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&

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GROWTH SECRETS

from

JERSEY MIKE'S
CEO Peter Cancro

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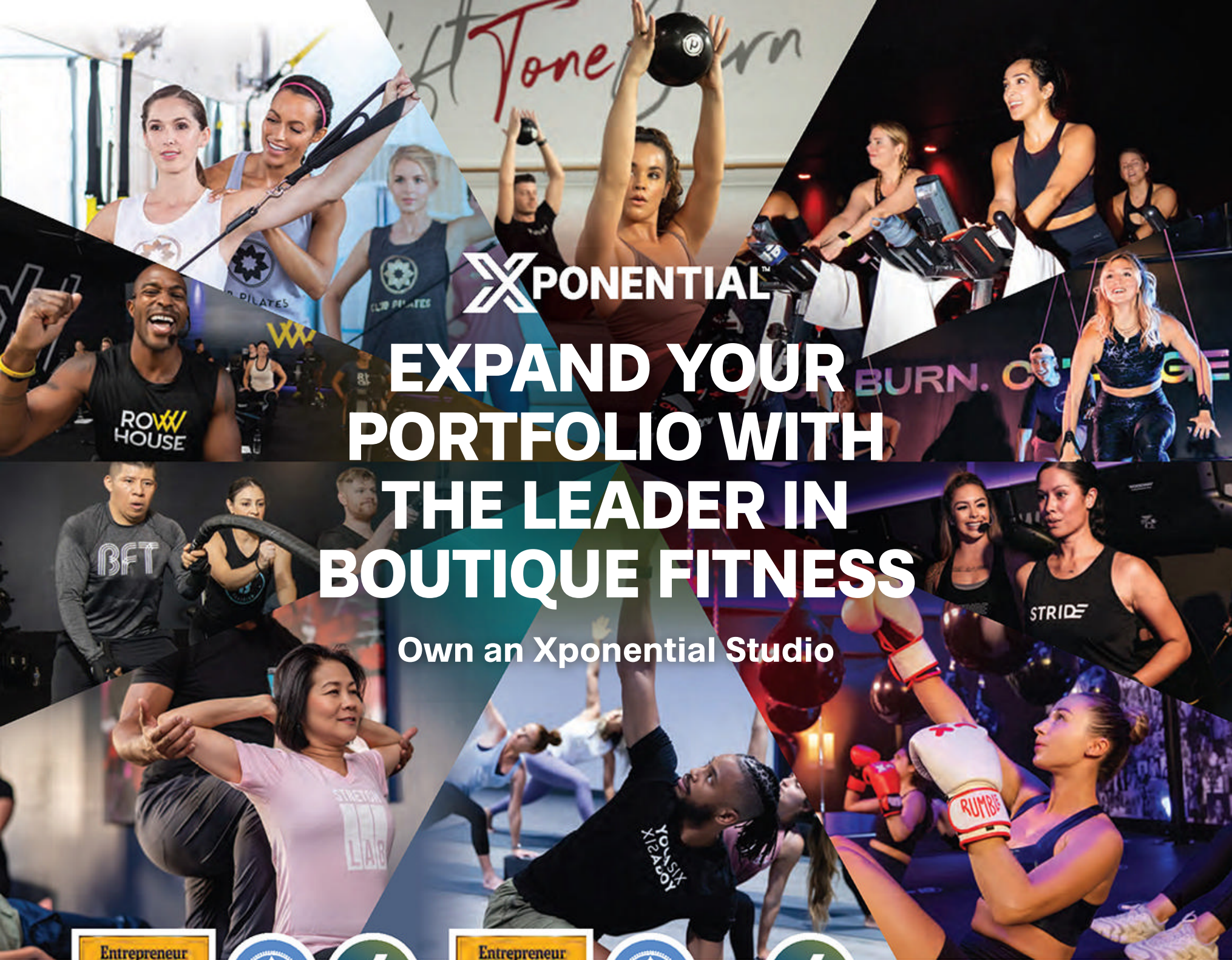
How a fast-growing unicorn finally figured itself out.

by LIZ BRODY



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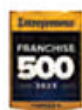
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YOU'RE TRYING to get somewhere. But you're not there yet.

That is frustrating. And worse, it's embarrassing. You've worked hard. You've traveled far. And you think: *I should be there by now—so why am I not?*

I feel this too, and I've concluded that it isn't just about anxiety or impatience. It's about something more fundamental: This is what happens when we are on a path, and what's ahead is unseeable.

But if we want to keep going, we must light the path as best as we can.

Here's an example.

I do a lot of keynote speaking, typically about how people and teams can thrive in times of change. Sometimes the rooms are packed, and it's a thrill. But other times I arrive to a near-empty room—if, say, conference attendees choose to spend their time elsewhere. It's demoralizing every time. I've worked hard to become a great speaker, and I aspire to be in demand—to be someone that people can't miss. Empty rooms tell me the opposite: They say, *You might never get there.*

But then I realized: The real problem isn't the empty rooms. After all, every speaker sees empty rooms—just as every salesperson hears “no,” and every CEO has setbacks. The real problem is that I don't know how many more times I'll speak in empty rooms.

This is what I mean by the unseeable path.

We want life to be like a marathon—because no matter where you are in the marathon, you know how far you must still travel. You can pace yourself. You can think, *Yes, my legs hurt, but I only have 8 miles to go...7 miles to go...6 miles to go...*

Entrepreneurship is often the opposite of that. We run toward a goal—but we have no idea how close or far we are, no idea how to pace ourselves, and no guarantee that we'll make it. That's why setbacks feel so bad. They are *disorienting*.

So it's worth wondering: Is there a way to make our path clearer? Technically speaking, the answer is no. We cannot tell the future. But we *can* see a few things.

Here's the first: We can see how far we've come.

A few years ago in this magazine, Drew Barrymore offered a piece of advice I often think about. She said that, when she struggles to achieve goals, she takes stock of what she's already accomplished. “We don't often take inventory of what we've done—it's very much a to-do-list kind of world,” she said. “But once in a while, make an I've-done-this list.”

In other words: When you only focus on the goal ahead, you only focus on what you *don't* have. But when you look at what you've achieved, you see the progress you've made.



And here's the next thing we can see: We can see purpose in each step we take.

That's why, whenever I'm about to speak to a near-empty room, I remind myself that there are still people in this room. And even if it's fewer than I'd like, I can still matter to them.

Then I tell myself this: *There are a certain number of almost-empty rooms that I must stand in, before all the rooms are full. And after today, there will be one less room.*

How many of those rooms must I stand in? Is it 50? Is it 300? I cannot know. But I do know this: The path to success goes through empty rooms, which means that empty rooms aren't a sign of failure. They're a sign of progress. And eventually, I'll have spoken in all the empty rooms—and then never again.

This is what it means to build something, whether it's a career or a company or anything else. You are living one part of a much larger story—some parts incredible, some parts regrettable, some parts forgettable, and with many of the best parts yet to come.

So when you are feeling lost, or frustrated, or embarrassed that you aren't where you'd like to be, step back and remember: You are on an unseeable path, but that doesn't mean you're *not* on a path.

