experience managing people in their former careers.

Additionally, we are looking for candidates who have a passion for music, enjoy being with children, and are looking for a valuable business opportunity coupled with a desire to give back to their community.



LITTLE CAESARS

Established: 1993 (Australia), 1959

Number of locations:
Several thousand

Interviewee: Jamie Wolfe, director, franchise development

Who stands out as an especially strong franchisee within your network?

One franchisee who comes to mind is Vicki Dunn Marshall of West Virginia, who started with the brand as a store

crew member.

While it's not uncommon for operators to have worked their way up through the system, Vicki has become one of our most commanding franchisees with a very large footprint.

The passion she developed for the brand as a Little Caesars employee inspired her to invest in the franchise opportunity. After nearly 40 years of growing her business by bringing family and other franchisees into

the fold, her network is now 26 franchise locations strong across three states: West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio. She's even evolved her business with a food truck to meet consumers in areas outside of her standard markets.

What's the step-by-step journey from entrepreneur to Little Caesars franchisee?

The prospect's journey starts with their inquiry, to which a development manager will respond by reaching out for the candidate's background, business goals, desired location, and financial qualifications. After this, the candidate will fill out a Little Caesars franchise application, return any required documentation and pass both a background and credit check.

Upon passing these checks, Little Caesars provides the candidate a franchise disclosure document (FDD) and additional networking connections to other current franchisees whom they can contact for first-hand insight into what the franchise opportunity entails.

From inquiry to store opening, candidates are taken through each of these steps in a seamless manner. We utilize an internal CRM tool where cross-functional team members at Little Caesars corporate work together closely to ensure that the candidate is serviced properly at every stage of the process.





RESTORATION 1

Established: 2008

Number of locations:
350 agreements awarded

Interviewee: Sherry Rose, COO

Do franchisees need restoration experience to succeed with Restoration 1?

Restoration 1 franchisees include former stockbrokers, corporate executives, and tradesmen alike, all of whom enjoy equal success. Neither industry experience nor experience owning a business is required, but we recommend that you have a proven track record of leadership and are confident in your ability to manage people, have an entrepreneurial spirit, are community-minded, and have the drive to follow our business model.

How approachable do you think the franchise industry is?

I personally believe people are more aware of franchising today than ever before, as there are so many great concepts. The more people understand that there are choices that can fit their needs and interests, franchising will become even more popular and attractive to individuals.



POPPIES

Established: 1980

Number of locations: 22

Interviewee: Chris Wootton,
managing director

What does your franchisee network look like?

Our franchisees come from a variety of backgrounds including former bank managers, careers advisors, teachers, nurses, ex-forces personnel plus a wide range of management positions. They all share one common thread – their ambition to build a successful and profitable business that is rewarding and lifestyle friendly.

Many of our franchisees started the business in new territories but we also have several second-generation franchisees who took over from their parents at retirement and others who bought established businesses from retiring franchisees.

Do you think more education is needed around franchising?

Whilst the franchise industry likes to think it's approachable – and it has certainly seen major progression in the last decade – I think there



remains some fundamental confusion for the general public about what a franchise is. We continue to educate people about why they don't necessarily need business experience and operational experience in a particular field to make a good franchisee.

It's important we take every opportunity as an industry to explain clearly to the wider public how a franchise exists to support a business partnership with a franchisee – you bring your strengths and we, as the franchisor, help to back-up any skills or experience gaps.

NEIGHBORLY

Established: 1981

Number of locations:
Almost 4,400

Interviewee: Mary Kennedy
Thompson, COO

Who's a particularly stand-out franchisee from your network?

Valerie Stewart of Mr. Appliance is a great example of someone who has excelled as a home services business owner despite having a strictly corporate career for 28 years prior to opening her franchise.

She knew that the resources could build a profitable business, and she wouldn't have to invent each and every component needed for success thanks to the coaching and guidance she'd receive from Mr. Appliance. She focused on serving her customers with the experience of the franchisor, and she's now a



shining example of best practices for the other owners in our network.

Is franchising approachable?

I started my journey in franchising almost 30 years ago as a franchisee myself, so I can attest to the approachability of franchising as a whole. I came from a military background with no business experience at all and was given a system to learn from and follow to help ensure my success. I would not have had succeeded early on without the franchising safety net. Franchising is about systems and being able to replicate them with scale – I saw that firsthand.



CODE NINJAS

Established: 2016

Number of locations: 602

Interviewee: Justin Nihiser, CEO

Do you think the franchise industry is as welcoming as it could be for female entrepreneurs?

The franchise industry has continued to evolve to become a more inclusive and equitable model for successful small business owners. As that happens, more women are joining the franchise industry as owners of franchise locations and as franchisors. There are a variety of franchise concepts that are increasingly approachable to women in the tech, health, and beauty space – and Code Ninjas is just one of them. In the end, it is up to the team that first interacts with potential franchisees to make or break the approachability of the specific franchise. I could own a franchise with a scope that's perfect for your experience and passion, but if I don't make it possible for you to get involved and see if it is truly a perfect fit, we both could lose out.

What kind of person makes a good Code Ninjas franchisee?

We're looking for people who are passionate about empowering kids to unlock their potential for the future. That could be anyone from white-collar professionals looking for a more rewarding career, to IT and technology professionals who already understand the value of learning to code, to educators – and anyone in between. A number of our franchisees are parents who were looking for a similar program for their own kids, realised it didn't exist, and chose to bring Code Ninjas to their communities. The most important thing is being able to follow the proven system.

ACTIONCOACH

Established: 1993 (Australia), 2001 (U.K.)

Number of locations: Over 200 in U.K.

Interviewee: Julie Wagstaff, managing director



What makes business coaching a great opportunity for first-time franchisees?

I think the strength here for us lies in the amazing network of 200-plus franchise partners we have in the U.K., not to mention hundreds further afield globally, who are all willing to support our new franchise partners joining.

Business coaching is about recognising the challenges that business owners are facing, then offering solutions in a way that empowers the business owner to gain confidence for future challenges.

It's rare that a new franchise partner can come across a scenario a client finds themselves in which hasn't already been addressed by another Action Coach in our network.

Do you think franchising is an approachable industry?

Absolutely. It's great that more and more women are getting into the industry. With our training and support, it helps franchise partners build the life that they want – this is great for our female franchise partners who may have thought they would have difficulty juggling a business with family life.

I believe we're seeing a shift in the business coaching profession and I'm confident that soon enough we will see a balance between the proportion of men and women in this B2B service. With ongoing awards, events, and initiatives helping to recognise those shining stars, we're heading in the right direction to help achieve just that.



Franchise fast-track: how to go from start-up to scale up

If you have ambitions to build a multi-unit business, franchising can help achieve your goal. But a strategic approach is essential for success

WORDS BY PAM GORDON



THE AUTHOR

Pam Gordon is franchise recruitment and development consultant at The Franchising Centre

The story of franchising is a complex one when you start to discuss multi-unit franchising.

The franchise industry's fundamental belief is that being a hands-on franchisee will develop and grow a business to greater levels and to a better standard and quality than an employee.

The paradox of multi-unit franchises is that often they're operated on a day-to-day basis by an employee and not the franchisee directly.

"For the franchisee, there is a danger of becoming overextended when it comes to resources and finance"

However, multi-unit franchises do seem to work and benefit the hands-on employees, the franchisees (multi-unit owners) and the franchisor. As a result, we often see this strategy being used by master and global franchisors.

Profile of a multi-unit franchisee

A would-be multi-unit franchisee is often an ambitious individual or a group of investors, family or friends

coming together to invest and pool their experience and skills to start their own business and see franchising as a quicker route to returns.

They may have more funds to invest and more equity to secure finance, so are able to consider larger investment franchises or development agreements with multi-site openings.

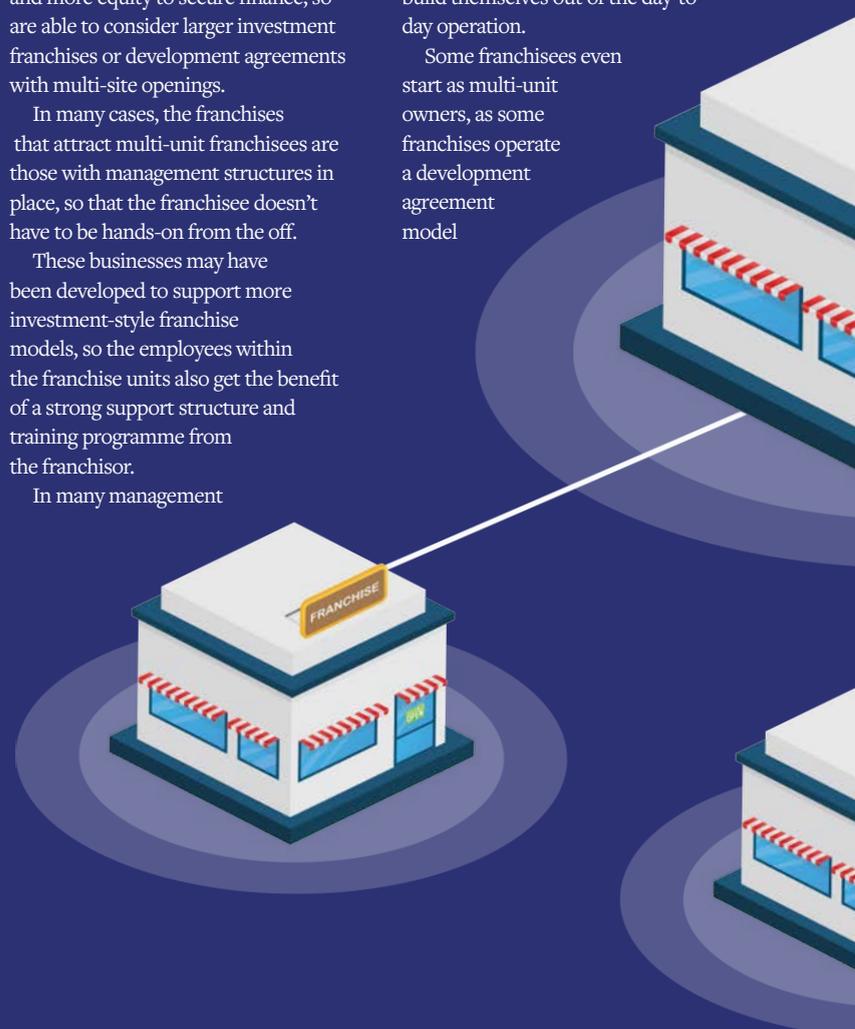
In many cases, the franchises that attract multi-unit franchisees are those with management structures in place, so that the franchisee doesn't have to be hands-on from the off.

These businesses may have been developed to support more investment-style franchise models, so the employees within the franchise units also get the benefit of a strong support structure and training programme from the franchisor.

In many management

franchise models, the franchisee starts directly within the business, but very much in a management role. The model allows for the growth of a staffing structure around them to build themselves out of the day-to-day operation.

Some franchisees even start as multi-unit owners, as some franchises operate a development agreement model



– often in the quick service restaurant/ food sector – where a franchise agreement says the franchisee has to open a number of units within a particular time period.

Some franchisors want to ensure the franchisee has access to the capital to fund the agreed number of outlets from the start and others will plan the growth within the business planning, so knowing that when unit one gets to a certain size it should be able to fund the investment in unit two and so on.

In other networks, multi-unit franchises are more organic and weren't part of a strategic plan.

They often came about because of an ambitious individual who had grown their original business substantially and had built a team that allowed them to take on a neighbouring area or buy an additional business, either from within the franchise network or an independent one that was brought under the umbrella of the franchise brand.

This can only be done with the agreement and support of the franchisor and the franchise network and also at a time

when the franchisee and their team are ready. In my experience, it has to be planned and the timing has to be right, as the first unit needs to be able to have the franchisee less hands-on.

In sectors such as fast food, an outlet might be open 24/7, meaning the franchisee can't be there all the time, so already a structure of staff delegation to managers is in place, allowing the franchisee to be less directly involved in the business.

In other sectors, it might take more time to build that team structure and get to a point where the business has a manager in place, allowing the franchisee to think about another location or unit.

What can often happen is that neither the new unit or the existing one grow as the set-up wasn't right or the timing wasn't planned.

So a franchisor ideally will be looking to work with the franchisee, providing advice about the plans, and expect the franchisee to present their proposal for growth, rather than just 'selling' them another area. This approach makes for longer-term stability for both parties to support the expansion.

Multi-unit franchising from a franchisor's perspective

Multi-unit franchisees can be easier to manage from a franchisor's point of view.

As an example, rather than having 200 franchisees, having 100 with two units each means benefiting from potential economies of scale

36%

The number of franchisees who own more than one unit, up seven per cent since 2015.

Source: 2018 British Franchise Association NatWest franchise survey.

when it comes to support, training and communication.

The financial institutions, such as the major banks, view multi-unit franchising in a positive light too.

The initial investment may be higher than a hands-on franchise, but for them there are cross-selling opportunities for loans, asset finance, payroll support and business insurance.

In addition, many lenders will consider loaning money to multi-unit franchisees who have a portfolio of investment across different or complementary sectors, such as gyms and beauty or therapy businesses, because it reduces their risk.

Potential pitfalls

Multi-unit franchising looks like a great way to build a sustainable business that benefits from economies of scale. But, like many things in business, there are potential pitfalls.

For the franchisee, there is a danger of becoming overextended when it comes to resources and finance or not having the right staff in place that allows for the successful management of both trading and new locations.

On top of this, a multi-unit franchisee may have put all their eggs in one basket and become reliant on one sector and one franchisor.

A strategic risk to the franchisor is if a franchisee ends up owning a significant proportion of the network.

During my time in the industry, I've witnessed the management service fee that was paid by a franchisee who owned five sites become a significant amount of the franchisor's income, which started to give them not only power and influence, but became a risk if the business failed or the franchisee sold up.

Also, some franchisees in fast food chains have formed collectives and opposed decisions made by the franchisor, leading to conflict in the network.

In summary, multi-unit franchising can be a great way to run a business from both a franchisee and franchisor standpoint, as long as it's strategic, planned and monitored.



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WORDS BY SUZIE MCCAFFERTY

"It's vital that a brand's recruitment strategy is as watertight as possible"



while around the same number dislike their current job.

And yet, according to the same research, 43 per cent of these aspiring business owners don't believe they will set up on their own. A quarter are concerned it

will be too stressful. Men fear competition and failure and women worry about whether they have the relevant skills and are also significantly less confident of fulfilling their business dreams.

Franchising could help you overcome many of these obstacles, providing a route into self-employment by offering training and support, as well as a format to follow.

Three key benefits

Here are three key benefits of buying a franchise:

- You have a proven format to follow.

The franchisor has already operated the business to prove the model works and should have evidence of successful trading to demonstrate this.

As a new franchisee, you'll start your business under the umbrella of the existing brand, with a structure to work to, which should reduce the stress of having to think of everything yourself.

- The risks are lower with franchising than starting up on your own.

The latest British Franchise Association/NatWest research shows that commercial failure accounted for under one per cent of franchise unit changes. The same survey revealed 93 per cent of franchisees reported profitability and over 90 per cent were happy with their relationship with their franchisor.

- Training and support will be provided.

As a new franchisee, you should receive comprehensive training in the operation of your business, enabling you to run it with confidence.

The franchisor should be there to support you, especially in the early days of trading – this is an important part of why franchise businesses are less likely to fail.

There should be ongoing training too, as you build your business and gain in experience, helping you to develop your skills as a franchisee.

Less stressful experience

Franchising can be a great way to get into business for yourself, with support, training and a proven format combining to make it a less stressful experience than trying to go it alone.

Of course, not everyone is cut out to be a business owner. It involves lots of hard work and is never going to be entirely risk free.

However, if it's something you've always dreamed of, at some point you should take action if those dreams are ever to become a reality. Don't let a lack of confidence stop you.

In these uncertain times, during a global pandemic with recessionary pressures rising, you wouldn't think that starting a business would be high on people's agenda.

However, according to recent research 64 per cent of the U.K. workforce want to set up their own business, rising to 83 per cent among 18-24-year-olds.

What's driving this desire for self-employment? One in three want flexible working and to be able to work from home,



THE AUTHOR

Suzie McCafferty is CEO of franchise consultancy Platinum Wave

Top tips for taking on staff

These are the essential elements to consider if you want to become an excellent employer

WORDS BY ERICA WOLFE-MURRAY



THE AUTHOR
Erica Wolfe-Murray is a leading business coach and expert, and author of *Simple Tips Smart Ideas*

When you're taking on staff for the first time, there are a number of aspects to employment you need to consider carefully before you hire. And when you have hired, there are other areas you need to stay on top of as your business grows.

Review your own employment history

Before you take on any team members, go back through your own employment experiences. Review who you enjoyed working for, why they made a good employer and what aspects of the roles you enjoyed and didn't enjoy. Consider both the job description – what you were being asked to do – as well as your

working environment and company culture. Ask friends about their experiences, too. This will help you to determine the framework and culture of your own employment style.

Research employment law

As an employer, there's a raft of employment law you need to be across. From environmental and employee health and safety to accounting, discrimination and rights to work, it's vital to ensure you're staying the right side of the law. Different sectors of the economy not

only have to comply with U.K.-wide law, but may also have their own specific directives. For example, there may be training requirements, material storage rules

or security checks that need to be carried out.

As an employer, you will be responsible for the company operating safely and legally within the law. You will also need to take out employers' liability insurance. Finding out about all these aspects before you take on a single employee is vital.

Determine the company culture

Running a company with employees is very different from owning a company where the founders have worked together since launch.

You'll need to put a management structure in place, even if you're only taking on a handful of staff. With few employees, this can be light touch and have an open framework, but your



team needs to understand who they report to, who is responsible for what management aspects of the company, and who to speak to for guidance.

Different owners have varying skills and abilities. As you employ more staff and the team grows, it's important to harness the right leaders for the right teams.

If you feel you're lacking in management or leadership skills, ensure you take part in leadership training. There are many good courses available online and locally, with countless books having been written about it. It's worth the time and cost to ensure your company develops a healthy, welcoming culture for your staff.

Happy companies work well, have a lower staff turnover and welcome input from all employees, who feel valued and safe.

Employees are individuals

Each person you look to employ will have their own hopes and dreams and their own reasons for working. But you as the employer have your own requirements for the business. It's important to match both of these from the outset.

When looking to hire, ensure you write a clear job description of what they're expected to do and the skills required to undertake the role. Be straightforward about working

conditions and remuneration offered, including pay, holiday, and pension. Give an honest picture of your ambitions for the company, with guidance to the sort of character the role might suit.

Your job description needs to be reflective of the role and should not inflate or be full of hyperbole about the company. Inaccurate or misleading job descriptions can cause difficulties and expense for both parties down the line when realities fail to match.

Look to bring in a diverse working team. Research has proven that companies with a range of ages, sexes and backgrounds are more successful than those drawn from a limited pool.

Behaving as an employer

Now you're an employer, you need to ensure your company is a good one.

Good employers ensure their teams know what can be reasonably expected of their working role and what the rewards for this are.

Each employee should be given an appropriate contract that sets out the terms of the relationship between you. This should cover the key aspects of their employment.

Any terms you might need to vary – such as working hours or place of employment – can be covered in an accompanying staff handbook. The contract needs to be fair to both parties to ensure there's no room for grievance further down the line.

It's also important to give employees a framework for how you will be assessing and rewarding them for their work moving forward.

A six-monthly or annual performance appraisal is common, with feedback being given in both directions, actions agreed and reviewed. Some companies link appraisals to pay reviews, whereas

75%

of franchise units employ staff and 30 per cent employ six or more staff.

Source: 2018 British Franchise Association NatWest franchise survey.

others believe in keeping these separate.

As an employer, you also need to provide a safe, supportive environment for your team. With COVID-19 changing working practice, you may be building a dispersed workforce or having to provide a safe place of work where your employees attend in person. Whichever it is, you'll need to consider their well-being while they are at work, as this is now your responsibility.

"Happy companies work well, have a lower staff turnover and welcome input from all employees, who feel valued and safe"

Good employers also provide their teams with a career ladder.

In the early days of employing staff this may seem some way off. But if you're looking for ambitious, engaged employees to help you build your venture, they will want to understand that you have growth plans and they could be part of these plans.

This can include encouraging the pursuit of further qualifications, additional training and upskilling, both in their job function, but also around management and leadership. Companies don't stand still. Neither do you as an employer or those people you will be employing.

An open dialogue, regular reviews, team meetings and two-way discussion is crucial. Everyone needs to ensure there is a warm working environment that allows both the company and all who work there to flourish. But the person who can make or break this is you, now you are an employer.



How to handle founder fatigue

Three ways to manage stress, burnout and the pressure of running a business

WORDS BY ANGELICA MALIN

Author photo by Rosie Parsons



THE AUTHOR

Angelica Malin is an award-winning entrepreneur, editor in chief of *About Time* magazine and author of new book *She Made It*, published by Kogan Page and available for £14.99

Burnout is one of the most common afflictions that U.K. founders experience. In fact, it's not just entrepreneurs who suffer, as a recent Gallop poll found that nearly two-thirds of full-time workers are dealing with burnout at some point while at work. Between 2019 and 2020, there were an estimated 828,000 workers affected by work-related stress, depression or anxiety. So, not only is looking after your mental health important for overall wellbeing, it's good business sense, too.

The problem is: we're more switched on than ever before. Constantly checking our phones. Answering emails. Scrolling through Instagram. Replying to WhatsApp messages. We're suffering with constant digital overload – which, when left untreated, leads to burn out and increased anxiety. The boundary between work and personal life has become so blurred – not

"Avoiding burnout is about taking control of your time and making work, work for you"

helped by a global pandemic and national lockdowns, where we're trapped inside and bored – meaning, as a society, we've forgotten how to rest.

This, obviously, leads to problems such as founder fatigue,

increased feelings of stress and the danger of burnout, as you're never getting the distance needed from your working day. If you're looking to get the most out of your career, without burning out, here are my three tips on how to avoid founder fatigue and maximise your productivity, without compromising your mental health:

1 Plan the week ahead on a Sunday night

Productivity is something you plan for – it doesn't happen by chance. I take an hour every Sunday to plan my week ahead – it's important if you're an entrepreneur working across different projects or businesses that you dedicate your time accordingly. I look at the balance of different projects I'm working on, making sure I'm not spreading myself too thin on any one thing.

It might be helpful to colour-code your diary, so you can get a visual representation on how your time is being spent. Avoiding burnout is about taking control of your time and making work, work for you – so factor in everything you'd like to do in your week, including workouts, self-care and social activities.

2 Make your down time non-negotiable

The main reason we burn out is not having enough down time. Time off is as important as time on – it's your time to recharge, get perspective, come up with fresh ideas and feel excited and inspired for the week ahead. If you don't give yourself time off, you can't bring your best self to work.

