

What Franchise



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LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

HOW TO INSPIRE A WINNING TEAM

20-PAGE SPECIAL

THE NEXT BIG GAME CHANGERS

Sizzling F&B franchises & the secret sauce to restaurant growth

EXPERT ADVICE
START UP SUCCESS
The art to opening a profitable franchise



AMIGOS BURGERS & SHAKES:

“We’re driving the burger boom!”

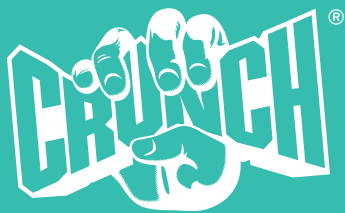
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Why franchisors can't afford to ignore AI anymore

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FROM THE EDITOR

When the economy slumps and purse strings are tightened, demand for fast food often remains stable, as customers turn to affordable and comforting treats to brighten their day. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, data collected earlier in the year by online food ordering tech solutions firm, Slerp, revealed that QSRs continue to endure in the UK retail climate blighted by a cost-of-living crisis, with some even flourishing and increasing their revenues by 39 per cent.

Many international F&B franchises are currently pursuing ambitious expansion plans, such as Tim Hortons with its new UK franchise model set to position the Canadian coffee giant as one of the best known QSR brands on British soil. Since Covid, the UK coffee market has bounced back with an 11.9 per cent sales growth in 2022 and Tim Hortons' focus on out-of-town and drive-thru locations, aligned with current consumer demand for convenience and self-service, will ensure its UK franchise partners will benefit from cheaper land prices along with streamlined operational costs.

This issue we've focused on fantastic opportunities in F&B franchising – from international brands seeking multi-unit partners to homegrown operations with a formula for success. Take Amigos Burgers & Shakes – a London-based QSR with a strong reputation built on serving its local community and providing a high-quality halal menu. Now Amigos is on the march and looking for entrepreneurial partners who share in its vision. The soaring market for premium burgers in the UK combined with a



growing demand for halal makes Amigos a very smart investment for F&B entrepreneurs across the UK. Read the story on page 32.

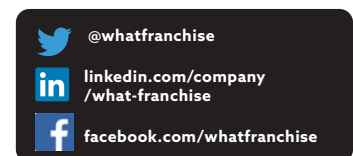
Elsewhere in the magazine: thought leaders discuss employee retention on page 43; we delve into why franchises need to get on board with AI on page 56, and franchise experts reveal the art of opening a successful franchise on page 34.

To your success,

Charlotte Smith

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The art of opening

Your expert guide to launching a successful franchise from pre-launch to day one of business



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Should they stay or should they go?

Five thought leaders in franchising on why employee retention should be your top business objective



Undiscovered opportunities for franchisees in fire and security

Jackson Fire & Security outlines why a franchise model might be right for you and what opportunities lie ahead

1. UNIQUE FRANCHISE MODEL

The rarity of franchises in fire and security means a lot of commercial opportunities are reserved for franchisees, because these advantages would otherwise be difficult to find. For instance, every one of Jackson Fire & Security's customers require regular servicing in line with British Standards. This offering means a regular stream of income for franchisees from the start, regardless of previous industry experience.

2. NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Being part of a franchise helps franchisees to easily maintain the quality of their services by tapping into a huge network of industry experts. For example, Jackson Fire & Security provides in-house expertise in finance, marketing, quality, compliance, training, engineering, business growth, and mentoring. Franchisees also receive support from industry suppliers, fully managed recruitment campaigns, and outsourced PAs who answer phone calls and conduct website live chats.

3. RESILIENT INDUSTRY

Those in need of fire and security services will be looking for a local business that complies to British safety standards and insurance requirements. A franchisee can offer this personal and compliant service as soon as they join a franchise, meaning they can tap into immediate revenue. For example, franchisees work under Jackson Fire & Security's suite of accreditations from day one. This means they can bid for lucrative large public sector contracts with customers such as education facilities and local councils.



“Franchisees work under Jackson Fire & Security’s suite of accreditations from day one. This means they can bid for lucrative large public sector contracts”

4. FIRST-CLASS MARKETING

A comprehensive lead generation campaign within your chosen territory will help secure new contracts from customers who are seeking to find better value and a more attentive service from a local provider. A support team can start marketing a franchisee's business during their training course, guaranteeing leads from day one of launching. For instance, the Jackson Fire & Security marketing launch package includes telemarketing, email marketing, digital marketing, and PR.

5. COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING

Franchises often include training plans to ensure franchisees have the skills to make the best start in their journey. For example, the Jackson Fire & Security

training package includes accredited industry courses, time spent with a support team to run through systems and processes as well as shadowing opportunities with other franchisees.

At a Glance Jackson Fire & Security

Established: 1991

Number of franchised outlets: 11

Locations: UK

Investment range: £80,000

Minimum required capital: £24,000

Contact: Andy Moore

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IN THE KNOW

Facts and figures from the world of franchising



NUMBER CRUNCHING

432,000

UK ORGANISATIONS, AROUND ONE IN SIX, HAVE EMBRACED AT LEAST ONE AI TECHNOLOGY, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST GOVERNMENT RESEARCH. ON PAGE 56, TIM MORRIS, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CYPHONY, EXPLAINS WHY FRANCHISES CAN'T AFFORD TO GET OUTPACED BY TECHNOLOGY AND WHY THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW IF THEY'RE TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN TOMORROW'S MARKETPLACE.



QUOTE ME ON THAT

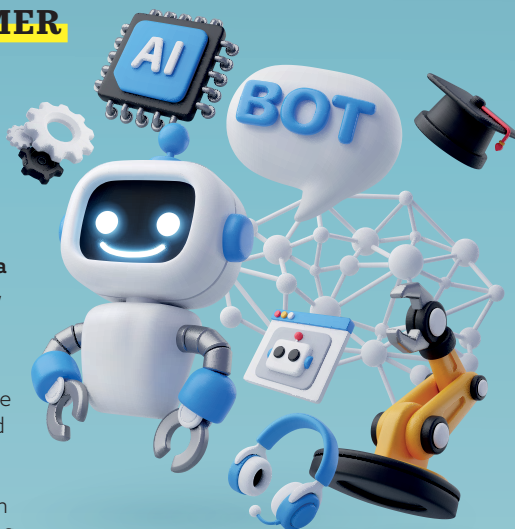
“Fun acts like a magnet. If your employees are having fun, not only will they stay, but customers and prospective franchisees will be drawn to your business”

Jo Middleton and four other thought leaders share their views on staff retention on p43.

TRENDING ONLINE: ARE NEW SOCIAL APPS DISRUPTING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR?

We've all heard about the troubles at LinkedIn, Meta (the mastermind behind Facebook and Instagram), and X, formerly known as Twitter. News of layoffs and workforce shrinkage have become regular headlines, along with a stream of concerns over responsibility, accountability and ethical practices.

Meanwhile, newer platforms are rapidly gaining traction, changing consumer behaviour and influencing the way in which all generations, young and old, spend their time online. Threads, the text-based sister platform to Instagram, gathered 100 million users in a few days, making it the fastest growing app ever. Last year, TikTok – another



relative newcomer – was the most downloaded mobile app in the UK, followed by WhatsApp and BeReal. Should businesses be looking to these platforms to reach customers, or stick to what they know already works?

For franchising, social media platforms offer unique opportunities to connect with customers at both corporate and individual franchisee levels. But it's not a one-size-fits-all approach. Successful brands are strategic, informed and analytical in achieving a higher ROI through social media; a result that's not always easy to nail. On page 60, we dissected the 2023 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, published this summer, to highlight how franchises can embrace online trends to convert new customers and communities in a way that's efficient, effective and brand authentic. Read it before embarking on your social strategy for 2024!



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Reach for growth

11 up-to-the-minute ways in which businesses can unlock the immense power and potential of social media and turn likes into leads

We've all heard about the financial troubles at LinkedIn, Meta (the mastermind behind Facebook and Instagram), and Twitter. News of layoffs and workforce shrinkage have become common headlines, along with a stream of concerns over responsibility, accountability and ethical practices. Meanwhile, newer platforms are rapidly gaining traction, disrupting consumer behaviour and influencing the way in which all generations, young and old, spend their time online. Threads, the text-based sister platform to Instagram, gathered 100 million users in a few days, making it the fastest growing app ever. Last year, TikTok – another relative newcomer – was the most downloaded mobile app in the UK, followed by WhatsApp, Vinted and BeReal.

For franchises, staying up to date and adapting strategies to embrace online trends is crucial for reaching new customers and communities. Despite some of the negative headlines, social media remains an indispensable tool for businesses to engage with audiences and build brand awareness. According to the *2023 Social Media Marketing Industry Report*, the numbers speak for themselves. A whopping 86 per cent of marketers stated that social media marketing gave their businesses more exposure, while 76 per cent saw an increase in website traffic. Additionally, 64 per cent reported generating leads, 56 per cent noticed an improvement in customer loyalty, and 55 per cent experienced an increase in sales. These figures show that social media marketing still yields positive results.

For franchising, social media platforms offer unique opportunities to connect with customers at both corporate and individual franchisee

levels. Successful brands take a strategic approach by selecting platforms carefully, staying informed about trends and utilising analytical tools, achieving a higher ROI. Keep your finger on the pulse and be adaptable and agile to trends and developments – businesses that do will thrive in the digital landscape.

1 Choose the right platforms

It's crucial to choose social media platforms that deliver the best results for your business. While experimentation is key to finding the right fit, there are some broad insights that can influence your decisions.

Despite marketers' confidence in the platform diminishing (from 61 per cent in 2019 to just 45 per cent in 2023), Facebook is still the overall leader in increasing exposure, boosting traffic, generating leads, developing loyal fans, and driving sales. Instagram, on the other hand, excels in increasing brand exposure. These platforms are the favourites among B2C marketers, with 89 per cent using Facebook and 80 per cent on Instagram. YouTube and Twitter have maintained steady positions, while TikTok is on the increase with brands, especially for increasing exposure. Meanwhile, 21 per cent of marketers consider LinkedIn their most important platform, especially when marketing to other businesses.

2 Be engaging and relevant

High-quality content is the key to capturing the attention of your social media followers. Develop a content plan that incorporates a mix of informative, entertaining,



Last year, TikTok was the UK's most downloaded mobile app. In 2023, it's Meta's new launch, Threads"



and promotional posts. Share engaging visuals, such as images and videos, that showcase your products, services, and customer experiences.

3 Encourage user-generated content (UGC)

User-generated content (UGC) is a valuable resource for franchised businesses to create authentic, engaging, and time-efficient social media content. Encourage your customers to share their experiences with your franchise brand by running campaigns, contests, or hashtags. Repurpose UGC by featuring it on your social

media accounts, website, or digital marketing materials. And leverage the power of storytelling to humanise your franchise brand and connect with your audience on an emotional level. Not only does this foster a sense of community and higher engagement, but it also saves time on content creation while amplifying the voice of your satisfied customers.

4 Establish a consistent brand ID

Maintaining a consistent brand identity across all social media platforms is vital for franchise brands and franchisors must standardise their brands'



THE POWER OF SOCIAL VIDEOS

Videos are becoming more and more popular in the eyes of social scrollers, and an area of increasing investment for brands. For viewers, the growth of short-form video means it's easier to digest more information on the go - whether that's news, reviews, or just general entertainment. For brands, this is good news too, as social video is estimated to generate 1200 per cent more shares than text and image combined. It also allows businesses to show more personality and experiment with their content. Younger groups are more likely to say they trust online reviews, possibly because they're more likely to seek out products on vlogs, micro-blogs, and video sites and lean less on traditional search tools.

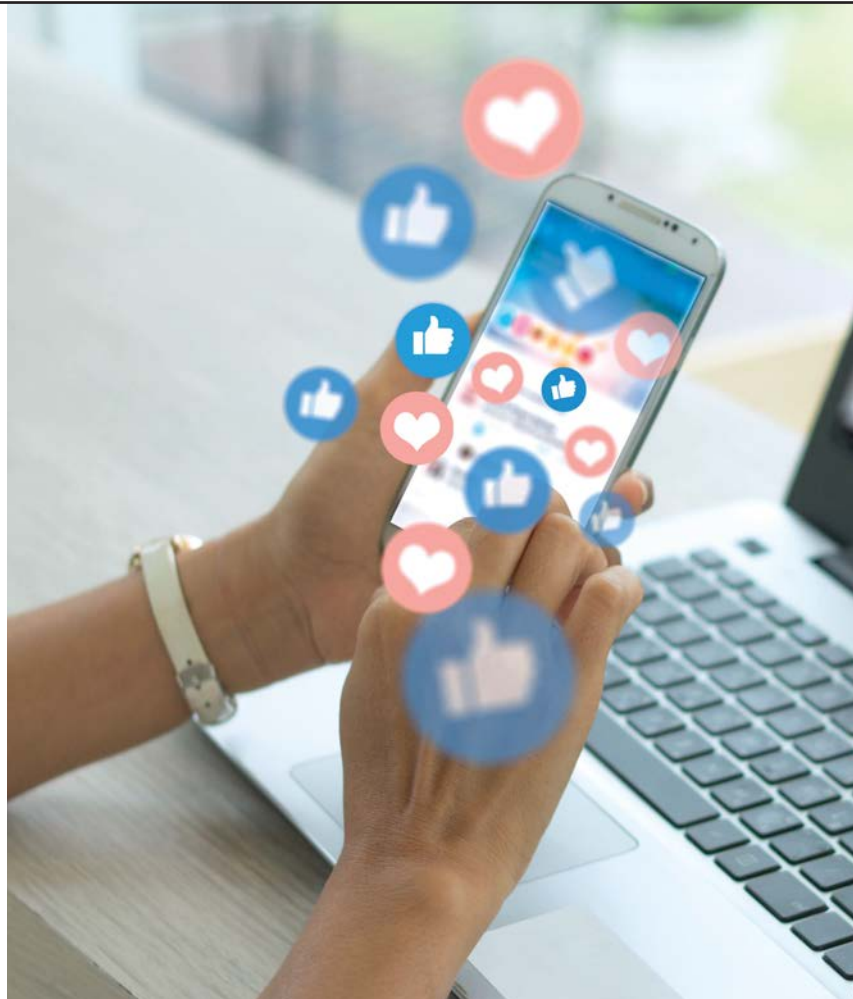
Entertaining short-form videos dominate TikTok and Instagram Reels, and forward-thinking brands and businesses are grabbing a slice of the pie by creating entertaining and informative video content to deliver fun facts, tutorials and explainers to a captive audience. Picture those bite-sized, quick clips that make you laugh, teach you something new, or blow your mind. These short-form videos are a hit because they fit perfectly into our fast-paced lives. That's why educational video content is the name of the game for smart marketers teaming up with content creators - they know it's the secret sauce to spicing up any social media campaign, catching your audience's attention, boosting your brand's visibility, and leaving a lasting impression.



HOW REDDIT TURNS AUTHENTICITY INTO BRAND LOVE

When makeup-free selfies became popular as far back as 2017, it felt like a new wave of authenticity. At last, people could show who they really were on social media, previously synonymous with filters and fakery. Authentic became the name of the game, with brands jostling to get in on the act; some more convincingly than others.

There's no disputing the performative nature of social media, but amidst that, there exists a countertrend for realness and vulnerability. For every contoured cheekbone, there's an acne-ridden closeup. For every perfect family photo, there's a story of fertility struggles. So how can brands navigate authenticity without overstepping the mark? "First, believe in something – anything!" says Rob Gaige, director of global insights at Reddit in the GWI's *2023 Social Behind the Screens* report. "On Reddit, our 100,000+ communities are deep and passionate, and they're excited when brands love what they love as much as they do. Don't posture or pretend, truly love it. When you have conviction, you can't fake it. Second, listen to the community. You are their guest. Participate, don't dominate. Ask for their opinions! And yes, not everyone will agree with you, but isn't there significantly more value in receiving real feedback than in constantly fighting for the attention of the uninterested? Finally, resist the temptation to bring everything back to your brand or your proof points. Stay in the moment and geek out with your community. That's how you turn authenticity into brand love."



visual elements, such as logos, colour schemes, and typography, to ensure a cohesive and recognisable presence. Craft a consistent brand voice that aligns with your franchise's values and resonates with your target audience. Franchisees should be aware of their brand's social media guidelines to maintain consistency across the network and post localised content that highlights their individual personality and focuses on their target local audience.

5 Focus on local Franchise brands can benefit greatly from focusing on the communities they serve. Franchisees can engage with their local audience by sharing relevant content, participating in local events, and supporting community initiatives. Incorporate local hashtags, geolocation tags, and partnerships with local influencers to increase visibility in specific regions. By combining the strength of the national brand with localised marketing efforts, franchise brands can establish a stronger connection with customers.

6 Respond to feedback fast Social media platforms provide an excellent avenue for customers to express their opinions and provide feedback. Regularly monitor comments, mentions, and direct messages across your social media accounts. Respond promptly to customer inquiries, address complaints or issues, and express gratitude for positive feedback. Timely and personalised responses demonstrate your commitment to customer satisfaction and build trust in your franchise.

7 Use paid advertising smartly While organic reach is essential, paid advertising on social media can significantly amplify your franchise brand's visibility. Utilise platforms' advertising features to target specific demographics, interests, and locations relevant to your franchise locations. Experiment with different ad formats, such as sponsored posts, carousel ads, or video ads, to find what resonates best with your audience. Track the performance of your paid campaigns using analytics



“Micro-influencer collaborations can generate a buzz and build credibility”

11 Analyse and optimise performance

Look at performance to identify what's working (and what's not) using built-in analytics tools on social media platforms or investing in advanced analytics software to gain deeper insights into your audience demographics, engagement rates, and post performance. By understanding which content resonates with your audience and drives results, you can optimise your social media strategy and focus your efforts on the most effective tactics, saving time and resource in the long run.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING WILL RETURN YOUR INVESTMENT

- It's a low-cost way to increase brand exposure and awareness. When users like, comment, share and repost your content, you're increasing your visibility and trust with other potential customers
- Build an online community: consumers actively seek out brands on social media, allowing them to connect with your mission and personality
- You can grow your website traffic. Followers who are already familiar with your brand are more likely to make online purchases or enquiries
- Generate new leads: social media's diverse content formats enable you to reach, inform and educate potential customers, prompting them to share valuable information and data
- Increase sales on evolving e-commerce platforms. Customers are more inclined to purchase products directly on social media, with Instagram yielding the highest ROI
- Provide faster customer service: platforms serve as an additional and often faster channel to handle customer questions and problems leading to increased business and customer loyalty.

and make data-driven optimisations to maximize ROI.

8 Plan and schedule in advance

Time is a valuable resource for business owners, and planning and scheduling content in advance can save hours while ensuring a consistent brand presence. Use social media management tools like Hootsuite, Buffer, or Sprout Social to create content calendars, schedule posts across multiple platforms, and even monitor analytics in one place. This approach allows you to batch your content creation, efficiently allocate resources and maintain a consistent brand voice while reaching out to a broader audience.

9 Automate, but keep a human touch

Automation tools and chatbots can streamline customer interactions, save time, and enhance efficiency. You can implement chatbots on your website and social media platforms to provide quick

responses to frequently asked questions, offer product recommendations, or guide customers through the purchase process and set up automated responses, such as thank you messages or order confirmations. But while automation can be helpful, it's essential to find the right balance – human connections and a personalised customer experience still very much count.

10 Collaborate with micro-influencers

Influencer marketing continues to be a powerful strategy on social media to expand reach and attract new customers. Research and identify content creators who align with your brand values and have an engaged and authentic following. Engage them in partnerships, such as sponsored posts, product reviews, or giveaways, to showcase your franchise brand to their audience. Successful collaborations can generate buzz, build credibility, and drive traffic to your franchise locations in next to no time compared to traditional marketing efforts.

Tapping into the middle ground

Hybrid Fitness has been sprinting to success, opening multiple gyms across the UK with plans to expand further



delivering high-end classes; and low cost, low thrill clubs with lots of equipment but little in the way of classes,” explains Townsley. “We’ve developed the middle ground, where members can get the best of both worlds with an affordable price tag.”

This offering has translated to a range of classes led by experts in the field as well as a space for gym-goers to work out independently with the latest equipment. It’s a premise that enables customers to have the freedom to work out in whatever way they see fit without paying a premium for high-quality services. So far, Hybrid Fitness’ approach has received an incredibly positive response.

“Opening an entirely new concept to any industry can be daunting and not without its ups, downs, and pitfalls, but we’ve received fantastic feedback and support from the fitness community,” says Mark Talley, managing director.