You have already gone far. Everything next is progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Feifer".

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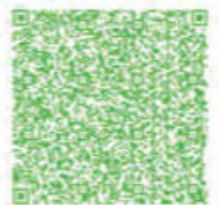
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‘You Want to Be Well-Known’

Bozoma Saint John has been a high-profile marketer for the likes of Netflix, Uber, and Apple. If you want to succeed, she says, don't be shy about marketing yourself. **by NICOLE LAPIN**

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If you know Bozoma Saint John's name, that is not by accident.

Yes, she's held high-profile corporate roles—working as the global CMO of Netflix, CMO of Endeavor, chief brand officer of Uber, head of marketing of Apple Music and iTunes, and head of music and entertainment marketing at PepsiCo. But now that she's working independently, she's happy to say that when she took those jobs, she was very intentional about being *visible* in them. She got press. She received industry awards. And that's because she believes very strongly: If you don't get attention for your work, you'll just be overlooked.

"People still say I'm self-centered," she says. "Well, if I'm not self-centered, who am I supposed to be centered on? Who? Please tell me it's not you."

Saint John wrote a memoir earlier this year, called *The Urgent Life*, about her work, the loss of her husband to cancer, and her message that people should live their lives with intentionality. In this conversation, we discuss how to get what you want—even if it makes you uncomfortable—and how the hardest paths can prepare you for the greatest achievements.

You're well-known for working at some of the world's biggest companies. What was your strategy for building your career?

Oh my gosh. Let me tell you this. This applies for everyone, but especially for women trying to become a better-known executive. One of the most undervalued ideas is: When you are better known for the things you do, your value goes up.

I became an expert at negotiating how public-facing I can be on behalf of the company. Because the moment you are hidden underneath somebody else, or you don't get the credit for the work that you're doing, the less you are known for your expertise. And you want to be well-known for the things that you do, so people come and seek you for your *next* job.

What does that negotiation look like?

When I took the job at Uber [after the company had gone through multiple scandals], I had already been on a big stage for Apple Music. As soon as I was negotiating my package for Uber, one of the things I said was: "Look, if I'm going to come here at a time when it's a little bit of a disaster, and we're trying to fix a brand image, and I'm going to be the chief brand officer—it's imperative that I'm out in front." And in doing that, I increased my own popularity.

Sometimes we forget that if you want to increase your value, that does not just come in your paycheck. When you're negotiating, don't just consider the money that goes into your bank account. You're also negotiating on the equity in you. ►

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A lot of the time, people's trauma or grief stands in the way of that awareness. You write about how your own grief impacted your career. How can someone use that to make themselves more powerful?

This is critical. People don't want to express or be seen as vulnerable. That is such a disservice—because just like all your work experiences make you unique for a certain job, so do your personal experiences.

I am a much better leader—a much more empathetic leader—because I'm a widow. I understand what it's like to sit at the bedside of someone who has terminal cancer and

It was very difficult for me during college. But I would find that mornings were okay. There were afternoons and evenings that became too much. That changed the way that I work: Even though I don't struggle with depression now, my most effective hours are in the morning. That's why I wake up at 4 a.m. and work out at 5 a.m. I like a 7 a.m. meeting—I'm bright at that time. Being your best means self-awareness, and being vulnerable enough to communicate what you need.

Your book is *The Urgent Life*. How would you advise someone to live more urgently?

We focus so much on what is coming that we forget that the living is in this moment. Are you satisfied in your life? We are so ambitious all the time that we think we must be hungry for the next day. The truth of the matter is that regardless of how long your life is, you want to be satisfied.

Again, I've had the unfortunate experience of being at the bedside of someone who died way too early—my husband Peter. We didn't talk about the things that he “should have” done. We talked about the things he *had* done—if he was happy in the life he had lived. And I want to get to the end of my life and be so satisfied. And so right now, even as I have great ambition, and I have high hopes for the future, I am satisfied in my life. If I were to go tomorrow, I would be so happy with the life I've lived. And if you don't feel that way, I urge you to change the life that you're living right now.

To hear more, find Nicole Lapin's podcast Money Rehab wherever you get podcasts.



THE MOMENT YOU ARE HIDDEN UNDERNEATH SOMEBODY ELSE, OR YOU DON'T GET THE CREDIT FOR THE WORK THAT YOU'RE DOING, THE LESS YOU ARE KNOWN FOR YOUR EXPERTISE. AND YOU WANT TO BE WELL-KNOWN FOR THE THINGS THAT YOU DO.

Being selfish is not a bad thing. Being selfless often gets glorified, especially for women.

Oh God, don't get me started on that.

How would you recommend someone build their personal brand? I don't mean on Instagram or as an influencer—I mean within a company, or when they have a side hustle they're starting.

Here's the thing: We get so confused by some of these words. We think a brand doesn't exist, and that we have to go build it. Your brand already exists. It's called your reputation. And if you are not actively involved in it, then somebody else is creating it for you. So would you

rather leave your reputation up to somebody else's imagination, or would you rather do it yourself?

Start talking about what you do. *Why are you unique?* And if you don't know the answer to that, then start at the step below: *Why are you special?* And if you don't think you're special, I need you to go one level below that and figure out: *Why don't you think you're special?* Why do you not think there's something unique about you that can be glorified, that can be celebrated? That's how you build your brand equity and brand love. It's a result of understanding all of that and being able to sit in it comfortably. This is not arrogance. It's awareness.

watch them die. I am a much more empathetic leader because I'm a single mother. I understand people better. The things that feel messy, like they should be hidden—that's your superpower. It makes you even better than everybody else, because you've been able to not just manage it—it's also made you more self-aware. You know when you need some space and time away, and that you're going to come back and be stronger because you didn't push through it.

This is all part of creating your boundaries, or communicating how you work so that you can manage whatever you're going through. I've struggled with depression.