Make time to yourself non-negotiable – block out the time in your diary and don't forget the importance of fun. That will look different for everyone – it might be a dance class, a long walk with the dog or a Zoom cookery class – but fun is an important part of everyone's working life. Forget FOMO, focus on JFTI – 'Just For The Joy Of It'.

Try to get out into nature every day – or at least leave the house! – ideally without your phone. If we spend too much time with our phones in our hands, we end up feeling suffocated by work and technology. Work is something you should enjoy and look forward to, so creating a physical boundary between work is important to reconnect with that enjoyment factor. I'd recommend always blocking out a lunch break in your calendar and try to have one day a week where you have no meetings or calls at all.



3 Plan your time efficiently

Productivity and avoiding burnout are about understanding your personal working style and how you personally work best. When you're your own boss, you have to really be

your own boss – that means taking monthly reviews of your efficiency and progress. Get interested in your working habits, understanding how to be most productive with your time and skill set.

For me, that means breaking my working day into 40-minute chunks of time – I find I lose focus after that time – and taking regular 10-minute work breaks, without screens. I'm a morning person, so my energy is always best

then and I'll do the most pressing or creative tasks then, saving my admin and more mindless tasks for the afternoon. You need to find how to work best for you – and when you're your most productive and energetic self. Corporate conditioning has a lot to answer for, including our perception of what a 'normal' way of working is – be careful not to internalise nine-to-five culture and presenteeism. If you're your own boss, you can make your time work for you – including working unconventional hours.

My final piece of advice is to do a weekly digital detox, ideally 24 hours without your phone and laptop. We've really lost the art of rest – and we need to remember how to truly relax, without digital distractions and 'urgent' work matters. Monday will come. Give yourself Saturday. Breathe. Walk. Read. Remember that stress is a feeling – one that you're capable of managing, if you give yourself the right tools and mental space.



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IN CONVERSATION: HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

It is safe to say that the franchise industry is not a boy's club anymore

INTERVIEWS BY AMANDA PETERS



THE AUTHOR
Amanda Peters is a staff writer for *What Franchise* and *Global Franchise*

The number of female leaders is growing by leaps and bounds as businesses the world over are beginning to recognise the value that women in leadership positions can have.

As women are pushing through cultural boundaries to pave the way for future generations, we sat down with nine boss ladies from our *Business Woman: 100 Influential Women in Franchising* list to discuss how they are playing their part in cracking the glass ceiling.



PANEL OF BOSS LADIES:



KRISTEN PECHACEK, chief growth officer, Massage Luxe International (KP)



LAURA REA DICKEY, CEO, Dickey's Barbecue Pit (LD)



EMMA LEHNER, CEO and co-founder, Bodystreet International (EL)



HEATHER HUDSON, COO and co-founder, 9Round Fitness (HH)



AMBER MANNING, CEO, Just Cuts (AM)



CHRISTINE KELLY, founder and chairman, Little Kickers (CK)



LISA MLINAR MERRY, COO, Junk King (LM)



AMANDA HALL, COO, Clean Juice (AH)



MEG ROBERTS, CEO and president, The Lash Lounge (MR)

Q: What is your most important piece of advice to succeed as a female leader today?

KP: Identify the purpose behind what you are doing and stay strong and decisive to fulfil that purpose. Believe in your instinct, pull your shoulders back, and never shy away from the challenge that sits in front of you.

CK: Based on the past year, I would have to say that ensuring that an organisation is agile is incredibly important. The pandemic raised some very unique challenges for so many businesses, and the ability to adapt quickly has been critical to the survival of many.

AM: Surround yourself with like-minded leaders. I am part of a franchisor CEO group, as it can sometimes be lonely as a leader, so make sure you have someone to share a coffee with or to share ideas and vent. Seek out experts in your industry to learn from, and don't be afraid to take a risk.

LD: What gets measured gets managed. I would encourage you to set quantifiable, measurable goals for yourself and regularly evaluate your performance. Without attaching a benchmark to your success, how are you able to track it? Don't wait for someone else to define your success, do it yourself. Without confirming, proactively defining success in large and small ways for your career, how will you know when you've arrived and when you should push for more?

LM: My main piece of advice is to be confident and speak up while doing so respectfully. Somebody said to me a long time ago that you have to decide to put your positive pants on even when situations may get tough.

There is a quote from Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube, that has stuck with me throughout my career, one I continue to live by and applies perfectly here: "Opportunities come when you least expect them. Rarely are opportunities perfectly presented to you. In a nice little box with a yellow bow on top. Opportunities – the good ones – are messy, confusing and hard to recognise. They're risky. They challenge you. But things happen so fast because our world is changing so much, you have to make decisions without perfect information."

MR: The answer should be the same regardless of gender. Be true to your character, don't conform, don't apologise, be you. If a person is authentic, and they have the characteristics required of a leader, for example – patience, vision, tenacity, strength, resolve, integrity – then those traits will be recognised and hopefully rewarded with greater responsibility.

AH: In leadership, the most important key to success is simple: people first! The success of a leader is a direct reflection of the success of their team. True leadership puts the team's needs first. This does not mean doing their job. This means empowering your team by giving them all the appropriate tools, coaching and expectations to clearly execute.

EL: My most important advice for all women is if you know what you want, have the courage and dare to live your life; no matter if it's about family, business or social goals. Discipline, perseverance, consistency, organisation and humour – that is my recipe for success.

HH: Know yourself: your strengths and things you don't excel at. Do the things you are great at well, and delegate what you're not great at with humility and grace. In doing this, lean on your team for input as they are on the frontlines and often have the best solutions to the problems.

"Don't wait for someone else to define your success, do it yourself"

- Laura Rea Dickey, CEO, Dickey's Barbecue Pit



Q: How can both corporate (the company's culture) and regional (the culture of where the company is based) impact the ability for a woman to gain equal recognition for equal contribution when compared to male colleagues?

KP: In the eyes of old school corporate leaders, the perfect worker is fully committed and always available. In the eyes of society, a woman's family is her primary commitment which must mean that work is secondary, therefore, concluding that a woman is not the perfect worker. It is because of this old school mentality that unconscious work bias exists. No person – man or woman – should need to sacrifice home or work to succeed and until this is widely recognised and advocated for, we will remain in our current state.

HH: Keep your eyes open to your own practices so that you are consciously creating the right dynamic in your brand or company. It starts with the right foundation and business owners, managers, and supervisors have to take responsibility for this for equality to truly thrive.

AM: At Just Cuts, we treat everyone as an equal – from admin to CEO. We are all willing to get in and get our hands dirty. I believe treating everyone equally allows both men and women the opportunity to show and grow their skillsets and succeed.

LM: The key is to be open and willing to expand the various levels of leadership that are allowed to collaborate on projects and larger brand initiatives. Unfortunately, there is still a disproportionate number of women in executive leadership roles. Companies should set aside a few times a year to bring in various levels of management into meetings which will, in turn, allow more women to join the conversation.

LD: Transparency, candour and objective results combined with consistent communication are needed for recognition and equitable compensation across any organisation, especially a geographically diverse company like Dickey's. It's also important as a woman to stand up and create visibility for your results and others; create communication and competition that is not self-advocating, but objectively beneficial and collaborative.

AH: Strong corporations drive recognition through a lens of results and data by creating systems that promote balanced recognition based on achieving an objective versus individual gender. Overall the company must create a culture where women are present within all levels of the organisation. A culture of recognition also means valuing your employees and what's important to them that includes celebrating their performance achievements, birthdays, anniversaries or promotional milestones.

EL: It is a difficult question to answer as Bodystreet operates boutique studios on three continents and the role of women is defined differently within each. For a huge community like Bodystreet, it is very important to create guided corporate values that work as a guardrail. Bodystreet developed this from the very beginning and over the years it has given rise to a robust corporate culture. You can neither copy nor fake it. This culture transcends gender, origin and religion and has a common purpose that includes responsibility towards people and the environment.

"No person, man or woman, should need to sacrifice home or work to succeed and until this is widely recognised and advocated for, we will remain in our current state"

- Kristen Pechacek, chief growth officer, Massage Luxe International



Q: What do you wish you knew when you first started in the business world that you know now?

KP: I wish I knew that it was okay to not have all of the answers. I used to hear the word strategy and think it was this untapped piece of code that I had not yet been gifted. The reality is that a strategy is a plan. Some plans succeed, and others fail. You increase your chances of succeeding with data and informed insight, but it may not work and that is okay. The only true failure is not trying or speaking up in the first place.

CK: I knew very little about franchising or football when I started Little Kickers and for the first few years I felt almost apologetic for having set up the business due to my lack of experience – a real case of imposter syndrome! Then I realised over time that the experience I had acquired had made me qualified to run the business and the more my knowledge grew, the more confident I became. I also started to “trust my gut” more on business decisions over time, whereas initially, I second guessed a lot of my decisions because I lacked the experience to be confident that I was doing the right thing.

LM: Don't be afraid to fail because making mistakes will help you grow.

At the beginning of my career, I was so worried about being perfect that I didn't speak up when I should have. Over time, I learnt not to fear failure but rather embrace it as long as you learn from it and don't continue to make those same mistakes over and over. Also, those moments where you are forced to work through how to solve a problem can oftentimes lead to you uncovering your best ideas.

LD: You have to take control of your destiny. Don't wait for opportunities to come to you, go find them or create them. Have a curious mind and always try more. When I was younger and just starting professionally, I thought there was a defined career path that followed hard work. As I gained experience, I realised hard work is rewarded but advancement takes more than that. You must learn to actively seek opportunity, advocate for yourself and the company, and always quantify your efforts and results in long-term value. I have learnt that true female leaders never wait for opportunities, they proactively hunt those opportunities down themselves or design them.

MR: When I started in business, I thought success was about metrics, wins, awards and promotions. As an ambitious business person, I was fortunate to experience many of those

things I thought were important. Yet, I never felt satisfied, and that was troubling. I was checking the boxes, I was moving up – why was I not feeling accomplished? As I moved through my career I began to discover that my passion was fueled by not what I was doing but rather for whom I was doing it. When I discovered franchising, I was instantly changed. I realised the greatest satisfaction for me came from directly helping others – putting your skills to work and seeing the results blossom in another's business. If I knew this three decades ago, I would have been working on behalf of small businesses my entire career.

AH: Hire people that are smarter than you! As you build a team, the job of a great leader is not to know everything but rather to build a team of individuals who are experts in their field and have a passion for the role. This goes back to the philosophy that to be successful as a leader your team must be successful. Having the right people in the right positions is key.

HH: I wish I had been more in touch with my strengths and weaknesses, so I could have skipped some painful lessons! I would have also been more ready for haters early on and would have let it roll off me so I could focus on what mattered.

"Every parent should raise their sons to be aware of how they play a part in respect towards women so that in the next generation this isn't even a part of the conversation anymore"

- Heather Hudson, COO and co-founder, 9Round Fitness



"Hire people that are smarter than you!"

- Amanda Hall, COO, Clean Juice

Q: How can the industry encourage more females to become business leaders in the future?

KP: The most difficult part about correcting industry or workplace gender bias is that most of the time it is unconscious. Because of this, the way to address and ensure equality is to bring conscious attention to it. Attracting and developing women in leadership roles requires company-wide and industry change that is driven from the top as a result of shining a spotlight where bias exists. Diversity committees organised by industry, or even within a company, help to identify this inequality. As female leaders, it is crucially important that we participate in these committees and that we seek out mentorship opportunities with future emerging leaders.

LM: It's having publications like these that give an opportunity to spotlight the women business leaders who have succeeded and aren't afraid to talk about the good as well as the bad of how they got to where they are.

CK: The franchising industry has a pretty good representation of female leaders compared to many other industries, particularly in the U.K. It's great to see so many women at senior levels in the various franchise associations around the world - this sends a very positive message to the industry, as do groups such as EWIF, which have been established to specifically encourage women to take on leadership roles within franchising. I also feel that mentorship is important.

AM: This needs to be a global movement. Most of my career opportunities have been provided to me through men believing in me and being willing to teach me. Female leaders also need to be encouraging of women as leaders. I believe COVID-19 will make a huge impact in providing female leaders with more opportunities due to flexibility in the workplace and being able to work remotely, as we lead businesses while also running the family unit.

LD: Recognise those who deserve to be recognised. The industry should acknowledge and celebrate women for small and large accomplishments. I used to worry specialised recognition reserved for women might be interpreted as not succeeding in general, therefore, specialised recognition was needed, but I have since realised that is the opposite of true. Intentionally recognising outstanding women simply offers another opportunity to encourage achievement, provide good examples and widen positive influence.

MR: The wonderful part about franchising and entrepreneurship is the balance of support and independence it provides. Many women, whether leading in the home or the workplace, are seeking opportunities to contribute more, to develop their passion and secure additional income. I believe there is an opportunity to better educate and inform women of the incredible possibilities of small business ownership and franchising in particular. It's refreshing to see blogs, podcasts and articles like these creating the forums for women to find information, exchange ideas and get informed about franchising.

AH: I firmly believe the key to this is putting more women in business leadership positions with a voice at the highest level of the decision-making process. Inspire more women in your company to see their potential and remove the barriers whatever they may be in your organisation to ensure that there is transparency and visibility for all.

EL: The empowerment of women is not something that only politics or the industry can solve but companies and brands should make this their main task, too.

As an employer, we focus on equal opportunities and among trainees there is equal representation. We also have leadership seminars which has led to a higher number of female leaders in our system. As an honorary senator, I always bring up such success stories to our Senate of the Economy. In this way, we also make our voices heard in politics.

HH: Each woman needs to have the confidence within herself to step up as a leader. But mentoring women who may need a little extra encouragement is a great thing any leader can do to pull up great talent from their female teammates. We've been very purposeful in ensuring that there's equal opportunity for everyone in our company, and it's not lost on us that we can be grateful for having control of that. But if you see behaviour or culture within your company or place of employment that makes it hard for women to have the same opportunities in your workplace, you should speak to someone who can help and become part of the voice needed to bring it to light.

Additionally, every parent should raise their sons to be aware of how they play a part in respect towards women so that in the next generation this isn't even a part of the conversation anymore.



How I identified a gap in the market and built a thriving natural beauty brand

Rosie Khandwala details her journey from learning about sugar waxing in Tanzania to building a beauty brand in the U.K.

WORDS BY ROSIE KHANDWALA



THE AUTHOR
Rosie Khandwala is the co-founder of Aqua Natural

Growing up in a small tropical seaside town was idyllic; I was completely unaware that a different way of life could exist. During my teenage years there was no television, national newspapers came a day late, and no magazines for lifestyle inspiration were available. It was a sheltered life without any outside influence; it was a simple upbringing. At this time Tanzania was going through an economic transformation with the government shifting to socialist policies. Imports of foreign goods were restricted with cosmetics and other beauty products considered luxury products.

My career started from age 15

when I worked as an apprentice in my cousin's hair and beauty salon. As we had no access to any products for the treatments, we used to formulate our own using natural ingredients extracted from herbs and fruits, then combine these with our ethnic recipes. The most popular treatment was waxing, where we would mix sugar and lemon juice to make a paste. That has been the traditional method of hair removal for centuries in East African Asian culture.

I loved waxing, as the results were instant and it could transform the skin, making it look clean and fresh. This experience gave me the knowledge of treating different hair textures, skin tones and removing hairs from all areas of the body.

Immigrant entrepreneur

In 1987, we moved to the U.K. I had a six year old and was seven months pregnant. Emotionally, it was a difficult period, especially after the birth. But there was a sense of excitement as it was a new beginning for a better future.

My first year involved me just trying to adjust and settle into life with the family. However, at the back of my mind there was this strong urge to be able to contribute and have financial independence.

I was not actively seeking to set up a business but something that would

give me a home and work-life balance, hence why establishing myself as a mobile therapist suited me perfectly. While I was in the process of setting this business up I realised there was an absence of sugar wax for waxing treatments. I felt that this was an opportunity that had come my way that could not be ignored.

Developing the product

I had a gut instinct to explore the possibilities further. Along with my husband we did some market research to ensure there was an opportunity to introduce the concept of strip sugar wax into the market. At the time, the awareness of natural beauty was brought into focus by Anita Roddick of The Body Shop and there was no doubt in my mind that it was the right time.

It was the start of our new business, and it was exciting and we were full of enthusiasm. Going through the process at each stage from identifying premises to suit the manufacturing process, equipment installation, branding design, sourcing of raw materials, and working with teams and in each field. This was an invaluable lesson on understanding building the business from the ground up.

Initially, we focused on targeting the professional beauty market, launching our Aqua Natural brand. This proved to be tougher than we thought. Our lack





of understanding of the beauty industry was a setback as the waxing sector was well established with known brands to the beauty professionals.

Soon after we were faced with the 1991-92 recession. This meant we had to look for other sectors of the market. To us, the most obvious option was to approach The Body Shop. Within a year we were granted a contract to launch the first 'sugaring' product under their label. We were so proud to not only see a sugar waxing product in the market but for it to be our product.

Problems along the way

The initial launch was quite substantial and went into all stores except North America. But soon after we had a recall as the product stability failed. The reason for this was we were manufacturing using the traditional way of formulation, mixing crystal sugar and lemon juice. This caused the product to be inconsistent and lose its efficacy. Nothing prepares you for how to deal with such a huge problem! We were very



fortunate that we were given time to rectify this issue.

A course in sugar chemistry was the inspiration which gave us confidence to experiment working with blends of syrups. This not only improved the efficacy but also gave a longer shelf life to the product; it turned out to be a winning formulation. We retained our contract with The Body Shop and the relationship continued without a hitch for 18 years.

However, the blow came when The Body Shop was taken over and we were informed that our contract would come to an end. There is no period in business when one can say it is plain sailing. Nothing prepares you for when you are informed that 85 per cent of your business will be coming to an end in three months' time.

This was the turning point. The business was 20 years old at this point and we had built it to a level where we felt we had a strong manufacturing base and it was time to move on from the dependency of contract manufacturing: we needed to create our own brand identity. That was the start of our current brand, Sugar Coated, which has proved to be a success story of a small family business.

Creating the brand

The awareness of sugar waxing soon grew after the launch of The Body Shop and other well-known beauty brands entered the market. The demand from consumers seeking out natural brands has been on the rise year by year.

Having traditionally been a manufacturer I have mostly been behind the scenes, but in recent years I have gained the confidence to inform people on the ethical and environmental aspects

"Nothing prepares you for when you are informed that 85% of your business will be coming to an end in three months' time"

of their hair removal and beauty choices. These are values that I hold dear and that have driven me. In the early days I didn't have the confidence or the know-how to get my message out there, but social media has been such a great tool to interact with our potential customers and to show them that waxing isn't something to be afraid of - it doesn't have to hurt nor does it need to be a disaster if you spill it. It is easy enough for you to do yourself at home.

We have also been incredibly lucky as we're now stocked in the new Next Beauty and Home stores, which for a small family-run business is a huge deal! I'm incredibly proud of all the work that we are doing and we will continue to reach out to as many people as we can about the benefits of sugar wax, not just for hair removal, but also for the planet and the skin.





“The time is now for the Black Franchise Leadership Council to move the needle on diversifying franchising”

Prominent U.S. franchise lawyer, Earsa Jackson, CFE, talks to *Business Woman* about the newly-formed Black Franchise Leadership Council, a network for Black American leaders to make the franchise model more accessible

BW: What's the role of the Black Franchise Leadership Council (BFLC) and what are its goals, challenges and ambitions?

EJ: The BFLC was launched in February 2021 to coincide with the celebration of Black History Month. The mission of the BFLC is to:

- Foster awareness, understanding, and access to franchise opportunities for Black entrepreneurs
- Create and maintain an organisational culture where inclusion, diversity, and creativity are valued
- Educate franchisors, franchisees,

suppliers, and the franchise community to provide new perspectives and stimulate discussion of blacks in franchising

- Provide regular opportunities for the exchange of information information with Council Members and, as appropriate, with other councils, boards, committees and other groups within the Diversity Institute, IFA Foundation, IFA and external groups

The Council has received significant support from the franchise community at large, as well as from the IFA Board lead by chairwoman Catherine Monson, CEO and

president of FASTSIGNS, and IFA president and CEO, Robert Cresanti. It has also received bipartisan congressional support.

BW: How did you become part of the BFLC and what will your role be?

EJ: I am the chair of the Diversity Institute which is one of the signature programs under the International Franchise Association's Foundation. I also serve on the board of the Foundation. The BFLC was born out of the Diversity Institute and will operate under the Institute. I was involved with the initial meeting to call together key players to lay the groundwork for the Council's role. I will continue to

be intimately involved with the BFLC providing strategic leadership and guidance.

BW: Who is involved in the BFLC and what will their roles be?

EJ: The BFLC is chaired by Diversity Institute board member, Richard Snow, vice president, SBA national franchise relationship manager as WSFS Bank. Carolyn Thurston, founder of Wisdom Senior Care franchise and board member of the International Franchise Association will serve as vice chair. Pamela Gore, senior manager, franchise recruitment at Inspire Brands and Diversity Institute board member, will serve as secretary. LaTonia Pouncey, president and owner, AtWork Personnel NYC and Diversity Institute board member, as well as vice chair of the Diversity Institute and IFA board member, JD Draper, CEO of Viridian Group have provided amazing support to the BFLC.

General membership is broad and open to leaders from all business industries and franchise sectors including franchisees, franchisors, suppliers, and stakeholders who reflect a broad spectrum of diversity of thought, experiences and ideas. To ensure progress against goals, the executive team identified above, among others, will take the lead on coordinating strategy, events, and outreach. The first general membership meeting will take place March 20, 2021. Please contact Ashley Mancheni at diversity@franchise.org for the meeting announcement or to get more information on the BFLC.

Opportunities are available for Council members to support the initial committees which BFLC plans to establish as follows:

- Community Partnerships
- Marketing & Communication Outreach
- Education & Learning
- Access to Capital & Funding Strategies.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for companies and individuals as well.

BW: Why is now the right time to launch the BFLC?

EJ: This past year has presented us with so many challenges, first starting with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Then the United States was hit with what has been dubbed a second pandemic, which was sparked by the senseless killing of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer while other offices stood by and watched.

"I believe that it is the start of the industry making some real progress to bring more diverse candidates into franchising"

As the nation caught wind of this story and video of the killing floated around the airwaves, the country almost simultaneously erupted in protest after protest – for weeks on end. Even the businesses that had quietly sat on the sidelines of discussions on racial and social injustices could remain silent no more as the conversation showed up at their doors. Many companies did some soul searching and concluded they had some blinders on. They are ready for some critical conversations; but most of all, they are ready to take some action. The time is now for the BFLC to move the needle on diversifying franchising.

BW: Are you noticing a rise or decline in Black franchisees and what do you think franchise brands can do to encourage more people from minority backgrounds to pursue business ownership?