COLLABORATIVE FRANCHISE EXPERIENCE

Ant Townsley and the Hybrid Fitness franchise team have created a plan to see new clubs open and receive ongoing support. Franchisees can expect a slick and thought-out programme which covers everything including financing, property searches and acquisition, kit supply, fit-out, recruitment, marketing, advertising and day-to-day club management.

“We’re here to help our partners build a successful business for the long term,” says Townsley. “Our approach is to always be on hand, developing the club in a way that suits the business owner and stays flexible to local area needs and national events. Our Franchisees can run their business and take care of the day-to-day, but they get the full support from our centralised operations and marketing teams.”

Hybrid Fitness believes this approach is different to other players in the

It’s been a quick-start year for Hybrid Fitness, a gym franchise that’s been targeting new locations while expanding its brand. In the process, it’s garnered high profile attention from athletes such as double gold Olympian Daley Thompson, who’s recently taken on the Hove and Wimbledon Hybrid Fitness branches.

“The past 12 months have been incredible, but it’s just the start of our growth,” says Ant Townsley, product development director at Hybrid Fitness. The franchise has already laid down roots in Loughborough, and recently opened a space in Canary Wharf. Openings are also scheduled in Reigate, Sutton, and Wimbledon. Meanwhile,

potential gyms in Putney, Loughton, and Hove are all currently in presale, with Manchester also in the pipeline.

It’s clear the franchise is building quickly, so what’s contributing to Hybrid Fitness fast becoming a heavy weight in the industry?

A NEW CONCEPT

Hybrid Fitness is aiming to tap into a gap within the fitness market by providing everything modern-day consumers have come to expect from gyms, with some of the additional elements from higher end, boutique clubs and studios.

“When we looked at the industry we essentially saw two camps: ultra-expensive, boutique clubs and studios



“We’ve developed the middle ground, where members can get the best of both worlds with an affordable price tag”

market and alongside its product offering, it’s collaboration that’s propelling the franchise’s success.

PRODUCT AND VARIETY

Strength and conditioning, hot yoga and combat classes alongside a high-spec gym are at the heart of Hybrid Fitness’ franchise offering. However, the brand provides a flexible model that can cater to a location’s needs and the franchisee’s personal goals.

“Everything we do is a collaboration. We have our core products but we have flexibility also,” says Townsley. “Through deep market research, we work with franchisees to build clubs that can cater to the local community, offer something different, and create a club that ticks owners’ personal wants without moving away from our core offering.”

This flexibility can extend as far as creating clubs that provide space for sports such as squash or padel. It really depends on what the franchisee is looking to highlight within their Hybrid Fitness branch.

TRAINING

Every personal trainer goes through a training process delivered by an external provider, with training days built into the onboarding process. These training days help coaches to understand the Hybrid Fitness method, enabling them to deliver great classes and customer service.

Hybrid Fitness also delivers in-house programmed strength and conditioning classes to members which follow a structured 12-week schedule with testing built-in. All classes at Hybrid Fitness are delivered to customers by experienced and highly skilled coaches, creating an exciting and dedicated training environment.

AN AMBITIOUS FUTURE

There’s a lot on the horizon for Hybrid Fitness which has its sights

set on several new locations in the coming months, followed by some soon-to-be announced clubs and partnerships.

Hybrid Fitness is also working on providing workshops covering fitness, wellness, nutrition, and health, allowing customers the opportunity to learn and get more from their memberships.

“The next steps are clear: continue our growth while continuing to maintain the highest in-club standards as well as spreading the word about our mission and our product,” confirms MD Mark Talley.

At a Glance Hybrid Fitness

Established: 2019

Number of clubs: 5

Location: UK

Confirmed 2023 gyms openings: 4

Minimum capital required: £60,000

Contact: ant@hybrid-fit.co.uk

Growth market

What's On In is the website for people wishing to find out what's on in their town, city and holiday location



f the What's On In franchise, managing director Dani Smith says: "It was simple, we know the UK online advertising market is worth £189 million and we saw the market was wide open.

"We also wanted to make our franchise available to anyone and that's why we priced it at £798. The return on investment is amazing. We also offer an interest free finance package and payment over three-six months."

USER FRIENDLY

She goes on to explain: "I needed to make sure our web platform was user friendly for the advertisers and that we could offer any business a free sales web page. 82 per cent of UK businesses have no website, so we needed to address this with a free web page for every advertiser."

THREE FRANCHISE PACKAGES

What's On In offers three different types of franchise:

- Single franchise postcode
- Master franchise, UK or globally
- Corporate franchise, Europe and globally

FLEXIBLE OPPORTUNITY

A typical What's On In website not only offers a franchisee an excellent income from advertisers, but also allows them to place affiliates on their website, which pay franchisees up to 70 per cent commission. There are three income streams:



- Income for main businesses
- Income from tradesmen
- Income from affiliates.

A franchisee needs no technical knowledge, as all loading of adverts is carried out by the What's On In support team. Bookings are made online via the website and payment is made within three minutes direct to the franchisee's PayPal account, which means excellent cash flow.

OPTIONAL 50-50 SYSTEM

What's On In has an optional 50-50 system, whereby you have a commission only sales person building your postcode area for you, offering

complete freedom, and is perfect for someone with an existing business or job who wants a 'hands-off franchise'. This option obviously requires less commitment from the franchisee.

Potential monthly incomes are £5,000-£20,000, depending on commitment. Franchisees receive a fully exclusive postcode area. The exclusive online franchise members' area provides in-depth and comprehensive franchisee support and access to tips, advice and training tools.

LOW COST ENTRY

Dani believes What's On In offers the perfect low cost entry into the profitable franchise arena.

New franchise opportunities are continually added throughout the UK. With its self service platform, high visibility, full tracking and low advertising cost, the What's On In franchise offers the ultimate opportunity for online advertising.

At a Glance What's on in

Year established: 2019
Location: Home based
Minimum required capital: £798
Contact: enquiries@woifranchise.com, 07860 833822
woifranchise.com



APPETITE FOR PROFIT?

Innovative, resilient and a major contributor to the UK economy – it's no wonder that quick service restaurants are the largest sector in franchising. We explore some of the most exciting opportunities available right now



IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

14 Quick service opportunities

Three ambitious QSR franchise brands on a mission to recruit entrepreneurial partners and expand nationally

22 Next-level service

How QSR franchises can elevate service and hospitality to new heights to attract today's discerning customers

28 The rise & rise of desserts

Why dessert restaurant franchises still remain a very sweet business proposition for UK entrepreneurs

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Contact franchise@amigosburgersandshakes.com

GRAB A SLICE OF SUCCESS

In a tough economy, quick service restaurants (QSRs) present profitable and scalable opportunities. Check out these tempting franchise offers on the menu



In August 2023, private equity firm Roark Capital bought Subway for a sum rumoured around \$8.95 billion, outbidding several other private equity groups vying for a bite of the 60-year-old, family-owned firm. According to a Subway spokesperson, Roark Capital, which also owns Dunkin', Arby's and Baskin-Robbins, will continue to execute its strategy with a focus on "sales growth, menu innovation, restaurant modernisation, overall guest experience improvements and international expansion," giving credence to the long-held opinion that fast food can be a solid business investment in a recession by those in the know.

In fact, data from the 2008 recession showed demand for fast food remained relatively stable even while other industries suffered. Enough so that Jim Taylor, president of Arby's, described the burger business as "recession-proof" in a

Yahoo Live conference last year, adding that "fast food is a simple pleasure that people can access every day that makes them feel just a little bit better about whatever they're dealing with."

Prime opportunities

"In the UK, the QSR industry stands as a prime and exciting opportunity for franchisees," says Fahim Khan VFP, head of franchise recruitment at Oodles. "Its resilience, demonstrated during the COVID pandemic, paired with consistent demand makes it a reliable investment – and the industry's ability to cater to the diverse tastes of a multicultural nation and its embrace of tech-driven innovations ensures it remains adaptable and versatile. For aspiring entrepreneurs seeking a flourishing business venture, the QSR sector in the UK is a hot prospect ready to be seized."

Rak-Kyu Park, CEO and founder of sushi QSR Kokoro, is similarly optimistic: "QSR holds a unique

position of strength in the global food market and presents an exciting opportunity for franchises in the UK right now. As we have faced the most uncertain times within our domestic economy, QSR outlets of all types are still opening across the UK and growing in number, while other businesses are declining. The strength of the QSR industry is not to be taken lightly."

With established brand recognition, comprehensive support networks, scalability, and a growing focus on sustainability, QSR franchises can offer a recipe for entrepreneurial success. Take a look at these three QSR brands on the path of expansion in the UK – each offering a lucrative opportunity for go-getting investors. With full franchisor support behind you, now might be the perfect time to take the plunge and profit from the UK consumer's enduring love for high-quality fast food.



OODLES

“An exciting prospect for multi-unit investors”

Oodles is an Eastern-inspired quick service store, revolutionising boxed food with theatrical live cooking using high quality, fresh ingredients. The first store opened in Evington Road, Leicester in 2010, expanding to a second store locally, and then focused on perfecting menus, recipes, operating procedures, and support systems before venturing into franchising in late 2018.

Currently, Oodles has over 40 operational stores across the UK, with 20 more in the pipeline and plans to expand internationally, with the brand's first store opening in Dubai scheduled for early 2024.

“80 per cent of our franchise partners are multiple store operators, and 60 per cent are already successful owners of other franchise brands,” says Fahim Kahn VFP, head of franchise recruitment. “Our ambition is to expand our international presence in 2024 and have a total of over 100 branches within the UK by 2025.”

With its well-established branding and successful business model, Oodles presents an attractive opportunity for entrepreneurs interested in the food and beverage industry. “While prior experience in F&B is not mandatory, possessing a business background or F&B expertise is advantageous,” he explains. “If you are already a franchise owner, our robust support system sets us apart and provides a competitive edge.”

“At Oodles, we welcome both individual operator franchisees and those interested in a multi-unit management

franchise,” he continues. “In fact, we embrace various models as long as they align well.” In return, Oodles offers an exceptional return on investment (ROI) as well as unparalleled support from the team at head office, which boasts over 100 years of combined experience in the food and beverage industry and franchise management. “Our typical payback period is a mere 24 months,” adds Fahim, and all current multiple store operators are initiated through individual agreements without any obligatory commitments, giving reassurance to investors.

Interested?

Oodles is an exciting, simple-to-run QSR opportunity for individuals or groups who can show exceptional business acumen and a steadfast dedication towards long-term business expansion. In return, they benefit from ongoing brand support and experience.

Investors can choose from kiosk and food court formats that start from £120,000, to flagship stores, where a minimum of £200,000 investment is required. All include the on-boarding journey, which includes in-depth orientation, comprehensive training, guidance with site selection and setup, as well as ongoing mentorship and resources. “Your success is our priority, and we’re committed to being with you on this exciting journey of growth and achievement,” Fahim emphasises, adding that ideal candidates value transparency, adhere to established protocols, and take immense satisfaction in

contributing to Oodles’ development, while fostering a sense of kinship with the wider franchise family.

Visit oodleschinese.com or call **0300 303 4145** to find out more.

KOKORO

“Serving authentic food with heart and soul”

Nestled in a nook in Kingston-upon-Thames, Kokoro began as a small Korean-Japanese restaurant just over a decade ago. Starting out with only three tables, Kokoro has since expanded into a booming franchise, with over 73 locations across the UK serving hand-made sushi and hot food quickly to customers during busy times of their day. Franchise partners’ success can be attributed to their customers’ appreciation for authentic and delicious meals, supported by reliable quality management in sourcing and packaging.

The brand is now looking to expand across the UK to wherever there’s a need for tasty, fresh and healthy fast food. “In Japanese, Kokoro translates to heart, mind or soul – these are our most important ingredients and the key to our success. The hard part is how you do it and maintain it,” says Rak-Kyu Park, CEO and founder.

Interested?

If you have a passion for food business and you’re hard-working and ambitious, Koroko could be the perfect opportunity for you. In



return for an investment ranging from £270-300K, according to the size of the shop, the franchisor will provide help in finding the right location, set up, training and bank funding, as well as ongoing business development and promotional support.

Visit kokorouk.com for further information or email jerry@kokorouk.com

PAPA JOHNS

“Seeking ambitious UK entrepreneurs”

Papa John's, which originated in 1984 in Indiana, has experienced phenomenal global expansion through franchising, boasting well over 5,300 stores across more than 40 international markets. A Papa Johns franchise presents the perfect opportunity for entrepreneurs to offer high-quality, innovative, and delicious products from a brand with global recognition.

“Everyone loves pizza and that is never going to change! Our quality, fresh ingredients delight customers and keep them coming back for more,” says Amit Pancholi, business development director, Papa Johns UK. “We now have well over 500 stores in the UK, with a Papa Johns in every major city. Our plan is to continue to open more high street stores, while helping existing franchisees develop their trade zones. We're also recruiting new franchisees from a QSR background who have the appetite to grow multi-unit operations of between five and 10 stores over the next few years.



“The strength of the QSR industry is not to be taken lightly”

“As a proven brand, we can offer franchisees access to multi-store, flexible format operations in the QSR marketplace,” he continues. “Our goal is to extend the reach of the Papa Johns brand beyond the high street, ensuring our customers can enjoy their favourite pizza wherever and whenever they choose, proactively partnering with venues and leisure operators and installing Papa Johns in sports stadiums, holiday resorts and leisure venues. By being flexible, we create win-win opportunities for established players to create new revenue streams and satisfy customers with an enhanced offering at the same time. Our robust franchise model offers excellent potential for multi-unit franchisees or those in the non-traditional space.”

Interested?

The obvious attraction in buying a Papa Johns franchise is joining a globally recognised brand, knowing that one of the world's largest pizza businesses is supporting you every step of the way. Total investment in a high-street store varies between £170k-£350k, depending on its location and whether it's a new store or a re-sale. This includes full turnkey opening and all the training and assistance needed to get up and running.

“Before joining we offer support

through introductory meetings, virtual discovery days, guest visits to the QCC, and in-store visits to make pizza and see how it all runs,” explains Amit. “Once on board, our franchisees benefit from continuous support from our marketing team, from national brand awareness to leafletting, digital marketing and app and website development.

“All staff have use of our Pizza Academy training system, which contains a suite of modules on subjects as diverse as making specific pizzas to finance and customer service,” he continues, adding that this inclusive system means employees can map out a career pathway at Papa Johns by acquiring relevant skills.

“The franchise business model provides the framework to work in partnership with like-minded, entrepreneurial franchisees to build something special for the future,” says Amrit. “We're looking to partner with ambitious natural leaders with a background in business, who are keen to take advantage of multi-unit opportunities, deliver the best customer service and serve their communities with better pizza. Our ‘non-traditional’ flexible franchise options, such as stadiums, holiday parks and leisure venues, are available to existing operators to expand too.”

For further information please see papajohns.co.uk/franchise.



HOW TO DELIVER ON A GREAT EXPERIENCE

Crafting the right restaurant ambience will lead to greater customer satisfaction and higher profits, says Paul Hunter from Seeds Consulting, but it's an elusive ingredient to find



In the dynamic, competitive world of the hospitality and restaurant trade, success isn't just about delivering exceptional dishes or providing top-notch service... it's about creating an unforgettable experience that keeps customers coming back for more. In F&B franchising, creating and maintaining a consistently elevated customer experience is key to growth (and a massive factor why many franchised QSR

brands lead their sectors), but finding this holy grail is about much more than simply following a pre-established playbook. Franchisees need to take ownership of their local market and work with franchisors to create a unique, buzz-worthy experience for their guests to leave a great impression.

"Businesses are only ever as good as the service they give," says Paul Hunter, hospitality consultant at Seeds Consulting and former head of operations at

Vagabond Wines, Puttshack, Bill's and Tortilla. "The huge advantage of franchising over starting up is buying into a business with a proven track record and a product that you know already works well. But no matter how great the venue may look or how amazing the food or drinks are, the path to success is always rooted in the quality of service that your guests receive."

Just as you would conduct a local competitor analysis and

embrace a marketing plan, going the extra mile to craft a memorable customer experience will lead to repeat business, positive reviews, and ultimately, higher turnover and profit. This starts with training.

“Great franchises will offer complete staff training guidance from pre-opening on site to recruitment and new staff training manuals,” Paul continues. “Training should never be rushed or ignored – your teams are the gatekeepers of your business and leave the largest impact on your guests. If you don’t have access to experienced in-house trainers or an HR team, I recommend working with a training and people consultant to ensure pre-opening



“Great hospitality is almost impossible to teach. It’s all about hiring the right people”

and ongoing training and development is on point.”

Every customer interaction is a chance to make an impression that lasts a long time after the bill is settled. From the moment a guest walks through the door, their perception of your establishment begins to form. This initial encounter sets the tone for their entire experience that follows. Welcoming smiles, attentive staff, and a comfortable ambience can all contribute to creating that positive first impression.

Hire for success

An important contributor to creating a pleasant environment for your guests is the mood and behaviour of your team. “Look at how they work together,” says Paul. “Are they enjoying their jobs, having fun and laughing together? Most importantly, are they smiling? Stressed teams pass on their tension to guests, just by the way they look and work. Remember, your team culture is as important as the food and drink you serve – and this can’t be taught in a manual. As with training, working with professionals to create a

smooth, happy and professional environment is a worthwhile investment.”

It all starts at the hiring stage. “Hire the best, and then keep them,” Paul advises. “Sounds easy, but believe me it’s not, and I’ve seen businesses die a piece at a time by losing their best people. Remember, great hospitality is almost impossible to teach. It’s all about hiring the right people.”

Look after the detail

It’s often the small details that leave a big impact. From the arrangement of table settings to the choice of background music, each element contributes to the overall ambience and attending to these little details showcases your commitment to providing an exceptional experience. A well-thought-out atmosphere can even influence your customer’s perception of the quality of your offerings.

“Creating the right ambience for guests ensures a great experience, happier customers and increased spend, but it’s not something that can be learned from a book and it definitely isn’t one-size-fits-all,” advises Paul.

Not only do you need to consider ambience during different times the day (your breakfast atmosphere should differ from that in the evening, for example), but each day is different too, as weather, seasons and other outside influences all have an impact.

Take lighting for starters. “Your business should never be markedly brighter than the outside,” says Paul. “As the sun sets, so your lighting should reflect the change outside and dim right down, creating a cosy, almost sexy, environment. No-one wants to burn their retinas when walking indoors, and a lot of business is lost before it’s even begun if potential guests walk straight on past because you look too bright from the outside.”

Music is another very important factor that changes through the day. Think about your playlists. “Music should be there and audible, but (late night venues aside) almost unforgettable,” Paul advises. “Your favourite playlists might put off 60 per cent of your guests, so choose music that suits your venue, not your personal tastes or those of your staff.”

“I would recommend working with a music provider who will help you to select the right tracks and plenty of them; no one wants to hear the same song over and over,” he adds. “This also ensures your teams aren’t plugging in their own devices when you’re not there! As with lighting, start quiet and as the venue fills and the noise of your guests increases, slowly increase the volume of the



music to create the perfect buzz and atmosphere.”

Another contributor to the comfort and positive experience of your guests is temperature. “This seems like a no-brainer, but a lot of business is lost because spaces are too cold or too hot,” warns Paul. “The perfect temperature is 21 degrees – warm enough to be comfortable, but not awkwardly so. If you have tables outside, consider supplying blankets or hot water bottles (as well as shade), and think about the draft doors when making your seating plan, because when they open they generate a rush of air. We want guests to be comfortable enough to stay for as long as they like, not to be forced to leave and have their dessert somewhere else.”

Create connections

One-size-fits-all approaches are becoming a thing of the past. Modern customers crave personalisation – they want to feel like more than just another transaction. By getting to know your regular guests – their preferences, and even their names – you will create a connection that makes them feel valued and special, fostering loyalty and encouraging customers to return again and again.

Going above and beyond what customers expect can create a sense of delight and surprise, so try and anticipate their needs and desires and find ways to exceed

their expectations. It could be a complementary dessert, a personalised recommendation, or simply exceptional service. These gestures leave a lasting impression that customers are likely to share with others.

Focus on feedback

In today’s digital age, customer reviews hold immense power. A memorable experience is more likely to result in positive online reviews and recommendations on social media platforms. Happy customers become brand advocates, sharing their experiences with their networks and these endorsements not only attract new customers, but also contribute to building a trustworthy reputation.