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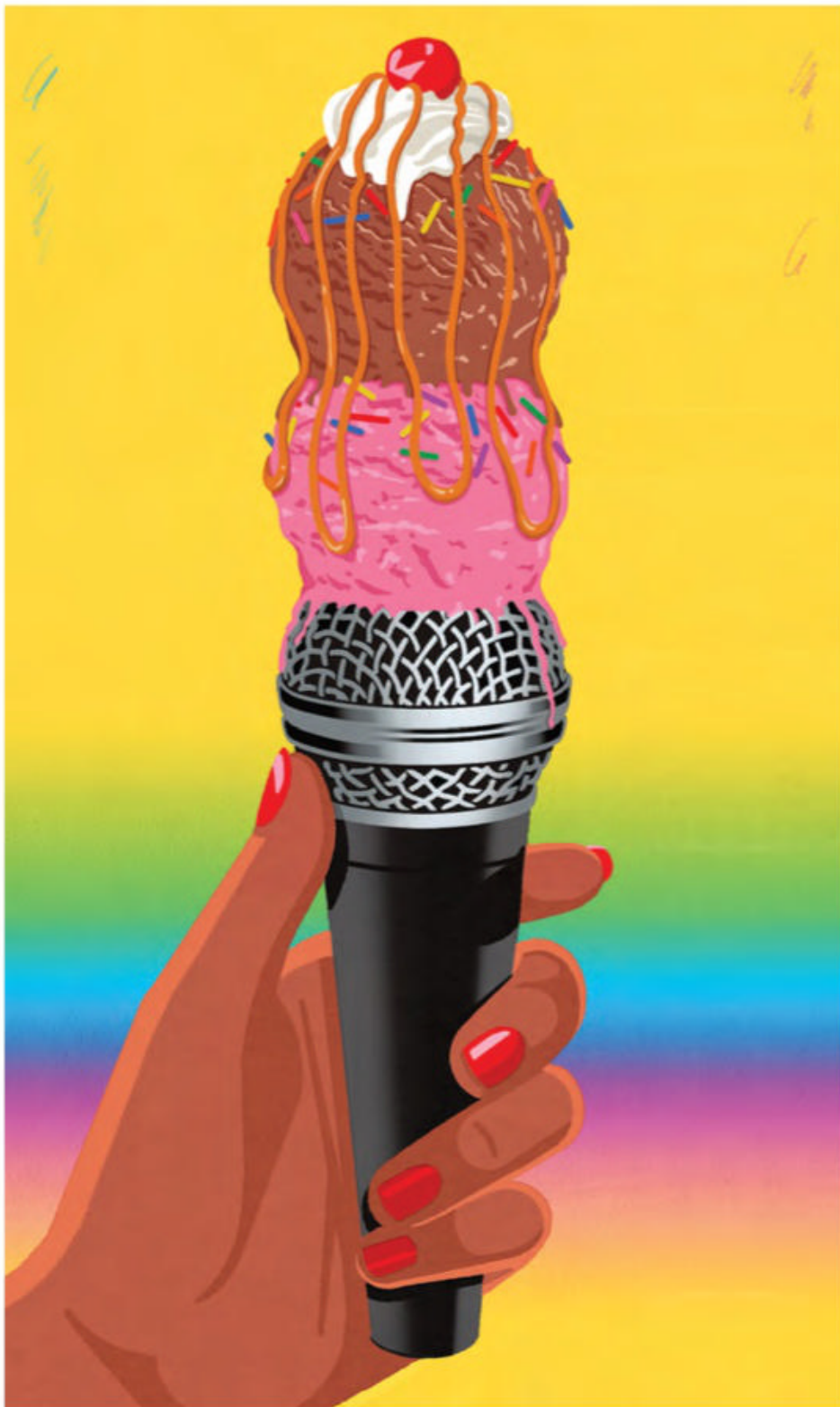
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Where Did Your Brand Voice Come From?

Every company has a personality and a communication style. Here, the founders of six companies share how they figured out what their business should sound like.

1/ Convey your mission.

“Our mission is to create the world’s best healthcare for billions of people, for free. What kind of brand voice conveys such a crazy ambitious mission? First, one that’s bold. We say impolite things like, ‘Hey, health insurance is evil.’ Second, our voice is empowering, not paternalistic. ‘Doctor knows best’ is not our style. We call people we serve ‘members’ instead of ‘patients.’ Finally, we’re optimistic. We need a voice that can break through the learned helplessness that healthcare is somehow unfixable.”

—ADRIAN AOUN, founder and CEO, Forward

2/ Find a characteristic that other brands miss.

“When building Harper Wilde, my cofounder and I wanted to channel the comfort we felt in our closest circles. Humor has always been part of our friendships, but when we looked at women-focused brands, we couldn’t find any that used humor in their voices. Plenty of male-focused brands did. So we wanted to celebrate the witty, relatable, sharp sense of humor that often ties girls and women together through their transformative years.”

—JENNA KERNER, cofounder and co-CEO, Harper Wilde

3/ Listen to customer feedback.

“Our product is all about creating connections and sparking conversations. Early on, we ran a few company names by customers and got their reactions. ‘Donut’ consistently rose to the top, confirming that they were responding to a more playful tone. So playfulness and humanity became cornerstones of our voice, honed through anchor words and branding exercises. Customer feedback still drives much of our brand refinement today.”

—DAN MANIAN, founder and CEO, Donut

4/ Speak as you want to be spoken to.

“Our company’s voice is a reflection of our lived experiences. Wemimo immigrated from Nigeria with his mother at 17 years old, who was forced to borrow money at over 400% interest from a predatory lender to pay for his education. Samir’s parents immigrated from New Delhi to New York. Like millions of Americans without a credit score, they struggled. We wanted Esusu’s voice to be reliable, accessible, uncomplicated, inspirational, and empathetic.”

—WEMIMO ABBEY and SAMIR GOEL, cofounders and CEOs, Esusu

5/ Clarify the problem you’re solving.

“We’re in the software space, and the problems we want to solve are around productivity. We help our customers have a greater impact in the time they spend building products. Our voice tends to be heavily oriented toward outcomes, blending a high level of confidence with irreverence for recent trends like ‘overtooling’ where teams overcomplicate their systems. We want our brand to be high-impact technology, versus technology for the sake of it.”

—SEAN KNAPP, founder and CEO, Ascend.io

6/ Know your brand purpose.

“It all starts with a strong brand purpose. Ours is to ‘elevate rest,’ so we’re up against the always-on, hamster-wheel mentality that leaves people exhausted. Our voice balances wisdom and humor—a blend of informed, real-talking, liberated, and witty. How Trevor Noah, Leslie Mann, Zadie Smith, or Billie Jean King might talk to their friends. We want it to be relatable, but well-researched.”

—ASHLEY MERRILL, founder, Lunya

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Choosing the Words That Can Change Your Company

Is it time to update your vision statement? A few words can shift how your entire organization thinks. Here's how I figured out the words that were right for us. **by BRENDAN P. KEEGAN**

The world is changing, and anyone ignoring sustainability will get left behind. So where to start? Perhaps with something simple—just a few words that, if taken seriously, can refocus the mission of your company.

I'm talking about a vision or mission statement, which many companies have for a reason: Employees who embrace your vision tend to work harder for you. According to a recent Dale Carnegie Training research study, companies with engaged workers outperform competitors by as much as 202%. With today's increasing focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues, many employees and customers are demanding that companies find ways to address these areas.

We grappled with this at our fleet management company, Merchants Fleet. Our statement had long been: "Enabling the movement of people, goods, and services freely." How could we update that language to embrace ESG, while not forgetting what made us successful to begin with?

We debated adding the words "and sustainably" to the end of our statement, but decided that would be too limiting. We commit to sustainability where possible; as a commercial fleet company, for example, we've reserved 40,000 electric vehi-

cles (EVs) for \$2.5 billion. But what about our clients in rural areas? Putting their drivers in EVs might be sustainable, but it would be irresponsible in areas without charging infrastructure.

That's why we settled on different language: "Enabling the movement of people, goods, and services freely *and responsibly*." With that, we prioritize responsibility—for our clients and, where possible, the world at large.