EJ: Franchising, as a whole, is a very strong business model. Even during a pandemic, franchising held strong. According to data just released by the International Franchise Association in February 2021 conducted by FRANdata, the number of franchised business establishments are expected to grow by 3.5 per cent in 2021. We want to ensure that these opportunities are available to a diverse audience.

According to a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2018 at the request of the IFA Foundation, nearly 30 per cent of franchised businesses were owned by minorities compared to 18.8 per cent of non-franchised businesses being owned by minorities. Only eight per cent of franchised establishments are owned by Black people. While this is an improvement over previous studies which reported Black franchise ownership at only half of this representation, growth has been too sluggish. Upon reviewing these statistics, a number of us in franchising wanted to analyse why Black people were so underrepresented in franchising.

We have identified some of the explanations for the disparities in representation of Black people in franchising, and the BFLC will address

some of these disparities. One explanation is a lack of awareness and exposure to franchising from a business perspective. More exposure to the business side of franchising takes the patron from a customer/consumer to a mentality of business owner.

Another explanation relates to the disparity from the standpoint of brands not considering underserved/underrepresented communities in their growth plans. I call this an opportunity deficit. It is a loss for brands because it is untapped potential. It is a loss for a community that might thrive with a franchised business owned by a local resident who might employ local residents and buy supplies from local suppliers. All of a sudden, with the infusion of one business, jobs are created. Management opportunities are creating. Other businesses are supported. Strong businesses contribute to strong neighborhoods.

Another explanation is a gap in generational experience for business ownership. Exposure to business ownership provides a different vantage point on what one believes is possible for himself or herself.

Another obvious explanation is lack of access to capital.

BW: What changes need to happen in order to see more people from minority backgrounds take up leadership roles within franchise organizations?

EJ: The BFLC will play a critical role in getting the right people to the table for conversations around diversity, equity and inclusion as it relates to Black representation in franchising. It will provide opportunities for education and training to franchise companies as well as potential Black franchisors and franchisees. It will address the gaps caused by lack of access to capital and the experience gap. It will arm franchise companies with effective tools for attracting Black franchisees and to hone internal talent for management and leadership roles. I am pleased with the interest in BFLC and believe that it is the start of the industry making some real progress to bring more diverse candidates into franchising.

“I share the stories of women who refuse to allow society to force them into a box”

In her latest book, entrepreneur, author and podcast host, Vicky Fraser, attempts to make success an attainable goal by showcasing the stories of prosperous everyday business women who define success on their own terms

INTERVIEW BY AMANDA PETERS



The saying ‘never meet your heroes’ rings true here.

“I was looking forward to meeting him as I had looked up to him for years,” says Vicky Fraser, discussing a meeting she had with an entrepreneur whom she had been inspired by for quite some time. “And the first thing he said to me when we sat down to dinner at the networking event implied that I was there to sleep my way to the top. This absolutely enraged me.

“Although he most likely meant it as a joke, he would never have said it if I were a man. It was frustrating and humiliating.”

Vicky channelled this frustration into the creation of her latest book, *That's What She Said*.

“Yes, this book is about what it’s like to be a woman in business, not from the point of view of having to navigate this incredibly sexist world, but about bringing together experiences of oneness.

“It’s about hearing women’s voices, their experiences and not just the male perspective because men are so much louder than us,” she continues.

A couple of steps ahead

While it’s fascinating to hear about the dizzy heights of Oprah Winfrey, Marie Forleo or Sheryl Sandberg’s successes, many women can’t relate to the experiences of these superhuman business savants.

“As an entrepreneur myself, I personally find it quite difficult to relate to these women because they’re so far ahead of me. It’s such a big gap to cross for me to get from where I am to where they are,” says Vicky. She thus sought out the stories of business women who had the potential to reach Oprah levels of success in their respective fields but were still on their journeys, only “a couple of steps ahead” of the author herself.

“I really wanted to bridge that gap and showcase stories of women who were at different stages of the journey so that they’re more relatable to people who might just be starting out,” she explains.

When it comes to her own business journey, Vicky has quite



"This book is about what it's like to be a woman in business, not from the point of view of having to navigate this incredibly sexist world, but about bringing together experiences of oneness"

the resume herself, with jobs that you would not generally associate with a successful coach who teaches business owners how to write non-fiction books.

For instance, after graduating with a degree in Archaeology and Ancient History, one of Vicky's first "proper jobs" was a crime scene examiner. She is also a trapeze artist and pole dancer. And it is these seemingly unusual and unrelated experiences that she owes to her success: "This has given me a unique perspective on the world, and makes me a better, more creative writer."

The big ask

While sexism is undoubtedly an issue that women need to navigate in the business world, Vicky doesn't see it as the real problem. "The problem is recognising the systems that uphold this; where we can work around, and where we can break them down and create a new system that suits

everybody, and not just rich white men," she says.

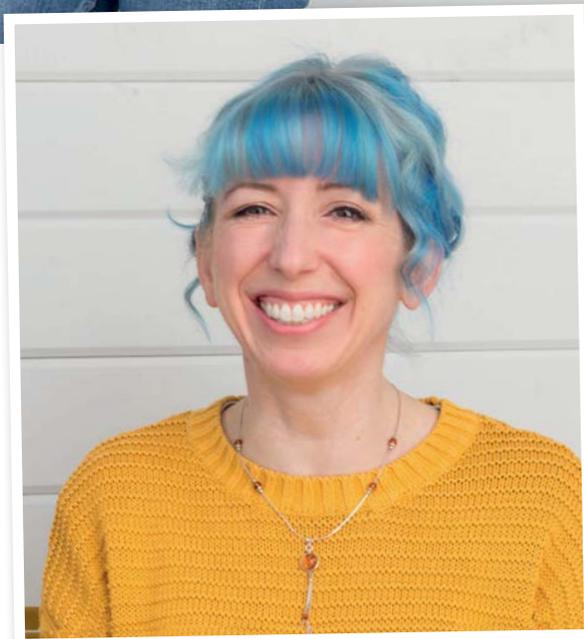
Acknowledging this big ask, she hopes that telling the stories of successful women – how they navigate this world and bring about change – will help.

"Although it is slow and in tiny increments, everybody does their bit and they all add up to bigger changes. I am hoping that my book does its bit for 'the cause'," explains Vicky.

Defining success

That's What She Said is not just about shining a spotlight on prosperous business women, it also manages to fill a gap in the market with regards to how women define success.

During her research for the book, Vicky came across a commonality among these women. Although their definitions of success varied, with some defining it as a big pile of money, or being able to live anywhere in the world or work three days a week, their complete determination to succeed on their own terms is evident.



"They had a determination to just follow that path, regardless of what the outside world tried to throw at them. This real commitment to being who they are, and refusing to allow society to force them into a box, is what stuck with me," Vicky reflects.

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Shining the spotlight on women in business

When it comes to spreading the word about business ownership and the possibilities for women nationwide, there's little that Rev PR's Sally Anne Butters and Lucy Archer are more passionate about

Dynamic duo Sally Anne Butters and Lucy Archer founded Rev PR in 2015 after recognising a need for a dedicated PR consultancy that understands the unique nature of franchising.

From what they would describe as their own humble beginnings, the pair have built Rev PR into a leading and award-winning U.K. agency.

Rev PR is passionate about the power of brand storytelling. With decades of franchise and PR experience, the team help business owners look internally to find the stories that will make an impact and reach potential franchisees, customers and affiliates, helping franchisors and franchisees to grow their businesses, empower their teams and create legacies for themselves and their families.

Sally says: "It's no secret that women make fantastic business owners. Franchisors know it and those who are already running successful franchises are living proof.

"In fact, most of the time the only people who don't know it, or sometimes doubt it, are women themselves. It's a combination of lack of self-confidence and generation upon generation of a male-dominated business landscape.

"All that is changing – and a lot has changed – but there's still more to be done when it comes to encouraging women into business ownership. We made it part of our mission a long time ago to help empower anyone thinking of being their own boss by showcasing what was achievable and educating people about the possibilities of franchising."

Lucy adds: "The success of our own

business is built on telling real stories about real people in real businesses. And that's what's so powerful."

Award-winning partnership

After five years of helping clients achieve their goals, Rev PR was voted Best Franchise Supplier in 2019 as well as being crowned Outstanding Small Consultancy by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and Best PR & Marketing Business in the national Best Business Women Awards.

"One of our greatest strengths is our partnership," Lucy says. "We're great friends and we remain each other's biggest champion.

"We both moved halfway across the country to launch the business and started out like most new business owners do – working from the dining room table. All that feels a long way away from our countryside offices in the heart of Oxfordshire, which our team of seven now calls home.

"The growth of the business has been hard, but incredibly satisfying because we only grow through our clients' successes. It's difficult not to feel proud when you work so closely with your clients and see the tangible difference your work is making."

Across the pond

While Sally and Lucy champion each other, they also have the backing of one

of America's most influential women in franchising, Sherri Fishman, founder of Fishman PR.

Launched in 1991, today Fishman is the largest franchise PR agency in the U.S. As sister agencies, the teams share knowledge and experience, as well as supporting brands from both sides of the pond to take root on new shores.

"We absolutely love working with Sherri and other passionate, powerful women in business," Sally says.

"People like Julie Wagstaff, U.K. managing director of global coaching giant ActionCOACH, and Amber Manning, general manager of international hair salon franchise Just Cuts. The industry is full of talented, inspirational women sitting at the helm of great franchise brands and running their own successful franchise businesses."

Lucy says: "Whether it's profiling these frontrunners for expert advice articles or positioning them as thought leaders, sharing their knowledge and experience is extremely compelling. And it makes a real difference.

"Perhaps the most powerful thing is telling the stories of franchisees themselves. When women see other women making it in business, it gives them the confidence to take the leap, especially if they can see themselves in the story. And even more so if that story is in a publication they know and trust."

"The success of our own business is built on telling real stories about real people in real businesses"



Addressing the underrepresentation of women

As well as creating content designed to boost franchise recruitment and increase sales, the team at Rev PR work with brands on matters close to the heart. Addressing the underrepresentation of women in certain key sectors is a prime example.

Since 2019, part of the strategy for long-term client Code Ninjas has been to bring the lack of women in tech to the forefront in the media.

The ongoing campaign is designed to educate parents and young women about the issue, the opportunities and inspire them to become part of the sector. Articles from Code Ninjas have regularly appeared in national tech, mainstream and franchise media, reaching hundreds of thousands of readers.

“PR really is what you make of it,” Sally says. “Of course, you can stick to a good news story here and there, provided your expectations on results mirror your effort.

“Our activity not only builds trust and credibility, it also sets our clients as the experts in their field and a voice of authority. When the time comes to invest – in a franchise, product or service – who do you think people will gravitate towards?”

A new partnership for 2021

In 2021, Rev PR and Aceville/DCT Media – the publishing giant behind titles such as What Franchise, Global Franchise and Business Woman – took their already strong relationship public.

The new collaboration sees Rev PR as partners for both the upcoming European Franchise Awards and Multi-Unit Month – highlights of the franchise calendar.

Keen to ensure that as many franchisors and prospective franchisees get the lowdown on all things PR, the team at Rev will also be contributing a regular workshop and advice column for readers.

“This partnership is something we’re incredibly proud of,” Lucy says. “We’ve always worked closely together, but as both businesses have forged ahead our visions have become even more closely intertwined, which are to educate and inspire people from all walks of life to take control of their own futures through franchising.

“We’re all in a privileged position that we work with brands of all sizes that span industries and even continents. It’s exciting to think where, together, we’ll take our clients over the coming year.”



Sally and Lucy are members of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, the Public Relations and Communications Association and Lucy is a Qualified Franchise Professional.

For more information about Rev PR, visit revpr.co.uk or call Lucy Archer on 07921 572554.

10 ways to become an inspirational leader

These central strategies can energise your team and ensure your business fulfils its potential

WORDS BY RYLL BURGIN-DOYLE

A mentor once told me that to inspire was to breathe life into someone or something. According to the Cambridge English dictionary, the definition of inspirational is 'making you feel full of hope or encouraged'.

Becoming an inspirational leader in business is to do just that. To be someone who can touch, move and inspire people to greater heights, bringing to life a shared team spirit and motivating people to accomplish goals and tasks for the common good.

As someone who has been the co-founder of a franchise, the CEO of a \$100m group and a founder of a non-profit organisation that operated in three countries with a base of volunteers, in my experience becoming an inspirational leader is crucial to your success in any business.

And it absolutely takes something. In fact, it takes fulfilling these 10 key strategies.

1 Define your rallying call

Think about anyone you have ever been inspired by. They usually have some big goal or a big game they're playing

that's larger than themselves and their business – something that calls the leader and the team into massive action over time.

So what's your big game? Be clear about that and make it your rallying call for the business as a whole or for the year ahead. The first sale is always to yourself; does it inspire you? If yes, great and be sure it inspires and motivates your team, too. It should be something you and your team are proud to be pursuing.



"Your team are a gift that makes your life and business results possible"

Building on that, it's vital to have captured and articulated clearly what I call your intention, vision and mission.

Most people are familiar with a vision and mission statement. However, your intention is the key. It answers the question: beyond money or the basics, why does your business exist? It's your reason for being. It should inspire you, so you can share it and inspire others.

As a franchisor, I found most of our franchisees joined us because of our intention: they were inspired by it, wanted to be part of it and it gave them purpose beyond profits.

Your vision is about outlining your five or 10-year goals. Your mission outlines how you and your team are going to achieve the intention and vision over time. Once you've captured all of that, share it everywhere.

Overall, this should be an inspiring platform to lead from, to share and speak about, to drive your brand, to reference as you make key decisions and to share with your team and customers.

If you're a franchisee, what's the larger purpose of the franchise group that inspires you? Of course, you can and should create or personalise your own intention, vision and mission for your business to rally around.

2 Feel your way

Sometimes you have to feel your way through business. You have to be able to feel how your team is feeling, to feel how your clients are feeling, and to feel the market itself.

Getting what your internal or external audience is feeling and then being able to respond appropriately is critical to being able to inspire those very people

to take an action you intend. It's what I call the 'get

it factor' – you get what it's like for them and set up responses, structures and wow factor processes to address their experience.

3 Be the positive light on the hill

Business leaders often think they have to have all the answers. For me that's not true, but you do have to be the

"As a leader, despite beliefs to the contrary, you don't have to have everything figured out"

person who's always holding the space and certainty of a positive future ahead.

People need to be led. People want to be led. People need hope and we all love certainty. Certainty at this time, depending on the type of business, its size, and financial health and strategy, can be hard to deliver right now, but people can be and need to be certain of you. Certain that you will always, working with them and others, find a way. That in itself is inspiring.

4 Keep your perspective straight

Perspective is critical. Remember that business is a long game – it's a marathon, not a sprint. Where do we want to be in 10 years' time? What do we want this business to look like? What will it be producing in financial returns?

What about lifestyle for you as the owner or the franchisee? And what impact and reach will the business have? What valuation would we want to hit by then? What does the future look like by 2030?

Get clear on that and as you're making short-term decisions think about that long-term outcome. That long-term perspective is critical to making strong decisions as a leader and inspiring others.

It's so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day. You have to be able to hold that long-term view, while you handle short-term needs.

5 Decide on your strategy

Your strategy is your plan for getting from where you are now to where you want to be in a given timeframe in the fastest, easiest possible and most profitable way.

Most business owners are too busy being busy to spend time on their strategy, yet it's the key to exponential growth. You have to set your vision and then work backwards from that, looking for the leverage points in your business to fast track your results.

Leverage points can be hidden in plain sight in many businesses across how you do what you do, to average transaction values, conversion rates,

client mix, marketing, sales processes, understanding the lifetime value of a customer and strategic hires and key team members being led on that journey by you.

6 Be vulnerable and authentic

While vulnerability is not a word many people associate with leadership, in my view it's absolutely a part of it.

As a leader, despite beliefs to the contrary, you don't have to have everything figured out. Authentically being open about what you don't have an answer for or how something has impacted you or the business can actually deliver a greater connection with your team.

At the same time, you must be able to communicate your commitment to transform that area with their help. In fact, being vulnerable and authentic can mean your team steps up.

7 Clarify your leadership role

Some people see leadership as 'doer-ship' – the more I do, the better leader I am.

You'll often hear these business owners say something like: "By the time I spend 20 minutes explaining how that could be done, I may as well have done it myself."

That's a huge mistake because every time you do that you miss the opportunity to train and develop that person and build better systems and processes.

Others associate leadership with power – being able to exert themselves and their will over others.

In my roles as a franchisor and a founder of a non-profit organisation, I believed the true role of leadership was to empower and develop great leaders around me. I thought of the business as healthy when I could walk in and see people demonstrating personal leadership.

If you want to be an inspiring leader, check your definition of leadership and gauge whether you've fallen into the trap of 'doer-ship' or if you're leading by empowering others.

8 Understand that the buck stops with you

To be an inspiring leader, you have to take the view that the buck stops with you.

For example, as a franchisee it can be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that it's up to the franchisor to create everything you need to be successful. While the franchisor has key responsibilities, this thinking is a pathway to limited results.

As leaders, ultimately our results are our own. If you can own that, while it can sometimes feel daunting, it's also liberating. Then do all you can to make your business work, inspire your team and produce the success you're seeking.

9 Act like a leader

Identify three leaders who inspire you. These could be from any walk of life. They could be celebrities or a family member. The key is that they have to be a leader you're inspired by.

Make a note of each person and the qualities you admire most about them. You'll likely see a pattern of characteristics across the three you chose, so set about emulating them.

When facing an opportunity or a challenge, ask yourself: what would a leader do? And then act from there. It's an empowering way to build leadership muscle.

10 Ways to become an inspirational leader

How do you relate to your team? I once had a general manager who said: "Leading this business is like running an adult day care centre."

When I ask business owners what their biggest challenges are, they usually say cash flow and people. That is, they relate to their people as a problem most of the time.

As an inspiring leader, you need to relate to your team as the beating heart of your business. They are the people who make it all happen.

Instead of thinking of them as a problem or challenge, alter your perspective. Given people spend most of their waking hours at work, consider they're giving you their life force, time, talents, thinking and strengths to fulfil your goal.

Your team are a gift that makes your life and business results possible. Relate to them like that and you'll be a long way down the track of being an inspiring leader.



THE AUTHOR

Ryll Burgin-Doyle is an author, keynote speaker and proven business and brand strategist



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“I never thought that I would end up in the position that I am today”



Sarah Luna, the newly-appointed president of Xponential Fitness, is one of the youngest ever executives for a global fitness brand at just 34 years old. How did she achieve it? Through hard work, determination, and one fateful Pilates class

WORDS BY KIERAN MCLOONE



“I never thought that I would end up in the position that I am today,” says Sarah Luna, the newly appointed president of health and wellbeing parent company, Xponential Fitness.

And at 34 years old, who can blame her? Many entrepreneurs can spend years trying to find their calling, and cycle through a multitude of roles before the right position comes along. For Luna, however, fitness franchising wasn’t just a possibility; it ran through her veins.

“I started dancing at the age of three, and had a professional career. I then eventually entered the world of Pilates in college, but before that, my mom was a Jazzercise franchisee and my dad was an independent small business owner,” explains Luna. “From a young age, I was able to see the stark contrast between being the owner of your own destiny, but with the support system of a franchising model, versus doing it as a smaller mom-and-pop.”

Luna doesn’t look back on either of these potential avenues with judgement,



"If I'm able to effect change at both the corporate and franchise studio level, then I'll be happy"

but knew from the very start that the business-in-a-box format that her mom was able to harness was more appealing than the challenges of the independent journey walked by her dad.

"That was always very attractive to me; to see that there were opportunities to be your own business leader, but do it with the support system that comes with a franchise model."

From Equinox to Xponential

Luna's pathway toward becoming one of the youngest female presidents of an international parent company began in 2015, when she had a fateful meeting with Anthony Geisler, the founder and CEO of Xponential Fitness. Having worked as a Pilates coordinator for luxury fitness brand Equinox since 2013, she knew that she wanted to be a part of this new adventure from the moment the opportunity arose.

"I was teaching at Equinox, and Anthony was a member," explains Luna. "He was investigating Club Pilates at the time and wanted to make sure that he actually liked it as a concept before acquiring this brand. It just so happened that it was his birthday, so I invited him to a birthday Pilates session."

That session was the start of something

special. Not only did Geisler hop on board the Pilates train, but he wanted Luna to join him as national sales director for the Club Pilates brand. For somebody in their late-twenties with extensive Pilates and dance training, opportunities like that don't come along often.

"For me, as a classically-trained Pilates instructor, I wanted to get on board and have a hand in what Club Pilates would look like," says Luna. "I knew this was going to disrupt a very fragmented industry, and it was going to provide a distribution channel for Pilates to get out to the masses. I wanted it to be done correctly."

Driven by empathy

This step up into the Xponential Fitness family wasn't Luna's last taste of the on-the-ground franchisee experience, however. As well as owning her own Jazzercise franchise location, she also endeavored to work on the front desk of a Club Pilates site to get a real taste of what the network's franchisees had to contend with. Additionally, she attended each and every grand opening possible. Equinox may have been a thing of the past, but the hard work had only just begun: "I was on the road a lot, and I'll never

forget that I hadn't seen my husband – fiancé at the time – for nearly six or seven weeks. We were coming up on our honeymoon, and then I said I was taking a week off. I met my husband at the airport, we went on our honeymoon, and then when I came back I hit the road again," says Luna.

"That was early on in the Club Pilates growth story, and it was incredibly important that we had someone going all over the country to see what was working and what wasn't for the things we were rolling out from corporate office. I was working in the office Monday through Friday, and then going to these grand openings Friday through Sunday. I was jet setting all over the country."

With Xponential Fitness' acquisition of Pure Barre in 2018, Luna received yet another promotion, and was now president of this boutique brand. Her first port of call? Obtain even more hands-on experience to empathise with the needs of her franchisees.

"At Pure Barre I spent about two months at the front desk at a location, and you gain so much insight. Your learning curve is going to be much quicker than just operating from the corporate office. More importantly, you're able to gain the respect of those that you're working with because you're able to walk in their shoes and see what they're up against," explains Luna.

"The POS system wasn't working, the toilets weren't working, and the instructor had slept through their alarm – that was a day where everything possible went wrong, and



it's very humbling to see what our franchise partners deal with on a daily basis. From the corporate office, we may forget that toilets break, or instructors are people, too."

No sign of stopping

It seems as if all the hard work Luna has put in over the six years since joining Xponential has paid off, with the parent company now having eight franchise brands in its network, totaling over 1,700 international fitness studios. But rather than rest on her laurels, she's looking to utilize all of this experience to make the franchisee journey as seamless and successful as possible.

