

Franchise Ownership – Insightful Lesson Learned for Prospective Franchisees

Hindsight. When you hear or read that word, what generally follows is what one should have done and the often painful ‘lessons learned’ that follow.

As I reflect on the last few days spent in Houston at the Franchise Expo South, I am reminded that it was the omission of ‘hindsight’ that led me to buy a franchise in 1996. The simple truth that the lessons are learned on someone else’s dime and someone else’s time, not mine; was what propelled me into ownership then and probably explains why the *franchise industry continues to represent the single best path to business ownership today*.

Not only does the **industry** continue to outpace other business sectors for job creation and as a percentage of GDP but the variety of industries and ownership entry requirements continues to expand. You don’t need an MBA to make a sound business decision because the industry is sufficiently regulated and lenders like the transparency and duplicity afforded by working with growth oriented franchisors. All good reasons to explore franchise ownership in the current economy.

The best way to see for yourself if the franchise industry has something to offer you is to go to a Franchise Expo. If you are a business geek like me, an Expo can be a lot of fun, but it can also be a little overwhelming.

Here's a quick guide to help you navigate:

Start by perusing the seminar section found in the Event Guide.

The Expo people make it a cinch for anyone without prior franchising experience to learn what you need to know before considering a financial commitment. One to three

hour seminars and expert panels are available for novice and experienced attendees. Attending just one or two of these will add layers to your knowledge base and make you a smarter investor. And they are not filled with hype. On the contrary, you'll learn about financing, legal aspects of franchise ownership and what it takes to be a successful franchisee. The vast majority are absolutely free.

After you picked your education track, it's time to hit the Exhibit floor.

Be prepared. I recommend going through the Event Guide before you walk in and choose the company booths that you don't want to miss. Over 50 categories are represented.

In Houston I saw everything from spray tans (Planet Beach) to transmissions ([Aamco](#)) and rocks ([Boulder Designs](#)). B2B franchising (CMIT Solutions) and B2C (Pillar to Post) are on the rise as pet related (Camp Bow Wow), fitness (YogaFit) and senior care (Coastal Caregivers) franchisors continue strong growth.

The restaurant and food category is far and away the largest category. You will likely be drawn to some that are personally familiar ([Zaxby's](#), Rita's, [Burger 21](#),) and enjoy exploring some brands that are new to you ([Regal Maids](#), Pizza Press, [The Kase](#)). Most have specific markets targeted for expansion with the successful growth in other areas paving the way for a new area developers and single unit owners.

As with any business, it's the relationships that help you on your path to success.

Franchising is no different. What is different is the genuine warmth and friendliness of those involved on the path to ownership. Industry wide, the people you will encounter want to help you as they explain the uniqueness of their brand and share their company's story.

Unlike a competitive corporate environment or going it alone - on your own, the individuals and the industry as a whole want you to be as successful as you want to be. That part you'll need to experience for yourself. As for me, I'm glad I had the foresight to choose franchise ownership in 1996. Lesson learned.

To learn more about franchise opportunities, visit FranchiseExpo.com.

- See more at:

<http://www.franchiseexpo.com/resources/franchise-articles/feb-2016/franchise-ownership-insightful-lesson-for-prospective-franchisees#sthash.qiBI3d1K.dpuf>