If you adapt your own vision statement to accommodate ESG principles, I recommend avoiding absolutes. The words should be broadly acceptable and understandable, but flexible enough to meet the needs and expectations of your entire base. They shouldn't alienate anyone, including your employees.

Similarly, make sure that your mission statement is realistic and attainable. If your words are impossible to follow through on, customers will lose faith in you. For example, suppose you're coming up with a new mission statement for an airline. If you add the phrase "on time," you'll be opening the door to a massive number of complaints, as there are just too many variables to guarantee that you'll hit every time point perfectly. If you add "safely," though, that's much easier to achieve consistently.

We found this to be equally important when discussing our commitment to diversity. Our staff profiles are very different in different regions. In New



Hampshire, our profile is at 9% diversity, which is roughly the state average. In Chicago, we're 45% diverse, because that area is more diverse overall. To require 45% diversity in both would be impractical, so we couldn't anchor ourselves to language that specific. Instead, we focus on a broader approach where we can have a more immediate impact—including, for example, having a 47% female team (and 50% female executive team) in an industry that's male-dominated.

Ultimately, it's not about the

statement you make. It's about the vision you set. Then you can ask yourself, "What can we do *today* to make an impact?" That fuels immediate and tangible actions, like gender-equity pay reviews, remote hiring, virtual education hangouts, and so much more.

The best practice is to pick language that's timeless and a little better than what you had. So, what few words can you add...responsibly?

Brendan P. Keegan serves as chairman, CEO, and president at Merchants Fleet.

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Say Hello to Product Packaging That's Practical, Sustainable, and Smart

Innovative paper-based packaging options are solving real-world challenges—and customers love it.



Customers are increasingly aware of the products they buy, and the materials used in their packaging. A recent study indicated that more than 80% of shoppers are concerned about plastic and packaging waste¹, preferring options that are easily recyclable and produce less waste.

The good news for customers and businesses alike is that packaging made from paper-based materials has come a long way. Customers love paper containers because they're designed to be beautiful, easily recyclable and compostable, and come from responsibly managed forests.

Businesses love paper containers, too, because they're designed to protect and preserve products, use less material, are easy to transport, sit efficiently on retail shelves, and can be cost-efficient. It's no wonder why nearly three quarters of adults in the U.S. say they prefer paper-based packaging for everyday products².

Simply sustainable.

One maker of sustainable paper packaging solutions is Atlanta-based WestRock. The company creates packaging for several industries, including food, beverage, healthcare, retail, beauty, and more. For instance, its EverGrow® Collection includes punnets, tills, totes, and trays produced specifically for growers, distributors, and retail produce brands.

"Paper-based products are renewable and recyclable, which contributes to circularity," says Sam Shoemaker, President of Consumer Packaging for WestRock. "EverGrow® is made from renewable paperboard and allows for curbside recyclability when emptied and flattened, offering an alternative for hard-to-recycle plastics."

The same goes for the ProducePack™ line of fresh produce packaging from Graphic Packaging International. "We recognize that our ability to deliver innovative, fiber-based solutions helps reduce the use of plastic in packaging, which is significant because plastic is under scrutiny and being banned in many parts of the world," says Mark Miranda, marketing manager for the Americas at Atlanta-based Graphic Packaging. "Our customers can benefit from fiber-based packaging when they make the switch because it is made from renewable resources and is recyclable."

Reliable performance.

In addition to sustainability, businesses need to know that their product packaging will hold up from warehouse to delivery truck to store shelf to customer use. Companies like WestRock and Graphic Packaging work with their customers

to determine the specific needs of each product, ensuring that the fiber-based package they create has what it takes.



"Our structural design team uses the optimal paperboard to design the structure for implementation in our customer's process," Shoemaker says. "For example, with top-seal punnets, we work to match existing downstream equipment to limit the cost of implementation. We then work with our customers on fit-for-use testing where we can utilize WestRock labs as well as perform real-world supply chain testing or store trials."

Appealing design.

Switching to paper-based materials doesn't mean your products will look like they're packaged in plain paper or cardboard. Packaging companies collaborate with brands to find the right mix of paperboard grades, package shapes, and print capabilities to make sure their branding really shines.

"Our ability to deliver eye-catching prints and messaging, reinforce brand positioning, and educate consumers about the sustainable nature of the packaging, is a significant differentiator on the retail shelf and for our customers," Miranda says.

When combined, the sustainability, exceptional performance, and attention-grabbing appearance of paper-based packaging is the ideal option for many businesses and their customers. "There has been a positive response for functional plastic alternatives for produce-primary packaging that help customers meet their sustainability goals and reflect their brand values," Shoemaker says.



Left: A recyclable fruit tray from WestRock.

Right: Example of a tomato punnet from Graphic Packaging.

To learn more about how innovations in paper packaging can help take your brand to the next level, visit howlifeunfolds.com/innovations



¹ Consumer Brands/Ipsos poll, 2021

² Isobar, Paper and Packaging Board, December 2022 Attitudes and Usage Tracking



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Very Sustainable Profits

The research is in: When your brand embraces eco-friendliness, consumers are happier and spend more. Here is what three studies show. **by THOMAS MCKINLAY**

Sustainability initiatives are good practice and something we urgently need to save our planet. But are they also good marketing? Yes. I write a newsletter called Ariyh, short for Academic Research In Your Hands (find it at ariyh.com), where I summarize the latest scientific research in marketing and sales. And I see a consistent theme: When brands have well-executed sustainability initiatives, they increase nearly every metric a business needs to succeed. It's even true with little-known startups and small-to-medium businesses. Below, I've highlighted three of the many studies that confirm this—along with recommendations on what you can do as a result.

1/ Sustainability drives revenue.

+6%



Scientists analyzed revenue from over 10 million sales at grocery stores across the U.S. They found that when products contain sustainability messages—about the eco-friendliness of its materials, packaging, or production—they had 6.4% higher revenue than related products without them.

HOW TO USE IT / If your product has something truly eco-friendly to tout, test that out as the central message in your ads and branding. See if it performs better than your regular talking points. Just be careful: If your claims aren't backed by facts, they can backfire.

2/ Sustainability boosts happiness.

+12%



Sustainability makes consumers happier. In surveys, for example, people enjoyed the same songs 12% more—using the same headphones—when they were told that their headphones were made with recycled materials. Eco-friendly detergent made washing dishes 23% more pleasurable, and a sustainable pen made writing 28% more enjoyable.

HOW TO USE IT / When people use an eco-friendly product, they feel that they're better citizens of the world. So give them reasons to feel good, such as iconography (a green plant symbol on your website) or useful upgrades (like bamboo instead of plastic chopsticks, if you run a restaurant).

3/ Sustainability signals quality.

+37%



Do customers want to buy more things from sustainability-focused small businesses? To find out, researchers asked people if they'd subscribe to a newsletter promoting a company's products. They found that 45% signed up when offered a 1% discount—and that number increased to 82% when people were told the company is environmentally friendly. That's a difference of 37%.

HOW TO USE IT / Remember what your future customer knows—and doesn't know. People have less information about small businesses, so they instinctively look for hints about trustworthiness and quality. Sustainability pledges help build that trust.