“We all have a love/hate relationship with reviews,” says Paul. “Many bad ones are over-embellished and cutting – and why couldn’t they have said something when they were in!” But love it or hate it, feedback is vital to the ongoing success of your business. “The new generation of customers rely heavily on ratings,” he continues, “and when you remove the emotion from feedback, there’s a lot of good to work with to help reward or improve your operation. I would encourage your teams to ask for feedback; this helps guests to voice any concerns before they leave and gives you the opportunity to put things right.”

When it comes to online reviews

and ratings, always reply to feedback, but never enter into a debate online. “The adage that ‘the guest is always right’ may not be literally correct, but when it comes to your business they should always feel like they are,” Paul advises. “If you get a bad review, acknowledge it, apologise to the customer and take it offline by asking them to contact you directly. If it’s a great one, then thank the customer – it means the world to people.”

Profitable return on investment

Crafting exceptional experiences requires investment, both in terms of time and resources. However, the returns far outweigh the initial costs. Repeat customers are more likely to spend more and become your brand ambassadors and positive reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations drive new business without the need for extensive marketing efforts.

“Dealing with any issues as they arise during a guest’s visit is a great opportunity to turn a problem into a magic solution and create new regulars,” Paul concludes. “Listen to what guests have to say and ask what they would like to make it better. Most of the time people just want to be heard, so a free dish or drink will be enough to make their day.

“Remember, we’re entering uncertain times with less disposable money and guests will ultimately vote with their feet. It might cost you a free drink today, but that will mean returned visits tomorrow and beyond. As Danny Meyer says: ‘a great restaurant doesn’t distinguish itself by how few mistakes it makes, but by how well they handle those mistakes.’”

Remember, each interaction is an opportunity to make a lasting impression – an impression that can turn a first-time visitor into a lifelong customer. The hospitality and restaurant industry is about so much more than just providing good food and service; it’s about creating memories and positive emotions too. Focus on delivering to customers an outstanding experience, and you can foster loyalty, generate positive reviews, and drive higher profits for years to come.

Extracting profits

Reducing costs and improving carbon footprints are just two of the benefits attracting customers to RZ-Clean-Seal's franchisees and their unique kitchen extract cleaning services

The changes in health and safety laws around how ductwork should be accessed has left many restaurants with partially cleaned, leaking equipment, high remedial costs and systems that use excessive amounts of energy. Solving this problem is often expensive as kitchen extract cleaning methods have remained broadly the same since the 1900s, with most cleaning companies using manual, labour-intensive and time-consuming cleaning processes. The rising costs and associated risks of operating a restaurant have contributed to the closure of many famous brands across the world.

The RZ-Clean-Seal® method, however, creates a sustainable solution for restaurants, helping them to reduce their operating costs, improve their carbon footprint, lower energy consumption, and reduce fire risks.

After 10 years of using its unique process, RZ-Clean-Seal® has perfected its cleaning methods through ongoing testing and working alongside leading restaurant chains – all the while supporting customers to achieve their goal of becoming carbon neutral.

RZ-CLEAN-SEAL'S CUSTOMER APPEAL

Reducing the cost and frequency of kitchen extract cleaning by up to 80% is a huge selling point for RZ-Clean-Seal's customers, but it's not the only benefit. Fire risks are reduced by removing carbonised grease deposits within the kitchen extract system. Waste to landfill



setting meetings.

Franchisees are responsible for recruiting and managing their team of qualified technicians as well as growing and managing their designated area. Marketing and planning support is given by RZ-Clean-Seal's central teams, and you will have the opportunity to complete corporate work to increase your profitability.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

There are many different companies offering kitchen extract cleaning services; however, only RZ-Clean-Seal® offer a sustainable solution to help support the future

of the restaurant industry while helping franchisees to succeed and create profitable businesses – thanks to its wealth of experience and knowledge within the sector.

If you want to be the part of the future of kitchen extract maintenance, RZ-Clean-Seal® is the franchise for you.

can also be cut by up to 15kg per clean, and reducing energy use and site visits lowers clients' carbon footprints.

JOIN THE NETWORK

The RZ-Clean-Seal® franchise offers the best of both worlds: the independence of running your own business with the invaluable support of an innovative, industry leading company. As an RZ-Clean-Seal® franchisee, you'll enjoy a streamlined path to business ownership, increasing your chances of success compared to starting a kitchen extract cleaning company from scratch.

GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED

RZ-Clean-Seal® franchisees and their employees are fully trained in how to operate all systems, processes, sales methods and accounts. As part of the ongoing support with running your management franchise, you'll also receive quarterly reviews and goal

At a Glance RZ-Clean-Seal®

Year Established: 2020

Number of franchised outlets: 3

Location of units: Nationwide

Investment range: £25,000

Minimum required capital: £25,000-£30,000

Contact: enquiries@rz-clean-seal.com

www.rz-clean-seal.com

A rising player in the UK market

Paris Baguette is whetting the appetites of British consumers and it's looking to rapidly expand

Bakery-cafe chain, Paris Baguette, has debuted in the UK, bringing its distinctive blend of French-inspired baked goods to British consumers. Now, having launched its first two London stores at Battersea Power Station and on Kensington High Street, the brand is hunting for franchise partners to expand its UK and European operations further.

While it may only be starting its journey on British shores, Paris Baguette has grown phenomenally since its conception in 1988. It now has more than 4,000 stores across 10 countries including Canada, China, France, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and the US. In the States alone, there are now more than 125 franchised locations serving up high-quality artisanal baked goods.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

The baked goods industry can be a competitive space but various industry accolades have already proven that Paris Baguette has become a frontrunner. For example, the company was ranked top in the Baked Goods: Bakery Cafes category in *Entrepreneur's* Franchise 500.



“Paris Baguette has grown phenomenally since its conception in 1988”

Meanwhile, Paris Baguette has also featured prominently in *Entrepreneur's* inaugural list of Top Franchises for Multi-Unit Owners, placing 17th. This recognition attests to the brand's appeal among entrepreneurs and franchise investors, further fueling its expansion plans in the UK and Europe.

A LOCAL FEEL WORLDWIDE

Paris Baguette's mission is to place bakery-cafes at the heart of communities. The company achieves this by offering an extensive menu of more than 25 premium items which are made in-house daily.

The menu includes three-layer cakes, bespoke baguette

sandwiches, French-inspired pastries, artisan bread, and locally roasted coffee. Paris Baguette chefs also draw inspiration from Asian cuisine, incorporating flavours such as matcha into their creations. The celebration cake, a delicately layered dessert, is currently one of the brand's most popular signature items.

THE FUTURE IS FRANCHISE

Paris Baguette is actively seeking franchise partners to join its family. Currently, the UK operations team is spearheaded by several seasoned food industry professionals, led by Chief Operating Officer Nicolas Gaillot.

Access to this team is part of Paris Baguette's franchise model which offers a comprehensive support system, ranging from training and store design guidance to menu development and marketing strategies. The brand's extensive network of suppliers and vendors also enables franchisees to tap into Paris Baguette's established reputation, driving footfall and generating sales.

So far, with an expanding menu of French-inspired treats and a growing legion of satisfied customers in the UK, the brand's growth shows no sign of slowing down.

At a Glance Paris Baguette

Established: 1988

Number of franchised outlets: 4000

Location of units: Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, China, US, France, UK, Vietnam, Cambodia

Investment range: £500,000

Contact: Nicolas Gaillot
info@parisbaguette.uk

<https://ownaparisbaguette.com/>



Is Chai Green the most desirable franchise?

Hasnain Siddiqui, founder of Chai Green 1823, explains what franchisees can expect and plans for global expansion

What makes Chai Green 1823 different from the competition?

Hasnain: It's not just another chai and street food concept. Chai Green is an experience that's visually captivating and irresistibly delicious. By stepping into our Instagram-worthy interiors, customers can enjoy a diverse menu that crosses breakfast, brunch, lunch, and dinner, and is complemented by a selection of coffee, chai, desserts, and mocktails. It's a concept that generates revenue from morning to evening.

How soon do franchisees usually see returns?

Franchisees can expect to recoup their investment from 24 months onwards, with total cost set up from £160,000+.

The return on investment depends on a dynamic blend of factors, including management skills and the landscape's macro-economics. While we can't control external economic forces, we provide the tools, support, and a proven business model to maximise success.

Do you provide any financial assistance to franchisees?

Yes, we believe in turning dreams of franchise ownership into realities, and we've made it financially accessible. We can help fund up to 50 per cent of set up costs with backing from prestigious high street banks. This reduces initial franchisee investment to a manageable £80,000+VAT.

Most of the essential equipment can also be financed through lease options, which significantly minimise initial expenditure.

What other support do franchisees usually receive, besides finances?

We provide a comprehensive support system designed to guarantee success from day one. This includes property sourcing, designers, kitchen training, grand opening support, ongoing guidance, and marketing.



“Franchisees can expect to recoup their investment from 24 months onwards, with total set up cost from £160,000+”

How have you cemented Chai Green 1823's industry reputation?

We're a member of the British Franchise Association (BFA), who are committed to driving ethical business models and sustainable business opportunities for all.

Chai Green was also named Restaurant of The Year in 2022 by The Birmingham Awards which is a testament to our authentic food and drinks.

This year, we've added another

trophy to our collection. Chai Green was awarded Café of The Year at the Central England Prestige Awards for our commitment to providing an experience.

What's next for Chai Green 1823?

We're on a mission to become a dominant international brand. Chai Green is set to open 30 UK stores in the next few years and our sights are also set on the world stage, including America, Canada, and the Middle East.

At a Glance Chai Green 1823

Established: 2020

Number of franchised outlets: 5

Minimum required capital: £80,000+VAT

Contact: info@chaigreen1823.com

01218 200 808

www.chaigreen1823.com

INDULGE IN PROFIT

Franchised dessert bars are flourishing in major high streets, offering entrepreneurs a profitable venture backed by a continuously growing trend



Traditional cakes, puddings and sweet snacks are embedded in British culinary history, but we're far from unique in having a sweet tooth. From baklava to deep-fried donuts, gelato to coconut rice, iconic sugary dishes are a universal delight across cultures, central to local celebrations and festivals and transcending cultural boundaries. In Britain, we embrace new exotic flavours as warmly as we do traditional sticky toffee pudding and custard – it seems it's the more the merrier when it comes to dessert options!

In recent times, the UK has witnessed an upsurge in interest in desserts, partly inspired by the Great British Bake Off, first aired on the BBC in 2010. The subsequent explosion in home baking, dubbed by some as 'the Bake-Off effect' sparked a 9.2 per cent rise in sales of sweet goods, but our appetite for retro puddings and extravagant bakes has endured far beyond the departure of Mary Berry and the show's dramatic move to Channel 4. More than a decade on and sales of cakes and desserts are still soaring, accelerated in part by the Covid lockdowns. In 2020, Just Eat reported a 36 per cent increase in dessert orders, and in the same year, Mintel valued UK sales of desserts at £1.59 billion.

Once seen as disruptors, brands like Creams, Kaspas and Heavenly Desserts are now household names. Although they have clear differentiations, they're united by lively social media engagement and fun, creative menus, designed to attract families and an





altogether younger, multicultural crowd who are less interested in socialising around alcohol.

Creams Café dominates towns and cities in southern England, but with 100 stores (and more in the pipeline) the brand is on a mission to bring its American-style milkshakes, waffles, crepes, sundaes and gelatos to all corners of the UK. In 2020, Creams had a significant surge, serving five million customers, dishing out over 50 million scoops of gelato and pouring 8.6 million milkshakes, all while navigating two national lockdowns – a true signal of good times to come.

With over 90 locations across the UK, Kaspas is in hot pursuit of the market share. It styles itself as “a chain of exciting new dessert houses that offer the world’s favourite hot and cold desserts under one roof” and with its vintage-American styling and punchy brand identity, Kaspas is firmly focused on providing an amazing dining environment for its customers.

“Dessert-only restaurants are on the rise as they offer a level of escapism and whimsy that’s been missing from many people’s lives during the past few years,” says Everett Fieldgate, CEO of Creams Café. “With younger people seeking to reduce their alcohol consumption, dessert-only restaurants are a great late-night option for them to enjoy. More welcoming and accessible than coffee shops, these sweet spaces are the perfect place to spend

time with kids, family and friends, from midday to midnight.”

Today, there’s a franchised dessert bar or restaurant on almost every major high street and the trend shows no sign of waning as consumers look for different ways to indulge and socialise. New restaurants and kiosks dedicated entirely to luxurious, unusual and tantalising desserts continue to pop up in towns and shopping

“We aim to excite our audience via the product itself and through our photography and marketing campaigns”

centres across Britain, and it’s not too late for prospective franchisees to get in on the act.

But strong brand identity aside, what makes dessert restaurant franchises such a marketable phenomenon? And how has this foodie trend transcended the novelty factor to become an enduring and scalable business opportunity? We delve into why dessert restaurant franchises are getting the cream of profits and the secret recipe behind their enduring success.

1 Experience & interaction

Beyond just serving delicious sweets, dessert restaurant

HAPPY HOSPITALITY

Five reasons why dessert restaurant franchises are a sweet business opportunity

- **Experience:** dessert franchises create visually appealing and immersive spaces, offering entertainment and engagement through dessert customisation and spectacular presentation
- **Innovation:** embracing trends and continuously introducing new flavours and combinations keeps customers excited and coming back for more
- **Social appeal:** consumer marketing through the power of social media creates wider brand awareness
- **Nostalgia:** offering classic desserts in new and exciting ways evokes feelings of both comfort and joy in customers
- **Special treats:** dessert restaurants are a go-to choice for celebrating special moments, providing personalised desserts and exceptional service.

franchises often emphasise the experiential aspect of dining. These establishments design their spaces to create a visually appealing and immersive atmosphere that enhances the overall customer experience.

Next-level customer service is the objective for Heavenly Desserts, which operates across nearly 50 locations in the UK and has invested in an infrastructure with a capability to build a 200-outlet franchise system. Its mission is clear: to deliver memorable dessert experiences that “spark joy for every guest,” and the focus is on creating cafes which are unique in their interior design, décor and identity, often influenced by local



“Dessert-only restaurants offer a level of escapism and whimsy that’s been missing from many people’s lives during the past few years”

culture and with an emphasis on luxury.

Decorative themes, unique interior designs, and interactive elements such as dessert customisation or live demonstrations allow consumers to engage fully in this brave new world of dessert-only dining, where the focus is on entertainment and engagement.

“At Creams, our creative and innovative desserts lie at the heart of our unique venues, exceptional vibes and experiences that customers enjoy, says Everett. “With every new product launch, we aim to excite our audience via the product itself and through our photography and marketing campaigns. We want to constantly push the boundaries of what is expected of desserts and adapt these in line with changing consumer habits – for instance, integrating more drinks into the menu and customisation.”

Participating in the creation of their sweet indulgences undoubtedly adds an element of entertainment and engagement to customers’ dining experiences and transforms a simple dessert

into a memorable and enjoyable event, which keeps them coming back for second helpings. “Our innovative campaigns, interior design, and unique products continue to drive new feet through the door and keep our loyal customers excited,” adds Everett. “We have a cult following of loyal customers who return time and time again.”

2 Variety & innovation

“Up until about 10 years ago, dessert shops were not present on the high street, says Saniya Rauf, strategist at Birmingham-based Dolce Desserts, which has expanded into Worcester, London and looking for new partners to take the brand nationwide. “As the concept of eating desserts at any time of the day has continued to develop, we’ve seen the dessert business boom. Dolce saw a gap in the market for flamboyant desserts back in 2013, after recognising that restaurants were neglecting dessert menus. “We introduced extravagant waffles, crepes and ice cream sundaes with trendy twists to our local customers,” she adds.

Unlike many traditional restaurants, dessert-focused establishments are able to really experiment and push the boundaries of creativity in their sweet menus, one reason for their rapid growth. From classics with a modern twist to avant-garde creations that defy expectations, dessert franchises continually introduce new flavours, textures, and combinations to their receptive audience. This focus on variety and innovation allows consumers to indulge their sweet tooth while enjoying a unique dining experience.

“Partly what makes Creams Cafe so successful is that we are always launching new, innovative desserts,” agrees Everett. “A few years back we introduced the very first Dessert Poke Bowl to our menu for a limited time which was hugely popular. We also had a Mince Pie Waffle for Christmas, and just last month we launched our new retro-inspired Summer Menu with a strong, positive response from customers. Our signature and classic range of desserts, including crepes, gelatos and waffles, are always popular.



However, we often see our specials becoming best sellers. This crown is currently held by the Unicorn – a vanilla soft serve sitting in an encrusted rainbow-hued 100s & 1000s waffle cone topped with a red glacé cherry, ideal for eating on the go!”

Keeping an eye on emerging trends is vital when it comes to selling desserts, and franchisors are always one step ahead of the public’s whims, enabling franchisees to profit from menu creations that tap into the zeitgeist. “We tend to analyse existing market trends (on a national and international basis), along with upcoming trends,” explains Saniya. “Using this information, we evaluate the product based on our demographics and store capacity. Once this research is completed, we issue our special in-house recipe and train our team to ensure delivery and presentation is excellent.”

3 Social & visual appeal

In this age of social media, the visual appeal of food plays a pivotal role in its popularity.

Elaborate milkshakes adorned with mountains of whipped cream, colourful macarons and towering ice cream sundaes garnished with unusual toppings have come to dominate social media feeds, and dessert restaurant franchises have successfully tapped into this phenomenon with aesthetically pleasing creations which rapidly become Instagram and TikTok sensations. Consumers are eager to capture and share their experiences, effectively driving brand awareness and fuelling the dessert franchise trend.

“Creams is a social experience, thanks to how visually exciting our desserts are for social media – they demand to be noticed and are perfect for sharing,” explains Everett. We appeal to a diverse audience, but our menus are particularly attractive to Gen Z and Millennials, as well as families with young children looking to go somewhere for a treat.

4 Nostalgia & comfort

Desserts possess a unique ability to evoke a soothing emotional reaction in consumers. Many dessert restaurant franchises have capitalised on this by crafting menus that pay homage to childhood favourites and timeless classics. Whether it’s a warm slice of apple pie, a rich and creamy cheesecake, or a perfectly gooey chocolate brownie, these beloved recipes transport customers back to simpler times, offering a sense of familiarity and joy. By combining nostalgia with culinary expertise, dessert franchises create an irresistible allure that keeps consumers coming back for more.

“Much like our summer menu, retro or nostalgia inspired desserts and flavours are also proving popular, with lots of people showcasing old classic desserts in new and exciting ways to give people a reminder of the good ol’ days and share these sweet treats with new audiences,” Everett adds.

5 Special occasions & celebrations

Dessert restaurants have become go-to destinations for birthdays, anniversaries and

OPENINGS & EXPANSIONS

DOLCE DESSERTS

- **Already well-established in all areas of Birmingham, with new expansion into Worcester and London coming soon, next steps are to expand the business nationwide with many territories available.**
- **Affordable purchasing price in comparison to competitors with ongoing support provided, including help to find a successful location.**

CREAMS CAFE

- **Recently opened a selection of new sites in the north of England, including a new store in Sheffield as well as a new kiosk-style Creams Cafe under a partnership with Park Garage Group, as well as other openings in the pipeline.**
- **Variety of formats: the new Wigan location features a grab-and-go kiosk which brings a quick service element, meeting the needs of locals as well as those passing through.**

special occasions. These franchises provide everything needed for a happy celebration – inviting atmospheres, personalised dishes, festive decorations, and attentive service. For Creams, the formula for success is simple: “Every customer is unique and very special, and we always ensure every customer experience is memorable. Whether it’s adding additional treats as a way of saying thank you, or helping customers to celebrate their special occasions, we’ve managed to build a very loyal customer base which has helped us to grow significantly over the past few years.”

By catering to the desire for unique experiences and elevating ordinary moments, dessert restaurant franchises have become synonymous with joy and affordable indulgence, and as they continue to evolve and push the boundaries of culinary creativity will remain a sweet business opportunity for entrepreneurs for many years to come.

Franchising the burger boom

Fresh from signing an eight-store deal in Birmingham, the founders of Amigos Burgers and Shakes talk success



Kasim (Kaz) Akhter and Waqas (Wax) Siddique's friendship has always revolved around fast food. The pair met as children and spent many years around a fish and chip shop owned by Kaz's father. It was this experience that later inspired the friends to set up their own food venture in 2011, after noticing a lack of good halal burgers on the market.

Amigos Burgers and Shakes was born in Acton, West London. The menu comprised halal burgers, wings, and chocolate bar milkshakes. "Within six months, the word got out, and there were queues seven days a week with budding foodies from across the UK," recalls Kaz.

