



# HOW TO EVALUATE A FRANCHISE TRAINING PROGRAM

## We no longer live in a one-career society

In our father's and grandfather's day, many people kept the same job their whole lives. Men and women in the "Boomer" generation, however, have already made a number of career changes by the time they enter their 40s and 50s. Studies suggest that our teenage children may have between six and 12 careers in their lifetime. With the cyclical nature of the economy and the impact technology has on so many industries, there is no longer any certainty that a job will take a person from graduation through retirement. Besides – many people really enjoy the challenge of taking on a new career. Bankers take off their suits and become lawn care experts. Doctors become fried chicken moguls and teachers get remade as pet groomers. How do they make the transition? Many times through the power of franchising. And one of the bonuses you'll discover about franchising is that they can train you to excel in a job you've never done before!

## Franchising: novices welcome

If you are ready for a career change via franchising, the training a franchise offers is one of the most important areas you need to look at when researching a franchise opportunity. You'll find that a good franchise system will take pride in their training programs because, through the payment of royalties, your success becomes their success. And guess what? Most franchises don't require you to have experience in their field. In fact, many don't even want a franchisee with previous industry experience. Because the systems of a franchise are structured for maximum success, previous industry experience often gets in the way when training a new franchisee.

## Evaluating a franchise training program

As part of your due diligence when researching a franchise opportunity, find out everything about the training a franchise system provides. A good training program should cover not only the product or service but also setting up the business, marketing, employee management, business procedures, reporting, etc. The best way to find out about the scope of the training program is to ask existing franchisees. Find out what stood out about the training they received and what they feel could have been covered more completely. Ask them how prepared they felt when they opened their business and what ongoing training they have been provided. Keep in mind that the franchisees you talk with may have been through various versions of the training program. Problems that existed at one time may have been fixed. Or, you may find that a training program that was fine in a company's early days is now out-of-date. Be sure to include in your research franchisees that have had the same training you will receive to get an accurate assessment of its value. Training may have been adjusted over time as the business becomes more complex, so an operations manual is a valuable resource, particularly if the franchisor updates the information periodically. Find out if the franchisor has other training support sources like conference calls or intranet sites.



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## Your future is in their hands

Your number one reason for choosing a franchise business over creating your own concept is that studies show your chances for success are exponentially greater. The franchisor has done many things before franchising the business that you, as a franchisee, you won't need to, including establishing and building the brand, testing a variety of marketing concepts, finding the best way to deliver a quality service or product, and researching the best value in suppliers. The greatest merit of a franchise system is that you should be able to walk right into your new business after training and expect to have the tools needed to make it successful. It's up to you, of course, to put in the hard work that will make that success a reality.

If, after your franchise investigation process is completed, you don't feel the offered training will adequately prepare you to run your new business, it's time to step back and look at other opportunities. To get full value for your investment in a franchise business, the training should answer all your questions and set you up as a confident and successful owner.

Franchisee training should include:

- Everything you need to know about the product or service
- Everything about using/protecting the brand
- How to find your business location
- How to negotiate a lease
- How you complete the permits and build out
- How to find, hire and manage employees
- How to market your product or service
- How to keep books and records for the business
- The reporting requirements and processes
- Where to get the equipment needed for the business
- How or where to buy supplies and inventory
- How to get help when you have a problem

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