STUDY CITATIONS / (1) Choi, S., Duhan, D.F., Dass, M. The influence of corporate social responsibility appeals (CSRAs) on product sales: Which appeal types perform better? *Journal of Retailing*, December 2022. (2) Tezer, A., Bodur, H. O. The greenconsumption effect: How using green products improves consumption experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, September 2019. (3) Liu, Y., Xu, C. Consumer intention to purchase and corporate social responsibility: Evidence from an experiment in an entrepreneurial context. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, September 2021.



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What's Your Ghost Job?

It's one of your five jobs. And if you want to find meaning at work, you must identify all of them. **by BRUCE FEILER**

Cornell Thomas lost his police officer father in New Jersey to cancer when he was four, and he grew up watching his dental assistant mother struggle to support her family. “Once, in sixth grade, I asked if we could order pizza,” he says. “Mom gave me a look that said, *No. Don’t ask again.*”

To help out, Cornell turned to entrepreneurship. “My mother had these packs of WeightWatchers cookies that tasted like death,” he says. Cornell put on his baseball uniform and sold the cookies to his

neighbors for 50 cents a pack. “I made \$50. It was like a million bucks.”

After his dream of playing pro basketball was cut short, Cornell returned to his entrepreneurial roots, opening a youth academy and giving motivational speeches. But his childhood fear of deprivation still haunted him: “I was an adult before I realized I had a horrible relationship with money. I would cry rather than ask people to pay me.”

Money was Cornell Thomas’ ghost job. We all have one.

We may also have four more

jobs. But before we discuss those, we must look at the way we work now—and how it’s changed in ways we may not have noticed.

Over the last six years, I’ve collected and analyzed 400 life stories of Americans of all backgrounds and vocations, looking for patterns that could help all of us survive and thrive in times of change. For the last three years, I’ve been looking specifically at the future of work. What I’ve found is that today’s workers—younger, more female, more diverse—are busting through old myths and

discovering new possibilities for individuals to write their own stories of success.

Specifically, Americans are debunking the three lies about work.

LIE #1 / You have a career.

For most of human history, humans lived where they worked and worked where they lived. There was no word for “career” because no one had one. The idea of a career was invented in the 19th century as millions of Americans fled farms for cities, and millions more joined them from overseas. ►



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In 1908, Frank Parsons, a journeyman engineer and writer, opened the first career training center in the U.S. Overnight, schools across the country started offering career counseling. Parsons popularized the idea that you chose a career when you were young and stuck with it the rest of your life (at least if you were male; his program was not offered to women). Within a few decades, another new invention, the résumé, normalized the idea that a career was a linear progression of jobs, each one more important than the last.

Few ideas have squandered more human potential. Sure, some people lock into a dream early and follow it for decades. But far more of us rethink our choices, find new passions, and break away from stifling expectations. In my study, 85% of people did not “follow their passion” when they were young; they discovered it along the way.

LIE #2 / You have a path.

All the metaphors we’ve used to describe a career—the track, the path, the ladder—have one thing in common: They reinforce the idea that work is linear. By con-

trast, our work lives today are nonlinear. They’re marked by an endless stream of pivots and swerves. I call these destabilizing events “workquakes”—moments of disruption, inflection, or reevaluation that redirect our work in meaningful ways.

The average person goes through 20 workquakes in their life—that’s one every 2.85 years. But younger workers go through them more frequently than older workers; women more than men; and diverse workers more than nondiverse workers—which means that number is only going to rise. We simply must begin to think of our lives as more unsettled and serpentine than we already do.

LIE #3 / You have a job.

At first glance, it may seem inaccurate to say that this is a lie. *Of course I have a job! How else do I pay my bills?* Still, it’s true.

Today, no one has one job anymore. As I said above, everyone now has up to five.

I asked everyone in my conversations a simple question: “How many jobs do you have?” The average answer was three and a half. A quarter

said five or more. At first, I was surprised by these numbers. The more I probed, the more surprised I became.

Economists have traditionally defined a job as work you perform for money. But even by this definition, 63% in my cohort have more than one job. And the full picture is even more complex.

The emerging way that people use the word “job” goes well beyond paid work and is closer to the original definition of a job as a task. The first of the five jobs is a main job—which sounds simple, but is not. Today, fewer than half of all workers even have a main job; in my research group, it was 39%. But is a main job the one where you spend the most time, earn the most income, or derive the most meaning? For many people, those jobs are different and change over time.

The second type of job, which two-thirds of us have, is a care job, like caring for children or aging relatives.

The third type of job, a side job, gets a lot of attention, and that’s no wonder: Three-quarters of us have a side job. Half of all side jobs involve entrepreneurship. They allow someone to either experiment with self-employment while supporting themselves with a main job, or sustain themselves with self-employment by using the side job for extra cash. In both cases, the side job provides the primary source of meaning while the main job provides the primary source of cash.

The fourth type of job also appeals to would-be entrepreneurs: a hope job. This type of job is something you do that you hope becomes something else, like writing a screenplay or selling jewelry on Etsy. Eighty-nine percent of us have a

hope job, including many people who feel stuck in a main job that drains them of energy. These are the people who get through their days by dreaming of starting a company.

The fifth and final job brings us back to Cornell Thomas. It’s a ghost job: an invisible time suck like battling self-doubt, struggling with mental health, or worrying about money. It is so pervasive that it feels like a job. Ninety-three percent of us have a ghost job.

While at first glance having all these jobs might seem to be a drain, in most cases the opposite is true. We use these various jobs to get the meaning we crave from our work. Maybe we do one job for income and benefits, but we do another job for meaning and purpose—and for most of us that allotment changes over time in response to fluctuations in our circumstances, our family situations, or our health.

It’s precisely this fluctuation that gives rise to the one big truth about work today: Only you can decide what story you want to tell. Only you can decide what brings you meaning.

Like Cornell Thomas and hundreds of others I’ve interviewed, only you can tap into your childhood longings and dreams, evaluate the priorities you hold at the moment, and begin to reshape a future made only for yourself.

Only you can tell the most important story you’ll ever tell: the story of what makes you a success.

Bruce Feiler is the author of seven New York Times bestsellers, including Life Is in the Transitions and The Secrets of Happy Families. His three TED Talks have been viewed more than four million times. His latest book is The Search: Finding Meaningful Work in a Post-Career World, from which this piece is adapted.

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Gear expert (and two-time Emmy Award winner) **Mario Armstrong** offers the essentials that can make deadlines easier—and your summer Fridays even nicer.



1/ Smile and say algorithm!

The **Canon PowerShot Pick** [\$500; usa.canon.com] is the smartest way to take a selfie. The rechargeable, pepper-shaker-sized camera has 12.8 megapixels and uses AI to automatically adjust the angle to capture human faces and positions when they smile. The gimbal inside handles all the panning and tilting with a lens that automatically zooms up to 12 times to frame shots. Use voice commands to take a picture. The device even remembers faces and can track someone moving, and when set up as a webcam, can help deliver dynamic presentations.