Success came quickly and the pair were able to leave their full-time jobs and focus solely on the store. However, a couple of years in, it became noticeable that both were having to sacrifice time with their growing families, which wasn't a compromise either were willing to make.

"I told Wax: 'I'm done with this. You can either buy me out or trust me and we expand,'" says Kaz. They chose the latter, with a fresh rebrand on the cards. In 2015, a second store in Shepherd's Bush High Street opened, and in 2017 the brand finally opened its first franchised store in East London.

"We've gone from our first 'desk' (a table in the Acton restaurant) to having our own HQ in the famous Park Royal

Estate which hosts some of the biggest food brands and operators in the UK. Amigos now boasts a 16-man team who ensure quality, freshness, and service throughout the restaurants," says Kaz.

AN INCLUSIVE MENU

Amigos' roots lie within its halal burgers which have placed inclusivity at the heart of the brand. Since expanding the menu, Kaz and Wax have continued to offer products along these lines, which now includes vegan alternatives.

"Initially, the 'halal' tag attracted Muslims from all over the country," says Kaz. "This wasn't the plan. However, we quickly gathered a cult following, servicing young, old, singles, couples, and families from all colours and cultures."

Alongside serving its famous Jacob burger with sweet chilli and Philadelphia, Wax and Kaz quietly spend time ensuring they integrate Amigos into the community via initiatives. These include providing food to homeless charities and youth groups across the city for the past seven years via NGOs and local authorities. Amigos also sponsors The Elite London Academy which aims to aid city children in developing their football skills.





KAZ AND WAX'S GO-TO ORDER

- Chicken in pitta meal (hot, no onions, and extra mayo)
- Amigos spicy fries
- Hot and BBQ wings
- Oreo and Daim milkshakes

processes. Feeding the NHS and taking part in government schemes allowed us to learn about adapting quickly."

The burger franchise also introduced a super savers menu to accommodate those with smaller budgets who still wish to dine at Amigos during tough times. On the flipside, Kaz and Wax remain vigilant to innovations in the burger space, with the latest trend being the 'smash' burger concept.

FUTURE PLANS

More than a decade on from opening their first store, Kaz and Wax have set their sights firmly on national and international expansion with the help of experienced franchisees and investors. This growth has already been kick-started by an eight-store deal in Birmingham.

"We're looking forward to driving down any high street and seeing our glowing logo, with the hard work in creating a long-lasting household brand having paid off," says Kaz.

Reflecting on their success, the pair believe the key to any food franchise is a unique, good quality product – not an easy thing to achieve considering the saturated market. "Whatever you do in this sector of business, you must think about the ingredients you're using, from oil to table," says Kaz. "The last thing you want is for people to say your food is bad or low quality."

A COMMUNITY OFFERING

Kaz and Wax have been smart in their marketing, opting for routes that reflect their customer's interests, which includes collaborating with brands such as Warner Brothers, EA Sports, and Lucozade. Most recently, loyal Amigo customer and urban rap star Fredo used one of the restaurants to host his own album launch party.

"Amigos was always meant to be a fun, vibrant family-friendly brand. We're the local neighbourhood 'go to' place," says Kaz. "It's why Amigos is still standing strong among the new wave of competitors. Our core values have never changed and will remain the same to take Amigos to new heights."

Providing value for many has also been inherent to the Amigos brand and this has most recently culminated in its marketing via a loyalty app, which encourages rewards and hosts give-aways.

"Wax and I genuinely take a lot of interest in the branding," says Kaz. To stay ahead of the game, we adapt quickly to market conditions."

"I'm done with this. You can either buy me out or trust me and we expand"

RESPONDING TO THE MARKET

The food and beverage industry has fluctuated over the decade, and Wax and Kaz have kept abreast of market trends by generating extensive data.

"Wax is a tech lover," says Kaz. "His passion for gadgets always encouraged him to digitise and automate processes. Our smooth sailing kitchens are a result of Wax's digital development."

The pair also used the pandemic as a test bed for improving its efficiency, which has led to further improvements in Amigos' kitchens. "It was the best time for us to close the gaps in our operations by streamlining menus and

At a Glance

Amigos Burgers and Shakes

Year established: 2011

Number of outlets: 28

Minimum required capital: - £200,000

franchise@amigosburgersandshakes.com

amigosburgersandshakes.com

The art of opening

Your expert guide to embarking on a successful franchise journey, from creating a pre-launch buzz to building business from day one



Opening a franchise can often be a lucrative venture, offering entrepreneurs a proven

business model with a built-in support system and a network to lean on for advice and support. Well-established franchises come with a solid brand reputation, a good marketing reach and customer testimonials. By following the franchisor's tried and tested methodology, franchisees are spared much of the pain of building a brand from the ground up and making costly mistakes, which can often be at the root of start-up failures.

However, despite gaining a head start in setting up a new business, the path to profit in franchising isn't guaranteed without planning and effort. For new franchisees, going the extra mile at the start of the venture can set them on track to recouping fees and expenses, generating customer loyalty and growing faster, but what exactly is involved in a successful launch? We've asked experienced franchisors and consultants to share their successful strategies for launching new franchises – from pre-launch to day one – to ensure things get off to a positive start.

Pre-launch success

First things first: choose your franchise carefully. Only spend time thoroughly researching those opportunities that align with your passion, skills, and local market demands. Consider the franchise's history, brand reputation, financial performance, and the ongoing support on offer. A well-matched franchise is the foundation for your successful start in business.

"Go for a franchise that offers comprehensive training and support, says Anthony Round, franchise director of Burger & Sauce, Awesome Chips and

Wingers. "To succeed in the quick service restaurant (QSR) industry you don't necessarily need food industry experience. However, you will need business and/or staff management skills and a supportive franchisor to show you the ropes."

"Years ago, we used to say a two per cent conversion rate from enquiry to franchisee in the QSR space was normal," continues Anthony. "Now it's only one per cent. Therefore, it's important for franchisors to create plenty of noise and push brand awareness to generate sufficient enquiries."

"We use social media and advertise on the main franchise portals, and I work with specialist

PR firm Grapevine to gain press coverage and highlight all the benefits of the food franchise. Together we create a pipeline of articles, press releases and case studies and place these in the media, so prospective franchisees can gain an insight into what life is like as a franchisee and what they can expect from the franchisor in terms of training and support."

Prime location

According to Krishma Vaghela, F&B franchise consultant and founder of Franchise Futures UK, investing in a resale business has strong advantages as it will come with an already-established customer base, guaranteeing immediate business.



This obviously comes at a higher price, but is often worthwhile if you have the capital available to buy in.

If you don't have sufficient funds to buy a resale or want to start out in a new location, the journey to success in food service starts with grassroots planning, especially in deciding on a suitable site.

"The greatest challenge with launching a new restaurant is finding the right location with a unit that has or can gain the right planning," says Anthony. "Location is key: footfall must be high as fast food is usually an impulse purchase. Providing the product and branding are good, the better the location is, the better the store will trade, and then customers will return for more," he advises.

"Location plays a huge part in determining the success of a hospitality business and the

franchisee should be familiar with the area," says Krishma, whose consultancy specialises in growing food and beverage brands. "Much of this will vary dependent on whether the concept is bricks and mortar, a kiosk in a food hall within a shopping centre with constant footfall, or a food truck," she adds, as these variables can have a significant impact too.

When it comes to location planning, the franchisor should provide support and guidance based on market data, including target demographics. "They (the franchisor) should advise the franchisee on how to keep all expenses at a minimum," she explains, "such as having staff on shifts only when necessary and using utility brokers if it helps to cut costs."

Anthony has a wealth of

"Investing in a resale business has strong advantages as it already has an established customer base, meaning immediate business"



experience in launching QSR brands and points out that Wingers helps new franchisees find the right locations for restaurants based on the team's experience of what works and what doesn't. "We're always looking for the next great venue," he says.

Do your homework

The buck doesn't always stop at the feet of the franchisor. Many franchisees will need to conduct their own competitor analysis by observing footfall in the chosen spot, checking the demand for deliveries through availability of drivers in the area and noting typical trading hours. "It's a great idea to network with other non-competing and well-established F&B business owners to understand more about the area, the typical average transaction values, peak trade times, rent averages and so on," Krishma advises.

"If a site is in a prime location with an expectation of heavy footfall, digital ordering kiosks are a must as they help reduce labour costs like cashiers and allow for



READY, GET SET... GO!

Franchise consultant Krishma Vaghela on the many ways franchisees can elevate their launch to get business off to a flying start:

- Social media marketing – dependent on whether a franchisee has permission to have their own social media pages. In most cases this is best left to the franchisor as they have a larger community of followers and franchisees can focus on local marketing while the franchisor promotes the upcoming opening and offers
- Direct marketing campaigns – leafleting door to door
- Local networking to create awareness of the brand and opening offers
- Reach out to family, friends and the local community for support in spreading the word and invite them to the launch
- Send out PR kits to local companies, inviting them to the launch
- Invite social media influencers
- Use your personal social media profile to promote the upcoming opening and the offers (ie post on local Facebook groups if permitted by the admins)
- Make sure you have resources or a dedicated area for selfies on site, allowing for brand exposure by customers
- Hire entertainers and balloons outside the store to catch the eye of passers by
- Ask invitees to bring others. You may want to request RSVPs so that you have an idea of numbers to plan for supplies
- Hand out free merchandise and 'come back soon' vouchers on the day enticing customers to return.



ease of upselling. And having self-employed delivery drivers will reduce the commission you pay to aggregators and could allow you to expand your delivery radius, resulting in more customers," she adds. Doing this research early on can tell you where and how you could invest in people and infrastructure to cut costs and boost profitability further down the line.

Work with aggregators

"Fast food is a great franchise model because people will always need to eat," says Anthony. "But there is much competition in the market. To stand out, it's all about the offer, image, honesty of the brand, great customer service and good value – in addition to a great location.

"I've worked in the industry for over 20 years and the brands that succeed give good value. Fresh products of the highest quality,

simply served at a fair price, work well. This is because people appreciate honest food and will return for the product if it is consistently good."

In terms of marketing, franchised QSR brands need to have good relationships with aggregators – such as Uber Eats – to reach customers more easily and boost sales as a result.

"One of Wingers' most successful openings was for our franchisee Tajinder Choong or TJ to his friends," continues Anthony. "TJ's Hedgesford restaurant opened two weeks before Christmas in December 2022. At the time, he said: 'From the moment we opened, it was manic! We have a great location in a parade of shops shared with an Indian takeaway and pizza outlet. A new Co-op is being built and a housing estate is to be constructed nearby, so it's only set to become busier! For the local primary school,



we offer a deal on milkshakes for the kids too, so whole families can now enjoy Wingers.”

As well as a great location, Anthony emphasises that the Hednesford launch was successful because the brand already great relationships with aggregators, which guaranteed business from day one.

“Franchised QSR brands need to have good relationships with aggregators, such as Uber Eats”

Create a buzz

Unlike a start-up, many franchises have a built-in marketing plan. This often includes social media, advertising and national PR and marketing, but there’s plenty more a franchisee can do to generate a buzz in their local vicinity.

“Work together with your franchisor to put together a local marketing plan and a budget in advance of launch,” advises Krishma. “A franchisee needs to know exactly what contribution will be made by the franchisor as reflected within the payable franchise fees, which includes a level of store launch support. The franchisee can then determine if they wish to spend anything additional - however, the guidance

should always come from the franchisor,” she adds.

Some franchisors prefer a soft launch to test the waters and iron out problems before the main event. You can also choose to focus efforts on a particular target group to ensure news of your launch reaches the right eyes and ears directly. “If university students

are your target market, connect with the university and the student union and leave flyers with discount vouchers and offers in student halls or on university grounds (where permitted),” suggests Krishma. “Get involved with university events, including sponsorship opportunities and job fairs, and continue maintaining those crucial business relationships.”

Real life networking

Like many good franchisors, Lettings and estate agency network EweMove provides all new franchisees with a templated launch plan - dubbed their Lean Mean Marketing Machine. However, according to MD Nick Neill, elevated success comes from what

HOW FRANCHISORS CAN HELP

How can franchisors best support franchisees in opening successfully? The amount of help provided in terms of resources will vary significantly on whether the franchise brand is emerging or established, but the franchisor’s know-how through experience is extremely valuable. Krishma Vaghela advises on best practice:

- Location planning with the franchisee is crucial
- Sharing knowledge with the franchisees on what marketing activities have worked successfully for others
- Drawing up a local marketing plan and budget with the franchisee - the first six months are imperative for future success
- Promoting the store openings and offers in advance via national social media pages
- Ensuring PR coverage through sector-specific media companies
- Operational support during the entire first week or two of launch
- Discounting or omitting royalty fees for a short period (months) to allow the franchisee to settle
- Providing thorough training for both franchisee and staff pre-launch ensuring they can upsell products while delivery quality products.

franchisees can do for themselves.

“We start by asking our franchisees in training: what are social networks and what do they mean for you?” he states. “Many people will mention Twitter and Facebook and many initially think marketing their business involves broad brush, super high/brand level advertising. But educating the whole town that you’re open for business is strongly discouraged as a waste of time and money.

“Instead, we provide a corporate launch plan that deploys broader



“It’s personal social networks that have the greatest impact on launch success. In our business, trust is key”

infrastructure marketing techniques, such as paid-for targeted marketing on Google, and the franchisees take care of the street level marketing – social networking, leaflets through doors and such like. They look after the local relationships and we do all the rest.”

However, it’s personal social networks that have the greatest impact on launch success in selling and renting properties, as Nick explains. “In our business, trust is key. Trust leads to referrals, and referrals come from people already in your tribe, or connected to them.”

As such, EweMove urges new franchisees to go and talk to their real social networks – their friends, neighbours and communities, as well as local professional networking groups – and tell them what they’re doing. “It’s the physical social interactions – the hyperlocal referrals and recommendations from peers – that lead to new clients and organic business

growth; not broad, anonymous, impersonal feedback on Google Reviews and Trustpilot” he adds.

“When our franchisees start out with only a few boards, we encourage them to network with everyone involved in the chain. For example, if they develop a relationship built on trust with the buyer, they can offer to help with their sale, too. Do a good job and you’ll leave a lasting legacy in your local area. Word-of-mouth referrals gather momentum with the most velocity, building out and building out until your network is extensive.”

Successful launch campaigns

Generating a buzz before your grand opening by utilising social media, local advertising, and targeted promotions are proven to be pathways to success, and offering pre-launch discounts and exclusive events are effective in attracting eager customers from day one.

For Body Fit Training (BFT) Battersea, a digital launch campaign blended influencer and paid marketing and organic social media to target leads from all angles and generate approximately 800 unique enquiries from scratch, all leading to a very successful opening in September 2020.

Battersea regional franchise manager, Charlie Hendrie, explains: “In new markets where we’re not

able to lean on the strength of the brand alone, particular attention goes on showcasing the team and building a relationship with customers early on in the prospect journey. In Battersea, a brand-new market, our focus was shared on educating the local community on our products and brand, creating hype with dynamic video content and building rapport and trust by showcasing the Battersea team.

Creating this campaign didn’t sit solely on the shoulders of the Battersea team, highlighting the assisted strength of working with an experienced brand when starting up a franchise in a new territory. “By working with a digital marketing company who had successfully launched BFT in multiple new markets, and with ongoing HQ support to adapt strategy as the presales process unfolded, we could take best practice from prior learnings and adapt to a UK-centric market,” adds Charlie. “Looking at franchise businesses specifically, it’s important to know your global USPs, but understanding what specific USPs you bring to your locality or region is where the real value lies.”

The Battersea team created a pre-launch buzz by hosting a VIP influencer event on the Thursday prior to launch, inviting a mix of fitness influencers and lifestyle influencers from the local area. As a result of this event, the franchise benefited from a jump of over 125 Instagram followers in two days, as well as six to seven additional sales on top.

BFT Battersea didn’t just rely on social media to ensure the launch stood out in London’s crowded fitness market. The marketing campaign ensured maximum reach with paid digital marketing, grassroots campaigns (eg Battersea park flyer drops), collaborating with other local businesses as well as HQ-driven marketing which included a drip-fed digital campaign educating people on BFT.

“The grand opening was a text-book-perfect event,” reflects Charlie. “We ran three full classes on the day and provided coffee, juices and snacks on site for customers. This was all aided by incredible energy from the team.”

From military to million-pound targets

Former Army captain Steve is now setting big missions for business owners in Exeter

Phil Rivers started Unicorn Construction in 2007. However, just before meeting his local Action Coach and former Army captain Steve in 2022, he was struggling. Productivity levels were dipping by up to 30 per cent, naturally affecting the bottom line. It meant something had to change.

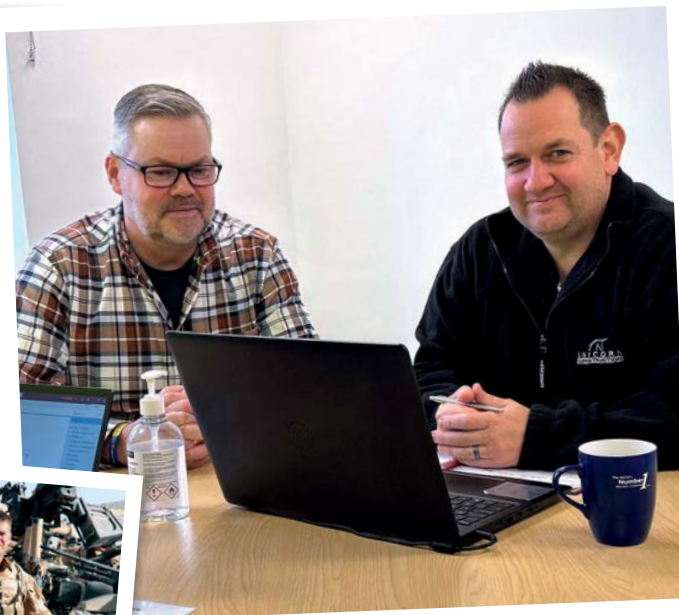
ESTABLISHING A BALANCE

The first shake up to Unicorn Construction came when Steve asked Phil what he wanted to get out of the business – something he'd not had much headspace to consider previously.

"I was accepting every job that came through the door rather than going out and getting the work I wanted. I was also working 10-12 hours every weekday because I thought that's what I had to do to succeed," says Phil.

He also quickly realised that working alongside his wife Nicki was making it increasingly difficult to establish all-important work-life balance.

"When Nicki began attending my sessions with Steve, things clicked – we realised we needed to spend time outside of the business together while still being productive. It's had a massive impact on our thought process and has helped us focus on what we want to get out of the business," says Phil.



"It's had a massive impact on our thought process and has helped us focus on what we want to get out of the business"

Once the pair had established the balance they desperately needed, Phil and Steve were able to identify pain points in Unicorn Construction and find solutions.

"The first month or so focused on specific day-to-day problems and how I could overcome them," says Phil. "We needed a team that wanted to work hard, who appreciated their downtime

but weren't just here for the money. We identified a few individuals who weren't consistent and let them go, showing the rest of the team how important the right attitude is."

MAKING DREAMS A REALITY

Steve has been well-positioned to provide Phil with the support and guidance he needs. However, the ActionCOACH franchise partner insists that Unicorn Construction's success has been down to Phil's receptiveness.

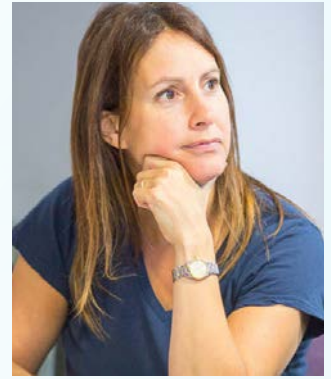
"Phil is very detail-oriented," says Steve. "If I ever ask him to watch something or read a book, he'll

always do it. Prior to our coaching he hadn't read for over a year. He now has a good team foundation and I'm confident this is just the beginning for Unicorn Construction."

Steve highlights that although you don't need to be a coach when you invest in the ActionCOACH franchise, you should enjoy learning and personal development, as it's these traits that help business owners like Phil.

At a Glance ActionCOACH

Established: 1993 (AUS) 2001 (UK)
Number of outlets: 250+
Minimum required capital: £69,000
Contact: 01284 701 648
actioncoach.co.uk/franchise



FRANCHISEE OF THE YEAR 2024

Get ready to showcase the
heroes at the heart of your brand
- your outstanding franchisees



"It's important to me that we do as much as we can for free, because every child needs to access what we offer"

Asha Richardson, Razzamataz





sector has ever seen. Hammad Cheema from Visiting Angels and Julie Houston from Right at Home UK reveal how business and a generous community spirit can go hand in hand to create a better world for everyone.