"We tend to attract two types of franchise partners: One would be the practitioners like myself, which would be somebody that has a fitness or teacher background and wants to take that experience to the next level. The other type comes from more of a corporate career path; they've worked in running a business through accounting or finance, but found that they were in something that they weren't passionate about. For either, we help them to be entrepreneurial while also having the guardrails of support in the areas where maybe they aren't an expert," says Luna.

"What excites me is when we have

"That was always very attractive to me; to see that there were opportunities to be your own business leader, but do it with the support system that comes with a franchise model"

our franchise training and they'll come through and say to me: 'I've thought about all these aspects of the business, but I didn't even consider liability insurance or marketing.' There are lots of lightbulbs that go off during the training phase, and that shows that we're providing value. The way I see it, the perfect marriage between an entrepreneur and a franchise model is being able to plug in those gaps – whether they're to do with skillsets or outside knowledge – so that they can ramp-up their business successfully."

Part of Luna's job now is to help other entrepreneurs walk down a similar path to what she originally did; interestingly, many of the inquiries Xponential receives are also from female franchisees, with the fitness industry being especially receptive to women.

"Many people want to be in fitness, but

don't know exactly what that looks like," says Luna. "We have a process to help them not only choose whether single-unit, multi-unit, or area developer would be best, but also whether something like yoga is a better fit than barre. It's just about raising your hand that you're interested, and then letting us help to guide you when the time is right."

After the journey so far, which will no doubt continue for many years to come, what has been Luna's main takeaway?

"Serving those around me; specifically the franchisees," she says. "Success for me is seeing that there's success in others. That may be my teammates or it could be franchise partners, but if I'm the only one that's successful, then that isn't success to me. If I'm able to effect change at both the corporate and franchise studio level, then I'll be happy."



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5 successful female entrepreneurs we can all learn from

Angelica Malin makes her top picks of inspiring female founders from around the world

From tech entrepreneurs to lifestyle gurus, Angelica Malin's pick of inspiring female company founders from around the world show that anything is possible when you believe in yourself and take action to turn your dreams into reality:

1 **Whitney Wolfe Herd: the youngest female CEO to take a company public in the U.S.**

Whitney is the world's youngest self-made female billionaire. If that's not enough, she's also damn cool.

Whitney founded dating app Bumble in 2014, after leaving Tinder, which she co-founded. She wanted to create a platform where more women have power and control, hence her unique feature of women making the first move on the app.

In February 2021, Whitney became the youngest ever female CEO to take a company public in the U.S., during which its shares shot up to more than \$76 each, meaning Bumble is currently valued at more than \$13bn.

Self-made women like Whitney account for less than five per cent of the world's 500 biggest fortunes, according to *Bloomberg*, so it's no small feat.

2 **Tania Boler: broken the taboo surrounding women's health issues**

The CEO and co-founder of femtech Elvie launched her business in 2013 with the mission to bring women's technology out of the dark ages.

Elvie is a brand created by women for women and has two signature products that have proved a smash hit globally: the Elvie Pump silent wearable breast pump and the Elvie trainer for pelvic floor training.

Both products have revolutionised the market and broken the taboo surrounding women's health issues, which mothers often face after childbirth.

Elvie now has over 100 employees in London and New York and in 2019 announced an incredible €37.5m Series B round of investment, the largest ever raise for a femtech business in history.

3 **Anne Boden: awarded an MBE for her services to financial technology**

Anne is CEO of Starling Bank, which she founded in 2014 after a 30-year career at some of the world's best known financial institutions, including Royal Bank of Scotland and Allied Irish Banks.

A trained computer scientist, Anne saw the potential in the banking industry for digital technology and solutions to revolutionise the way people bank. Building an app from scratch, she had a vision to improve banking for all and build Starling into a global brand.

To date, Starling Bank has raised more than £363m in investment and Anne was awarded an MBE for her services to financial technology in 2018.

4 **Marie Forleo: assisting the next wave of entrepreneurs**

A marketing expert, Marie is also a thought leader and best-selling author in the U.S.

Through her website and social media, she reaches over 190,000 people worldwide. Marie's signature course, the B-School, which has had over 40,000 members join, helps business owners gain clarity on their concept, nail their marketing, boost sales and reach new audiences through expert content.

"Whitney is the world's youngest self-made female billionaire. If that's not enough, she's also damn cool"

By hosting podcasts and informational videos on her MarieTV YouTube channel, as well as through free webinars, she's helping inspire the next wave of entrepreneurs globally.

Marie is an inspirational self-made millionaire who's featured on the Oprah Super Soul Sunday series and has even given a keynote talk on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

5 **Grace Beverley:** builder of multiple seven-figure fitness brands

An influencer and entrepreneur, Grace has built multiple seven-figure businesses in the fitness and activewear space.

Beverley is the owner and CEO of three different, highly popular fitness businesses: B_ND, a gym equipment shop; fitness app Shreddy; and Tala, an ethical activewear brand.

Tala has been a huge hit among young women, with its ethical credentials and flattering designs, making £6m in revenue since launching last year.

At only 23-years old, Grace has achieved an amazing amount at a young age, using savvy marketing and building a strong personal brand through her Instagram channel, which has over a million followers, and by documenting her fitness journey on YouTube

Make 2021 the year to launch your business

If you've been inspired by these female business leaders, why not make 2021 the year to launch your own business?

Angelica's book, called *#SheMadeIt*, is a tool kit for female founders in the digital age, giving you all the advice and actionable tips needed to plan, launch and build your own business using the digital tools at your disposal.

Remember, what you create today will have a ripple effect for years to come, so dream big and believe in yourself to build something amazing.



“Be unapologetically fearless”

Wife, mother and serial entrepreneur, Yemi Penn, runs a London-based F45 Training franchise from her Sydney home 10,000 miles away. But her journey to success has been far from smooth

WORDS BY TONY JAMES



THE AUTHOR
An award-winning journalist and author, Tony James specialises in business and sport

Could you run a franchise from 10,000 miles away? Yemi Penn has been doing so with exceptional success for the past two years. But then she is an exceptional woman.

Moving to Australia from London's Brixton five years ago to start a new life after what she described as “messing up big time”, 38-year-old Yemi became a high achiever, creating thriving coaching and engineering consultancies.

But when it came to signing up with the fast growing fitness franchise F45 Training, she made the unexpected decision to base it back in Brixton. And it works.

Franchisee from afar

“I can hear the disbelief in your voice,” says Yemi, on the line from Sydney. “I obviously had to make some changes when COVID came along and now have a managing partner on board.

“Normally I shuttle between the U.K. and Australia and would have been in London for two months last April had it not been for the pandemic.

I obviously keep a careful eye on what's happening in Brixton, but not to the point of micro management. The important thing is to harness the skill sets of the people you work with.

“You've also got to acknowledge that at some point they will probably leave. You should focus on how long they are going to stay and make life as good as possible for them while they are with you.

“What makes F45 different to other gyms? I tried several of the other systems and realised F45 was designed to use technology to bring the community together and was one of the first to do that.

“Another thing that attracted me is that head office is continually asking: ‘What can we do better?’ They have a hunger for continual improvement.”

Trials and tribulations

Now a multiple entrepreneur with three thriving businesses, Yemi tells the story of her often harrowing journey to her present success with an unhesitating frankness.

“Of course I'll talk about it,” she says. “If my story helps anyone deal with their own problems, then that's absolutely fine. When I look back on my trials and tribulations, I don't think my hunger to succeed would have been so strong if I had security.”

It's a story of overcoming the trauma of being turned out of the family home after becoming pregnant, spending nights on the streets and in rundown hostels while trying to complete an engineering degree. A story of divorce and failed relationships, becoming what she describes as “a broken, vulnerable, depressed individual”.

You'd never guess. Today, Yemi is fulfilled, easy going, friendly and confident, passionate about her mission to transform people's mental and physical health, happily in love and anxious to stress that if you want to do something you invariably can.

“I don't think women know how powerful they are,” she says.

Moving around the globe

Yemi spent her childhood in Nigeria, where she went to boarding school and moved to London with her family as a teenager. There were problems when she told her father she didn't want to follow in his footsteps and study law and far more serious ones when at 24 she became pregnant.

“I don't think my hunger to succeed would have been so strong if I had security”

“I was in love with my partner, but we weren’t going to get married and my parents didn’t approve,” Yemi says. “My mum told me to move out and get myself together. To my parents, you just didn’t have a child out of wedlock so I moved out, registered as homeless and eventually got social housing.

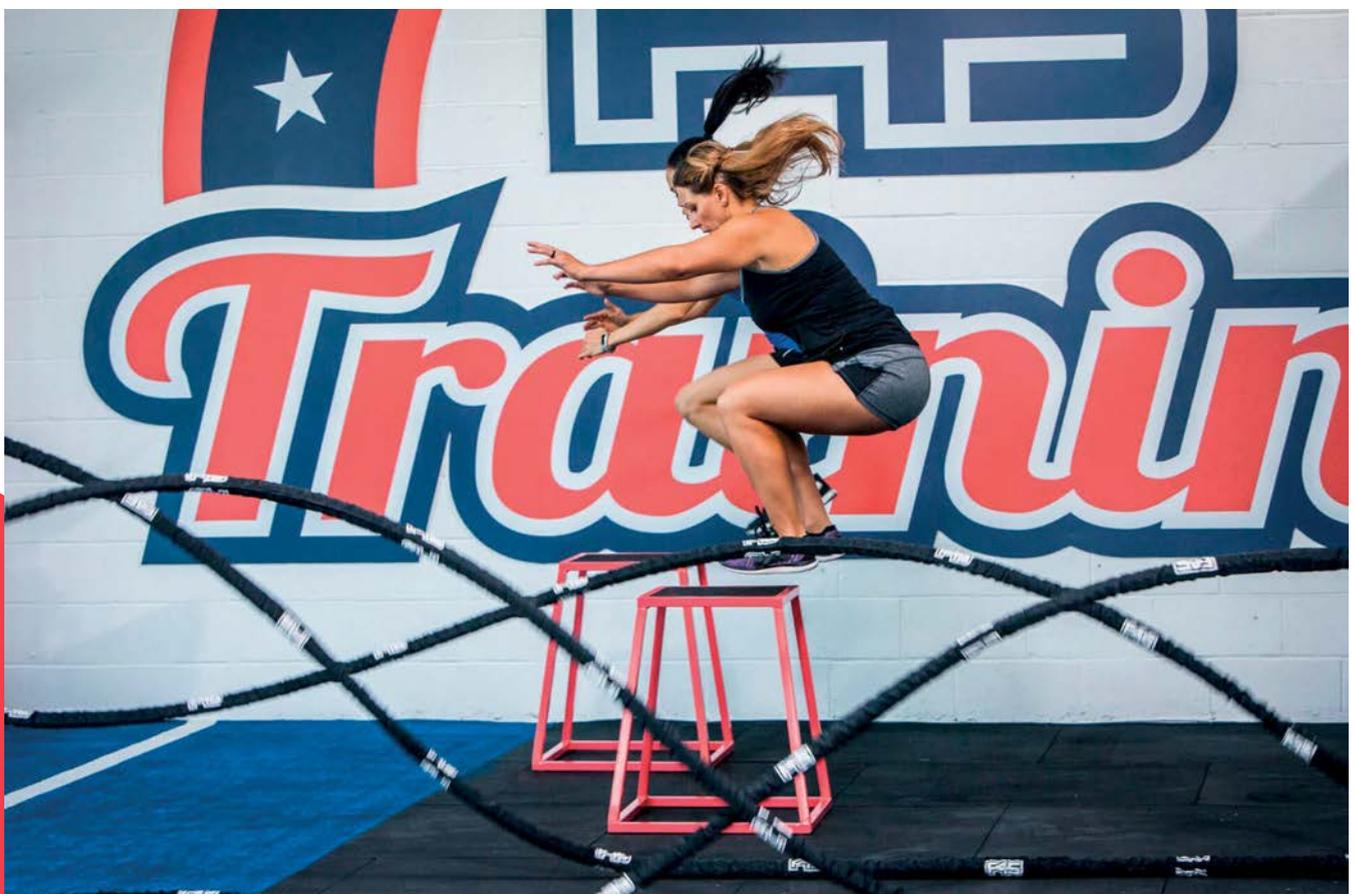
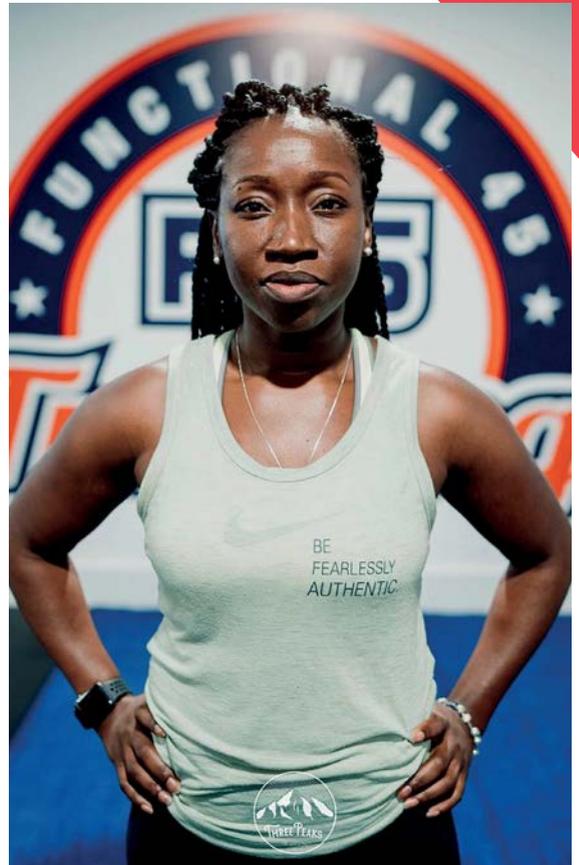
“I was angry and frustrated at the time, but I believe most things happen for us, not to us, so I don’t have any

resentment now.”

Yemi stumbled on engineering after finding she enjoyed putting together an IKEA desk and, despite her daunting personal problems, got a first class mechanical engineering degree at Brunel University.

“I’m an engineer by profession and an entrepreneur by passion,” Yemi says.

Later she moved to Japan, where her entrepreneurial instincts took over:





she taught herself hairdressing and sold hair products. She married and in 2012 had a second child, but the marriage didn't last.

"I felt like a failure again," Yemi says. "Then the opportunity came to move to Australia for engineering work on large railway infrastructure projects, so I took it. I was 32, my daughter was seven and my son was seven months, so on paper people must have thought I was absolutely mad."

Looking back, Yemi says a new country and a new outlook on life was just what she needed. Within five years of arriving as an immigrant, she had started her own engineering consultancy, which was making over £650,000 a year, a coaching business and bought an F45 franchise business in London.

I loved the concept

Fitness had been part of Yemi's lifestyle since university: "Everyone looked pretty and trim and I realised I had to change how I felt about myself – until then, exercise wasn't something I'd paid much attention to. Then I really got into it and remember thinking: 'I'd love to have my own gym'."

"F45 in Sydney was recommended by a friend and to say I loved it was an understatement. It offered much more than conventional gyms by combining high intensity interval training workouts, which were accessible to people of all fitness abilities.

"I also loved the fact that there were no mirrors and I didn't have to battle with low self esteem – and even though it hurt like hell, I vowed I would come back.

"After I started my engineering and coaching businesses, I began to think seriously about opening an F45 gym 10,000 miles away in London – in Brixton, where I used to live. All the voices in my head said: 'You don't live in London any more – how are you going to do that?' That's when I decided to test everything I had been learning to become a coach.

"I told myself: 'Yemi, if you open this business remotely you truly are worthy to be able to harness the power and all the tools you've got to help other people transform their lives.' It's a franchise, but I wanted that because I hadn't ever done business to that capacity. It's been great, but not without its challenges."

In September 2018, Yemi's dream finally came true.

"I just stood in awe as I saw over 100 people come in to train in my gym," she says. "It was real and a physical manifestation of what can be achieved through hard work, tenacity, having faith and being resourceful.

"To have achieved this while solo parenting on the other side of the world was truly amazing."

Yemi admits she didn't write a business plan for any of her successful enterprises.

"I typically chose the business that will have the greatest impact and give me the biggest reward by way of satisfaction, accomplishment and finances," she says.



Filling a gap in the market

She's got it right. The brainchild of Australian former equities trader Rob Deutsch, F45 is one of the world's fastest growing franchises and a result of spotting a gap in the health and fitness market.

He believed the best training was simple, effective and, most importantly, enjoyable. Drawing on a bank of more than 3,000 exercises, the high intensity training on offer changes daily, working every muscle group and energy system in deliberate phases throughout the year.

Rob says: "People were turning up to normal commercial gyms with very little innovation and results. They turn up on average once a month and that's really bad in terms of how much usage they get out of it."

F45's pioneering approach was based on the formula that variation plus motivation plus innovation equals results. In stark white studios, clients exercise in front of huge plasma screens showing 45-minute workouts.

The atmosphere is designed to be non-intimidating and caters for all ages and levels.

"One day you train like an American quarterback and perhaps the next day you train like a surfer," Rob says. "We're the Apple store of the health and fitness scene."

The first studio opened in Sydney in 2012 and the concept was franchised a year later, coming to the U.K. in 2017.

Rob believes the franchise's runaway success is all about serious health and fitness, but also keeping things balanced and fun. As he says: "If that includes enjoying the odd glass of wine at weekends, so be it."

Wife, mother, serial entrepreneur and owner of three successful businesses, Yemi's working day starts around 5:30am with a 30- to 45-minute workout and runs on high octane from then on.

She says she relaxes by sitting on the beach watching the waves, but we wonder how long it takes before superwoman is on the move again.

Yemi's words of wisdom

What do you enjoy most about being a franchisee?

It's like dipping your toe into the pool of entrepreneurship, but not your whole foot! Somebody else has thought about all the hard work and the risk and has created a model you can actually make better. People say you want to work smart or you want to work hard. Owning a franchise allows both, especially one that's a proven model like F45. With this franchise, there's a sense of community and you know you've got backing, which is more comfortable than going on your own in the beginning.

What's your proudest achievement?

Setting up my own engineering consultancy in Sydney. Growing up, most of us are told there is only one way to succeed, although I'm sure there's a whole world out there where people are told something different.

I was told you had to get a job and work nine to five. To shift out of that mindset and be able to create my own business – initially as the only employee and eventually with two others – opened up a completely new world to me. If I hadn't done that, I probably wouldn't now have F45.

And your greatest challenge?

The first was myself – trying to unlearn all the things I had been told. The second was funding – that was the biggest thing.

There's no greater oxymoron out there than going to a bank and getting them to believe in you and your vision to loan you the money before you have the chance to show them how trustworthy you are.

For me, with my background and my story, the periods of homelessness and not having any generational wealth behind me, that was tough.

Biggest lesson learned?

I'm not going to be the first person nor the last to start a business who has come from humble beginnings. That was the biggest lesson.

You start a business, whether it's taking up a franchise or something new, and it can be so uncomfortable and you think you're the only one going through that. I think there's some comfort in knowing that others have done it before.

What advice would you give to a younger you?

Be unapologetically fearless. What I mean by that is, unless someone's going to die, go for it. Now more than ever we can see how vulnerable life is, so you've got to give it a go.



Top tip for someone wanting to invest in a franchise?

Scrutinise the model, especially the cost model you have been given. Find extreme versions of the franchises that interest you – those that are doing well and those that aren't doing so well – and figure out where you want to fit between those two extremes.

You have to imagine you're a franchisee and your business is struggling. How would you get out of it? Prepare for the worst and anticipate how you would deal with it.



"I QUICKLY REALISED MY AGE DIDN'T MATTER AT ALL"

Georgina Burman is among a rising number of people under 30 who've bought their own franchise. Here, the YogaBellies franchisee explains the benefits of investing in a proven concept, how she overcame her biggest challenge, and her plans for 2021

I'm a 29-year-old mum of one and a certified YogaBellies teacher in West Norfolk.

I joined YogaBellies in September 2019 and since then I've been actively teaching YogaBellies classes, working around my little boy, Leo, who's now aged two.

Before joining YogaBellies, I worked in the fashion industry as a full-time garment technologist in London and Asia for around six years. I studied retail buying at university and went on to work for various clothing suppliers and retailers.

It wasn't until I became pregnant that I decided to change my career path. That's when I found YogaBellies. I signed onto their training programme while I was on maternity leave and never went back to my previous role. I can honestly say it was the best decision of my life and I wouldn't change it for the world now.

I decided to become a franchisee because it provides you with the opportunity to run your own business with the help and support of a larger company that has a proven formula for success.

While becoming a franchisee requires more investment initially, you get what you pay for in that you're joining a brand with an established reputation that would take years to build if you were starting out on your own.

When you become a YogaBellies franchisee you get ongoing business support, a mentor, training and access to ready-made online systems and tools – everything you need to run a successful, ethical business.

YogaBellies supports and empowers women at pivotal times in their lives, which I absolutely love and feel extremely passionate about.

Well-being is at the centre of what YogaBellies does, not only teaching yoga to women, but offering a safe, nurturing place where they can heal and grow their bodies and minds.

Having worked in a job where well-being wasn't high on the list of priorities, I knew that it had to be in my next adventure. With my passion for yoga and holistic health, YogaBellies instantly felt like the right fit for me. You don't have to



"While becoming a franchisee requires more investment initially, you get what you pay for in that you're joining a brand with an established reputation"

be an experienced yogini, as it's more about your passion to support women in your local area.

The YogaBellies franchise offers the whole package. It actively supports, mentors and guides you on your journey as a franchisee and help you create the business of your dreams.

The best part is when you join you become part of a collective of like-minded women. It's actually more like a family encouraging and supporting each other in running your business.

I funded the purchase of the franchise with personal savings and finance.

The good thing about YogaBellies is it can provide finance to help you start and grow, which is ideal if you want to start your own franchise, but don't have the initial capital. This was a major deciding factor for me when becoming a franchisee.

I personally teach all my classes.

I have an accountant who manages my books because I'm useless at all that stuff and want to solely focus on teaching and earning an income. The most I do in this area is update QuickBooks.

On a day-to-day basis, I handle the running of the business, including organising advertising campaigns, processing bookings, dealing with enquiries and posting on my social media.

I didn't achieve half of what I intended to in 2020, but I'm grateful to still be here, like most small businesses.

I launched my business in January last year and managed three months of teaching before being shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, being part of a franchise like YogaBellies meant that everyone came together to support one another. Head office quickly adapted and came

"I can honestly say it was the best decision of my life and I wouldn't change it for the world now"

up with an online offering, so that we could continue to teach.

Teaching this way put me out of my comfort zone, but I knew I had to do it to protect my business and provide support to my clients during a difficult time. With all the obstacles we've faced in 2020, it has been a steep learning curve for many businesses, let alone one that was in its first year of trading.