2/ The printer that prints green.

Printers don't usually inspire a lot of excitement, but the **HP Color LaserJet Pro MFP 4301FDW** [\$699; hp.com] should thrill the eco- and cost-conscious members of your team: It executes every function a small office needs while saving energy. The TerraJet ink cartridge inside uses less plastic in the toner cartridge compared to previous generations, and up to 27% less energy to print as it cranks out up to 35 pages per minute. HP's handy app makes it easy to print from a mobile device, too.

3/ What's cooler than being cool?

The **Oyster Tempo Cooler** [\$500; oysterc cooler.com] boasts a big claim: It describes itself as the first cooler that doesn't require ice. Why? Because its aluminum walls are vacuum sealed and filled with silica to minimize ambient heat infiltrating. Just add some chilled cans, and the company says they'll stay frosty three times longer than in an ordinary cooler. Plus, because the cooler doesn't contain the usual polyurethane foam, its walls are thinner and lighter—when empty, it weighs just over 12 pounds.

4/ A standing desk worth a standing ovation.

Standing desks aren't new—and neither, alas, are their aesthetics. They often look bland, but the **Herman Miller Leatherwrap Sit-to-Stand Desk** [From \$3,795; store.hermanmiller.com] upgrades that well. The 44.6-by-28.1-inch top sits over four legs, which, powered by motors, conceal extensions to move the desk from 29.1 to 46.75 inches high. Unlike other desks and their dorky digital readouts, this one has a simple button tucked under the top controls. A ribbon of leather in the center offers a comfortable surface to write on or type, with a cutout hole to manage cord clutter.

5/ A box that really booms.

How do you fill a room with sound without also filling it with speakers? The **Soundcore Motion X600** [\$200; us.soundcore.com] makes it possible. It looks like a simple product—it pairs through Bluetooth and operates with just a few buttons. But on the inside, it uses five speakers, one of which points straight up, to deliver deep, room-filling sound that's inspired by theater acoustics. Leave it in your office to add atmosphere, or grab the little handle at the top and take it outside (it's waterproof!) to spice up a summer happy hour.



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The Sound of Social Silence

Do people ignore your social media posts? That might not be a bad thing. **by TERRY RICE**



But who, you may ask, is viewing your posts from three months ago? Potential business partners and other business prospects can and will check your social media history to learn more about you. And during their search, they'll learn about your expertise, personality, and worldview. Having a consistent and high-quality digital footprint builds your credibility, generates inbound leads, and helps you close deals faster.

You'll be surprised when people start sharing why they liked one of your old posts—which you may not even remember—and how that accelerates their trust and faith in you as a subject matter expert.

So make it easy for people to discover your high-value content. You can put it in the "Featured" section of your LinkedIn profile or link to it in your Instagram profile (which now allows up to five links).

2/ Creating content makes you sound smarter.

To create content, you must also consume content. Otherwise, you'll eventually bore everyone—including yourself.

This is a hidden reason to keep creating: Consuming and processing is a learned skill, which means that it requires building a habit. You're giving yourself the opportunity to learn something new, apply it to your work, and then share it with others—and, in doing so, you're training yourself to break complex ideas down in easily communicable ways.

You're also building a reservoir of thoughts, ideas, and advice to recall in real-time conversations and through your content. This is particularly helpful if you'd like to appear on podcasts, stages, or other media opportunities.

3/ Creating content helps you create even better content.

Maybe your posts are great, and nobody's paying attention (yet). Or maybe your posts are bad—because you just haven't learned what your audience is interested in yet.

Creating quality content requires consistency and a willingness to experiment. By constantly putting out content, you'll learn what resonates with your audience and what doesn't.

The only way to become a better writer is to write—so keep at it. Need a prompt? Here are a few to consider for your next post: You could debunk a popular myth, answer a question people often ask you, provide a step-by-step process for something you've mastered, or share an inspiring personal story.

You have valuable knowledge to share; the algorithm just may not know it yet. So don't get caught up in the numbers. Focus on creating relevant, engaging content for your audience. The value will follow.

Terry Rice is the Business Development Expert-in-Residence at Entrepreneur and host of the podcast Launch Your Business.

Q People tell me to post regularly on LinkedIn, but nobody's reading. Should I just quit? — **DEREK, AUSTIN**

THIS ARTICLE could flop. You might not even get past the first paragraph. That's just a fact of life for anyone who writes anything. But it's not a reason to stop.

Let's start with some assumptions. You're probably not a professional creator. Maybe you're posting to grow your brand and revenue. At this point, you're a little embarrassed by how poorly you're doing, looking at the opportunity cost of it, and thinking that your time is better spent elsewhere.

But let me offer a few thoughts on why you may want to stick it out. I know many people who do not go viral on social, but still use these platforms successfully to attract and convert business-building opportunities.

Here are three reasons you should keep going:

1/ Posting content builds your credibility.

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MOM & POP

Why they matter.

How they can
be stronger.

**And the 150
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the most.**

The term “mom-and-pop shop” might sound quaint, but their impact is outsized: Small businesses account for 99.9% of all businesses in the United States. They’re often built from deeply rooted passions for their trades, products, social goals, and communities. Customers don’t just know the name of the store; they also know the name of the person behind the counter. And when it comes down to it, that isn’t just what mom-and-pop shops are. It’s also their competitive advantage—and small business owners should own that.

Small businesses are frequently referred to as the lifeblood of the American economy, but their statistics tell an interesting, complicated story. An average of over 4 million businesses open each year in the U.S., and in 2022, business openings reached an all-time high. In spite of a shaky economic landscape in recent years, more than half of them are hiring, according to an American Express report.

But that’s only half the story. These locally owned, often family-run businesses are in constant competition with larger brands and businesses—many of which have more access to funding or bigger marketing budgets. No wonder many of our favorite local restaurants, fitness studios, and trusted home services providers struggle to succeed. In



MOM AND POP SHOPS

fact, 1 in 5 fail in the first year, and 45% close by year five.

So how do we reconcile these facts—that small businesses are vital to our economy, but also face challenging economics?

It all leads back to that mom-and-pop competitive edge.

I've had the privilege of working with hundreds of local business owners, and when we talk about what makes them successful, one element always rises to the top: They show customers who is *behind* the business.

People love supporting local businesses because they love the people who make them possible. When you share your unique story as a business owner, you humanize your business and appeal to potential customers who relate to your mission—whether that's sustainability, diversity, or community involvement.

Consumers consistently say they want to shop with brands that align with their beliefs and values, which is why being clear on your values and local ties has never been more important. Recently, for example, Yelp documented a trend in users searching for minority-owned businesses, further underscoring consumers' desire to shop locally with businesses that align with their values.

So how can you thrive as a mom-and-pop business? Lean into your identity and find your crowd. First, identify your target market and what's important to them. Then, create engaging content that tells your unique story and explains how your product or service will benefit them. Also, be sure to show up where they spend their time online. According to BrightLocal, 98% of consumers use the internet to find information about local businesses. By making it easy for potential customers to find you, you also create the opportunity to tell them why they should pick you over the competition.