Another community hit hard by Covid lockdowns were young people. Piyush Gupta, a former finance executive, rose to the challenge and launched his Tutor Doctor franchise during the pandemic with heart and soul, giving himself the mission of changing the trajectory of students' lives, many of whom were excluded from mainstream education.



"If you want to work in a silo, franchising is not for you - it's all about the power of the group"

Chris Wyle, Pitman Training

Nominated by franchisors, our annual power list of 'entrepreneurs with X-Factor' celebrates franchisees who have made an outstanding contribution to franchising in 2023/2024 - supercharging their brands and sectors with their talent, passion, acumen and a drive to succeed.

These are the people who are shining ambassadors for both your brand and franchising as an industry. They inspire everyone in your business and serve as exemplary examples of success when you're recruiting new franchisees.

Not only do they bring in the figures; they exemplify good leadership - leading by example, motivating their teams and/or fellow franchisees, and constantly demonstrating qualities like compassion, integrity, ambition and creativity in their roles as business leaders, whatever the scale.

Worthy winners

Last year's power list revealed some incredible inspiring stories, such as that of Laura Bailey, a former police officer from Glasgow who tragically lost her husband, left the force and launched an Alchemy VA franchise so she could work more flexibly around her one-year-old son.

There was veteran Kris McLernon, the award-winning Wilkins Chimney Sweep franchisee, who became a TikTok sensation and grew his business exponentially - an innovative example of what happens when you go the extra mile.

And then there were the inspirational franchisees in the care sector, who showed tremendous resilience, compassion and leadership through the pandemic - some of the most challenging years the

Going the extra mile

"What more can I do?" is a daily motto that Piyush lives by, and a sentiment shared by others on our shortlist. It's ambition that elevates a franchise business to outstanding, a quality we're looking for from our final shortlist.

This year, ask yourself: which of your franchisees are exceeding themselves in their purpose? Who is a guiding light in your organisation, inspiring everyone to think bigger and strive harder? We'd love you to share their success with What Franchise, as we dedicate our next issue to this year's franchising superstars.

Franchise brands can nominate their heroes now, by emailing the team at foty@what-franchise.com and requesting a nomination form. We will showcase the finalists, with interviews and insights, in the spring edition of What Franchise magazine, out 28 March 2024.

Which of your franchisees are exceeding themselves in their purpose? Who is a guiding light in your organisation, inspiring everyone to think bigger and strive harder?

NOMINATE NOW!

Email us at foty@what-franchise.com for an entry form and further details.



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Should they stay or should they go?

Five thought leaders in franchising discuss why talent is vital to the success of any organisation and focusing on employee retention must be a top priority



The ability of businesses to hold onto experienced, capable employees is a differentiation that brings huge competitive benefits. While the recruitment process demands considerable time and resources, the cost of losing valuable employees extends far beyond stretching HR budgets. It impacts customer service, disrupts workflow, and hinders business growth.

Considering recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) labour market data, which indicates a continued demand for staff combined with a labour shortage in many sectors, we've delved deeper into the importance of talent retention and how it serves as a cornerstone for maintaining exceptional customer service and success in business. Prepare for insightful perspectives, as we invited some of franchising's elite to shed light on the significance of nurturing and retaining any franchise's most valuable asset – its talented workforce – and why we need to hold onto good people more than ever in a challenging economy.

"At the heart of any successful business is its people"



Businesses are only ever as good as the service they provide. The huge advantage of buying a franchise is entering into a business with a proven track record and a product that you know works. But no matter how great the venue may look or how amazing the food or drinks are, the path to success is rooted in the service your guests receive.

"Staff retention leads to better service"

Paul Hunter, hospitality consultant at Seeds Consulting and former HOO at Vagabond Wines, Puttshack, Bill's and Tortilla

Great franchises will offer complete staff training guidance; from pre-opening onsite, to recruitment and new staff training manuals. Training should never be rushed or ignored – your team is the gate keeper of your business and leaves the largest impact on guests.

If you don't have experienced in-house trainers or HR support, I would recommend working with a training and people consultant to ensure pre-opening and ongoing training and development is on point. Not only will this ensure the

best guest experience, but team development and growth form the base of your company culture and ensures great retention – something that's vitally important when staff recruitment is the toughest it's ever been.

Richard Branson got it right when he said: "The key is to set realistic customer expectations and then not to just meet them, but to exceed them." Teaching what great service looks like and then allowing your teams to exceed it is the hard part.





“Trust is built when there is a firm belief that everyone is being kept in the loop and that management is not withholding information”



“Create a bond with your team that’s strong and tight”

Jo Middleton, founder of Franchise Business School

The franchise world can be fast-paced and competitive. Holding onto loyal and skilled staff can be a vital jigsaw puzzle piece in the long-term success of your brand.

By encouraging a positive working atmosphere with clear and open channels of communication, you can foster a sense of belonging and loyalty to your brand among your work force.

However, in my opinion (and perhaps somewhat controversially), even more important than the commercial gain aspect is valuing all employees as individuals and free-thinking beings, each with their own personal and professional goals and motivators. If you’re genuine in helping your

employees identify and reach their goals, and empowering them to voice their thoughts and ideas, it will pay dividends in the long run.

At the heart of any successful business is its people. Those who feel valued and supported are more likely to stay committed to a brand, leading to reduced turnover rates. By ensuring that you’re cultivating a positive working atmosphere in your team, one with a sense of camaraderie and purpose, you’ll create a bond that’s strong and tight.

As an employer, you don’t ‘own’ your employees. Understanding that they have their own lives outside of work is crucial. Focusing on the happiness, community and wellbeing of your staff will have a knock-on effect and increase productivity, while also reducing training costs and increasing customer satisfaction.

Your staff retention directly impacts your customer retention. Customers pick up on a dissatisfied work force because they don’t get a consistently high level of customer care. Having a high retention rate stabilises internal operations and makes for a smooth and streamlined feeling for your end users – whether that be your partners or, if you’re a franchisee, your customers. The level of consistency increases

word-of-mouth recommendations and builds a positive reputation.

There are six key areas I recommend focusing on to increase staff retention: communication, growth and education, wellbeing, structure, processes and fun. Fun acts like a magnet in an organisation – if the employees are having fun, not only will they want to stay, but customers and prospective franchisees will be drawn to your business.

There will be times when valued team members do move on to pastures new, either due to personal circumstances or because they want to progress with a different organisation. Sadly, many employers focus on the inconvenience and feel bitter. Instead, departing staff should be celebrated. Highlight their achievements, thank them for all their hard work and wish them well. Then relish the opportunity to reflect on your team structure, roles and responsibilities and how you want to reshape things moving forward. Who knows, the new team member you bring on board might come in with a fresh pair of eyes and revolutionise your business moving forwards.



“Offer competitive salaries and incentives for a business edge”

Amrit Dhaliwal, CEO, Walfinch

In today's highly competitive business landscape, we face numerous challenges in attracting and retaining top talent. But while talent acquisition is undoubtedly vital, it is equally important to focus on retaining your existing staff. The ability to keep hold of skilled employees not only enhances productivity, but also contributes to sustainable business growth.

For example, it will save money. Employee turnover comes with substantial costs. Hiring and training new employees, as well as the loss of productivity during the transition period, can have a significant financial impact on your business. By prioritising staff retention, companies can minimise recruitment

expenses and maintain operational efficiency.

One way to save on large recruitment costs is to offer competitive salaries and performance-based incentives. In sectors like care where wages are historically low, you can quickly lose talent to other sectors such as retail unless you're offering competitive salaries.

Experienced employees possess valuable knowledge, skills, and expertise. These are assets that can't easily be replaced. Retaining experienced employees ensures continuity, fosters innovation, and helps your business to maintain a competitive advantage.

To build your employees' knowledge and experience you can offer training programmes, mentoring initiatives and workshops. By investing in personal and professional development, you're creating a culture of continuous learning and improvement, which employees need to stay engaged and inspired.

Something that works well for Walfinch is offering franchisees, staff members and carers the opportunity to attend and speak at industry events. This shows employees how valued they are and exposes them to opportunities and experts in the sector.

Long-serving employees often develop strong relationships with customers, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Retaining staff allows businesses

to maintain these valuable connections and benefit from the trust established over time. This is particularly important in the home care sector.

With conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's, the continuity of care is super important for clients who need familiarity for a better quality of life. These clients often become reliant on seeing the same person regularly whom they trust. If you're sending different carers out every month to a client like this, you risk losing them.

Finally, as leaders we should provide clear expectations, open lines of communication, and regular feedback. At Walfinch we ask employees to fill in feedback questionnaires so that if there are any issues, they can be resolved to boost morale.

Sometimes it's the simple things that make a big difference. Giving staff members a weekly check in call, to ask if they have everything they need and to make sure they're not feeling overworked or overlooked can help you retain top talent.

The retention of staff is just as important as recruitment if you want to grow your business sustainably. By investing in employee training and development, offering open lines of communication and collecting employee feedback as well as offering competitive salaries, you will keep your staff for longer. This, in turn, will encourage customer loyalty and greatly reduce your recruitment costs.

“The retention of staff is just as important as recruitment if you want to grow your business sustainably”





"You need to build trust to inspire employees to stay"

Kevin Riley business management specialist, ActionCOACH Warwick & Coventry

Trust is a vital ingredient for the success of any team. It cultivates a sense of security, fosters open communication and bolsters employee loyalty. If trust is missing in the workplace, employees may feel unsettled, resulting in lower productivity, increased turnover and poorer performance. The importance of trust becomes even more evident when we consider staff retention in high-performing teams.

Here are my three top tips in nurturing trust within your team, which can lead to better staff retention. First, foster transparency and open

communication. This can be achieved by maintaining clear and consistent communication about the company's direction, changes and expectations. It helps to reduce uncertainty or confusion, leading to less speculation and suspicion. By encouraging an open-door policy and promoting two-way dialogue, you create an environment where employees feel they can express their ideas, voice concerns and get reliable responses. Trust is built when there is a firm belief that everyone is being kept in the loop and that management is not withholding information.

The second is in practicing consistency. Leaders and managers should ensure their words match their actions; a concept known as behavioural integrity. Staff members pay close attention to this, often taking their cues from the top. Inconsistent behaviour can lead to confusion, doubt and mistrust. Remember, it is the daily behaviours that reinforce trust, not just large, standalone actions. Treat all staff members fairly, uphold commitments and be consistent in your decision-

"WHEN STAFF FEEL EMPOWERED TO MAKE DECISIONS AND SUPPORTED WHEN THEY MAKE MISTAKES, THEY'RE MORE LIKELY TO TRUST IN THEIR LEADERS"


making. This predictability breeds trust.

Finally, support and empower your team. Whether you lead an entire company or manage a team, your people need to know that you support them in their roles and are invested in their growth and development. This can include providing them with learning opportunities, involving them in decision-making processes and giving them a degree of autonomy in their work. When staff feel trusted to make decisions and are supported when they make mistakes, they are more likely to trust in their leaders and remain committed to the organisation.

Trust isn't something that can be built overnight but, if cultivated properly, it can become one of the most potent tools in maintaining a high-performing team and reducing staff turnover.

"Training should never be rushed or ignored - your team is the gate keeper of your business and leaves the largest impact on customers="





“People want to come to work and love what they do”



“People are looking for personal fulfilment and quality of life”

Mike Broad, head of franchise support, Pitman Training

Even in this challenging climate, Pitman Training has seen a 15 per cent increase in corporate enquiries this year across all sectors, from food service to the NHS, as business leaders increasingly recognise that investing in training, professional qualifications and career development is a highly effective way of adding value to their brand.

Amazon is a case in point. Pitman is one of only a handful of Career Choice providers delivering professional development and upskilling opportunities to Amazon workers, enabling them in many cases to quit warehouse jobs to progress within the business or pursue a career elsewhere. Amazon recognises that every person has a life cycle in their job, but if you support, engage and motivate them on their journey, they can be with you for an awfully long time. And even if they do leave and take their skills elsewhere, they will continue to be a strong advocate for the brand.

In franchising, culture is



paramount, and a good employer likes to see their employees do well. In my previous franchise roles with Venture Photography and Stagecoach, I saw them create a structure of support where future franchisees often started out in junior roles. When I was with Stagecoach, I saw a high proportion of growth driven by people already embedded in its internal structure, many of whom originally began as Stagecoach students and progressed to becoming teachers, managers and finally franchise owners themselves. This wouldn't have happened if they weren't supported by Stagecoach from day one.

In the end, you won't retain good people without creating the right culture, and this starts with great communication. Business leaders need to understand staffing needs and challenges, and this comes from understanding team members as individuals – what makes them tick and motivates them, whether it's money, job satisfaction, or being recognised for helping others.

As a training provider, Pitman Training is every bit as focused on setting up our own people for success as we are our clients, through our franchise partners, to their sales and support teams. All associates have exclusive access to our 250+ professional training courses and we encourage them to set aside personal development time each week to devote time to learning. In turn, this enables them to help and guide our clients better in selecting and completing their courses, improving both our sales and customer service.

Recruiting the right people is critical: just one wrong person can end up costing a business a

fortune in lost sales, tarnished reputation and replacing colleagues who quit because of them. By communicating regularly and keeping a close eye on performance metrics, we can identify franchisees who are excelling their roles and make sure we recognise, celebrate and reward them accordingly, whether it be through our annual awards and conference, or by simple gestures like sending hampers to teams who are overreaching targets. By keeping all lines of communication open, we empower our people to overcome challenges by acting as a critical friend, helping them to grow and prosper.

I was in Ireland a few weeks ago, supporting our two franchise partners Tomás and Kristian with their eight Pitman Training centres. It was great to hear how they'd recently hired a ranch outside Dublin and paid for their entire team to a one-and-a-half day retreat, all on company time. They all took part in a wide range of activities, from riding to a team tug-o-war, and the owners were right in the thick of the action. It was great to see the team bonding and the appreciation going around, and this is reflected by the consistency shown in their centres too, with clear goals and opportunities for career progression. This is a great example of top-down leadership, with the owners driving their company culture in a way that's positive and productive for all.

At the end of the day, people want to come to work and love what they do. They're looking for personal fulfilment and quality of life, and the people they work with are crucial in providing this.

BREAKING BARRIERS: HOW DE&I IS FUELLING FRANCHISING

It's time for UK franchisors to wake up and embrace diversity, equality and inclusion, or risk getting left behind in the race for success, says the BFA's Pip Wilkins

If we told UK franchisors that we'd found a way to help them enhance their creativity and innovation, improve their employee engagement and productivity, and help them attract and retain top talent and improve their customer relations – all while making them look pretty amazing – we're sure they'd be straining at the leash to implement it, right?

Well, the truth is the answer could be as simple as embracing diversity, equity/equality and inclusion, or DE&I. It's not sexy, it's not on an app and it definitely isn't driven by AI. It's just good, old-fashioned kindness – and the good news is it will improve results for franchise brands who get on board.

WHAT IS DE&I?

For most of this year, the British

Franchise Association (BFA) has been running a campaign looking at DE&I within franchising. Although the list is not exhaustive, DE&I is generally thought to include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, and religion. According to Inclusive Employers, a membership organisation for businesses and employers committed to prioritising inclusion and creating inclusive



“Enabling diversity is imperative for businesses if they’re to grow and remain competitive”

workplaces, the full and correct definition is as follows:

- **Diversity** – the mix of people
- **Equity** – the fair treatment of everyone, often linked to The Equality Act 2010, the legislative framework in the UK
- **Equity** – creating equal possible outcomes for everyone, because some people can experience substantial barriers in the workplace
- **Inclusion** – the culture in which the mix of people can come to work, feel comfortable and be confident to be themselves, working in a way that both suits them and delivers business or service needs.

MEASURABLE SUCCESS

According to a 2020 report by McKinsey, diverse companies “are more likely to financially outperform their peers.” Specifically, McKinsey stated that as per its 2019 analysis, “companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were 25 per cent more likely to experience above-average profitability than peer companies in the fourth quartile” and regarding ethnic and cultural diversity, companies “in the top quartile outperformed those in the fourth by 36 per cent in terms of profitability in 2019.” We can clearly see that enabling gender, ethnic and cultural diversity is imperative for businesses to grow and remain competitive.

A spokesperson at FASTSIGNS, a franchisor that embraces diverse hiring said: “We operate in a creative industry; if we were to only ever welcome one ‘type’ of person, we wouldn’t be very creative! Having a diverse team allows us to draw on cultural references and different drivers

and motivations to help us create impactful signage that our customers can relate to.”

A pre-pandemic article by Deloitte in 2018 recorded the transformation of Qantas Airlines from a company with AUD\$2.8 billion losses in 2013 to a record profit of AUD \$850 million in 2017. Qantas CEO Alan Joyce attributed the spectacular turnaround to: “A very diverse environment and a very inclusive culture,” which, “... got us through the tough times; diversity generated better strategy, better



“My manager focuses on my abilities and strengths”

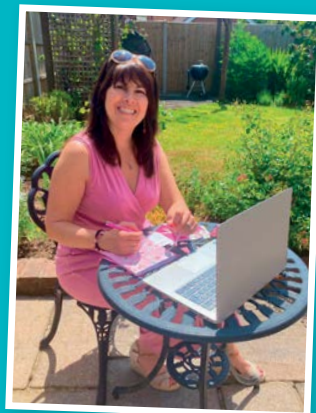
KIRI ALEXANDRA JOSEPH, PINK SPAGHETTI

Kiri works as an administrative assistant at Pink Spaghetti. She lives with multiple chronic health conditions including postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS), hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (hEDS), spinal arthritis and hemiplegic migraines.

“Living with multiple chronic health conditions can be challenging, but thanks to the unwavering support and understanding of my employer I’ve been able to maintain a fulfilling and independent professional life,” she explained. “They have allowed me to set my work hours according to my energy levels and medical needs, enabling me to strike a balance between work and self-care.”

“The understanding and support I receive from my manager, Sandra, has been invaluable; instead of dwelling on my weaknesses, she focused on my strengths, creating a workspace that leveraged my abilities and fostered my personal and professional growth.”

Pink Spaghetti manager, Sandra Da Silva-Creasey, said: “I’m truly honoured to have Kiri as a member of my team. From the outset, I recognised the immense potential she had to offer and despite her chronic health conditions, her determination and passion to excel in her work were evident. I made sure to assign tasks that played to her creative strengths, and she has never disappointed. Her loyalty and hard work are commendable, and she brings a sense of joy to our team. I am proud to be an employer who can provide Kiri with a role where she can thrive.”



risk management, better debates, and better outcomes.”

Amrit Dhaliwal, the chief executive of homecare franchise Walfinch concurred: “Any franchise has much to gain from a diverse hiring policy when it comes to both franchisees and staff – it’s not just a ‘nice to have’. It starts with changing your mindset to become more inclusive



“DE&I starts with changing your mindset to become more inclusive”

and that must start at the top. Put yourself in the shoes of the prospective franchisee or employee. If you have ever looked at an organisation and wondered, ‘do they accept people like me?’ that’s the doubt they might be feeling, and they’re likely to take their talents elsewhere.”

HOW CAN FRANCHISORS BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE?

I recently said in an interview about being a gay woman in franchising that a basic starting place, and one that frankly should already be in place, is for franchisors to adopt policies to ensure there’s no discrimination against marginalised communities in their workplaces. Once a franchise has the correct policies in place, they should then look at inclusive hiring practices.



WHAT ARE INCLUSIVE HIRING PRACTICES?

It’s worth noting that these will help you avoid unlawful discrimination, which is covered under the Equality Act 2010. With this in mind, here are some things franchisors and franchisees should consider:

- Inclusive writing and language in job descriptions – use gender neutral language
- Have an inclusive application process – give candidates a fair opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities
- Offer reasonable adjustments throughout the interview process and be mindful of the needs of candidates with

disabilities – they may need extra time

- Understand the legal framework and make sure you know the law – attend a course on inclusive recruitment if necessary
- Get expert help – seek advice from an employment lawyer or inclusive recruitment expert.

EMBRACING DE&I

Embracing DE&I isn’t just morally and ethically the right thing to do – it also makes great business sense. As an association, the BFA hopes we can continue to drive the conversation and make franchise brands aware of the need for a more richly diverse community.