The biggest benefit of joining a franchise is becoming part of a community of franchisees.

Some have been running their businesses for 10 years, while others, like me, have only been franchisees for a short time and are in need of tips and tricks to help them develop.

For me, one of the main benefits of becoming a YogaBellies franchisee was that you get a mentor and support from other teachers in the network. We're like one big happy family and offer only positive support and advice when it's needed, which is important especially in times like these where businesses are having to either close or adapt.

I wouldn't have made it through the last year if it wasn't for the support of YogaBellies headquarters, our founder, Cheryl MacDonald, and the other incredible teachers.

The greatest test for me was believing in myself, because I'm pretty young compared to your average yoga teacher. In fact, I'm the youngest teacher at YogaBellies.

Initially, it did affect my confidence, but after teaching class after class and getting positive feedback from clients, I quickly realised my age didn't matter at all, only my knowledge and expertise did.



I imagine my clients are a little surprised when they meet me for the first time in the studio, but no one has ever said anything or walked out the door.

Now I find myself feeling confident and assured. After all, I'm a mother just like my clients, going through the same life challenges, so can relate and support them during their YogaBellies journey as best as I can.

My advice to someone currently researching franchises with a view to becoming a franchisee would be to find out how much support the franchisor provides after the initial training.

You can't expect a franchisor to run your business for you, but you don't want to be left in the dark once you've completed your training. You ideally want the best possible start to launching your new business in order to make it a success.

For example, YogaBellies offers 'business goddess' training, which includes all the need-to-know basics of setting up and running your own business. They also offer ongoing franchise support, which includes regular business reviews to help

achieve your business and marketing goals for the next year.

Without the proper support along the way, it's going to be hard for you to keep your business moving in the right direction and maintaining momentum when times are tough.

At the end of 2020, I focused on a big January launch.

January is typically a busy time of year for YogaBellies, as we usually have an influx of new clients, so I ran an advertising campaign in the lead-up to it and introduced a couple of classes for new mums in my local community.

I'm currently studying to become a fertility yoga teacher with YogaBellies so I can extend my current offering. I'm aiming to complete this before baby number two arrives in March, so that I can launch the classes when I return from maternity leave later on in the year.

I'm also studying to become an aromatherapist and once my training is complete I'm planning on topping this up with additional training in prenatal, postnatal and fertility massage therapy, so that I can offer additional holistic therapies for women in Norfolk.

Introducing the

Woman BUSINESS
FEMALES IN FRANCHISING

25 CSR BRANDS CHANGING THE -WORLD-

25 franchise brands that have leading corporate social responsibility initiatives at the heart of their organisations, from charitable activities to sustainability-focused business models

METHODOLOGY AND CAUSE

Compiled and curated by our in-house team of franchise journalists to a rigid selection criteria, the list showcases compassionate franchise brands that are positively impacting their communities by not only providing business-in-a-box investment options, but demonstrating that charitable,

fundraising, empathy and eco-consciousness are paramount in 2021. Here are the brands that have made a true difference over the last year - a year that has seen a global pandemic wreck havoc on families, communities, economies, businesses and more.

25 CSR
BRANDS
CHANGING THE
-WORLD-

CULVER'S

By 2050, the world's farmers will have to grow about 70 per cent more food than what is now produced. The urgency to serve the growing population is at the heart of why Culver's has created the Thank You Farmers Project.

"Since creating the Thank You Farmers Project in 2013, we've successfully raised \$2.5m to support agricultural education programmes that teach smart farming," said Alison Wedig, Culver's marketing specialist. "Despite the challenges that 2020 brought, one thing was clear – our guests are just as passionate about supporting tomorrow's AG leaders as we are."

Since 2015, Culver's has hosted Scoops of Thanks Day – an event where guests receive a single scoop of Fresh Frozen Custard in exchange for a \$1 donation to local FFA chapters and other agricultural education organisations. In 2020 alone, this event secured \$144,975 for those FFA chapters unable to hold their own fundraisers due to COVID-19.

"We also awarded three FFA chapters a total of \$15,000 through the FFA Essay Contest," added Alison. "The annual contest is another way for FFA chapters to use awarded funds for agricultural education initiatives and projects. It allows us to show FFA members our support and hear about their passions and hopes for the future."



SONIC DRIVE-IN

Every year, U.S. drive-in restaurant franchise Sonic Drive-In runs its Limeades for Learning Campaign in partnership with DonorsChoose, a non-profit crowdfunding platform created to help public school teachers with necessary teaching resources.

Now in its 12th year, the Limeades for Learning Campaign runs for around a month every fall, and sees a \$1m donation distributed among the

requests made by numerous teachers across the country, which are then voted on by Sonic guests.

"During this time of uncertainty, teachers are going above and beyond to create safe and welcoming learning environments, whether in-person or virtually," said Christi Woodworth, VP of public relations for Sonic. "The Limeades for Learning Fall Voting Campaign is an opportunity for our guests to be a part of this great cause and see firsthand how teachers are flexing their creative muscles and inspiring their students."

OLTCO

In 2019, sustainable resin driveway company Olteo came up with an ingenious way of utilising waste plastic: it launched Recycle Bound, a surfacing material that's made from straws, drink bottles and food packaging.

Co-directors Tom Stringer and Johnny Pearce said: "The issue of plastic waste has long been a concern for us, not least because we see first-hand the impact it's having on our beaches and wider environment, with our base in Cornwall."

Recycle Bound has already recycled the equivalent of over 40 million plastic straws. It's also proven to be the ideal product for many commercial clients, including visitor attractions such as the Eden Project.

While Recycle Bound has turned out to be incredibly popular, Olteo, which was founded in 2004, isn't resting on its eco laurels.

The company says it's constantly looking for new ways to reduce its impact on the environment, which is why Olteo is working on what it describes as "another world-first product".

Tom and Johnny promise it will be a "game changer" when it's launched later this year.





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JUST CUTS

Australian hair salon franchise Just Cuts takes corporate social responsibility very seriously.

Having recently fundraised for charities such as The Little Princess Trust and SANE Australia, the head office team, along with franchise owners and stylists, are currently planning further campaigns.

UK general manager David Mathie explained: "In December, we launched the SANE Australia #Hearts4SANE campaign, which raises awareness of mental illnesses and grants funding to this worthwhile cause.

"Clients could come into the salon and donate money towards a blue heart, which they could write messages of encouragement on. These were then stuck to the wall of the salon for the five days of the campaign."



David added: "Supporting mental health charities is something we feel passionate about as a brand, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic is driving a spike in demand for

mental health services. The campaign was so successful that it's something we will replicate with a U.K.-based mental health charity later this year."



F45 TRAINING

Heroes Hollywood, F45 Training's global fundraising workout initiative, is aiming to improve on the six-figure sum it donated to victims of the Australian bushfires that devastated millions of hectares of land in 2020.

Buz Roberts, owner of F45 Ealing, said: "As Australia was where F45 originated, it felt only right that studios around the world came together to raise money and support the impact the bushfires had.

"The F45 community rose to the occasion and raised over \$550,000 for the national crisis."

This year, each Heroes Hollywood workout will be dedicated to a specific cause. The first one of 2021 raised funds for mental health charities.

"A lot of the U.K. studios supported FareShare, which helps children in poverty, and were able to raise over £2,300, a figure that's continuing to increase," Buz said.

The next Heroes Hollywood workout is scheduled for April 17 and will be live streamed via Zoom from a number of F45 studios. Participants are asked to donate money via the company's GoFundMe page.

THE SOURCE BULK FOODS

For years, Makayla Drummond has been living a low waste lifestyle. She'd even discussed opening a package-free food store with her husband, but felt they lacked the experience to do it well.

"When I came across The Source Bulk Foods in Australia, it was a solution to both our needs," Makayla, now managing director of The Source Bulk Foods UK, said.

The U.K. operation has five outlets and sells over 500 products. Since its inception, it estimates it's saved over 1.2 million pieces of plastic packaging from being used.

"We always try to make decisions in line with our core values around promoting a low waste lifestyle, offering quality food and providing value to customers,"

Makayla said. "This starts with decisions on the products we offer, from which supplier and where it originates from and the packaging it comes in.

"At store level, it comes through in our support of local community initiatives and as an employer we try to create a positive and inclusive workplace and pay our teams a living wage."



CAFE2U

Martyn Ward, CEO of mobile coffee franchise Cafe2U, says he's extremely proud of the company's response to the pandemic. And he has every right to be.

While the business faced unprecedented challenges in 2020, franchisees ensured many key workers across the U.K. didn't go without their daily caffeine fix, delivering over 15,000 free cups of coffee to NHS frontline staff alone. Some even volunteered to work in centres to assist with the vaccination programme.

On top of this, drivers adapted their normal routes so they could serve fresh coffee, food and snacks to fire service personnel, care home workers, supermarket employees and teaching staff.

Cafe2U franchisees in Preston North West, Castle Donnington, Belfast East, Lichfield and Stockport North, among others, provided a COVID-safe service to essential staff.

All those involved demonstrated their caring credentials



during a crisis that has engulfed the nation.

In addition to these efforts, Cafe2U Bromsgrove recently took time out from their usual business activities to serve coffee to the homeless and those sleeping rough as part of Worcestershire's homeless appeal.

REVIVE!

One of the values at Revive! is unity, so when the company, which provides mobile repairs to minor vehicle damage, looks at supporting different charities, it tries to bring all the team together.



In September 2020, the Revive! team raised nearly £4,000 to buy a motorised wheelchair for a motor neurone disease sufferer. Company employees, along with some franchisees, raised money by challenging themselves to move as far as possible in September, which included walking, running, swimming or cycling every day – or as many days as they could manage – during the month.

Four of the team, joint managing director Mark Llewellyn, UK operations director Andy Hupfield, together with Renata Townsend and Marketa Ouchouche from the Revive! customer service team, extended the challenge and continued to run five kilometres every day for 100 days.

Mark said: "Giving back is very important to us to date we've raised over £25,000 for children's cancer charities and the Motor Neurone Disease Association."

JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS

After its conception in Tulsa in 1997, consignment sale franchise Just Between Friends has grown to a U.S. network of more than 160 franchisees – and yet, the benevolent brand has never lost sight of its charitable foundations, giving more than \$32m in cash and in-kind donations to local communities in the 24 years since it began.

"Giving back to the local community is foundational to our business model, as our sellers can choose to donate any unsold items after each JBF sale," said Shannon Wilburn, co-founder and CEO. "This creates an easy way for clothes, toys, and shoes to go to homes where they are needed. Last year, we facilitated over \$4.5m of in-kind donations to our local charity partners. Goodness multiplies – and we love being a part of this at the local and national level."

The brand also consists of 97 per cent female franchisees, and continues to promote its charitable message with each new acquisition.



MOLLY MAID

A domestic cleaning franchise under the Neighborly services umbrella, Molly Maid has been a strong advocate for women for decades. With the creation of the Ms. Molly Foundation in 1996, the brand put wellbeing at the forefront by launching a mission to increase public awareness of domestic violence – the most underreported crime in the U.S.

“Since its inception, the Ms. Molly Foundation has raised over \$3.5m and each year, the foundation sends over 100 checks to various shelters across the country,” said Vera Peterson, president. “In 2020, the Ms. Molly Foundation held its first-ever virtual auction due to the pandemic. With 146 franchise partners participating across the country, the foundation was able to raise over \$13,000 to support local shelters.”



LITTLE KICKERS

Little Kickers was last year’s winner of the Global Franchise Champion title at the annual Global Franchise Awards, and uses this position of prominence to promote positive CSR initiatives wherever possible.

Some, such as flying its soccer coaches out to teach at schools in Malawi or changing to recyclable uniforms and donating old kits to African communities, have been put on hold in light of the current pandemic and its associated challenges. But this hasn’t stopped Little Kickers from engaging with charity in recent months.

“In December 2020, our franchisees were quite upset by the free school meals situation, as lots of the kids who were impacted were of the age groups that we cater for,” said Christine Kelly, founder. “So, we decided to raise enough money to buy Christmas lunch for 1,000 U.K. families.

“Not only did we achieve our target of 1,000 families receiving a hamper full of ingredients, but we also managed to donate over £5,000 to FareShare, where it has been used to provide access to meals for over 22,000 of the country’s most vulnerable people.”

ARBY'S

Since its founding in 1986, The Arby’s Foundation has given over \$100m to a variety of youth-related causes that support some of the most vulnerable members of the population.

Whether that’s working toward putting an end to childhood hunger in partnership with charities like No Kid Hungry, providing support to programmes like JA Academy that help to transform kids into the leaders of tomorrow, or partnering with the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation to open up possibilities for kids’ careers; Arby’s has always invested heavily in its youngest consumers.

By focusing on ‘Dream Big’, The Arby’s Foundation aims for lofty goals by using the support of everyday people. This comes in part through the \$1 donations that guests contribute during its Make a Difference Campaign, which runs during two months of the year.



BOJANGLES

Equality is a key pillar of restaurant brand Bojangles’ CSR policy, and this was clearer in 2020 than ever before with the creation of several progressive initiatives that highlight

and elevate underrepresented members of the fast food industry.

For example, its Minority Franchisee Program was created to recruit, train, mentor, and provide funding support and other resources to minority entrepreneurs, who may not have previously had the opportunity to pursue their dreams of business ownership. 2020 also saw the launch of the brand’s Diversity and Inclusion Task Force; a push to unite employees from all levels on how they can bring an inclusive and diverse culture to life throughout every aspect of the network.

Bojangles also runs an Accelerated Management Trainee Program, which is a six-to-nine-month process designed to increase diversity among its restaurant locations and corporate offices.

WILTSHIRE FARM FOODS

This frozen meal delivery brand has been a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative since 2015 and in 2018 signed up to the UK Plastics Pact, a formal agreement between 41 businesses to keep plastic in the economy and out of our oceans.



The following year, Wiltshire Farm Foods won the Queen's Award for sustainable development – the third time it's been recognised by this prestigious programme.

The company caught the eye of judges with its early adoption of anaerobic digestion – a way of creating energy from food waste – its fundraising for Alzheimer's Support and the Alzheimer's Society, and because 100 per cent of the fish sourced by the brand is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council.

Marketing manager Hannah Kempster (pictured) said: "We're dedicated to doing business in an ethical and sustainable way, enhancing the health and well-being of our customers through great food we're proud of and our good old fashioned delivery service.

"Our commitment to team members, suppliers and customers is something we take incredibly seriously, allowing us to make a real difference to people's lives."

DAIRY QUEEN

Ice cream franchisor Dairy Queen runs its annual Miracle Treat Day to help franchisees support the people that matter most: their local communities.

A fundraising event for the Children's Miracle Network, Miracle Treat Day is held every year in the U.S. and Canada and sees at least \$1 from the proceeds of every Blizzard Treat sold go to local participating Children's

Miracle Network hospitals, which treat around 17 million children across North America every year.

Dairy Queen has supported the Children's Miracle Network since 1984, and at its 30th anniversary celebrations in 2014, it was revealed that Miracle Treat Day had helped to raise more than \$125m for the Children's Miracle Network.



TRUSSELL TRUST FOODBANK NETWORK AND X-PRESS LEGAL SERVICES



Partnering with churches and communities across the U.K.; what started out in 2000 in a garden shed and garage in Salisbury has now grown into a network of over 440 foodbanks.

Seeing how many people needed emergency food, the Salisbury Foodbank model led to the foundation of the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network in 2004. The Foodbank Network asks franchisees for a donation of £1,500 during the first year and £360 each consecutive year. These are just minimal costs for setting up and delivering services to foodbanks, with the Trussell Trust funding the remainder.

Since the start of the pandemic, the network has dealt with a huge

increase in need for its services. For instance, linking with Trussell Trust, X-Press Legal Services' head office ran a charity campaign throughout December 2020, with all its 26 franchise offices donating to their local foodbanks.

Lynne Lister, managing director of X-Press Legal Services, said: "The pandemic has caused hardship for so many, resulting in a record number of people now reliant on local foodbanks to feed themselves and their families. We wanted to help in whatever way we could, and encouraged our network to do the same. We are proud to have helped so many local foodbanks throughout England and Wales with much-needed essentials."

1,239,399
emergency food parcels were
provided to people in crisis by
Trussell Trust foodbanks between
**APRIL AND
SEPTEMBER 2020.**

Source: Trussell Trust coronavirus response impact report – March to September 2020



DUCK DONUTS

Since 2017, Duck Donuts has supported Gabe's Chemo Duck Program, a non-profit that provides education, comfort

and hope through stuffed ducks, medical play, and therapeutic tools. The sponsorship ensures that children undergoing treatment for cancer can have access to their own Chemo Duck, a stuffed duck dressed in hospital scrubs with a chemotherapy port, to help them learn what to expect during treatment and to provide "huggable hope".

"Gabe's Chemo Duck Program is an important resource not just for the children undergoing cancer treatment and their families, but also for the doctors, nurses, child life specialists, and other supporters who are trying to comfort children and navigate them

through what can be a very scary experience," explained Russ DiGilio, founder and CEO of Duck Donuts.

To date, Duck Donuts has raised \$210,000 during its annual franchise-wide campaigns. Nearly 6,500 Chemo Duck programmes have been provided to children undergoing cancer treatment in the communities Duck Donuts serves.

"By partnering with Duck Donuts, we've been able to extend our outreach to thousands of children and we're honoured to be the beneficiary of this campaign again this year," said Lu Sipos, founder and CEO of Gabe's Chemo Duck Program.



LITTLE CAESARS

Little Caesars, founded in 1959 by Korean War veteran Mike Ilitch, has always admired the business acumen of franchise owners with a military background. In 2006, Little Caesars established the Little Caesars Veterans Program, which offers an array of benefits – including discounts on franchise and equipment fees as well as corporate communications support, among others – for honourably discharged or service-disabled military veterans and Gold Star families.

"Almost 15 years since the programme was launched, Little Caesars has amassed 65 veteran franchisees, all of whom collectively own hundreds of pizzeria locations," said Jamie Wolfe, director - U.S. development at Little Caesars.

"As part of this programme, the company partnered with two other organisations, C4 Foundation and Gallant Few, to provide \$10,000 donations that benefit active-duty military personnel and veterans."

Darla Renee Jackson Hernandez serves as director of operations for her family's stores in the San Antonio, Texas area. Her father, Rene Jackson, a United States Army veteran, opened his first Little Caesars store seven years ago after retiring from service. Today, he and his family own and operate six stores.

HOME INSTEAD

"Our charity, The Bring Joy Foundation, is a key component of our social purpose strategy," explained Penny Hamer, executive director, The Home Instead Bring Joy Foundation. "It is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the lives of older people and to bringing joy to their lives. The charity works mainly by funding activities arranged by local community groups or by supporting them through the provision of items such as activity packs."

During the pandemic the Foundation was able to provide 20 portals to older people to allow them to remain connected with friends and family. More recently it launched Challenge 500, an initiative that involved its franchisees raising money before its national conference in March. "So far £6,000 has been raised and we are looking forward to putting this money back into

local communities for the benefit of many seniors in the coming months," added Penny.

Over the last 12 months the Foundation has also been in review and expanded to include new trustees, two of whom are Home Instead franchisees – a first for the charity. Significant changes have also been made to its grants programme so that the Bring Joy Foundation becomes more embedded in its franchisees' businesses.



ACTIONCOACH

When ActionCOACH founder and CEO, Brad Sugars, offered some for-profit business advice to a nonprofit children's charity in his native Australia, he never thought that the experience would provide the basis for a campaign to provide pro-bono coaching to nonprofit leadership and later, for the creation of the ActionCOACH Foundation.

"For years, we've worked with for-profits to leverage performance, productivity and profit," said Sugars. "Now, we can leverage those same systems and strategies through our network of global coaches to help willing nonprofits on a local level everywhere we operate."

Through the original 'Coaching for a Cause' campaign, launched in 2009, hundreds of Action Coaches have donated over \$1m in coaching services worldwide to help charities and nonprofits increase their impact. As a direct result of coaching, nonprofits have raised well over \$5m since the programme launched, including additional funds and donations totaling \$3,409,645 in the first six months of the programme alone.



Coaching for a Cause is a way for the ActionCOACH Business Coaches collective to give back to their communities by providing pro-bono coaching hours to local nonprofit organisations. According to coach and ActionCOACH Foundation chairman, Doug Winnie: "It is in our corporate DNA to give back and to educate community leaders in order to spread abundance."



PLANET FITNESS

Planet Fitness' philanthropic initiative – The Judgement Free Generation – strives to combat bullying faced by today's youth by creating a culture of kindness and encouragement.

Partnering with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, along with its franchisees, it has contributed \$5m to its nonprofit partners, provided staff and youth training that has reached more than 1,200 Boys & Girls Clubs in all 50 states, awarded \$500,000 in scholarships to youth who promote inclusion in their communities and built 30 'Mini Judgement Free Zone' fitness centres in select Boys & Girls Clubs.

"We could not ask for a better partner to help spread the pro-kindness, anti-bullying vision across our clubs. Planet Fitness and the Judgement Free Generation will have lasting, sustainable impact on our members and our communities," said Jim Clark, president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Also, during the pandemic the brand's well-loved Pizza Mondays tradition pivoted, with the help of Slice Out Hunger's Pizza vs. Pandemic initiative, by donating pizza to healthcare heroes on the frontline.

The initiative collects donations on its website and then matches them with requests from healthcare centres across the U.S. Since March 2020, the initiative has delivered 35,100 pizza pies and raised \$660,000.

BUILD-A-BEAR

Teddy bear retailer Build-A-Bear has been spreading joy among children for 23 years with its customisable workshop-style experience allowing customers to create bespoke bears that come in multitudes of shapes and sizes.

While it is now a renowned global organisation, it is equally recognised for its altruistic activities, chiefly through its Build-A-Bear Foundation. The foundation's aim is to 'add a little more love to life by sharing hugs and making days a little bit brighter for those in need', typically doing so by financial donations, donating teddy bears, arranging teddy bear visits, and partnering with charities such as the American Red Cross.

"Since its establishment in 2004, Build-A-Bear Foundation has been making days a little brighter for those in need, with a focus on providing in-kind donations of furry friends to less fortunate children," Hailey Kaufman, cause marketing communications specialist tells *Business Woman*.

"In 2020 alone, the foundation gave over \$350,000 in COVID-19 relief, more than 35,000 furry friends to children in need, and 240,000 masks to essential workers and communities in the U.S. and U.K."



25 CSR BRANDS CHANGING THE -WORLD-

ACM ENVIRONMENTAL

While some organisations have a strong corporate social responsibility ethos, there's a growing number of franchise brands where it underpins their entire business models.

Established in 1991, U.K. brand ACM Environmental is a recycling-led waste management company that offers a progressive alternative to traditional waste management services. In fact, it is the first waste management company to be deemed carbon neutral, as well as being an active member of the British government's All-Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group.