There are endless ways to promote your business, connect with customers, and improve the customer experience. Remember: Wherever you choose to engage potential and current customers, be your authentic self and show them the person behind the business who is trying to make their community just a little bit better every day.

On the following pages, we celebrate the mom-and-pop shops that do it best—looking at the 150 that made Yelp and *Entrepreneur's* list of America's favorites, drawing lessons and insights from what makes them successful, and sharing how any small business can thrive today.

—Emily Washcovick, Yelp's small business expert






HOW ONE MOM & POP SHOP EXPANDED 2,500 TIMES

Jersey Mike's

famously began as a single shop owned by a teenager. Now it's everywhere. How exactly does that happen?

by **NATE HOPPER**





It was 1975, and Peter Cancro was 17 and in love. The object of his affection was a small mom-and-pop deli in the beach town of Point Pleasant, New Jersey, called Mike's Subs.

Peter had worked there since he was 14—at first wrapping subs, then waiting for the day he'd earn the right to slice meats. "Only certain people would slice," he recalls, "because that was, like, where you had to really nail it." Alongside his colleague buddies, he was always talking to the tourists who flocked to the ocean. There's no way to know for sure, but Cancro thinks the deli had to be the highest-volume sub shop in the country, even back then. On an average summer day it went through "850 giant loaves a day," Cancro says, "or \$130,000 in sales a week, in today's dollars." He was always serving people, always memorizing their orders. Always tracking the details.

Then one night, Cancro heard from his mother that the shop's owners were planning to sell. What happened next is a story Cancro has long relished telling. His mother asked him, "Why don't you buy it?" With that question in his head, he started heading upstairs to bed. By the time he got to the top of the stairs, he thought, *Why not me?*

Cancro was still in high school (and planning to attend The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with notions of becoming a lawyer), but he skipped classes to research the financials and look for backers. Desperate, one Sunday after 9 p.m., he knocked on the door of his former football coach—who was, helpfully, also a banker—

and asked for a loan to meet the brothers' \$125,000 asking price. The coach said yes. The deal went through. Peter Cancro became the owner of a mom-and-pop deli, while still living with his mom.

This is the origin story of Jersey Mike's Subs, told and retold in media and marketing. Often, the story quickly flashes forward to the present day—where Cancro's little store is now a franchising behemoth. How big? Big enough that Danny DeVito appears in its national commercials, and it has 2,535 locations with plans to open around 350 locations this year—on track for its annual target of 15% unit growth. In January 2020, the average unit volume was \$850,000; today, it's more than \$1.3 million. And this year, Jersey Mike's was No. 3 on *Entrepreneur's* Franchise 500 list.

So, pretty big.

But a love story that skips from infatuation to happy ending is like a sub made only of bread: It's potentially delicious, and comforting in a fluffy, carb-y kind of way, but it lacks real substance. So what is the *rest* of the story—the meat and veggies of it? How did a local deli, in what Cancro says was an undeniably poor location ("No parking. You don't see the sign. You go by it and never see it.") become one of America's most successful food franchises?

The answer is, you find a way to scale that mom-and-pop mentality—to stay small, even when you're getting huge. ►





“WE STARTED OUR MISSION STATEMENT TO GIVE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE... PEOPLE KNOW US FOR THAT, NOW, AS MUCH AS THEY KNOW THE PRODUCT.”

that Cancro credits for the company’s success. To grow beyond a single mom-and-pop store, Cancro believes in building what he calls a “nucleus.” *This* is the “stay small while getting large” insight at the heart of his company’s growth. The nucleus, to him, is a small collection of shops in the same area, which work together to build training teams and master multi-unit operations. At first, this will likely develop near the original location, but later, new regions can develop their own nuclei.

Why is this useful? Because this way, no one Jersey Mike’s location feels like a tiny part of a giant system. Instead, each store has a nearby community of support. In addition to ongoing help from the corporate training team, it’s comforting for a mom-and-pop to know there are a couple seasoned franchise aunt-and-uncles and grandma-and-grandpas down the road.

And even once a franchisee is well-established, the franchisor should still be

there to help them grow. For instance, whether a franchisee is opening their first location or their fifth, it’s essential to take leasing and site selection seriously. To this day, Jersey Mike’s helps franchisees pick locations, starting with their basic criteria: “You’ve got to see it. You’ve got to be able to get to it. You have to be able to park,” Cancro explains. (Which is to say, it should be nothing like the original Jersey Mike’s.) But on top of that, before signing a lease, you need to know every single potential expense, down to, say, the HVAC or the grease trap. “You include everything, because if you don’t, you’ll be \$30,000 short,” he says. “You’ve got to be truthful in your numbers.” Only then can you “open to win,” as Cancro puts it—meaning, open for the least amount of money and with everything turnkey. Otherwise, oversights and surprises can submarine your sub shop.


Then comes the rest: The franchisor develops a training manual, divided into modules, that explains every detail learned from years of mom-and-pop operation—including specifics like how long it should take to slice something. And then, of course, managing *other* owners is a whole new skill set for a franchisor to master. “What are you going to do when the franchisee says, ‘No—I’m doing it this way?’” Cancro says. It’s no longer just the owner’s business. “If you have a problem, you gotta go in and work with the people and come up with: What do we need to do? Are they doing everything correctly?” By leading multiple shops, franchisors learn to apply their knowledge to new challenges. “You’ve got to be able to turn it around.” ►

MORE THAN A DECADE went by before Jersey Mike’s expanded. For years, while Cancro prepared subs, customers told him they were taking the sandwiches back home—sometimes across the country, sometimes across the Atlantic, even into the Soviet Union. Then, in 1987, some of those customers started taking the *brand* home with them too, by becoming some of his first franchisees.

Cancro and his crew were hands-on with the newcomers, teaching everything they’d learned from the original store. “I’d be behind the slicer,” Cancro says. They’d also cook up excitement by going door to door around the community to offer free subs, or by supporting local community organizations. Then, when the store would get hectic, Cancro would become a coach. “I’d take the franchisee: ‘Alright, listen, go over here during the rush,’” he says.

Charitable giving was an important part of Cancro’s vision from the start. Growing up in Point Pleasant Beach, he’d been impressed by two men who respectively owned an ice cream store and a local lobster shanty in the area. “They gave unconditionally to the youth, to the first aid, to the community,” Cancro recalls. “Watching that in high school, I said, ‘Well, that’s what we’re gonna do.’ So we started our mission statement to give and make a difference. ‘The power of the sub sandwich,’ we called it. People know us for that now, as much as they know the product. They say, ‘We hear what you’re doing for the kids. We hear what you’re doing for the community.’”

It’s that same ability to build communities *within* Jersey Mike’s

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“YOU CAN’T JUST FRANCHISE AND HOPE IT DOES WELL. IT’S A PEOPLE EXPENSE FOR THE TRAINING, NURTURING, MENTORING... THAT ALL COSTS A LOT FOR THE FRANCHISOR.”

banks will say, ‘Get away from me.’ But there are lenders out there that charge a few more points and will do restaurants.” Though there’s still value, of course, in trying to work with a local bank when you’re starting out: “They know you. They know your brand.”