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PE with purpose

Premier Education reveals why business and sport are the perfect combination for aspiring franchisees

The UK is experiencing rising levels of inactivity among children. Since 1999, Premier Education has been tackling this by partnering with schools and community venues to offer captivating PE sessions. Now 50 franchise directors have joined the cause and the brand hopes to grow further by providing aspiring franchisees with five key drivers for success.

1 FIRST-CLASS SUPPORT

Expertly devised support programmes help franchisees see maximum impact. This guidance can include a quarterly business review with a support team, twice weekly update webinars, an active online newsfeed, mentoring with established franchisees, and automatic roll-out of tools and systems for operating effectively. At Premier Education, a 14-month support programme starts from the moment you begin franchising.

2 AN ESTABLISHED, RECOGNISED BRAND

Franchises can offer a reputable and solid foundation for new business owners to build upon. For instance, Premier Education franchisees find reassurance in the brand being the first organisation in the sector to receive full British Franchise Association (BFA)



membership. Partnerships with Sainsburys, LTA, British Gymnastics, and a Department for Education steering group have similarly bolstered confidence. Plus, Premier Education was recently named a 'Franchisor of the Year' finalist in the 2023 BFA HSBC British Franchise Awards, which has created further industry credibility for franchisees to use to their advantage.

3 SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM PROFITABILITY

Some business models in franchising enable franchisees to generate greater ROI with each successive territory they take. In fact, it's not unusual to receive support in creating a long-term business plan for expansion with the aim of driving a turnover that surpasses seven figures. At Premier Education, 95 per cent of franchisees turned over more than £250,000 last year and

continue to see year-on-year growth. One third of franchisees turn over more than £500,000 each year and 33 per cent are set to turn over £1m+ by the end of this business year.

4 A PASSION FOR ACTIVITY

Only one-in-five children in the UK are currently getting 60 minutes of daily physical activity. By franchising with a brand like Premier Education, you'll be able to provide children with opportunities to get active, as well as build a viable career.

“At Premier Education, 95 per cent of franchisees turned over more than £250,000 last year”

5 AN INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Becoming a franchisee can be a more accessible route to business ownership. For example, franchisees at Premier Education include people like former schoolteacher Alistair Hudson. He now works a flexible schedule and helps 10,000 children get involved in sport and physical activity weekly. In Alistair's words: "It's been the best decision I ever made."



At a Glance Premier Education

Established: 1999

Number of franchised outlets: 108

Locations: UK

Investment range: £14,995 - £24,995

Minimum required capital: £2,000

www.premier-education.com/franchising

Keeping success run in the family

Making up for lost time, Tony Prueitt decided to launch his ActionCOACH business, and getting his family involved was the icing on his cake

For three decades, Tony Prueitt spent his career in the corporate world, working his way through 13 different roles across a variety of departments. Although it gave him great satisfaction, Tony couldn't help but wonder what other opportunities were out there. In June 2020, he launched his ActionCOACH business coaching franchise in Derby, giving him even more food for thought than he initially anticipated.

"I'd always had the ambition to run my own business, but I just needed the inspiration and motivation to make it happen," he said. "I'd toyed with the idea of starting something from scratch. Having been exposed to franchising during my corporate career, I completely understood how a franchise system gives people a better chance of success.

"I also enjoyed working with decision-makers on business re-education and transformation – ActionCOACH had all the best ingredients to continue that through my own business!"

FOLLOWING THE RECIPE

To help run his coaching firm, Tony enlisted the help of both his wife and daughter, Vanessa and Francesca. Whilst Vanessa works on attracting potential clients on a part-time basis, Fran focuses on client relations alongside running their social media accounts. Together, they have helped generate a healthy monthly client income in excess of £20,000.

"We've over-achieved compared to our original business plan," said Tony. "We're now transitioning into the next stage of growth. It's all about refining the process, getting to grips with what works and moving forward strategically to ensure we provide a gold-star service for every client, without compromise.

"What makes it so manageable is the support I receive from the UK team, specifically from my master coach, who has gone above and beyond to give us the best start possible. I learned more



Tony Prueitt with his wife Vanessa and daughter Francesca

"I have the opportunity to make the business work with all aspects of my life"

in the first year with ActionCOACH than I did in the final years of my corporate career – I'm constantly absorbing information whether it's through reading books or watching webinars with world-class thought leaders."

THE ICING ON THE CAKE

With the foundations set, Tony is ready for the next phase. Using the ingredients given, he has been able to create a business that not only supports him financially but personally too. It's a far cry from his lifestyle during his corporate career, giving him much more freedom to enjoy the things he loves.

"Upon initial contact, ActionCOACH doesn't present itself as a lifestyle

franchise, yet I have the opportunity to make the business work with all aspects of my life," Tony added. "To have this sense of freedom is great."

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:

- loves learning and developing yourself
- has enjoyed success in your career or sport
- and is willing to invest if they see substantial rewards can be made...

Then find out more by visiting actioncoach.co.uk/franchise.

At a Glance ActionCOACH

Established: 1993 (AUS) 2001 (UK)

Number of outlets: 250+

Minimum required capital: £69,000

Contact: 01284 701 648

actioncoach.co.uk/franchise



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Why you can't afford to ignore AI anymore

Franchises must embrace new tech if they're to stay fit for the future, says Tim Morris from Cymphony. Now's the time for businesses to act

Let's start this one with a stat. According to the US International Trade Administration, the UK Artificial Intelligence (AI) market is expected to grow from £16.9 billion to £803.7 billion by 2035. Clearly AI is not just a flash in the pan. We're talking about a new industry with a value that's higher than the GDP of Portugal, Greece and Croatia combined!

Ignoring the rapid advances in AI is a luxury that businesses, especially franchisors, can no longer afford. While we may currently chuckle at the limitations of some chatbots and customer service automations, AI's capability is evolving at an unprecedented rate and the boundary between interacting with a human and a machine is becoming increasingly blurred. As we approach the advent of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) – machines that possess human-like cognitive abilities – AI will soon not just be a luxury, but a necessity for maintaining a competitive edge.

The AI you see currently isn't the end point, it's the start line. The possibilities with AI are still in their infancy. Data management, language processing, self-driving vehicles; these might be the applications that spring to mind when you think of AI, but in truth new uses for the technology are being thought of and implemented

"AI will soon not just be a luxury, but a necessity for maintaining a competitive edge"



every day. The next AI breakthrough might be today, tomorrow, a week from now. We can't say for sure, but what we do know is that it is coming, and it will be soon.

Around one in six UK organisations, totalling 432,000, have embraced at least one AI technology according to UK government research. If you're in a decision-making role, especially in franchise operations, the question isn't about if you should integrate AI, but how quickly you can do it effectively. The time to strategise about the role of AI in your operations is now. Failing to act promptly may not only mean missed opportunities, but could also result in inefficiencies when you eventually have no choice but to integrate AI as a retrofitted afterthought.

Customer service ready for a rapid change

We've all found ourselves arguing with an annoying chatbot at some point in life. Contrary to popular perceptions, these rule-based programs are not powered by sophisticated AI but follow a pre-defined set of instructions. The next generation of AI-driven customer service systems will not just follow a script; they will be capable of learning from each interaction, improving their understanding and providing a far more 'human' experience through techniques such as Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing. Although neither option is a match for a real person, something we pride ourselves on here at Cymphony, it doesn't mean we aren't exploring new ways in which AI can help us improve the service we provide.

The bottom line for businesses is not just an improved customer experience, but dramatically increased operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Imagine a customer service ecosystem where calls are never abandoned and issues are resolved before they

escalate, thanks to an AI system that can understand the problem and provide a solution in real time. For businesses, the integration of AI could translate to higher customer retention rates, reduced overheads, and the ability to focus human resources on tasks that require a nuanced touch.

Risk versus reward

AI undeniably elicits a range of opinions, often marked by scepticism and caution. The transformative potential of AI is seismic, and that will always ruffle a few feathers. While many people express concerns about AI displacing human jobs, there is an alternative viewpoint that underscores the burgeoning demand for AI specialists. These experts are essential for integrating the technology into business operations both effectively and securely, although this expertise comes at a cost.

When queried about their primary apprehensions surrounding AI, the British public highlighted three major areas: the erosion of human skills, the impact on employment, and concerns related to privacy and data security, according to Forbes Advisor market research in May 2023, conducted by Opinium. These are not just legitimate concerns; they're critical issues that need to be addressed as AI continues to permeate multiple sectors.

For businesses, outsourcing may offer a viable solution to some of these challenges, acting as a crucial bridge to the efficient adoption of AI technologies. By enlisting external expertise, companies can implement AI in a cost-effective manner, ensure secure data collection, and gain a competitive edge. At Cymphony, for example, we offer a lead response service that guarantees a response time of under five minutes – far outpacing the industry average of 47 hours. As we look to the future, one can't help but wonder: what could an AI-driven response service deliver?

Will you make the leap?

Franchisors need to take a collaborative approach with their networks. As AI becomes more

WHAT BUSINESSES NEED TO KNOW

- The UK AI market is expected to grow from £16.9 billion to £803.7 billion by 2035.
- Around one in six UK organisations, totalling 432,000, have embraced at least one AI technology – according to government research.
- Whether you find the prospect exciting or terrifying, the reality is that the landscape is changing. The businesses that embrace these changes, integrating AI in a thoughtful and strategic manner, will be the ones that thrive in the competitive marketplace of tomorrow.
- The next AI breakthrough might be today, tomorrow, a week from now. We can't say for sure, but what we do know is that it's coming and it can't be ignored.

commonplace, some franchisees are already taking steps to incorporate it in their operations. Instead of allowing a fragmented adoption, you should take the lead in fostering an organised, network-wide strategy for AI integration. This is not a topic for future board meetings; it should be on the agenda today.

AI is growing and developing at a rapid pace. Whether you find that prospect exciting or terrifying, the reality is that the landscape is changing fast. The businesses that embrace these changes – integrating AI in a thoughtful and strategic manner – will be the ones that thrive in the future.



THE AUTHOR

Tim Morris is a distinguished franchise professional with decades of experience across sales, customer care, operations and compliance. From leading the expansion of an international franchise

brand to heading up the support functions of both national and international franchisors, Tim has been instrumental in the growth of hundreds of franchisees. Visit cymphony.co.uk for more info.

Studio Pilates' four pillars of success

Fresh from opening the UK's first Studio Pilates, Felicity Kelly explains profit came quickly by focusing on the franchise's four success factors



system at Studio Pilates that felt different to anything on offer back in the UK fitness scene.

"The Studio Pilates classes are a great combination of the low impact precision of Pilates with the intensity and buzz of a challenging workout," says Felicity. "With guidance provided by the AV and voice-over supporting the personalised help and motivation from the instructor, it's a very consistent experience, and quite different from anything else on the market."

FINDING PASSION AND PURPOSE

Feeling passionate and finding a sense of fulfilment has underpinned the success of Studio Pilates franchisees. For Felicity, this came naturally once she had experienced the brand first-hand, despite never having dabbled in fitness or business previously (neither of which are prerequisites to owning a Studio Pilates franchise).

"There's a growing awareness around the effectiveness of low impact, high intensity reformer Pilates workouts, which are suitable for a diverse range of people," says Felicity.

At the time, she was working in the creative communications field, having run several creative agencies. However, Felicity decided to trade in a corporate career to open the UK's first Studio Pilates – and key to this was harnessing other people's passion for Pilates and building a community.

"People are loving that Studio Pilates delivers a clinically backed and proven reformer Pilates workout but with the buzz and energy of a group class and a genuine community vibe," Felicity says.

BUILDING A POSITIVE COMMUNITY

Placing people at the centre of Studio Pilates' offering is another vital pillar to launching a successful franchise. An

There are four main success factors behind Studio Pilates International – a franchise that has grown from a single studio in Australia to a global network of more than 89 locations. The company defines these success factors as passion, purpose, people, and profits.

Over its 21-year existence, Studio Pilates has continued to tap into an increasing client demand for unique, physiotherapist-designed reformer Pilates classes. In 2022, its studios recorded more than one million visits. It's for this reason the company decided to rapidly expand beyond its existing markets in Australia, New Zealand, China, and the US – setting foot in the

UK and Ireland. Here, 70% of UK fitness enthusiasts are now opting for Pilates over yoga, according to HFE.

Earlier this year, the first Studio Pilates franchisees began opening studios on British and Irish soil, applying the tried and tested success factors that the brand has abided by for the past two decades. As a result, franchisees are already earning an average of £40,000 GBP in their first 30 days of trade.

This includes Felicity Kelly, owner of Studio Pilates in Exeter. She discovered the brand while in Australia and knew it would be an instant hit with the UK market. Although Pilates is not a new concept, there was something about the workouts, the instructor, and the



“People are loving that Studio Pilates delivers a clinically backed and proven reformer Pilates workout but with the buzz and energy of a group class and a genuine community vibe”

executive team in the UK is currently helping to focus on people via marketing, operations, finance, and HR.

In Exeter, this has manifested in everything from the studio's luxury aesthetics to the fun, fast-paced workouts which are fuelled by instructors paired with the latest Pilates technology.

“Each exercise can be followed on screens around the studio, with voiceover to emphasise key points, which allows the instructors to provide one-on-one client feedback, just as you'd get with a personal training session,” explains Felicity.

These classes combined with Studio

Pilates' recognisable hardwood floors, bespoke reformers and signature chandelier has helped build the special experience that the franchise aims to create for its customers. “For anyone wanting the ultimate form of ‘me time’ this is definitely it,” confirms Felicity.

GAINING COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

When it comes to investing in any type of business or franchise, one of the leading questions from potential investors is ‘how much will I earn?’ or ‘how quickly will I make a return on my investment?’. While there's no one-size-fits all answer to this question, Studio Pilates franchisees earn an average of £40,000 GBP in their first 30-days of trade.

Felicity's studio in Exeter marks the beginning of a big expansion across the UK, and she is set to be joined by six more studios in locations such as North London, Birmingham, and Leeds later this year.

The UK openings mark a long trajectory of growth. In 2010, Studio Pilates opened its first studio. The brand's leap to having 89 studios open and operational places it in the top 17 per cent of all franchises globally.

Passion, purpose, people, and profits have been an integral part of this franchise journey, and each aspect has fed into Studio Pilates' determination to

change the way people work out.

“Studio Pilates is a premium product that has 21 years of proven success because we transform more than just bodies, we transform lives,” explains co-founder Jade Winter. “Our mission is to change the way the world works out and every new studio we open gets us one step closer to our goal of one million people training in our studios each week, which we're on track for.”

The global health club industry is set to exceed £83 billion by 2024, according to research from Konzept Analytics. If you're interested in investing in a business with proven success, Studio Pilates has franchise opportunities available in the UK and Ireland.

At a Glance Studio Pilates

Established: 2002

Number of outlets: 89

Locations: Australia, New Zealand, USA, UK and Ireland

Investment range: £250,000 - £350,000 depending on location

Minimum required capital: 50 per cent of total investment

Contact: Alison Day, Franchise Development Executive UK - 07572 060187

ukjoins@studiopilates.com

Looking for your dream franchising opportunity?

Attending an event like the International Franchise Show 2024 can open your mind to a world of possibilities, says Karina Kundzina



Opening a franchise is a great way to become your own boss while adopting a tried-and-tested business model. Therefore, it's hardly surprising that franchising in the UK continues to grow, predominantly influenced by the success of US businesses expanding their operations through the model. The most recent NatWest survey (2019) estimated franchising to be worth £17.2bn, making it one of the most profitable industries in the UK.

The International Franchise Show (IFS) which takes place 12-13 April 2024 at ExCel, London, plays host to the UK's biggest selection

of the most exciting franchise opportunities from around the world, making it an unmissable event for entrepreneurs and business owners alike. With free access to over 250 exhibitors, 60 seminars, 1-2-1 personal advice, interactive features, expert guidance and more, the show promises to be the biggest and busiest yet, boasting limitless choices to start, develop, or invest in a franchise.

Attending a franchise show like this enables you to establish personal relationships with major players in the industry – franchisors, bankers and advisers – in a one-stop-shop

environment, as well as gain a deeper understanding of franchising and why it's such a popular, lower-risk model.

But to make the most of your visit, preparation is crucial.

Start prepping early

Find out the major participants before attending any event, and especially one of this scale. The IFS plays host to the UK's largest selection of franchise brands under one roof, spanning over 25 different sectors, over 50 international brands, and franchise opportunities from under £10K.

Many franchise brands offer a range of support, loans and funding options to help kickstart your venture, and these too are represented at the IFS. Check out the schedule of seminars, speakers and workshops and add the relevant ones to your schedule, as they provide invaluable information and advice.

Plan your visit

Decide in advance which stands you wish to visit. The range of business ventures on offer is very broad and it's impossible to visit all in a day. Trying to cover the whole field will use up valuable hours that could be better spent investigating your areas of special interest, so adopting a focused approach is a better use of time.

At the IFS you can discover a huge range of exciting franchising opportunities. As well as meeting franchisors in person, entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to connect with a range of experts, consultants and associations to gain a deeper understanding of why franchising is such a popular option. In



addition, business owners can network with some of the biggest experts in the industry who can help them expand and recruit great franchisees.

Attend the seminars

With over 60 insightful seminars, expert panel debates and workshops and a compelling line-up of industry-led talks, the IFS will equip you with vital knowledge and skills to start your own franchised business.

If you're new to franchising, you should certainly try and find time to attend a seminar or two. These are an ideal opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how the concept works and meet experts to explain the fundamentals of franchising, franchisors



“Establish personal relationships with major players in the industry in a one-stop-shop environment”

presenting their opportunities and franchisees who describe how they realised their ambitions.

Meet the people behind the brands

Clearly, you're not going to sign up to a franchise at the exhibition. This is your chance to meet the people behind the brands, obtain a better understanding of their business models and take time to cool off and consider your options. However, it's useful to make notes and arrange follow-up meetings with potential partners.

The IFE attracts over 10,000 entrepreneurs, business owners and franchisors/franchisees, all looking to start or grow a business, with many opportunities to network and connect.

Put your best foot forward

Most franchisors are seeking new franchisees, but you will have to demonstrate that you have the right personal and commercial qualifications to join their network. You'll need to be open and honest about your abilities and available resources, both in conversation and in completing their application forms.

During your visit try to find time

to meet some professional advisers, such as those in the finance and legal fields. You may require funding, for example, and some banks will lend up to 70 per cent of the cost for reputable franchises and offer sound advice on starting your new career. You will also need the services of a franchise solicitor to review your franchise agreement.

Don't fall asleep at the wheel!

We can all suffer from information overload, so take time out before fatigue overtakes you to enjoy some refreshment and a chance to relax and chat to others in the Bartercard Coffee and Networking Area. You'll return to the fray in a much better frame of mind.

What happens afterwards?

Attending a show like the IFS helps you to shortlist franchise options and make connections, the important first step of the journey. When both parties wish to continue the conversation, you'll be able to move towards the exciting final stage... signing the franchise agreement and becoming a proud franchisee!

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO FIND AT THE IFE?

- Panel Discussions – experts in different fields of franchising debate topics with open Q&As to follow.
- Supplier Zone – a dedicated area to access knowledge and innovative services to get your venture off the ground. In the Supplier Zone theatre, you can hear talks from well-recognised brands who've successfully grown and expanded their operations.
- International Pavilions – here you'll find a range of opportunities in markets across the world. The US pavilion will help you find US brands with big plans for growth and the show also hosts several Korean and Japanese brands looking to increase their presence in the UK. With South Korea ranking 11th in the world in terms of economic development, it is an incredibly tempting target for foreign investors, and the franchising industry has a very positive and constructive impact on the country's economy.
- Bartercard Coffee & Networking Area – the perfect place to pull up a chair, get a bite to eat and network. Open to all visitors and exhibitors, this open space, centrally located, provides a place to chat, connect and exchange business cards and contact details.

BEST IN BRITISH FRANCHISING

The BFA HSBC British Franchise Awards 2023, a celebration of outstanding success in the UK franchise industry, has unveiled its list of finalists

The British Franchise Association (BFA) has announced the finalists in their BFA HSBC British Franchise Awards 2023.

Known as the 'Oscars' of the franchising world, the awards recognise and celebrate the success of franchisees and franchisors in the UK franchise industry. The awards, sponsored by HSBC Bank, are a staple event for brands that are serious about celebrating and supporting excellence in ethical franchising, and reward dedication, innovation and devotion to both business and the franchise industry overall.

This year's winners will be revealed at a black-tie awards dinner in Birmingham on Thursday 9th November 2023 after the BFA's annual conference.