The brand firmly believes that zero landfill is an achievable and necessary goal. Initiatives, such as its Greener Path Programme and free waste audits, help businesses to reduce the amount of waste ending up in landfills.



THE HUMAN BEAN

Coffee brand the Human Bean, which currently has over 200 locations open or under development in 20 U.S.

states, not only follows a mission to take care of the general public with quality coffee, but it also puts a strong emphasis on treating its supply chain with the respect it deserves, too.

It primarily does this through its Stewardship programme, which has helped the organisation to form long standing relationships in coffee communities, helping facilitate several projects at coffee origin communities.

Its first project in 1999 with Finca El Paternal in Guatemala showed how it could positively impact farming communities while forging sourcing relationships with the farmers.

Through its Farm Friendly Direct initiative it helps to provide water sanitation supplies, planting trees, installing water wells, and other important projects to farms in coffee-producing countries. For instance, the brand states that its Colombia-based initiative will have helped 51 farms in the country.



A WATER KIOSK AT SCHOOL

Founded by Kenyan entrepreneur and secretary general of the International Transformation Foundation, Venuste Kubwimana, A Water Kiosk at School is a franchise initiative launched in 2014 as a school-based and student-managed

business selling clean tap water to community residents at an affordable price.

It is both an educational and profitable business that teaches students business skills while also generating income for schools.

The concept has caught the attention of business communities across the globe, with Kubwimana named one of Africa's Top 50 Innovators in 2018, the AIDF Global Innovator of the Year, and the winner of the 2019 Social Enterprise Franchise award at the International Franchise Association's NextGen in Franchising Global Contest.

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Ohana and innovation in a virtual world

Flexible workspace provider Office Evolution stands ready to inspire the dreamers, risk-takers and doers to succeed with a family of franchisees committed to the communities they serve, says Andrea Pirrotti-Dranchak, Chief Marketing and Development Officer

Thanks to lockdowns, a global workforce pivoted to virtual working roughly one year ago and the great work from home (WFH) experiment for millions began.

As we embarked on this new journey, sitting in what we affectionately call our 'Zoom Bubbles' and making every effort to connect and instill a sense of normalcy over the geographic divide, we quickly

learned that inherent in a 'bubble' is a fine layer that separates.

Focus shifted both from a human and business standpoint. At the onset of the pandemic, the initial objective was indeed survival, but at the same time we never lost sight of the need for innovation. Innovating to support our team members, our franchisees and their members to provide a sense of 'usual' in a rather unusual time.

And while the greatest segment of our effort was aimed at providing immediate help and support, we also kept a keen eye on the future.

What we learned during this time is that the power of our culture, which is based on the principles of Ohana (Hawaiian for family), has been our connecting force that breaks down the separations inherent in a bubble, allowing us to drive innovation.

CULTURE MATTERS

Studies by McKinsey, Deloitte and SHRM all confirm that culture matters. In fact, organizations rooted in a powerful culture outperform those who don't make it a priority.

The way in which we engage, formulate decisions and represent is rooted in Ohana. It is this culture that guides us to deliver on our promise to our franchisees, team members and partners. Ohana is a culture that fosters collaboration, creativity and innovation. A pandemic could not stop this; rather, the pandemic enhanced the power of it.

Four pillars make up our Ohana: respect, authenticity, ownership and a

At a Glance OFFICE EVOLUTION

Established:
2003

Number of franchised outlets:
140 locations awarded; 73-plus open

Location of units:
US

Investment range:
\$374,000-\$1.6 million

Minimum required capital:
\$500,000 liquid capital, \$1 million net worth

Contact:
Development@officeevolution.com
officeevolution.com/development

belief that every win benefits us all. Now more than ever, our culture matters.

We have drawn upon the power of our culture to bridge the distance between team members, as our inability to meet face-to-face has been impacted. Like all businesses, we've heavily relied on technology. The pandemic disruption wasn't a setback because we have a foundation in place that keeps us connected and grounded in our goals, even when we are apart.

A recent workplace analysis revealed that more inclusive companies were 1.7 times more likely to be innovative leaders in their field. The business impact of inclusivity in higher performing companies will quickly separate them from the competition.

Earsa Jackson, Chair of the Diversity Institute of the International Franchise Association, reinforced the importance of inclusion and innovation.

"Many of your customers and clients will advance the discussion even if you don't, so get ahead of the curve," said Jackson.

"In my role as chair of the Diversity Institute of the International Franchise Association, I am privileged to talk to many companies in the franchise industry. I am pleased to report that I have seen overwhelming interest from companies exploring how to improve diversity, equity and inclusion."

At Office Evolution, our development, real estate, construction and brand team is a mix of ages, geographic locations and professional backgrounds. It's this blend of individuals that keeps Office Evolution's ideas fresh. This way of thinking internally is resonating with our external audiences of potential franchisees, who are impressed with the company's level of commitment and support.



Office Evolution's Marketing, Development and RECON team: Andrea Pirrotti-Dranchak (center), Jeff Hensiek, Tamara Atkin, John Lijoi and Emily Larson

CONNECTING PEOPLE IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

Given the uncertain times we are living in, it is important leaders at every level consciously commit to nurturing inclusive behaviours and the need to evaluate how technology can support these goals.

As Jackson expertly notes, technology is the medium that will foster innovation.

“Technology takes away the excuse that it is too expensive to invite a younger, diverse colleague to a meeting,” said Jackson. “In seconds, you can invite someone to a meeting. You have your team front and center like the Brady Bunch. This is a good time to assess what skill sets and perspectives might be missing from your team.”

COWORKING FOSTERS CONNECTIONS

What I've learned from the work from home experiment is that it doesn't work all of the time.

Think of where you do your best work. I would argue that people want the option to work from home some of the time; most do not want to do it all the time. It can be isolating or downright chaotic - especially if you have kids, a spouse or pets at home.

At the onset of the pandemic, workplace experts touted flexibility would be essential for businesses as the eventual return to the office begins. As part of their strategy to bring workers back to an 'office', employers are considering a variety of options, including offering staff the ability to have a workspace outside of the home, but without a lengthy commute to the head office.

Employers are re-imagining the future



of work, innovating in real-time and looking for partners who share in their quest to provide some stability during tremendous uncertainty. Coworking is uniquely positioned to fill this need.

Office Evolution is the nation's largest provider of locally owned and operated flexible workspace locations close to home that are safe and affordable.

We've been franchising since 2013 and our network of on-demand locations provides a mix of private offices, conference rooms and community spaces to accommodate the rise in solopreneurs, small business ownership and corporate America's shifting work habits.

Based in Colorado, we currently have more than 70 suburban locations open across 26 states. We have been consistently recognized by Entrepreneur Magazine and have remained on the Franchise 500 best of the best list for five

consecutive years - having leapt from 267 to 126 in 2020.

Deemed an essential service, Office Evolution's development, real estate, construction and marketing team locked arms virtually to overcome challenges and leaned into our Ohana - and are looking forward to the next phase of the business.

Emily Larson, Chief of Staff at Office Evolution, has been with the company for over a decade and has been instrumental in driving innovation by implementing the Entrepreneurial Operating System®.

“It's important for us to create synergy within the organization and the EOS system has helped us collectively stay on track,” said Larson.

“We actively elevate our team members, empowering them to take ownership and be accountable. When we all embrace our vision, we can effectively execute across the board and succeed as a team.”



Office Evolution's franchise convention 2019

We find ourselves at the intersection of innovation, expansion and rising demand. I love talking to savvy entrepreneurs who realize the potential of our coworking franchise model as small to medium-sized businesses around the country reevaluate their real estate needs. Our brand's model fills a niche for suburban-based workers looking for a professional environment minutes from where they live.

Bucking the trend of coworking operators who closed locations and struggled last year, Office Evolution's growth is directly tied to our core values, which allow for everyone to have a seat at the table and for every voice to be heard.

Office Evolution's innovative franchising model is paving the way for new entrepreneurs to start their own coworking locations.

A UNIQUE MODEL: 93% RECURRING REVENUE*. SEMI-ABSENTEE. BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS

Office Evolution has a pipeline of 140 franchise locations sold and in various stages of development. This opportunity is perfect for the seasoned franchisee looking to diversify his or her portfolio or for the serial entrepreneur looking to start another business.

This is a franchise opportunity that easily fits into an entrepreneur's lifestyle. The coworking location operates during normal business hours, with only one employee, enabling our franchisees to achieve work-life balance.

The simple, single employee business runs with 93% recurring income. As a business-to-business service, franchisees are working with professional clients just like themselves. In addition, franchisees never need to worry about food, expiring inventory or cash. Franchisees also receive

back office, lead generation, call center and billing support.

Office Evolution franchisees have the incredible opportunity to build long-term wealth while operating other businesses, owning other franchises and, in many cases, keeping a corporate career.

Karen and George Fisher, Office Evolution franchise owners out of Woodbridge, NJ, have solid business backgrounds and are true assets to their members. When looking for an opportunity that would fit their lifestyle, Office Evolution became an obvious choice.

"OE fit the bill, with its focus on Ohana and its commitment to building connection between members and helping them achieve their dreams of success," said Karen. "Our members often compliment us on the warm and inviting environment we have created."

FRANCHISEES BENEFIT FROM INNOVATION

The learnings and ideas curated during brainstorm sessions benefit Office Evolution's franchisees.

My team and I connect and draw from our franchisees for ideas, inspiration and, indeed, a reality check. These franchisees come from a variety of industries and are at different career stages.

Franchisees are often part of brainstorming sessions, as they are on the front lines of the coworking movement in their communities. Their experiences and perspectives are welcomed and spark additional ideas for the marketing and development team.

Martin Gruszka opened his first Office Evolution location in March 2019 in Herndon, VA and is thrilled with his decision to become a franchisee.

"As I looked and researched different

franchises, Office Evolution presented a perfect opportunity to take the next steps in my career," said Martin.

"Office Evolution is a great company with top management, fantastic resources and a solid support structure. It allowed me to engage my creativity once again - first to build a center, then grow it and finally to support its members."

Business owners can also reap the rewards that come with owning multiple Office Evolution locations in an industry primed for robust growth.

By 2030, shared office space will make up nearly 30 per cent of commercial real estate, according to a report by JLL, the real estate services firm that also projects flexible workspace to soar in a revived post-pandemic market.

Office Evolution stands ready to inspire the dreamers, risk-takers and doers to succeed with a family of franchisees committed to the communities they serve.

"We find ourselves at the intersection of innovation, expansion and rising demand"

FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Mark Hemmeter, Founder and CEO of Office Evolution, often says: "The office market is way overdue for a transformation in order to keep pace with the changing nature of work.

"For anyone interested in a business with growth potential, the opportunity is here for the taking."

*This article is not intended as an offer of a franchise, as franchises are only offered pursuant to Office Evolution's Franchise Disclosure Document.



The dreamers, risk-takers and doers around the nation

Keeping ahead in the numbers game

When it comes to accounting, take advantage of technology, but keep communicating, Renata Selley, senior relationship manager at d&t, advises

Franchising has a rich history of passionate females leading both as franchisees and franchisors. These women are experts in their field and provide innovative products and services to their many and varied customer bases. But to help make these franchises even more successful, it's important to look after the numbers.

Statistics show maths is one of the least popular subjects at school. However, a little understanding in the business world goes a long way, so it's important to manage your accounts carefully - and the good news is that help is at hand.

INSTANT INSIGHT

One of the great developments in recent years is online accountancy software. It can streamline processes and free up time, while providing instant insight on marketing spend or monthly profit and loss at the touch of a button. It's designed to be intuitive and easy to use, so well worth the investment required.

In addition, with the HMRC Making Tax Digital initiative on the horizon, if you're not using online accountancy software such as Xero or QuickBooks Online you'll need to start doing so very soon.

If kept updated regularly, online accountancy software means at your year end, bar one or two electronic documents you need to send to your accountant, you'll already be up to date. We advise all new businesses to start as they mean to go on and begin by accounting online.

For older franchised businesses, moving online should be straightforward, as free training is provided by QuickBooks and Xero. d&t also provides free, personalised set up and training for our partners, as we know it's the most efficient way to manage accounts and keep accounting costs down.

One thing to consider is where there are



At a Glance
d&t

d&t is a multi award-winning team of chartered accountants and expert business advisers to clients in multiple industries, as well as over 100 different franchise networks.

team-dt.com

timing differences between invoicing and work completed that need to be adjusted for. This may occur in a tuition business, where work is invoiced and payment collected upfront, but for accounting purposes it needs to be recorded out throughout the year.

These adjustments are called journals and unless you're confident posting them, they're best left to your accountant to adjust, verify and put the figures into context throughout the year.

ADDING FURTHER VALUE

At d&t, we add further value as because we work with many franchise brands we know what's normal for your sector. This might mean we can advise where gross profit is not quite where it should be, so sales or purchases prices could be reviewed, or bulk discounts negotiated to remain competitive.

Overheads can also then be reviewed and acted on in a timely manner if they're going over budget.

Here's where it's important to keep communicating with your accountant. Brilliant as it is, accountancy software can only do so much. It doesn't record information that doesn't go through your bank account, such as mileage or 'use of home' expenses, which can help you save tax, so understanding where these items fit can be helpful.

More importantly, your accountant can help when it comes to timing of investment decisions, such as taking on new employees. Or they can advise how to acquire a new vehicle in the most tax efficient way.

Talk is cheap and having these discussions with your accountant in good time can save in the long run.

So when it comes to accounting, take advantage of technology, but keep communicating. In this way, your franchise can maximise profitability while you continue to enjoy doing the job you love.



From desk job to business leader

Anoop Sekhon escaped an uninspiring 9-5 and now leads a more fulfilling life as a Bluebird Care franchisee



"Over her career with Bluebird Care, she has enjoyed a better life balance"



ftentimes, a 9-5 job doesn't provide any personal satisfaction. The work can be boring and without the right room for growth can feel like you're stuck at a dead-end.

This was certainly the case for Anoop Sekhon, who found herself wondering if this is really what life is all about.

ENCOURAGEMENT

You won't find Anoop at an uninspiring 9-5 nowadays. Spurred

by discussions with her friends, she joined a network of over 200 franchisees at Bluebird Care.

Though they come from a variety of backgrounds, the franchisees at Bluebird Care share one common goal: the determination to develop a successful business working to a proven business model and the passion to provide the highest quality of home care and support in their territory.

In 2012, Anoop opened the Greenwich office, sharing the very same goal. She initially felt out of her depth in a sector she was unfamiliar with, but with award winning support from the Bluebird Care team was provided with the knowledge and assurance to set up and manage a highly successful business in the care sector.

The experienced team provides continuous support to help franchisees tackle finance, business systems, IT, marketing and PR, field-based business development and, most importantly, compliance and quality assurance.

In Anoop's case, the team was also instrumental in many other areas; they helped her raise capital, speak to banks, construct a business plan, register with a regulator and interview people for her business.

CONFIDENT

In the present day, you'll find Anoop confidently at the helm. As a Bluebird Care franchisee, you don't just work in your business - you work on your business to make it



At a Glance BLUEBIRD CARE

Established: 2004

Number of franchised outlets: 231

Location of units: UK and Ireland

Investment range: £100,000-£115,000

Minimum required capital: £34,500

Contact: Sarah Wilkins. 02392 009978.
sarahwilkins@bluebirdcare.co.uk

bluebirdcarefranchise.co.uk

"She was provided with the knowledge and assurance to set up and manage a highly successful business in the care sector"

thrive and prosper.

Anoop has found that she now leads a more fulfilled life with the support of her team. Over her career with Bluebird Care, she has enjoyed a better life balance, dedicating the time not just to business, but to other key areas that can often be neglected, such as exercise and all-important family.

GROW

What's next for Anoop? She plans to continue to grow and expand with the Bluebird Care network and hopes to expand to other territories while building her existing businesses.

One of the key things she's looking forward to is having more staff join her team; like most franchisees, she finds it rewarding to make a positive impact on the lives of others.

This is an especially important part of the care sector, which is all about making a genuine difference, not just to customers, but to the lives of their staff, who work tirelessly to provide high quality care.

How to motivate your team

10 top tips from Hitachi Capital Franchise Finance

There are lots of reasons why productivity can falter; outside influences play their part, but your business' productivity can also be affected by your team's motivation and ability to share good ideas.

Most of the tips and tools that businesses and franchises use to motivate their staff can be easily introduced as part of your everyday operations.

TREAT YOUR EMPLOYEES LIKE PEOPLE

Find out what makes your people tick. Make a point of finding out about their interests and what motivates them in their home life.

Don't be superficial. Engaging with a small number of employees well can have far more impact than having many interactions with hundreds of team members every day.

BE CONSISTENT

When you're trying to demonstrate that 'we're all in it together' and 'we're working for a common goal', it's vital to be consistent. Provide direction and give praise on an equal footing.



ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO HAVE A VOICE

Encourage your team to speak up and offer new ideas on all aspects of your business.

Recognition is important, but it's also important to recognise what you learn when new ideas don't work as expected. Ask your teams for feedback, welcome their input and remember that not everyone likes speaking up. You may need to talk to people individually to get the best from them.

REWARD LATERAL THINKING

When your teams know you value their opinions, they'll be encouraged to speak up and make suggestions that might not have surfaced otherwise. Encourage new ideas and make it easy to offer them - discreetly if necessary.

TALK ABOUT CAREERS - INSIDE AND OUTSIDE YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Not everyone may want to work with you throughout their working lives.

Let your employees have career goals that feel tangible. Encourage them to share their personal and career ambitions for the future - it could help you to make plans that help them and your business at the same time.

If you're able to, create a structure that offers internal progression on a regular basis. Employees who think they're stuck in a rut tend to lose motivation quickly.

GIVE PRAISE WHERE PRAISE IS DUE

If your team is doing a great job, tell them - personally and sincerely. If they're not, find out why and then see how you can help the situation first.

It's easy to demotivate a disconnected employee even further by



At a Glance HITACHI CAPITAL FRANCHISE FINANCE

For more information call 01844 355575 or visit hitachicapital.co.uk/franchise-finance

blaming them for a bad job without knowing the reasons why a target has been missed.

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR PLANS

If your team can't understand what they're working for, they'll struggle to find anything that motivates them in the workplace.

Talk about the company's 'bigger picture' on a regular basis and make it clear how their everyday duties fit into that plan.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE AT EVERY LEVEL

However large or small your business is, roll your sleeves up occasionally and check in with your core employees.

It's an excellent way to discover small changes to your operation or service that might make a big difference if they're rolled out across your business.

GIVE EVERYONE A BREAK, SOMETIMES

There's more to life than work. Set an example that reminds employees they'll benefit from having regular breaks, including fresh air, good food and time away from their desks or workstations.

MAKE SURE YOUR WORKPLACE IS A NICE PLACE TO WORK

Nobody likes working in an unpleasant environment.

Find a balance for your company that fits your brand identity and takes your employees' personalities into consideration too. With a properly motivated and engaged team, you'll be amazed at what you can achieve.

Try to implement some of these into your work environment and see the difference they can make.

Inspiring the nation's imagination

There has never been a better time to become a Creation Station franchise owner



Established by Sarah Cressall in 2002 to provide her three children with creative opportunities to explore, discover and develop, The Creation Station's purpose is to make positive differences through creative experiences.

1.5 million children and adults have been inspired by over 90 Creation Station franchise partners.

Based on over 7,000 5-Star Trustpilot reviews, The Creation Station is rated as number one in the UK for children's classes and birthday parties.

"I launched during the pandemic and my business is growing"

GROW AT YOUR PACE

The Creation Station's wide range of award-winning classes, clubs, parties and events allows you to maximise the opportunities in your exclusive territory.

Activities include creative afterschool

clubs and workshops, birthday parties, adult well-being and crafting events, preschool, family fun classes, senior citizens 'crafternoons', plus event entertainment.

The company's franchise owners come from a wide range of backgrounds - from banking and management to stay at home mums and health care professionals. They are friendly and proactive and share The Creation Station's purpose to make positive differences.

Before joining the company, very few of its franchise owners had run their own businesses or had experience in delivering creative experiences.

The Creation Station provides comprehensive ongoing training, a regional support manager for one-to-one support and regional meet-ups, as well as detailed, tried and tested activity plans, cutting edge mobile technology systems, sales, marketing and technical support. Your support plan is tailored



At a Glance THE CREATION STATION

Established:
2002

Number of franchised outlets: 90

Location of units: nationwide

Investment range: £6,000-£18,000

Minimum required capital: £2,000

Contact: franchise team
franchise@thecreationstation.co.uk
thecreationstation.co.uk

to achieve the success you want at a pace that suits you.

ETHICAL MARKET LEADER

The Creation Station has been ranked number 28 in the top UK franchises and its commitment to making positive differences has been recognised by numerous recent awards.

Emma McCalla-John, a franchise owner for over four years, says: "Running my own Creation Station has given me the opportunity to be my own boss, with all the support and help I've needed. Bringing creativity into all areas of learning, leisure and life is very fulfilling and great fun."

HUGE POTENTIAL

Setting up and growing a business during lockdown hasn't been the focus for many people during 2020, but Abby Warner knew there was huge potential in The Creation Station franchise.

She says: "I wanted to move away from my administration career. I always wanted to run my own business and decided I don't want to live with regrets! I researched franchises and The Creation Station stood out because of the huge potential.

"I launched my business during lockdown and my business is growing. I started with COVID secure, face-to-face classes in September, then moved to online activities with crafts packs and my business is growing as demand for experiences increase. And now face-to-face experiences are opening up, I can see we are going to be very busy.

"It's been quite a journey, but I'm so pleased I made the decision to invest in a solid and supportive franchise. It's allowed me to take control of my life and I love what I do."

Centred around social connection

Hybrid boutique fitness brand TRIB3 continues to thrive, as it's powered by loyalty

Humans are social beings. We crave togetherness and thrive on being part of communities. We are comfortable when we're connected, sharing experiences and building bonds.

The boutique fitness industry is centred around social connection, with those frequenting these smaller, experiential facilities showing up for the workout experience, but staying afterwards to socialise, form friendships and share achievements.

CONSUMERS WILL RECALIBRATE

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on social interactions, shifting the way people participate in fitness and moving communities online. However, this will not be the case forever.

Consumers will recalibrate and, as it becomes safe to go back to more normal routines, pursue the experiences that give them a sense of belonging and connection.

Distancing measures will be in place for a long time, but we will see a rise in people partaking in fitness as they look to prioritise their physical and mental well-being. In a recent UK survey sponsored by Active IQ, 76 per cent of 33,544 customers across 771 facilities said they would return to their fitness centres as soon as they reopened.

OFFERINGS MUST ADAPT

With lifestyles and routines augmented in the long term, more consumers will continue to integrate working out at home with attending fitness studios in person. Fitness providers will have to continue to adapt their product offerings based on these changing needs.

