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Franchisee Satisfaction Surveys Help Investors Identify Optimal Franchise Opportunities

by Jeff Johnson
 Founder/CEO of the Franchise Research Institute®.

In the aftermath of the global economic crisis increasing numbers of displaced executives are choosing to become self-employed to gain more control over their financial and personal futures. Franchisees are getting a fresh look from a new sector of entrepreneurs. These individuals have solid business backgrounds and excellent communication skills. They know how to work in a team environment and don't want to "reinvent the wheel." These savvy business people are looking for the best franchise investments available.

How to begin the search? Research. The common factor among top-quality franchisees is a high degree of franchisee satisfaction. Ultimately, franchisees are the consumers of the "franchise product," and their success is crucial to the franchise company's overall success. This is not about whether you like a particular hamburger- or the product or service that the franchise sells; it's about the quality of the franchise as a business investment. How will the company contribute to your achievement of the American Dream- especially when corporate America failed to do so?

According to Blair M. Gran, CEO and founder of Speedpro Imaging, "Speedpro is a business model designed specifically for the Executive level person, with no prior experience in our industry. Our owners are Corporate Refugees who enjoy the scalability, diversity and strong support of our system. We have continually utilized franchisee satisfaction surveys to truly discover where we can improve as a company. This proactive initiative has contributed to our delivery of top level quality and service."

The single greatest predictor of a franchisee's success is the degree to which a franchise company provides expert guidance and assistance- not only during the crucial start-up phase but during the day-to-day operation of the business itself. Franchise companies with staying power are constantly adapting to market conditions and franchisee needs.

Shelly Sun, CEO of BrightStar Healthcare attributes her company's success to offering franchisees a business model with multiple streams of revenue, including in-home care for seniors, disabled adults, and children as well as staffing services to healthcare facilities. This model evolved and continues to be refined through input from franchisees, via carefully validated research from an independent source.

There is a direct relationship between how effective a franchise company is at sharing its expertise and the likelihood that an individual franchisee will be successful. Well-informed prospects evaluate the quality of the support programs each individual franchise has in place to assist their franchisees

throughout the various stages of development. With outstanding franchise opportunities, this is not a parent/child relationship or a benevolent dictatorship, but a real collaboration.

"We continually strive to foster a collaborative partnership with our franchisees and we are committed to providing them with expert support for all areas of their business. From marketing and product development to store construction and operations, we work closely together to ensure we're pursuing the best steps for the Auntie Anne's brand. It's this operating spirit that has allowed us to achieve ongoing success and remain the world's largest hand-rolled soft pretzel chain," explains William P. Dunn, Jr., President and COO for Auntie Anne's, Inc.

James Young, President of Spring-Green Lawn Care, views the company's World-Class rating not simply as a measurement of how franchise owners feel about the communication and support that they receive, but a rating that centers on franchisee profitability and the effectiveness of their marketing programs to drive individual franchise growth. At its best, this is a highly symbiotic relationship. "We believe the strength of franchising is in the collective knowledge of franchisees." Without an objective collection of data from their franchisees, this knowledge base would remain untapped.

Simply stated, brand recognition on the part of the general public does not insure the viability or profitability of a franchise or a franchisee. Viewing franchise owners as partners and listening closely to their feedback is paramount to the success of Compound Profit, according to CEO James Penry. "A key aspect of our model is to share a substantial amount of the wealth with our franchise owners, and assist them in building valuable equity in their businesses." This process requires substantive, consistent franchise support and an ongoing information exchange with franchisees.

Great franchise opportunities do not necessarily require employees, inventory, offices, and rent. In fact, David Banfield - President of The Interface Financial Group states that his franchise has been providing working capital to small businesses for the past 37 years without any of these traditional business overhead items. "Interface is well positioned to help that business sector at a time when conventional lenders are hard to find,

and at the same time allow Interface franchisees to grow their businesses substantially."

Research has shown that there is also a direct correlation between franchisee satisfaction and the quality of leadership and direction from senior management. World-Class Franchise® CEOs are concerned about the long term success of their franchisees. They are consistently moving away from a short-term focus on sales and development and toward long-term sustainability. Tough economic times and a tight credit market are forcing weak concepts out of business and moving robust franchises toward higher levels of excellence. How to determine which companies will move forward? While information gathered from end users in the marketplace tells one side of the story, the only way to evaluate the quality of a franchise investment opportunity lies with existing franchisees.

As stated by Jeff Connolly, President and CEO of CMIT Solutions, "The culture here at CMIT Solutions is one of focusing on the most intense technology needs of the Small & Medium business markets we serve. Not only do we regularly invite our tens of thousands of Customers to tell us how we are doing, our 125 offices give us constant feedback. This keeps our focus sharp, our products & services current, and our culture tuned to our franchise partners and the needs of the businesses we serve."

When the going gets tough franchise opportunities may offer the ideal alternative to downsizing, layoffs, and early retirement. The key in determining whether it is the right opportunity lies soundly with the information provided by those who are walking the walk: the franchisees.

Here is a partial list of the companies certified as World Class Franchise® Opportunities by the Franchise Research Institute® and their URL addresses for obtaining information on franchisee satisfaction.

COMPANY	WEB ADDRESS
Auntie Anne's	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/AuntieAnnes
BrightStar Healthcare	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/BrightStar
CMIT Solutions	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/CMIT
Comfort Keepers	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/ComfortKeepers
Compound Profit	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/CompoundProfit
Money Mailer	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/MoneyMailer
Speedpro Imaging	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/Speedpro
Spring-Green Lawn Care	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/SpringGreen
The Interface Financial Group	www.World-ClassFranchise.com/IFG

A complete list of the Franchise Research Institute®-World Class Franchise® Opportunities can be reviewed at: www.World-ClassFranchise.com. You may contact the Franchise Research Institute® by calling 800-410-5205 or by email at: Jeff@FranchiseResearchInstitute.com.

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James Young, President of Spring-Green Lawn Care



A Speedpro Imaging Van



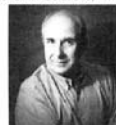
Shelly Sun, CEO of BrightStar Healthcare



James Penry, CEO of Compound Profit



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