The finalists in the BFA HSBC British Franchise Awards 2023 are as follows:

"It was great to see new brands entering for the first time and the strength of the next generation of franchisors and franchisees coming through"

FRANCHISOR AWARDS

CATEGORY:

Franchisor of the Year Award

1. ActionCOACH
2. Agency Express
3. Driver Hire
4. InXpress
5. Mathnasium
6. Premier Education

CATEGORY:

Emerging Franchisor Award

1. Canopy
2. Get a Drip
3. Rise
4. The Cat Butler

CATEGORY:

Franchisor of the Year – Lifestyle Award

1. Dog First Aid
2. Extra Help
3. Pink Spaghetti
4. Harmony at Home

CATEGORY:

Leadership and Culture Award

1. Greene King
2. Revive! Auto Innovations
3. Snap Fitness
4. Visiting Angels

CATEGORY:

Franchisor Trailblazer Award

1. Fastsigns
2. GoodOaks Home Care
3. Water Babies

CATEGORY:

Brand Awareness Award

1. Snap Fitness
2. Speedy Freight
3. Water Babies

FRANCHISEE AWARDS

CATEGORY:

Next Generation Award

1. ChipsAway (Brandon Akerman)
2. Driver Hire (Connor Ferguson)
3. Snap on Tools (Luke Henderson)

CATEGORY:

Lifestyle Award

1. Computer Xplorers (Richard & Emily Simcox)
2. Get Ahead (Kristy Roff & Suzanne Evett)
3. Mini First Aid (Jen Fisher)
4. Puddle Ducks (Ellie Cawdwell)

CATEGORY:

Community Focus Award

1. Costa Coffee (Diljit Brar)
2. Home Instead (Anitra Camargo)
3. McDonald's Restaurants (Ian Stephenson)
4. Merry Maids (Debbie Walker)

CATEGORY:

Franchisee Trailblazer Award

1. ServiceMaster (Siva Kugathas)
2. Concept Claim Solutions (Gary Dimond)
3. Mathnasium (John Preston)
4. Swimtime (Fiona Marshall)

CATEGORY:

HSBC Best in Class Multi-Unit Single Brand Award

1. Home Instead (Suhail Rehman)
2. Pret a Manger (James Lipscombe)
3. Swimtime (Terri & Andrew Vince)





bfa HSBC British Franchise Awards 2022 winners

CATEGORY:

HSBC Best in Class Multi-Unit Brand Award

1. Adil Group (Raja Adil)
2. Goldex Investments (Diljit Brar)
3. Ice King (Angelina Mouralidarane)

Chief executive of the BFA, Pip Wilkins, said: "We were very impressed with the overall standard of entries we received this year. Notably, it was great to see new brands entering for the first time and the strength of the next generation of franchisors and franchisees coming through. There were some particularly impressive entries in the Leadership and Culture and Trailblazer categories, and it was wonderful to see brands referencing milestones as part of their entries. Generally, we shortlisted more entries than we usually would, which was a testament to the overall strength of the entries we received."

Gillian Morris, UK Head of Franchising at HSBC, added: "Shortlisting candidates for the BFA HSBC British Franchise Awards is one of the toughest challenges of the year. Once more the candidates were a high standard, and it was very tough to shortlist just a few entries. I was really impressed at the diversity of entries across the brands and sectors, which is a great testament to the strength and reach of the franchise industry. I am looking forward to meeting the

finalists and wish them all luck."

"Gillian and I would like to thank everyone who entered as we appreciate the amount of time and hard work that goes into each entry," added Pip. "We are happy to provide feedback to brands who were not successful this year; to allow them to learn from the experience and come back stronger next year."

FURTHER INFORMATION

Formed in 1977, the BFA is the UK's voluntary self-regulating governing body for franchising, accrediting and promoting franchise systems that meet the strict ethical and business criteria of a good franchise. For a full list of members and the code of ethics to which these members subscribe to, visit thebfa.org





IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME?

If you're ready for a change, or you want more control over your financial future, then take a look at the Mathnasium franchise opportunity:

- + Management franchise
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franchising@mathnasium.co.uk

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fun-fest.co.uk

The A+ franchise

Learning centre Mathnasium explains why investing in tuition just adds up

Franchises present an ideal opportunity to be your own boss, build a successful business, and make a positive impact on the lives of others. If you're someone who believes in the power of education and wants to give back to your local community, a tuition franchise could be the right choice for you.

1. EMPOWER YOUNG MINDS

Maths is much more than just numbers and equations; it plays a crucial role in shaping the minds of the future. You can empower students with essential mathematical skills, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking by investing in a maths education franchise. Those who become part of students' educational journeys will play an intrinsic role in building a strong academic foundation and fostering a love for learning.

2. ADDRESS A GLOBAL NEED

Many students struggle with maths, leading to a lack of confidence and a negative perception of the subject. However, this can be counteracted by those working in the education franchise space. For example, franchisees use Mathnasium's proven method and established expertise to help students to succeed academically.

3. TAP INTO A GROWING MARKET

The demand for quality maths education is continuing to rise, creating high growth potential for those willing to invest in education franchises. For example, Mathnasium's established brand, reputation, and proven teaching methods aim to give franchisees a competitive edge in a high demand market from day one.



“Franchisees benefit from a stable, recurring income and predictable cashflow by using a subscription-based model”



4. PROVEN METHOD

One of the main advantages of investing in a franchise is access to a tried-and-tested business model. This, combined with a support system, allows you to hit the ground running, regardless of your experience-level in the education industry.

Essentially, franchisees are given the capacity to focus on delivering educational experiences, with all the necessary tools and resources to streamline operations and maximise efficiency. For instance, Mathnasium

franchisees receive comprehensive training, operational and marketing support as well as curriculum materials to ensure they get off to a flying start.

5. FULFILMENT AND FINANCIAL REWARDS

Investing in a maths education franchise offers financial rewards as well as the sense of fulfilment which comes from making a positive impact on students' lives. Seeing the progress and growth of students as well as witnessing their newfound enthusiasm for maths can be incredibly rewarding. Franchisees also benefit from a stable, recurring income and predictable cashflow by using a subscription-based model and encouraging children to visit regularly.

At a Glance Mathnasium

Established: 2002, 2019 (UK)

Number of outlets: 22

Minimum required capital: £90k

Contact: franchising@mathnasium.co.uk

www.mathnasium.co.uk/franchise-uk



Enhancing life through activity.

Rise promotes mobility and social engagement, addressing many reasons why people have reduced activity. We boost confidence and well-being via adapted activities tailored to each person's abilities and environment.

"We transform people's confidence, as well as their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing"



Staying active (physically, mentally, socially) offers countless benefits. Our program enriches lives and aids rehabilitation through much-loved sports. Rise suits all generations and abilities, even intergenerational activities, adaptable to healthcare settings. From one-on-one therapy to group sessions, it enhances mobility, activity, and social interaction.

Franchise Opportunities

Change lives and make a difference with a Rise franchise. Experience is not required; we provide the necessary training for those with a passion to make a difference and good people skills.



To find out more about the franchise please visit or call:

www.rise.life | 0330 912 7880 | hello@rise.life

Brand snapshot: Rise

Making a difference to people's lives doesn't need to jeopardise financial success. Activity service Rise is enabling franchisees to do both

There are lots of franchises that make a great financial return. There are also lots of ways to make a difference to the world as a business. However, very few franchise opportunities allow you to do both at the same time. That's exactly what Rise has aimed to achieve.

The activity service's fun and interactive sessions are transforming the lives of thousands of people in the UK and have been endorsed by GPs, health workers, and care professionals.

There's a huge demand for Rise services as a result of its credibility. This is especially true as the population continues to live longer, while many are also still recovering from the lack of mobility and social isolation provoked by the pandemic.

In short, those who decide to franchise Rise will recruit a small team of activity leads who will run mentally stimulating and social sessions for a

"Rise's sessions have been endorsed by GPs and health workers"



broad range of people.

Rise supports franchisees in running their business which means previous experience is not a pre-requisite.

However, it's fundamental that franchisees are passionate about making a difference, are committed to delivering high-quality sessions, and have a real interest in people.

At a Glance Rise

Established: 2018

Franchisees: 8 (with more in pipeline)

Contact: laura.harvey-smith@rise.life
03309 127 880

www.rise.life

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bfa established

2023 5 STAR FRANCHISEE SATISFACTION

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A Puddle Ducks franchise is an investment that allows you to change not only your and your family's lives but the lives of the children you teach.

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Get in touch with Claire on claire.mills@puddleducks.com or 01477 410082
Find out all about our Franchise offering at www.puddleducks.com/franchising

Brand Snapshot: Puddle Ducks

Making a splash in the swimming industry is winning big for franchisees

Puddle Ducks provides franchisees with the opportunity to build a scalable business within the swimming industry. It is currently inviting ambitious individuals with business acumen to come onboard.

Puddle Ducks invests in its franchise owners from day one and is the only national swim school offering a programme that covers children from birth to 10 years. It means franchisees can make a real difference to the lives of young people by teaching an essential life-saving skill.

The brand recently received a five-star satisfaction rating from its franchisees for the eleventh consecutive year – an accolade Puddle Ducks attributes to its head office support and business model which provide franchisees everything they need to operate successfully.



Many existing franchisees have won prestigious industry awards, bought additional territories, and built significant businesses as part of Puddle Ducks. They've also received a great deal of personal fulfilment by providing a service that truly makes a difference.

“Puddle Ducks is the only national swim school covering birth to 10 years”

At a Glance Puddle Ducks

Established: 2007

Number of outlets: 33 franchisees covering 51 territories

Minimum required capital: £24,000 franchise fee plus working capital

Contact: claire.mills@puddleducks.com
01477 410 083

www.puddleducks.com/franchising

CHAMPIONING EMPATHY

Ryan Armitage, managing director of Tezloom, explains why demonstrating the all-important human touch is a key growth driver for successful franchise brands in 2023



Like all businesses, franchise brands must navigate a world of viral videos and clickbait in the ongoing competition for consumer attention. But while traditional marketing formats promoting a brand's products and services remain an important part of connecting with new audiences, demonstrating a human touch is proving vital too, as deeper connections become more important to customer and colleague communities alike.

We no longer live in a corporate world characterised by grey suits and briefcases. Even in the business space, you would have to do some digging to find a cutting-edge brand that still operates successfully without a sense of personality and humanity. And honestly, who wants that? Over the last decade, accelerated in part by the rise in social media, brands have found fewer opportunities to 'hide' behind corporate curtains. As such, we've seen a culture of openness, vulnerability and

empathy become a key driver behind the growth of successful brands in 2023.

As entrepreneurs turn to the franchise space to seek caring communities where they have the freedom to flourish, it has never been more important for us to celebrate not only the human touch, but the humane touch in equal parts.

Morale matters

Research is conclusive about the importance of morale in the modern workplace. In fact, a

HOW TO LEAD WITH EMPATHY

- Show a genuine interest in the individuals who make up your team. Building personal connections enhances trust, loyalty and a stronger sense of belonging
- Pay attention to well-being. Be mindful of workload, stress levels and mental health and provide your colleagues with resources and support, such as wellness programmes, mental health initiatives, or flexible work arrangements. When your team feels supported in achieving a healthy work-life balance, they will be more motivated and engaged
- Be transparent about your business's goals, challenges and decisions and share your vision and values openly and authentically to encourage trust and open communication
- As a leader, demonstrate empathy in your actions and decisions. Show compassion, understanding, and consideration for the well-being of your team and set positive examples for others to follow
- Create opportunities for collaboration and team building. Encourage camaraderie (where appropriate) and provide a supportive environment for individuals to work together

- Empower individuals to reach their potential by providing resources, training, and mentorship opportunities
- Acknowledge and celebrate hard work and achievements to foster a sense of pride and motivate employees to continue giving their best
- Create a culture of openness, seek feedback regularly and act upon your colleagues' suggestions to improve processes, policies, and

the overall franchise experience. Taking a collaborative approach demonstrates that you value opinions and are committed to continuous improvement

- Extend empathy beyond the internal team and apply it to all your interactions with customers and clients. Actively listen to your customers and show empathy by addressing their feedback and finding solutions that meet their expectations for outstanding customer service.



staggering 50 per cent of employees would sacrifice their salary for a job they enjoy¹. But while, financially, this sounds like a quick-fix approach to attracting new talent and growing a franchise brand, the general workplace is still playing catch-up on these shifting attitudes and priorities.

With just 30 per cent of UK businesses having employee engagement initiatives and 42 per cent having employee wellbeing programmes¹, it is vital that franchisees and franchisors take control of their team's wellbeing

and morale as a way of securing a business's foundations ahead of future growth. And boosting morale through such initiatives is not just a way of looking ahead. As we know, the franchise industry thrives off innovative, supportive and creative entrepreneurs who are taking control of their current environment and industry.

Empathetic leadership from franchisors and franchisees creates an environment where employees feel heard, valued, and understood. This helps brand communities further establish the

foundations of trust and collaboration, which ultimately inspires and drives effective communication – all vital characteristics of successful franchise brands today. And with empathetic leadership, anyone joining a franchise or using a brand's services or products will see a culture of psychological safety. Ultimately, this approach will become natural, which promotes team building and demonstrates a deeper understanding of the feelings and relationships within a well-oiled franchise operation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM RYAN'S COLUMN

- Boost employee morale and engagement by implementing initiatives that prioritise their well-being, creating a positive work environment that attracts talent and sets a strong foundation for growth.
- Cultivate empathetic leadership within your franchise to fuel innovation, engagement, and productivity.
- Show care and empathy to fellow franchisees to foster a sense of unity, trust, and commitment within your wider community, essential for the growth of franchise brands.
- Infuse empathy into your franchise's vision, values, and culture, building lasting relationships with customers, employees and stakeholders, and earning their trust and loyalty.

Empathy increases productivity

Empathetic leadership is not just effective for consumer and employee morale. Around 61 per cent of employees with highly empathetic senior leaders were reported to be 'innovative' at work, while 76 per cent of employees were found to be 'often' or 'always' engaged at work². Thanks to operating within an environment that fosters a positive and engaging culture, teams naturally feel protected in a space where they can flourish. This devotion to creating a permanent 'safe space' within franchise operations increases engagement and productivity, improves franchise-wide job satisfaction and ultimately contributes to a brand being scaled and developed with an aligned network of devoted professionals.

The extent of a brand's empathy determines how well a franchise becomes embedded within a community and its level of care for others. This sense of unity in a well-established environment of openness can be a huge factor in determining if a team believes in a brand's vision, mission and goals.



"It's important for us to celebrate not only the human touch, but the humane touch in equal parts"

Care leads to growth

Of course, growth is achieved through people. People are the most important aspect of any business, and with the increasing devotion that franchise brands are showing those same people – in their personal and professional development, their families and their overall wellbeing – it's impossible to discount empathy as a core factor in the continued healthy growth of the franchise industry.

When empathetic leadership is discussed, it is often within the context of manufacturing a welcoming environment where managers and bosses have a strong sense of self-awareness

and avoid angry outbursts. However, this angle misses a fundamental reason why empathy should be a priority when growing a franchise business: we all have an obligation to care for our peers, and leaders all have an obligation to help their team reach its full potential. This can only be achieved through care and trust.

At the beating heart of the Tezloom brand lies the importance we place on collective wellbeing and growth. Every member of the team – whether they are a franchisee or one of our exceptional staff members – contribute heavily to our culture. So, if they don't feel protected,



nurtured and rewarded, our whole operation is hindered.

“Tezlom is just one example of the incredible opportunity franchising is presenting to prospective business owners in 2023,” explains group brand manager, Kay Lou Haskins. “Thanks to an infrastructure built on the foundations of care, empathy and openness, no one across the network is ever left behind – and this is very visible to prospects. The franchise industry is continuing to see the benefit of reverse-engineering business models centring on ‘people’ as opposed to solely focusing operations on financial or growth targets. Business growth comes naturally through levelling the playing field and ensuring business owners have a team behind them that they can trust, both personally and professionally.

“Everyone is entitled to the

best possible mental health and wellbeing, and I’m humbled that I can support Tezlom as we continue to inspire change in franchising – we’re changing the game so that everyone can play! With personal wellbeing in business becoming increasingly championed, I encourage other brands to follow suit and employ a culture of care and empathy at every level in their workplace.”

Future proofing

These core factors of empathy in franchising certainly highlight the immediate benefits. However, it is equally important to point out that by establishing initiatives and programmes that protect teams’ wellbeing and development, franchisees and franchisors are future proofing their businesses.

Put simply, empathy is a definitive aspect of any high-quality franchise’s collective

vision for the future. This devotion to improving interpersonal relationships between staff, workforce and customers drives a brand’s vision and ultimately helps them maintain relevance and demand through trust and loyalty.

In just a year, Tezlom has welcomed eight new franchise territories and celebrated expansion across its network. By employing empathy as the core driver in our business, we feel we have got the balance just right.



THE AUTHOR

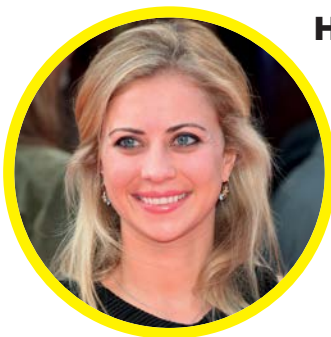
Ryan Armitage is managing director of healthcare recruitment franchise, Tezlom. For more information about a franchise opportunity that rewards you with huge personal satisfaction, visit tezlomfranchising.com

OUT OF OFFICE

WORDS BY LORENNE BROGAN

Need some business advice or feel stuck in a rut? Take a moment to rejuvenate your motivation with this month's shot of inspiration

THE INFLUENCER WE FOLLOW FOR A DAILY DOSE OF BUSINESS ADVICE



HOLLY BRANSON

Daughter of the Virgin Group's founder, Holly Branson is the company's chief purpose and vision officer, but this is nowhere near the extent of her influence. She also holds the position of chair at Virgin Unite, a not-for-profit charity under the Virgin umbrella – and in 2012 she took a further step into business as a force for good by co-founding Big Change, a collaborative initiative that partners with diverse charitable projects.

Holly Branson's journey is marked not only by her family legacy but also by her extensive

understanding of the business realm. Her substantial influence is evident in her 114K Instagram followers seeking wisdom in areas like leadership, motivation tailored for young entrepreneurs, and deeper insights into the Branson family's remarkable achievements.

Her online influence isn't limited to Instagram, as she also utilises LinkedIn to share pertinent updates from the various companies under the Virgin umbrella. However, Branson's distinct focus lies in discussing leadership, entrepreneurship, and causes that hold personal significance to her – notably advocating for gender and racial equality in business.

PODCASTS



THE PODCAST WE TUNE INTO FOR REASSURANCE THAT IT'S OK TO FAIL SOMETIMES

THE MISTAKES THAT MADE ME WITH EMAN ISMAIL

Mistakes That Made Me is the podcast that asks extraordinary business owners to share their biggest business bloopers – so you know where to find the potholes and avoid them on your road to success. Join email strategist Eman Ismail as she chats to some of the brightest minds in business about how to push through failure and accept it as an important and necessary part of building a brand. Because, as it turns out: your biggest business mistake often leads to your biggest lesson and becomes your biggest blessing.



MUST LISTEN EPISODE

Launching Without a Plan with Amy Posner & Kirsty Fanton

THE PODCAST WE TUNE INTO TO NAVIGATE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING WITH MICHAEL STELZNER

Publishing weekly since 2012, this show helps marketers navigate the ever-changing marketing jungle with expert interviews from leading marketing pros. Join Social Media Examiner's founder Michael Stelzner as he helps you discover new strategies and actionable tips to improve your marketing, with the most recent episodes covering Facebook ads, video and storytelling, and turning Instagram stories to conversions.



MUST LISTEN EPISODE

Getting Started With GA4: A Practical Approach

BOOKS



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

Elon Musk By Walter Isaacson

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

At the beginning of 2022 – after a year marked by SpaceX launching 31 satellites, Tesla selling a million cars, and becoming the richest man on earth – Musk spoke ruefully about his compulsion to stir up dramas. “I need to shift my mindset away from being in crisis mode, which it has been for about 14 years now, or arguably most of my life,” he said.

It was a wistful comment, not a New Year’s resolution. Even as he said it, he was secretly buying up shares of Twitter.

For two years, Isaacson shadowed Musk, attended his meetings, walked his factories with him, and spent hours interviewing him, his family, friends, coworkers, and adversaries. The result is the inside story, filled with amazing tales of triumphs and turmoil, that addresses the question: are the demons that drive Musk also what it takes to drive innovation and progress?