One fitness provider that's going from strength to strength is TRIB3. The company recently announced further global expansion into the Netherlands as its sixth international territory, with TRIB3's first franchised store in the region set to open in Amsterdam.

The brand also launched a custom at-home workout platform, TRIB3 Live, in 2020, evolving to a hybrid on and offline model and bolstering customers' connectivity.

At the easing of the UK lockdown in December, 72 per cent of consumers on TRIB3 Live were existing studio customers. In tandem, the studios themselves were operating with occupancy rates of over 90 per cent, demonstrating the validity and power of the model. TRIB3 built a community from connection, which means it continues to thrive, even in an online setting, as it's powered by loyalty. Loyalty creates strong brand allies and ensures the business is able to keep delivering results, even with evolving macro factors.

COMPLEMENTING EVOLVING NEEDS

People are more focused than ever on their well-being. Fitness franchisors like TRIB3 will complement the evolving needs and habits of the consumers in this space.



At a Glance TRIB3 INTERNATIONAL

Established: 2016

Number of franchised outlets:
6 (of 13 outlets)

Locations of all outlets: Sheffield, Leeds, Bristol, Helsinki, Moscow, Madrid: Cuzco, Basílica and Goya, Guangzhou, Edinburgh (opening Q1 2021), Manchester x 2 (opening Q1 2021), Amsterdam (opening Q2 2021)

Minimum required capital: initial investment can start between £59,000, leveraging third party funding, or £118,000 of personal investment

Contact: franchise team
franchise@trib3.co.uk

trib3.co.uk/franchise

Fitness franchising allows people who want to start their own business to do so with less risk and more support. Previous experience in the industry isn't necessary. As long as you're motivated and inspired to make a difference, franchisors provide ongoing support and robust training.

TRIB3's support team has decades of experience, with CEO Kevin Yates being one of the pioneers of the UK boutique fitness market.

The company's new franchise partner in Amsterdam attributes his leap into fitness franchising to the pandemic: "The situation increased and strengthened my desire to start my own business, as I was ready to take the wheel myself and become my own boss.

"The pandemic was a period of reflection and propelled me to start thinking about my future."

Are you ready to seize your future too?



Becoming a franchisee has been liberating

FASTSIGNS' trusted franchise model has enabled Melanie Martinez to be her own boss

Melanie Martinez (Mel) has worked for FASTSIGNS for nearly 26 years, 24 of those as an employee at the company's Crawley centre, where she helps local businesses showcase their services effectively through the use of signage.

Most recently, she's spent nearly two years as the franchisee of the same centre.

STEADY INCOME

Having left art college in 1994, Mel worked as a freelance artist until she and her husband, Jose Martinez, decided to buy a house.

In order to get a mortgage, Mel needed a steady income, so she joined FASTSIGNS, the same business her husband worked for. But she never intended for her employment to last any longer than was necessary to achieve their objective of home ownership!

Nevertheless, Mel formed a good working relationship with the then owner of FASTSIGNS Crawley, who gave her more and more responsibility. In 2010, when the franchisee decided to sell the business, Mel was given the opportunity to buy it.

However, having just become a mum, she didn't feel the time was right and the franchise passed into new ownership. Mel continued to work for the business in a part-time role as she brought up her young family. In 2018, the franchisee of the centre decided to retire. This time, Mel knew she couldn't miss her chance again.



DRIVING FORCE

Mel, Jose and their business partner, Alan White, purchased the centre.

Mel says: "I was the driving force behind wanting to buy the franchise. I knew I'd missed out on the earlier opportunity and wish I'd been braver back then. Knowing what I know now, franchising could have helped me create a positive work-life balance, but the timing just wasn't right."

During her time with FASTSIGNS, Mel has focused on nurturing relationships in her local area, helping business owners achieve their signage requirements and her exuberant personality has helped her to make lasting connections.

"When I was just an employee of the centre, I loved my job and loved helping businesses, but now it's personal and I'm glad I was able to put the groundwork into developing relationships with my customers," Mel says.



At a Glance FASTSIGNS

Established:
1985

Number of franchised outlets: 24 in the UK, 700-plus internationally

Location of UK units: Birmingham, Bolton, Brighton, Chelmsford, Crawley, Enfield, Gloucester, Guildford, Hammersmith, Huddersfield, Hull, Islington & Hackney, Kingston upon Thames, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Maidstone, Milton Keynes, Peterborough, Portsmouth, Sheffield, St Albans, Southampton, York

Investment range: £125,000-plus

Minimum required capital: £36,000

Contact: enquiries@fastsigns.com

fsfastsigns.co.uk

"We still deal with some of the businesses I worked with almost a quarter of a century ago, so I must have done something right."

COURAGE OF MY CONVICTIONS

Mel has found becoming a franchisee liberating: "When I worked in the centre, I had so many ideas for how I would do things, but of course had to get permission from the franchisee. Now I have the courage of my own convictions and can press ahead with the changes I want to implement."

One of Mel's goals is to increase her business' turnover and improve its positioning in the FASTSIGNS network league tables. To do this she's invested in marketing and is already reaping the rewards.

Between 2018 and 2019, the Crawley centre grew by 35 per cent, which Mel sees as proof that she made the right decision, stepping out of her comfort zone and finally claiming the business as her own.

Join this thriving theatre school family

Razzamataz offers flexible and rewarding career opportunities in the children's sector



The world is changing faster than any of us could have imagined. What we have learnt is that we must keep looking forwards, continue to adapt and seize opportunities as and when they arrive.

Last year, multi-award winning Razzamataz Theatre Schools took on 10 new franchisees and this year there are already new franchisees for five new territories.

In February of this year, the company was awarded 'Best Franchise' by WorkBuzz and Lloyds Bank in the '£2-£10 million turnover' category, took home the 'Continuous Improvement' Award voted for by the company's own network of franchisees and once again won the '5 Star Franchisee Satisfaction' Award.

We meet some of the inspiring women who have either launched a Razzamataz Theatre School or expanded during the pandemic:

MICHAELA CRUMPTON, RAZZAMATAZ BRISTOL NORTH AND SOUTH

"Taking on the business after lockdown was a huge decision, but surrounding

myself with a positive team of staff who I can rely on was a big part of my decision.

"I've always valued a good work-life balance and becoming a mum with a horse-mad daughter has made the life side more important. Razzamataz offers the chance to be flexible - I can do the school run and get to the stable to do the mucky jobs and get back home and start my working day."

THE BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF A FRANCHISE

"If I was out there on my own, I would have failed. I'm terrible with setting myself a timetable, but with a franchise behind you, setting goals and giving you help, it's been easier to do. Thanks to our founder, Denise, and Charlotte in our head office, we've been able to overcome the challenges of reopening and pivoting online."

ASHA RICHARDSON, RAZZAMATAZ PENRITH

"I launched in the middle of the pandemic, which of course was pretty overwhelming.

"But when I looked at what the other schools in the network were doing, how they pivoted their business online and the amazing testimonials from customers, it gave me a lot of hope."

THE BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF A FRANCHISE

"Before I took over Razzamataz Penrith, I'd already started investigating other franchises.



At a Glance RAZZAMATAZ THEATRE SCHOOLS

Established: 2000

Number of franchised outlets: currently 44 (52 by September 2021)

Location of units: UK-wide

Investment range: £7,995-£9,995

Minimum required capital: £5,000 working capital and £4,000 marketing launch budget

Contact: franchise@razzamataz.co.uk
07821 122242

Facebook: @Razzamataztheatreschools

Instagram: @razzschoools

Twitter: @razzschoools

YouTube: youtube.com/c/RazzamatazTheatreSchoolsLtd

LinkedIn: [Razzamataz Theatre Schools](https://www.linkedin.com/company/RazzamatazTheatreSchools)
razzamataz.co.uk/franchise-ops/contact-us

What we get in terms of help from Razzamataz is incredible and I know that friends running other theatre school franchises don't get nearly as much.

"Being part of Razzamataz feels like you're part of a family who are supporting you to grow, so you're not on this journey by yourself."

What you get with Razzamataz

- More than 20 years' experience in the performing arts and theatre school industries.
- Low-cost entry.
- Intensive six-day training course with continued support, training and access to webinars.
- Flexible lifestyle - you can work around your commitments, including school holidays.
- Funding options.
- Incentives and rewards.
- Being part of a multi-award winning brand.
- The chance to say goodbye to the corporate 9-5 and create the career you've always wanted.
- Franchisees turning over circa £300,000.

Have a positive influence on children's lives

Helen Doron Educational Group has been empowering women to start their own education franchise for 35 years



CEO and Founder
Helen Doron

Are women wired to succeed in business? According to independent research*, women naturally excel in three key skill areas: communication, initiative and emotional intelligence.

These skills are evidenced in the work of Helen Doron, CEO of Helen Doron Educational Group, which is a leading franchise network that's carved out a niche for itself in the English-as-a-foreign-language industry, as well as in kindergartens and maths programmes. Helen, a linguistic scientist, has built an international franchise that's launched the careers of numerous women who also excel in these business skills.

FLEXIBLE CAREER PATH

Franchisees benefit from a flexible career path that gives them a choice of options. Many started off as parents looking for excellent English language education for their children. Others began as teachers and, seeing the opportunities, become learning centre franchisees and then master franchisees, responsible for a whole country or region.

There are also opportunities for teachers to work independently as employees and teacher trainers.

Helen says: "I'm very proud of being a part of so many women's success stories. I think it's a win-win situation and, while our male master franchisees are equally successful, women possess important traits that make their businesses flourish.

"Firstly, women excel at multitasking, a vital tool for running any efficient business. Women also seem to be more intuitive than men or at least more willing to listen to their inner voices. This makes them more sensitive to nuance, picking up those subtle signals that can be an important information resource in business dealings.

"Women also tend to be more patient and open to sharing their knowledge with work colleagues, thus expanding and reinforcing their networking system. In some cases, a woman's more compassionate nature better motivates employees and helps attract customers.

"In addition, when it comes to educational franchising, women are more motivated to develop a franchise that speaks to them on a personal level."



At a Glance HELEN DORON EDUCATIONAL GROUP

Established:
1985

Number of franchised outlets: over 1,100

Location of units: 38 countries: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lichtenstein, Macedonia, Mexico, Montenegro, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam

Investment range: £150,000-£250,000

Minimum required capital: £200,000

Contact: info@helandorongroup.com
helandorongroup.com

"I'm very proud of being a part of so many women's success stories"

SUPPORTING MOTHERHOOD AND CAREER

Being a Helen Doron franchisee provides an ideal opportunity for mothers committed to spending quality time with their family, while running a successful business at the same time.

Danijela Haralovic, Master Franchisee for Croatia for the past seven years, has three children.

She says: "All my children are enrolled in Helen Doron English and I love seeing how much they've all grown - not to mention the other 4,900 students in Croatia.

"I now have 100 teachers and work closely with my franchisees every day to make sure we only go forward, opening learning centres across the country every year.

"I'm delighted to have created new jobs, helping to reduce unemployment in our country, all while having dedicated and happy teachers who have been part of my team for years. It's easy to be a woman in the Helen Doron world. You get more out of your business life and you can have a



Helen Doron Educational Group®

wonderful, fulfilling personal life at the same time.”

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Helen Doron’s management is 75% women - 70% of the company’s master franchisees and 90% of its learning centre franchisees are also female. Many master franchisees have built long-term partnerships with the brand, with some being part of the network for over 25 years.

Alexandra Pickel opened her learning centre in 2007. Today, she’s Helen Doron’s Master Franchisee for San Marino and Le Marche in Italy. Her business employs 32 teachers, who deliver lessons to 740 students in a very small geographical area.

She says: “I love being a Helen Doron master franchisee. I didn’t want to work for somebody else, yet I’m still part of an international network and part of a team.

“My management style is very hands-on and I work very closely with my franchisees. I view them as responsible, independent business people. The Helen Doron English business model allows you to develop your own style.

“What brought me to this business was the opportunity to give something to the community - to promote something intellectual that enhances children’s development. Not only brain development, but also important socialisation skills, which learning in small, intimate groups promotes.”

Many of the master franchisees have won laudable awards for their achievements.

An example of many, Vera Chub, Helen Doron National Coordinator and Master Franchisor in Odessa/Nykolayev, Ukraine, was recognised for her achievements in business by the Eurowoman - International Women’s Business Forum, an international worldwide organisation that unites active, responsible and outstanding women to cooperate in the fields



Joanna Cezarz-Krzystanek
Master Franchisee South Poland
Joined 1999



Helen Doron broke the glass ceiling for women in Poland”



Danijela Haralović
National Franchisee Croatia
Joined 2009



It is easy to be a businesswoman with Helen Doron, and have a fulfilling personal life too!”



Elisabeth Ruelle-Mégrelis
Master Franchisee Ile de France, Paris
Joined 2016



Proven methodology with fast results”

of business, management, social responsibility and personal development.

“It was a big surprise and a great honour,” Vera stated. “The award was designated for a company owned and directed by a woman, employing women.”

GATEWAY TO PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Paris-based Elisabeth Ruelle-Mégrelis, another of Helen Doron’s high flying master franchisees, is a busy working mother who wants her children to be fluent in English, as she says the language is a gateway to global communication, educational achievement and professional success.

However, Elisabeth spent several years searching for suitable English courses in her local area, but could only find ones that offered a traditional methodology, often with tutors teaching children in large class sizes of 15 or more.

She also came across English franchises that were mostly focused on marketing with little pedagogic content. She was so alarmed, that she searched online for someone teaching English with real content.

During this time, Elisabeth’s children were learning violin through the Suzuki method, which teaches by repeated background hearing of the pieces being learnt and positive reinforcement by the teacher. This is similar to the way

each child learns their mother tongue.

Elisabeth searched online for a school that used a similar methodology and was overjoyed to find Helen Doron English.

As a result, Elisabeth decided to set up her own language school, with the help of Helen Doron. Since she opened her doors, she has had a warm welcome, with people in her district happy to see a Helen Doron Learning Centre launch in Paris.

Elisabeth says: “We’re just starting, but the feeling is good. People are happy, my teachers are happy and I’m very satisfied.

“I love the support that head office provides. This isn’t an operation where you pay a fee and are then on your own. With Helen Doron, you get superb support and help as an entrepreneur. It’s a very good balance.”

HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BUSINESS

Helen Doron has a values-based and holistic approach to business, with an emphasis on human relations and community.

As well as a comprehensive package of training and support, franchisees also benefit from expert mentorship to assist them in growing their businesses. In addition, as it’s an international brand, Helen Doron teachers can train and establish franchises in any of 38 countries.

*Entrepreneur’s Source 2018.

Mentoring is the heart of franchising

You get the joy of being your own boss, but you're never really alone, FranFund COO Sherri Seiber says

 ur industry has a saying: "Franchising means you're in business for yourself, but not by yourself." Isn't that the core idea of getting involved in an established business model? You get the joy of being your own boss, but you're never really alone.

Mentoring is at the very heart of this unique business relationship - the franchisor gives you steps that work and the franchisee follows those steps exactly to create a formula for real success.

SUPPORTIVE SECTOR

This line of thinking is particularly powerful when you apply it to women who are looking for a career.

One of the most significant advantages a woman can have in her business life is a mentor - someone who can give you the steps that work. But when we look at business as a whole, you often find that there aren't always women in leadership positions willing to lift up someone who's trying to get their start.

The franchise world tends to be a much more supportive place for women, because that's the nature of the industry. Success relies on everyone doing their best. That doesn't just apply to owners, but to women who work at all levels of a franchise, whether that's business development, management or learning a trade. Every skill set has a place in franchising.

OFFERING ASSISTANCE

If you need a mentor or you can offer mentorship, it doesn't have to be a formal arrangement. If you see a scenario where somebody is struggling and you have relevant experience, there's no reason not to offer support.

Mentorship can equal friendship.

It's support, it's camaraderie, somebody to laugh and cry with. There's a saying: "A true friend is somebody that straightens your crown without ever telling anybody that it was crooked." That's exactly how a mentoring relationship should feel.

An approach to mentoring can begin by examining a person's strengths. Are they in the right role? Or would they be stronger if they shifted to another role or another type of business altogether? Where can we find an intersection between what they are passionate about and what needs to be done to ensure success within an organisation?

There are nearly 4,000 different franchise brands in the United States right now. So there is literally something for everybody. If you have more of an entrepreneurial brain, you might want to enter a small emerging system that needs your thought leadership to help get it the next level.

But there are also more than 600 different franchise brands with 100 or more units. Inside those systems are jobs with established operational and marketing protocols for people who need more structure.

Everyone is familiar with the phrase 'six degrees of separation' - that's the idea that anyone is only six social connections away from knowing



At a Glance FRANFUND

As the COO of FranFund, which creates and administers custom funding solutions for entrepreneurs looking to start or grow their small businesses, Sherri Seiber is responsible for business development, operations and marketing. She also serves as a mentor and advocate to women seeking their first business, as well as to her employees.

franfund.com

anyone else in the world. In the franchising world, it's more like two degrees. If you're established inside this close knit community, you can pretty easily move from opportunity to opportunity until you find the one that fits.

UNCOVER YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL

There has never been a better time for a woman to uncover her true potential in a franchise business.

As of May 2019, women own or co-own 35 per cent of the franchise outlets in the US - around 265,000 - according to the Franchise Business Review research firm. That represents outlet growth of 24 per cent from a decade earlier, while in the two years ended in May 41 per cent of new franchise outlets opened have been owned or co-owned by women. And in some sectors, such as interior decorating, they far outnumber their male counterparts.

While gender equality has not universally worked its way into every corner of the business world, franchising is the great equaliser.

It's not male dominated and it doesn't have to be. Women are not pigeonholed. If you go to almost any franchise trade show, like the International Franchise Association conference, you will find close to a 50/50 mix of men and women.

Sure, you have women gravitating towards businesses like DekaLash, Amada Senior Care and Kitchen Tune-Up. But more and more you'll see women getting into opportunities like Premier Martial Arts, Ecomaid and Monster Tree Service.

The most popular sectors for women still fall along expected genres, such as business services, senior care, travel and real estate.



Although women have yet to make big inroads into larger sectors such as sit-down restaurants - where they represent only 17 per cent of franchise ownership - they outnumber their male counterparts in a number of industries, according to FRANData.

Among them are interior decorating services (86 per cent women owned), modelling schools and beauty pageants (68 per cent), clothing, toys and accessories (63 per cent) and travel agencies (61 per cent).

INCREASE IN WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Women and men each have qualities that make them great at different facets of business. In fact, businesses are seeing an increase in women leadership.

According to a study by Grant

"The franchise world tends to be a much more supportive place for women, because that's the nature of the industry"

Thornton, 2019 saw the highest percentage of women in senior management on record - at 29 per cent - rising five percentage points from 24 per cent in 2018. In our industry, for example, FranFund's leadership team is almost all female, with the exception of the CEO.

Key attributes that drive leadership placement are a desire to collaborate, communicate and be less territorial. Their company-wide attitude is we can get farther, faster if we work together, echoing the industry sentiment that as we mentor one another, we really are in this together.

Since our industry is celebrating women in franchising, observations are skewed toward the many amazing women we have worked with as clients, partners and employees.

But give credit too to the men in our industry who see women as excellent partners, whether as owners or as key business drivers in every part of their organisation. We're proud that franchising is by nature an inclusive and empowering journey for everyone. Because at the heart of our industry is the desire for us all to succeed.

Her drive is central to the company

Footlights founder Jo Fisher has created an innovative business model that's at the forefront of its field



Footlights is led by an individual whose passion and vision for her business has seen it grow from a single idea and hobby to a company creating an impact throughout the North West, Midlands and now South Wales.

Jo Fisher is a trained actor and teacher. She grew up in Higher Openshaw, a deprived area, left school at 14 with no qualifications and became the first milkwoman in Manchester in 1988 aged 18!

FULFILLING HER DREAM

Although as a child Jo loved literature, she was not encouraged to pursue her ambitions, but instead expected to drift into an unskilled job. Despite this, in 1992 she fulfilled her dream to train as an actor.

Jo then 'fell' into teaching and discovered she had as much passion for this as for books and acting. In 2005, after years of freelance teaching and acting, she launched Footlights with just £300 on a credit card.

She won 'Entrepreneur of The Year' at the Salford Business Awards in 2016, has produced and directed dozens of plays and in 2018 her commitment to education (developing a play and workshop around the centenary of the First World War) led to her being invited to the Remembrance Day service at Westminster Abbey.

Yet on a Saturday morning you'll find Jo in her Footlights t-shirt and joggers at one of her four company owned units and, if you arrive between 9.45am and 10am, be warned: she'll probably 'persuade' you to join in the most energetic warm-up of your life.

ROLE MODEL

Jo is an excellent role model for young people, inspiring them to make the most of their talent and develop new skills, and she fulfils the same role for her 12 franchisees, nine of whom have been recruited in the past 24 months.

Jo used her training and life experience to create an innovative business model that is at the forefront of its field.



At a Glance FOOTLIGHTS

Established:
2005

Number of franchised outlets: 14

Location of units: Predominantly North West and Midlands, plus recent movement into South Wales

Investment range:
£3,995 (plus VAT) - £13,250 (plus VAT)

Minimum required capital: £2,000

Contact: Jo Fisher
jfisher@footlightstheatre.co.uk

franchise.footlightstheatre.org

She says: "One of the reasons I started Footlights is because I wanted to engage with young people, take them off the streets and onto the stage. So it's important to work with the local community, schools, businesses and agencies.

"I also thought I could provide a better service than our competition!"

Jo recognises the importance of working collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes and her enthusiasm and tenacity has led to partnerships with senior educationalists, police and community services.

This spirit and knowledge is shared with Jo's franchisees. She firmly believes that working with the right people, both inside and outside the business, is fundamental to success.

Stringent processes and procedures, delivered in hands-on training by Jo and her team, ensure the brand equals quality and value. Jo's tireless enthusiasm for and commitment to the business is rewarded by loyalty, not only by clients, but by franchisees, two of whom have been with Footlights for more than 10 years.

TRACK RECORD

Her drive is central to the company - Jo has a successful track record in identifying opportunities to grow the business.

She's also quick to recognise when a franchisee is feeling under pressure or underperforming, whether as a result of the demanding consumer environment, general 'life pressures' or the weight of running their own business.

However busy Footlights is, Jo calls each franchisee regularly; after all, one of her favourite quotes is 'teamwork makes the dream work'.

Take your seat at the top table

Franchising gives women the chance to not just challenge gender inequality, but themselves as well, Helen Mansfield, managing director of Encouraging Women into Franchising, says

If you'd been around in the early 1900s, would you have joined the Suffragettes? For each generation to succeed, we usually end up standing on the shoulders of generations before us. And while we're still a long way from workplace equality, women have made significant progress.