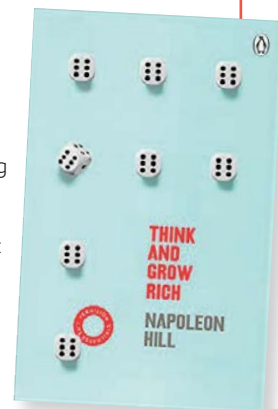


THE BOOK WE READ TO FOSTER A MONEY-MAKING MINDSET

Think And Grow Rich
By Napoleon Hill

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

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

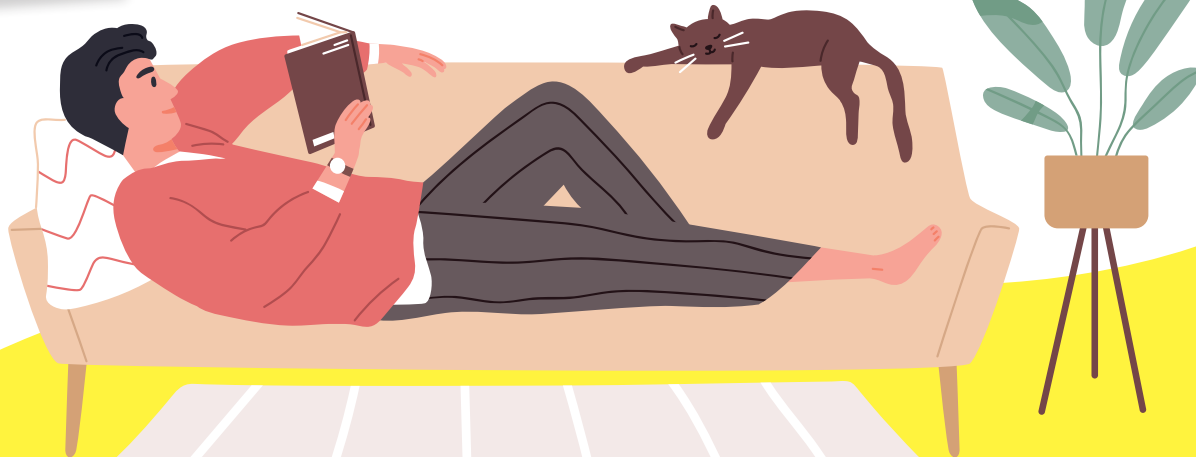
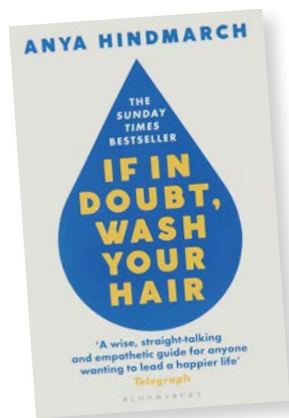


THE BOOK WE READ FOR MOTIVATION, ENCOURAGEMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM LAUNCHING A GLOBAL BRAND

If In Doubt, Wash Your Hair
By Anya Hindmarch

Anya’s Sunday Times bestselling book, now available in paperback, shares what she has learned during her busy and eclectic life as a mother, stepmother, entrepreneur and businesswoman; what she still worries about, and what sage advice she has received along the way to becoming a global brand name.

From practical tips and quick fixes to profound observations about confidence and creativity, this inspiring handbook will show you how to live and work a little better – and why sometimes, the answer can be as simple as washing your hair.



Power up your network

Ed Purnell explains how to break free from traditional franchise recruitment methods and harness the strength of social media

What would you say if I were to tell you that there is software out there that could help you find, attract, contact and convert franchisees without costing you a penny (other than internet costs)?

This software can also help you maximise your advertising spend, build email lists, increase visitors to your franchise website page and help you to get to know your ideal franchisees better. Again, this is all free of charge. I bet you're sitting there thinking: "This sounds great! What is it?"

Well, it's one of the most powerful tools available to franchisors and their teams, and yet almost no one seems to know how to use it effectively – social

media. Whether it's LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or whatever the next big network on the horizon happens to be, they all offer access to a wide demographic of individuals, many of whom are thinking about changing their lives in one way or another.

Here are some comments that I hear quite often when discussing how it social media can be utilised as a tool for franchise recruitment:

"We tried social media and it was just a waste of time."

"The paid adverts don't work."

"The leads are just rubbish. We can't even get hold of them."

So, in just a few hundred words,

my aim is to help you to understand how to effectively harness the power of social media for franchise recruitment and reach beyond the franchise bubble to tap into a vast pool of potential franchisees (even if they don't realise that they are yet!).

First, let's address the scepticism surrounding social media as a recruitment tool. It's true that many franchisors have dabbled in social media without seeing significant results. However, the key lies in understanding how to use it strategically and with purpose.

Understand your target audience

A well thought-out strategy is essential and that starts with



understanding your target audience. What challenges are they facing in their lives? What do they want for their future? Which influencers are they likely following? Which social media groups are they a part of? What content will they enjoy consuming?

“Being authentic in your interactions will make your brand more attractive”

Once you know this you should have a clear idea of where to find them and what is actually going to stop them on their scroll. Bear in mind that if they don't know anything about your brand, sales messages about your franchise are probably not high on their agenda just yet.

Use EERIE content to build trust

Entertaining, engaging, relatable, inspirational and educational

(EERIE) is content that's going to work best to help others learn about your franchise and build trust. Try to show the people behind the brand and share relatable franchisee success stories. I've found that including humour and education in combination can be a powerful

way to engage, and people are more likely to share this content with others, which in turn helps others to discover your brand.

Get your network involved

Encourage your franchisees and happy customers to share their experiences on social media. User-generated content acts as powerful social proof, helping to build trust and credibility for your franchise. Share testimonials, success stories, and images/videos submitted by your community to showcase the positive impact of joining your franchise.

Collaborate with influencers

Find an influencer who already has the ears and eyes of your target prospects and find ways to collaborate with them to create sponsored content, host takeovers, or participate in live Q&A sessions. Influencers can help expand your reach and attract potential franchisees who trust their recommendations.

Engage with your followers

If someone has taken the time to like or comment on your content, it should serve as a signal to you that they like your brand. Foster that relationship by replying to comments or, if it feels right, meet up and connect with them in person. Again this isn't an opportunity to sell to them...yet! However, being authentic in these interactions will also help to

create a sense of community and make your brand more attractive.

Amplify your actions with paid advertising

If you would like to ramp up what you're doing, paid advertising has great potential if used right. Like with most cold approaches, a spray and pray approach just isn't going to work. Instead, use the ads and organic content to build awareness, then retarget with compelling adverts to individuals who have already shown interest in your brand or landed on a webpage you've previously directed them to. In this way you'll maximise your spend and can start generating conversations with prospects with a much warmer approach.

Make decisions based on data

Social media provides us with great insights into how content is performing. Metrics such as reach, engagement, click-through rates, and conversion rates help you to understand the effectiveness of your campaigns. Use this data to optimise your strategy, refine your targeting, and focus on what's working.

If you embrace social media and take the time to create a clearly defined strategy you can break free from traditional franchise recruitment methods and build your own pool of potential franchisees.

The final piece of advice I can offer is simple – be consistent. It might take a little while to get the ball rolling, but by sticking to the plan, trusting the strategy and adapting where necessary you can make social media work harder and become a reliable resource for building your franchise network.



THE AUTHOR

Ed Purnell is a franchise recruitment marketeer, podcaster and director and founder of The Franchised (thefranchised.com), a hub for the franchising world.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... A PET CARE FRANCHISOR

Ryan White is a dog behaviourist and managing director of We Love Pets – a dog walking, pet sitting and dog daycare service franchise

INTERVIEW BY CHARLOTTE SMITH



FRANCHISE FOCUS

Caring for animals has always been a huge part of Ryan's life, but he's just as passionate about helping people too, especially when it comes to his franchisees.

We Love Pets was started 15 years ago by my wife, Jo. We first met when I was teaching a course on animal management at Wiltshire College & University Centre, where I taught her and her six franchisees. The rest, they say, is history – we now run the business together with 111 franchisees.

I've been working in the pet care sector since I was 11 years old, when I started working at boarding kennels, where I stayed until I was about 18. I grew up on a farm, so my world was centred around animals from day one.

As a child I dreamed of becoming a millionaire when I grew up. I struggled with ADHD and was excluded from school, but I always had ambition.

The biggest driver for me is to make a massive difference in people's lives. I love coaching franchisees, helping them to develop their business skills and assisting them on their path to success. Aside from the personal satisfaction that comes from working with animals, there's huge fulfilment in succeeding in business too, which is why We Love Pets is so fulfilling. I love engaging with people, bringing new franchisees into the network and helping them to make a success of it all.

We've seen a massive uptake in interest since the pandemic – we have franchisees join us from all walks of life, from teachers, police officers and to ex-military, to people quitting the corporate life in sales and marketing. Recently, we've had a lot of interest from people leaving the veterinary nursing profession.

Many of our franchisees are now earning far more than they were in their previous careers. It doesn't really matter

“The number one quality we look for in franchisees is resilience. We can help with the rest”

what your previous experience is – the number one quality we look for in prospective franchisees is resilience. We can help with all the rest.

I'm really excited about the future. I want to massively raise the bar, both in pet welfare and in franchising. We're currently looking at international development and taking the business across continents to the Middle East and Australia.

THE HUSTLE

Ryan's zest for life is contagious. Living in an idyllic rural setting, he doesn't have to travel to find peace, fun and adventure, and his career brings him enormous personal satisfaction.

My morning routine is like Groundhog Day, but in a good way! Jo brings me coffee (she's a morning person, I'm not). I play with the kids and then I sort our own animals out. We have three dogs (two Labradors and a German Shepherd), a Ragdoll kitten, chickens and pigeons.

I don't have to try and fit my life around work. Work is my life, my whole life. It's so enjoyable I wouldn't want it any other way.

Every day feels like waking up on Christmas Eve. I don't stay awake all night worrying about things – I just feel excitement about the future. We live in the middle of a wood, so tawny owls, deer and foxes are the only reason I might not sleep – they're extremely noisy!

We live in a thatched house in the Norfolk Broads, on a private estate with woodland and a lake at the bottom of our plot, so every day feels like a holiday. We often kayak to the pub and our children's friends come for sleepovers at weekends because it's so much fun living here. I also enjoy fishing, travelling and pigeon racing.

GET TO KNOW...



Positivity and contentment are defining traits of Ryan, whose optimistic and energetic approach to life are clear factors behind his success.

What's your greatest fear?

Not finishing what I started.

What's your current state of mind?

Positive.

Where would you most like to retire?

I consider myself already retired because I'm exactly where I want to be, doing what I want to do. I have water, trees and green surrounding me – what more could I want?

Your favourite possession is...?

Nothing, just life in general.

What qualities do you most admire in yourself?

Resilience and belief in others.

What quality do you value most in your friends?

Honesty.

What talent would you most like to possess?

I'd like to be an actor.

If you could eat one last meal, it would be...?

A cheeseboard.

Guilty pleasure?

It's a bit cringey, but I enjoy chick flicks!

A film you watch over and over is...

Peter Rabbit – the kids watch it a million times a day.

Your favourite song is...

We Will Rock You by Queen – again, my children are forever playing it!





"The documentation, software and systems that Blossom provide are extremely thorough and a huge advantage to the business"

Adam Irvin and Amy Shearsmith
- Blossom Homecare Franchisees



A home care franchise with a NEW approach

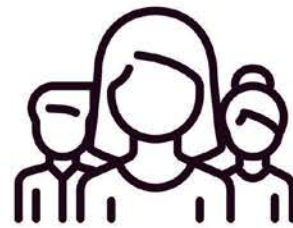
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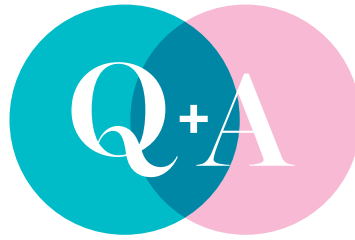


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5 minutes with...

GREG RENK

The MD of Walfinch Mid & South Bucks explains how leading from the front and investing in a solid management structure are key to success in the care sector



My career didn't begin in the care sector. Before I became MD of Walfinch Mid & South Buckinghamshire in June 2020, I worked as a business consultant, and prior to that, founded a marketing, advertising and design agency in London, which I ran successfully for 24 years. This was a very good run for an agency in the field and a proud achievement, but after I moved out of London into Oxfordshire it was hard work maintaining close relationships with my London clients. So much

business in this sector is done through networking and socialising with clients – it's very much a young person's game. Not surprisingly, I became worn out with it all in my 50s and it felt like I was chasing invoices to pay staff. In 2014, things wound down to a natural conclusion as my existing clients retired or moved into other fields and I didn't have the appetite to replace them. But I was too young to retire. I had loads of energy left to invest myself in something else.

For a few months I enjoyed being free from the shackles of responsibility, but before long I found myself getting fidgety. I felt too old to return to agency marketing; and working for someone else after running my own business would be tricky. I started to look around for another occupation where age and maturity would be seen as a positive, not a barrier.

What led you to taking on this franchise?

People don't often think about the care industry until it becomes relevant to their lives. For me, this happened when my mother returned from Australia with early dementia. She eventually needed to go into a care home and this was my first real contact

with the sector.

As a marketer, I was struck with how care homes and businesses don't do their own marketing very well. This got me thinking seriously about the care sector as a business prospect. Not only is it a big-ticket service (a live-in carer costs somewhere in the region of £60-70K a year) but I realised I could bring my decades of marketing experience to the table and make a real difference.

Care clients don't want to be dealing with a young yuppie; instead, they value gravitas and experience. This revelation led me to take on the role as a business development consultant for a large, corporate, live-in care company. Simply by applying traditional marketing techniques across the vertical channels, the figures increased significantly.

After this success, I started working for other care organisations on a consultancy basis. I really enjoyed seeing the figures coming in. It was during this time that I met Amrit Dhaliwal, CEO of Walfinch, whom I door-stepped when networking for consultancy work. He got back in touch with me a few years later when he was launching Walfinch as a franchise and invited me to join his network. I was one of the first partners he approached, and

it was a serious proposition for me to consider. I already knew what the figures were like in care. I'd run a successful business before. And the territory on offer was west of London, in the stockbroker belt. It was too good an opportunity to turn down.

Launching a business in domiciliary care was undoubtedly challenging in June 2020, right in the throes of the first lockdown, but I didn't know any different and I felt very motivated. There were multiple challenges – PPE, reporting and paperwork, staff absences. For the first six months, I concentrated on getting set up and in January 2021 gained my first client.

What do you find fulfilling about your role?

I'm now three years in business and achieved healthy growth in a short space of time. I feel a tremendous sense of fulfilment as it's mainly down to the strength of the team I've built and the strong management structure beneath me.

As MD, I don't deliver care to my clients. It's imperative to have a strong, reliable team to manage this. I made sure I was involved with everyone in the business right from the start, as the structure only works if everyone on the team respects you as the owner. The relationship I have with Gina, my registered manager, is key. I use the analogy of a restaurant to describe how it works: Gina is my head chef. She is front of house and success depends on her expertise and experience. A head chef should be considered a vital investment in any good restaurant, so I pay Gina according to the responsibility I bestow on her, which is above the going rate in the sector. She deserves this investment, and if it means she sticks around and oversees the client-facing operational side of the business, I consider it worth every penny.

What are the challenges?

When issues crop up unexpectedly, seven days a week, 365 days a year. This means you're always switched on. In this line of work where you're dealing with people's lives, urgent problems can arise, and as care workers are

typically on zero-hours contracts, you must expect a certain amount of unreliability with carers not turning up or leaving without notice. This is where my management team comes into its own – because I've invested in the best quality people, I can rely on them to firefight and deal with day-to-day issues before they reach me.

I can't be on call seven days a week, so empowering my team to operate effectively means I'm number four on the call list when organisational problems arise. That said, I've never taken my foot off the gas when it comes to steering the ship. The support I've received from the franchise has been supercritical, and I pat myself on the back for implementing a management structure that's enabled the business to grow while allowing for a little Greg-time!

"I've surrounded myself with the best quality people and I know I can rely on them"

How do you fit into the wider Walfinch network?

Walfinch is a thriving franchise network and I like its ethos. Unlike some US-owned businesses, it's less target-driven and more focused on providing high quality care. Of course, there's pressure to bring in the numbers, but the culture is great – I'm always having WhatsApp conversations with other MDs and, more formally, I'm chairman of the Franchise Advisory Council, where I take any issues to the network's national support office.

Navigating this highly regulated industry calls for a high level of franchisor support. There are reams of policies and procedures necessary to achieve CQC registration (the public facing regulator for care homes and businesses) and contracts and handbooks are complicated. Walfinch takes this seriously, with regular internal audits, so the



responsibility on owners to be compliant and on top of admin is significant.

What's your go-to piece of advice for successful leadership?

It's vital as a MD that you earn the respect of your team. This only happens if you're a good team player yourself. I come from a sporty background and consider my role as a business leader to be no different than that of a decent manager in sport – encourage your team and support your best players. No one can hide in a team, so I always lead from the front. If all the vital components are

in place, staffing and management-wise, and the organisation is solid, it will thrive.

Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions left?

I think I'm at my final bus stop career-wise, but I'm not done yet. I want to keep growing the business over the next five years. There are new geographical areas to move into and I would like to explore the live-in care model. While I want to see more of the big wide world before I'm too old to travel, I consider myself fortunate – good health, happy marriage and successful grown-up children. I also have time to indulge in hobbies, like playing golf and walking in the Alps and the Lake District. I go to the gym daily, time afforded thanks to the flexibility of franchising. Keeping fit helps me stay level-headed in business, and enjoy wine and good food, two other passions in my life!

Dusting off redundancy to build a business that shines

Rob Piper decided to start his own venture with cleaning service franchise Poppies after losing his job in 2010. More than a decade later, he reflects on his success

Rob Piper is a self-confessed people-person. For almost two decades, his natural flair for communication, employee engagement, and customer service saw him excel within Sefton's Education Authority.

Tragically, government funding cuts brought an abrupt end to his career in 2010. However, determined to turn things around, Rob opened Poppies Liverpool in 2011. Now, the cleaning service franchise affords freedoms that have quite literally changed his life.

"Being made redundant is like having the rug pulled out from under your feet," says Rob. "I already knew about franchising and the more I thought about it, the more it appealed. I could really see the benefit of investing in a 'business in a box'. I didn't have to invent anything, training is given, and you're supported from day-one by head office."



FINDING A FRANCHISE

Rob decided to prepare for his new adventure as a business owner, having decided that franchising was the right option for him. He quickly began researching Poppies' values and found that they aligned with his own.

"I made up my mind almost straight away that this was what I was going to," says Rob. "I knew that I would excel and that I could create a personal business that supports my passions and others in my local community. I was sold."

A DECADE OF SUCCESS

Rob began running his new Poppies branch from the comfort of his own home during the first few weeks of launching. However, he quickly moved into his own office in the heart of South Liverpool, following rapidly increasing customer demand.

"Being made redundant is like having the rug pulled out from under your feet.

I already knew about franchising and the more I thought about it, the more it appealed. I could really see the benefit"

Success has continued throughout the decade that Poppies Liverpool has been running, with the business' first-ever client still a loyal customer. Now, Rob is planning to step back from the company with the support of his office manager. It means he can truly take advantage of the freedoms franchising offers.

"I've built the business to a point where I have the reassurance that things will run smoothly even if I'm not there," says Rob. "And that's because I can place my trust in the office team – they're amazing. The scope of freedom that Poppies has given me has been life changing."

At a Glance Poppies

Established: 1984

Number of outlets: 24

Locations: UK

Investment range: £18,999+VAT

Minimum required capital: £18,999+VAT

Contact: recruitment@poppies-franchise.co.uk

www.poppies-franchise.co.uk



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MY LIFE HAS CHANGED IN A GOOD WAY!

Upon discovering the world's number one business coaching franchise, **Anu Khanna** quickly realised her glass was only half full - she was ready to pour more into her life.

"The main impact ActionCOACH has had on me is who I'm becoming. I thought my glass was full, but being exposed to the precision and detail within the franchise model, I became aware of how much work there was left to do. It's miles away from the stage I was operating at in the corporate world and it's completely turned my life around. In my previous role, I would never be able to wind down. My days were extremely long, meaning I missed out on family time whilst my children were growing up. Now's my chance to make up for it"

As a Franchise Partner you'll get...

- ✓ Unsecured bank finance of up to 70%
- ✓ The system and support you need 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

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Proud to be rated
5-Stars for Franchisee
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