For those of you with young daughters, nieces or female friends, you're probably acutely aware of the gap between the genders. And you don't have to be female to see the obstacles women face, along with the additional challenges brought about by the pandemic.

THE LOCKDOWN CHALLENGE

Unfortunately, more women than men found themselves affected by the coronavirus crisis. Mandu Reid, leader of the Women's Equality Party, found that of the 11 million essential frontline workers in the UK, women account for:

- 77 per cent of healthcare workers.
- 83 per cent of social care staff.
- 92 per cent of child care employees.

- 58 per cent of retail workers (the top five employers being supermarkets).
- 98 per cent of staff in high risk positions (ie, most exposed to the virus) and paid poverty wages.

When it comes to parental responsibility, according to The Telegraph on January 7:

- Mothers were 47 per cent more likely than fathers to have lost or quit their job during lockdown.
- Home schooling impacted mothers, who spend two hours more per day than fathers managing their children.

In addition, LinkedIn data revealed women were less likely to be hired during peak lockdown, with hiring of women reaching its lowest point in April, at 41.5 per cent.

THE INTERNAL CHALLENGE

However, the gender imbalance doesn't just hold women back from reaching the top.

Many women, like Encouraging Women into Franchising Ambassador



At a Glance ENCOURAGING WOMEN INTO FRANCHISING

For more information visit ewif.org

"Finding a business where your passion lies can help build the confidence of women"

and diddi dance founder and franchisor, Anne-Marie Martin, also have internal struggles to deal with.

She says: "Finding a business where your passion lies can help build the confidence of women. For myself, dance actually helps reduce my anxiety and stress. So being able to offer it as a business opportunity feels amazing and is so rewarding."

A COLLABORATIVE HOPE

According to the 2018 Franchise Landscape report by the British Franchise Association and NatWest, 37 per cent of new franchisees at the time were women.

While these figures are obviously pre-COVID-19, within EWIF we've seen more women looking into the prospect of franchising.

This shows organisations like EWIF and the bfa, which are pushing for women to get better opportunities, are invaluable. Being able to run your own business and be your own boss, even with other demands put upon us, is both real and attainable.

International Women's Day, which focuses on celebrating women, and our annual awards are a powerful reminder of how franchising doesn't just support women into business ownership, but constantly shouts about their achievements along the way.

So why not discover within which franchise opportunity your future lies and take your seat at the table of success.



Stepping stone to success

Redundancy led Sam Wright from a confidence crisis to owning a million-pound Right at Home franchise

Right at Home franchisee Sam Wright, recently nominated for Encouraging Women into Franchising's Franchisee of the Year Award, has, along with her husband, built an Outstanding rated homecare business from a career 'disaster'.

When she was told there was no option to return to her full-time finance role after maternity leave, panic set in.

Sam says: "It was absolutely devastating. I'd just had my first child, so my hormones were everywhere and it had a huge impact on my confidence. I felt if I was any good, they would have wanted to keep me.

"I thought about looking at other roles, but didn't even consider finance roles because my confidence was so shaken. I slowly came to realise that I had to park that emotion - there was nothing I could do at that time to make myself feel any better.

"The only way I could move forward was to say to myself: 'Right, I've got a chunk of money, I'm going to have to make that work for me. That is going to be my stepping stone.'

"It was all about turning that really awful, negative emotion into something positive."

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Sam and her husband Danny had long discussed running their own business together and now they had an opportunity to do something about it.

"Danny engaged with a company called MatchPoint, who assessed us and came up with business models we should be well suited to," Sam says.

"When we'd brainstormed what we would like to do, a couple of years previously I was very focused on the care sector. I'd worked in a care home from the age of 16 until I was 22; weekends, summers and university holidays - I absolutely loved it.

"So when MatchPoint came up with Right at Home, I said: 'That's the one'.

"We didn't rush, though. We did our due diligence into other providers and by the time we committed to opening in High Wycombe it was Christmas 2016 - our son Felix was just turning one year old."



At a Glance RIGHT AT HOME

Established: 2010

Number of franchised outlets: 68

Location of units: England, Wales, Scotland

Investment range: Up to £130,000

Minimum required capital: £40,000

Contact: Kate Dilworth
franchising@rightathomeuk.com

rightathomefranchising.co.uk



Woman Franchisee
of the Year 2021

Sponsored by
Darwin Gray
FINALIST

SEVEN-FIGURE TURNOVER

Four and a half years later, Sam and Danny employ 45 people in a business that has an Outstanding rating from the Care Quality Commission.

Last month they broke through the landmark of a £1 million annualised turnover and Sam and her registered manager, Susie Long, were both named as finalists in the national EWIF franchise awards.

With two young children and a care business to run amid a pandemic, Sam and Danny's lives are still relentless. "But that's part and parcel of running your own business," Sam says. "These days I find the work-life balance much easier.

"Susie is really motivated about driving the business onwards. She's had a fantastic impact since she joined us and I'm so proud of her award nomination."

So how are Sam's confidence levels now? She laughs: "There's a saying that your first million pounds is the hardest and the second is a lot easier and that's how I'm feeling now - yes elated, but also much more settled about how we can really push forward from here."

Help our global brand flourish locally

With Rainbow International, you'll have all the autonomy you want plus the support you need to prosper, franchise director Kerry Bhella says

At Rainbow International, we'll put you at the centre of our mission to help families and businesses keep their structures safe, clean and free from disaster. 'We restore, you recover': that's our motto.

For over 30 years, Rainbow International has delivered exceptional service around the globe. We've honed our techniques, goals and values to become the leading disaster recovery, specialist cleaning and restoration company.

Rainbow international is part of the ISS Group. We have over 46,000 colleagues in the UK and nearly half a million operating in 47 countries across the world.

The company has a network of franchisees across the UK, giving our clients and customers nationwide coverage on their doorstep, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

FAST-TRACK TO SUCCESS

Buying a franchise puts you on the fast-track to running a successful business, especially when it's built on solid foundations like Rainbow International. With us, you'll have all the

autonomy you want, as well as the support you need to prosper.

Seize a business opportunity with Rainbow and you're one step closer to achieving your personal and financial goals.

Specialist restoration and commercial cleaning services will always be in demand, which has been proved in the current pandemic. We'll give you all the right training to help you make our global brand flourish locally.

The Rainbow network has become strong because we bring transformative value to those who use our services, restoring their structures and livelihoods when they have nowhere else to turn. It makes us recession resistant; people can always count on Rainbow, putting their faith in our expert cleaning procedure.

Our franchisees have access to



At a Glance RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL

Established: 1987

Number of franchised outlets: 57

Location of units: nationwide

Investment range: starting at £20,000

Minimum required capital: £55,000

Contact: moreinfo@rainbow-int.co.uk or call 01623 675100

rainbow-int-franchise.co.uk

industry leading equipment, attractive finance options and a network with a proven track record.

Initial investment is dependent on the number of areas you invest in, as that will scope out the equipment requirements to service. The initial fee for one area is £20,000 and this is all detailed on our mapping tool, which specifies the households and businesses per area.

PRESTIGIOUS UK FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES

Rainbow is proud to be a member of Encouraging Women into Franchising. The industry we operate in is predominantly male, but we have lots of females in our network who are out there making their mark. Rainbow has two members of the team who have been nominated for awards in March.

Rainbow is also a full member of the British Franchise Association and was a finalist at the bfa's British Franchise Awards, which demonstrates that we have a modern grasp on what running a business means, backed by practices that have been three decades in the making.

We have an extensive on-boarding process that will guide you through the process of becoming a franchisee, from on-site training, claims management, preferential equipment deals and selecting your premises to ordering uniform and recruitment.

Rainbow has a dedicated support team based in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire who will be there every step of your Rainbow journey.



Making a world of difference

Action Coach Natalie Simms has a desire to help as many business owners as possible



Even in the year that presented the worst economic crisis on record, Natalie Simms recalls how she had faith in the franchise model that would help her achieve both her professional and personal goals.

“After a discovery day with ActionCOACH UK co-founder, Ian Christelow, I got a real feel for the brand and came away with such enthusiasm,” Natalie says.

“Right from the beginning, I had a goal to expand into further territories and although the pandemic threw many things into turmoil, it didn’t impact my plans.”

BUILDING BETTER

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world. National lockdowns sent business owners into panic mode and increased Natalie’s desire to help as many business owners as possible.

“To say I was impressed with the training would be an understatement,” she says. “From the first day, I was blown away by the content, delivery and commitment by the UK Support Team.

“One of the best things was learning the proven ActionCOACH

business growth system from the perspective of a coach and a client’s point of view too.”

With the lockdown meaning Natalie wasn’t able to visit clients in person, she concentrated on increasing the social presence of ActionCOACH Winchester, Basingstoke & Farnborough.

To ensure she was able to take advantage of every opportunity, ActionCOACH’s Step Up Week gave Natalie all the tools she needed to reach her true potential.

“The ongoing support has been amazing,” Natalie says. “It’s gone way beyond my expectations and there’s always something to learn. Whether it’s with MasterCLASSES, conferences or sales and marketing webinars, there’s always a chance to better myself for the benefit of my clients.”

CLIMBING CONFIDENTLY

Within six months of launching her business, Natalie had reached her revenue targets and was determined to expand into a neighbouring territory. With five one-to-one clients under her belt, she’s now focusing on extending her reach and making a difference to a larger pool of business owners.



At a Glance ActionCOACH

Established:

1993 in Australia, 2001 in UK

Number of franchised outlets:

200-plus in the UK

Location of units:

UK-wide

Investment range:

£69,000

Minimum required capital:

£20,000

Contact:

If you want to build a business with scalability and longevity, make a difference in your local community and you’re the kind of person who:

- A. Loves learning and developing yourself;
- B. Has enjoyed success in your career or sport; and
- C. Is willing to invest if you see substantial rewards can be made...

Then find out more by watching the overview video at actioncoach.co.uk/overview

“It’s so rewarding to offer something to cater for all client budgets, with group coaching and one-to-one sessions,” Natalie says. “This versatility is what urged me to take the Firm Builder licence for Winchester - all the stepping stones were in place to help me get there and make it a success.”

Although the pandemic has forced many people to reconsider their plans, it’s been a huge motivation for Natalie.

If she could create a success during that time, then under normal circumstances Natalie expects her business to thrive. By year five, she plans to have a business that works without her, offering her even more freedom and choice.

“ActionCOACH has already made the world of difference to my personal life,” Natalie says. “I’ve swapped 35 years of international travel and a two-hour commute into central London each day for a seven-minute trip to my office and I can work as many hours as I wish.

“I love travelling, but I also want to buy my dream home in Hampshire and lead a simple life enjoying the great outdoors. There will be nothing better than living stress-free, knowing there’s still a business creating my legacy. For me, that’s the end goal.”

Ask Julie

Julie Wagstaff answers your questions about the ActionCOACH franchise opportunity



Do you need previous business experience to own an ActionCOACH franchise?

No. We awarded a franchise to Helen Pethybridge who had worked in senior HR roles for 13 years before she was made redundant.

In particular, she was most nervous about selling to secure new clients. However, our training gave her the confidence to overcome this anxiety and she became comfortable about promoting the ActionCOACH service and the back-up the system gave her.

Being part of our franchise gave Helen over 3,500 strategies and tactics to help her clients and a wealth of ongoing professional development sessions to help her get to grips with her business.

Is the franchise recession proof?

It's been proven historically that the ActionCOACH franchise is recession proof and we now know it's pandemic proof too.

Despite the challenges resulting from the pandemic, Action Coaches have continued to operate and serve their local community, delivering a guaranteed return on investment to their business owner clients.

The increase in the average client conversion rate from meetings with qualified prospects from 30-42 per cent to above 60 per cent during the pandemic is proof business owners need ActionCOACH's critical business growth services now more than ever.

How many other franchises can say their UK franchise network revenue was higher in Q4 2020 than Q1 2020?

How do your female franchise partners find running their ActionCOACH businesses?

Lucy Cameron launched her ActionCOACH business in February 2012, immediately saving herself 720 hours a year on commuting time alone.

Having developed an enviable work-life balance, which culminated in her making the final in the British Franchise Association's Lifestyle Franchisee of the Year category in 2018, she's now focused on helping other business owners find that balance too.

Lucy's won multiple Best Client Results awards since 2013 and in 2019 invested in ActionCOACH's Senior Partner licence, giving her access to an exclusive territory of over 10,000 businesses in two areas - Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells.

She has proven it's possible to run a successful business, be a great mum and have a work-life balance. Lucy's inspiring women to push themselves to be more than they thought they could be.

Imagine being like Lucy, where you can enjoy a business with so many rewards, not just having to choose either a flexible business or one that gives a great income for your family.

What have the results been like so far?

Our franchise continues to deliver mind-blowing results.

Mitali Chopra joined ActionCOACH in 2016 and within eight weeks had

signed up five one-to-one coaching clients. Now she's reached a level of income that's triple what she earned in her successful corporate career and for every client she signs she sponsors a child's education in India.

Equally, we have those that come in and struggle. From what I've seen, there are only two reasons for that: either they're too lazy to learn the best ways of getting results or they're unwilling to invest enough time or money - or both - in marketing to grow their business.

If that's likely to be you, please start looking for a different opportunity!

Has anyone endorsed the franchise?

Yes. Every time a major bank lends an individual 70 per cent of what they need to invest in an ActionCOACH franchise unsecured, that's a notable endorsement.

Talking of banks, we've won the RBS UK Best Mid-Priced Franchise three years running. That speaks volumes because it's 50 per cent judged on anonymous franchise partner feedback and we achieved a record score for a franchise with 40-plus franchise partners in its network.

The growing number of major companies who choose to strategic alliance partner with us, such as Funding Circle and Santander, and position their brand alongside us, shows how well regarded the offering is.

Dream team

Franchise Resales has welcomed new staff, while CEO Julie Taylor has been nominated for a prestigious award



The past year has been as strange as they come. There's no doubt about it, business has been very different. However, as Albert Einstein once said: "In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."

Franchise Resales has been incredibly lucky, not only because it's been able to continue trading, but the company has also taken steps to grow.

Over the past few months, director Michael Bohan and the team have been working hard to launch Franchise Resales' new online portal, as well as welcome new staff members.

"Julie Taylor has been busy training the company's newest team members"

AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

In addition, CEO Julie Taylor has been busy training the company's newest team members.

As a result of her key role, she's been selected as one of the finalists for the Encouraging Women into Franchising Ambassador of the Year Award.

MEET THE TEAM

Emma Ozenbrook was the first to join Franchise Resales at the beginning of 2020. Since then she's learnt so much about the world of franchising and is now operations manager.

Emma has made a big difference to the day-to-day running of the business and now supports all the team members in their work, writes the business prospectus and works closely with Michael and Julie to grow the business.

Clare Fordyce was next to join



At a Glance FRANCHISE RESALES

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Franchise Resales as listing and relationship manager. She has a background in estate agency and is utilising her experience and skills in her new role.

Clare works hard to generate new relationships and works with franchisees who want to sell their businesses. She loves to meet new people and spends some of her time networking across the country - on Zoom, of course.

Simone Howlett joined the team at the beginning of 2021 as a business broker. She also has previous experience in estate agency and is using her skills to her advantage.

Following many training sessions with Julie, Simone has taken to her new role like a duck to water and is continuing to learn on the job.

Nael Shaheed is the latest member to join the team as a business broker. He has over 15 years' sales and negotiation experience dealing with large contract account management and his skills are an asset to the company. Nael has hit the ground running and has settled in well.

Franchise Resales says it's thrilled to be able to announce the newest members of its team to you and is overjoyed at the great balance it's achieved.



Workplace discrimination and harassment

Training and policies must be of high quality and up to date to protect franchisors and their franchisees as employers for their workforce, Kate Matthews of Boddy Matthews Solicitors says

Women often feel uncomfortable in the workplace, often enduring direct or indirect discrimination and harassment.

A good, ethical franchise model offers an excellent opportunity to showcase the brand's equality and diversity, which is so essential to achieve a balance in the modern workplace. However, training and policies must be of high quality and up to date to protect franchisors and their franchisees as employers for their workforce.

Workplace discrimination and harassment instances are distressing to all concerned. Sadly, they are more often perceived to affect women rather than men.

This can have serious implications on employment relations and employees' well-being and result in employment tribunal claims that can devastate franchise networks or their culture.

More often than not, while a claim is brought against the employer (being the franchisor or franchisee company), the employer is not the perpetrator of the conduct in question.

Rather, the act complained of is likely to have been committed by a colleague or manager of the complainant. The franchisor or franchisee will be treated as vicariously responsible for the wrongdoing because it employs the perpetrator and, broadly speaking, the act took place at work.

REASONABLE STEPS DEFENCE

In recognition of potential unfairness to employers, English legislation provides for a 'reasonable steps' defence. This is available to employers to seek to avoid liability if they can show they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent the objectionable act or acts of that kind.

But what must employer franchisors or franchisees do to benefit from the defence?

As a first step, employers ought to have equality policies and procedures in place, supported by suitable training for all staff. A good franchise will have these.

However, good policies and procedures are only the start. In 2021 following recent case law, an employment tribunal will now need to consider not only what the employer has done but, crucially, what more it could have done if there is to be no liability.



At a Glance BODDY MATTHEWS SOLICITORS

Kate Matthews is a founding partner with Helen Boddy of Boddy Matthews Solicitors. Kate is delighted to be an Encouraging Women into Franchising Awards finalist 2021 in two categories: Ambassador of the Year and Service Provider of the Year.

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Where more could be done, the defence will not be made out, even if the additional steps would not have prevented the harassment or discrimination from occurring. This will be good news to those subject to demeaning behaviour or discrimination.

In assessing the additional steps employers may have to take to ensure against harassment and discrimination, a tribunal will take into account the size and resources of the employer, the cost of the additional steps, their potential effectiveness and the practicability of providing them.

If, having looked at these issues, the tribunal concludes that there were further steps the employer should have reasonably taken the defence will fail.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

The case sends an important message to employers about the nature and extent of the commitment they must have and display to preventing workplace discrimination and harassment.

As with all good franchise models, franchisor and franchisee employers are advised to adopt and regularly review their policies and training. In addition to regular and periodic assessment of the steps taken to prevent discrimination, where discrimination or harassment is observed or becomes known, the policies and training must be reviewed, adapted and refreshed.

This is very much a step in the right direction to provide a structured platform and give a voice for those experiencing issues in any form of employment.



Franchising with friends: the perfect match?

For Kristy Roff and Suzanne Cox, buying a Get Ahead VA franchise turned out to be the right decision



Can going into a franchise partnership with a friend be a match made in heaven or spell the end of your relationship?

For Kristy Roff and Suzanne Cox, buying a Get Ahead franchise turned out to be the right decision for their careers and their friendship.

ASPIRATIONS

The pair met after becoming mums 13 years ago and have been friends ever since. Suzanne had been working as an independent virtual assistant, while Kristy was in IT.

Both had reached a point in their careers where they felt they had more to give and more to gain, with aspirations to see if they could make their ambitions of running their own business a successful reality.

Doing this alone felt like it might be a challenge too far. But with aligned

values and complementary skills, a partnership felt like a much better option. When they saw that the Get Ahead Reading franchise was available, it was too good an opportunity to miss and everything fell into place.

EXPERTS

Get Ahead's team of over 40 experts provides virtual support to businesses of all sizes. From virtual assistants and social media managers to video conference facilitators, designers, bookkeepers or another specialist, they help businesses to get ahead.

With established franchisees across the UK, from Wakefield to West Surrey, Get Ahead's team of experts provide flexible business services on an hourly, project or ongoing basis. They match the right person to each business' needs - finding not just the right skill set, but the right personal fit too.



At a Glance GET AHEAD VA

Established:
2017

Number of franchised outlets: 8

Location of units: Leeds, South Yorkshire, The Wirral, East Midlands, Berkshire & North Hampshire, West London, West Surrey, Suffolk & Essex

Investment range: £8,000

Minimum required capital: £0

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ACHIEVEMENT

Kristy says: "Investing in a Get Ahead franchise has been a great career move for us. Though the pandemic threw us some major challenges last year, we still welcomed many new clients and delivered some fantastic projects. I'm so proud of everything we have achieved.

"We've recently been shortlisted as a 'New Business of the Year' finalist for the Encouraging Women into Franchising Awards, which is such an achievement. Rebecca, Get Ahead's founder, has been so supportive. We love the balance of running our own business, but being part of the wider team too."

"Most importantly," Suzanne adds, "we're just as good friends as we were two years ago. Buying the franchise as partners means we can always share ideas, plans, responsibility and tasks.

"Neither of us is ever alone with the frustrations or worries of running our own business and we always have someone to share our celebrations with. I would definitely recommend a franchise partnership with a friend as something to consider."

Rebecca Newenham, founder and director of Get Ahead, says: "From the moment Kristy and Suzanne got in touch about the franchise, I could see how well they worked together and their enthusiasm for a joint business venture was apparent.

"That has translated into real results for their franchise and it's been a joy to watch their business grow. I look forward to continuing to support them and helping them take their business to the next level."

How to Create the **Best Franchise Funding Strategy** for Today

Knowing all of your options is the first step.

Funding your franchise can be challenging. You need a solution that works for you today, but you also need to make sure you set yourself up for long-term success. That's why you need a trusted partner like FranFund.



“

FranFund's support throughout the process of setting up our new business was nothing short of world class. They answered countless questions and provided professional, insightful, and clear guidance. They took the stress out of navigating through all of the detail and requirements. I would strongly recommend FranFund. - Pamela H.

”

Register for our next live webinar to learn about current business funding options and strategies for new franchise owners.

franfund.com/webinar-bw



I'VE FOUND MY DREAM BUSINESS

Searching for a chance to make a real difference to people's lives, Mark Dilks decided to become an **ActionCOACH franchise partner** in 2019 and achieved a £30,000 monthly income in his eighth month. He is now living his dream...

"I'd been contemplating how I could give SME business owners and solopreneurs the some intellectual competency that bigger companies take for granted to drive their growth. Then, I discovered ActionCOACH... you get the whole package. I pinch myself when I wake up and have complete gratitude for the business I've been able to create."

As a Franchise Partner you'll get...

- ✓ Unsecured bank finance of up to 80%
- ✓ Your own 1-2-1 mentor to help you turn your £69k investment into a **£1 million-a-year business***
- ✓ A recession and pandemic proof business that works from home or a serviced office
- ✓ More learning and development than you can imagine
- ✓ Ownership of the only franchise to be rated both 5-star for franchisee satisfaction and in the Elite Franchise UK Top 10 every year since the accolades began

DISCOVER MORE:

Visit actioncoach.co.uk/overview
or call the UK Support Team on 01284 701 648



*Fewer than 75 of the UK's 230 territories are available to invest in – all territories expected to be awarded by the end of 2021.

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