Even as franchisors grow, they still need to keep in mind that it won’t only be their franchisees taking on the expenses of each new franchise. “You can’t just franchise and hope it does well,” he says. “It’s a people expense for the training, nurturing, mentoring, coaching, opening the store, ongoing training and assistance, ongoing site visits. That all costs a lot of money for the franchisor.”

To succeed requires a community.

Jersey Mike’s avoided bankruptcy and survived the recession. Within a year and a half, Cancro was able to rehire his headquarters team. As bank failures make headlines today and talk of another recession looms, though, Cancro admits he’s unsure what lessons to take from his experience. “I wish I had capital lined up for ’91 and didn’t spend all my money, thinking that it was just going to keep coming in,” he says. That said, he doesn’t exactly regret spending all his money on expansion either. “It helped our growth. So would I do it over again? Yes.”

“I wish I had capital lined up for ’91 and didn’t spend all my money, thinking that it was just going to keep coming in,” he says. That said, he doesn’t exactly regret spending all his money on expansion either. “It helped our growth. So would I do it over again? Yes.”

JERSEY MIKE’S GROWTH happened fast. It hit 100 units within its first 10 years. “We were too busy to even stop and congratulate ourselves,” he says. When he doubled that, Cancro recalls talking with Truett Cathy, the late founder of Chick-fil-A, who told him, *Peter, you’re at 200 stores. There’s no stopping you now.*

But there certainly were things that could slow them down. By that point, Jersey Mike’s had a formula for expansion, and most of the time it worked. Since they first started franchising (and even to this day), when arriving in a new region, the company tends to target suburban areas with a higher-educated, middle-plus-income population. (“Our product is not cheap,” Cancro notes.) This made sense in a stable economy, but it set the brand up for some bumps—like in the early aughts, when the tech bubble burst. This deeply hurt local economies that Jersey Mike’s had bet big on, such as the Research Triangle in North Carolina. “That was another tough time for us,” Cancro says. “But we slowly came out of it.”

The brand continued to grow, and the more it did, the more customers in new regions seemed hungry for its arrival. Still, there is no numerical critical mass that makes a franchise infallible. The way

By the end of the ’80s, Jersey Mike’s had about 30 shops—no longer just in New Jersey but also in Tennessee and Ohio and beyond, each region building its own nuclei along the way. “It really started happening,” Cancro recalls. “We hit really well.”

Then the world outside the Mike’s community brought trouble.

AS THE ’90S BEGAN, Jersey Mike’s was all-in on expansion.

“Everything we made was going into paying our people and into marketing, and just trying to create our business,” he remembers. “We spent everything we had, plus, *plus*.” But then, banks began to fail. A recession began. “When the banks fell, and no new stores were coming, we were like, ‘Uh-oh. Where’s our capital? Where’s our money coming from?’ We didn’t have a small business equity line of credit or anything to draw on.”

Even though the existing shops continued to succeed, they couldn’t grow—and Cancro could no longer afford his staff of six at company headquarters. He had to lay them all off. “I was there alone, above one store,” he remembers. “You find out how many bills you can pay when you don’t have any payroll.”

To Cancro, this underscored the importance of having a financial support system. When aspiring franchisors ask him for advice today—especially if they’re in the food business—he now tells them: “Go to some of the restaurant shows and find out about who is offering capital to restaurants or to fast-casual or quick-serve. Most

The Surprisingly Smart Way Throne Fosters Deeper Connections Between Creators and Their Audiences

It's no secret that social media influencers are given free things by companies to help market their products, but with the increasing popularity of platforms like Twitch and TikTok that help anyone create viral content, gifting practices have radically changed.

Gifting isn't just reserved for influencers with millions of followers anymore—it's for anyone with a fan base that loves their creative output. And there's a company on the front lines of this new wave of giving: Throne, a Dallas-based gifting and commerce platform for creators.

"Some creators have a fair amount of set-up costs because they need a good camera or microphone to use for their content, and we always thought there is so much value that they are giving away for free to those who are watching them. These creators might not have certain brands reaching out to them because they don't have as large of a reach, and we wanted to support these creators by thinking of ways to help them monetize," Throne co-founder Heiner Stinner explains.

Instead of simply sending products for promotion, Throne takes a personalized approach by curating bespoke gifting experiences tailored to each creator's unique needs and preferences that can be purchased by their fans. By allowing creators to make a wish list of desired or needed items, Throne ensures that the gifted products not only resonate with the creator but also create genuine value for their followers.

This strategic approach to gifting allows creators and their fan bases to forge meaningful relationships, foster authentic endorsements, and create a ripple effect of positive exposure through the creators' online platforms.

Simple, practical access to a massive e-commerce network.

As Throne sought ways to help personalize the giving experience, they found that with a marketplace model, they needed a broad

product catalog to show a vast selection of gifting options was available for people to purchase. There was only one solution that made perfect sense: Amazon Business.

"Amazon Business has a gigantic catalog of products, and for our use case, creators don't just want Apple AirPods. Sometimes they want everyday items like a spoon or hot sauce," Stinner explains.

From a realistic standpoint, Throne couldn't approach every single company that produced these types of products. But with Amazon Business, the sheer number of products already in their marketplace made more items accessible for Throne's customers. "We needed the creators to know we have the brands that they want so in the end, they can be happy," Stinner says.

Logistics at scale.

Beyond the robust product catalog, Amazon Business also provides Throne with support in shipping, global logistics, and customer support.

"We ship a lot of orders, and there are few merchants that are reliable at scale," Stinner adds. "With Amazon, it doesn't matter if we buy five pens or 5,000 pens in one day, it is incredible how reliable and fast they are... It's a seamless experience."

Prior to Amazon Business and their assistance in different markets, Throne was purchasing items from many different vendors, which caused them to experience issues with Customs. But with Amazon Business, they have dedicated support that can explain topics like different sales tax rates in the U.S. or import taxes so that they can translate Amazon's experience to their own business.

"In various perspectives, we are very happy with this deep relationship with Amazon, and I see big potential for Amazon in other areas of our business," Stinner says.

To learn more about Amazon Business and how they can help your business accomplish goals you never dreamed possible, visit:

business.amazon.com





**“WHEN THE BANKS FELL,
AND NO NEW STORES
WERE COMING, WE WERE LIKE,
‘UH-OH, WHERE’S OUR
CAPITAL? WHERE’S OUR MONEY
COMING FROM?’”**

stores, you have managers, assistant managers—they become your army ambassadors to be able to help open the stores,” Cancro says. And just how committed to training is this company? Well, that original Jersey Mike’s location is still standing—and still in the original location, with no parking and little visibility. But it’s no longer open for business. Now it’s a training facility for franchisees and their managers and assistant managers.

TODAY, 48 YEARS ON, Peter Cancro is older but still in love, sitting in the conference room of that training facility—though this half of the space wasn’t part of the original shop, but an adjoining hairdresser’s. Next door, on the other side, there’s a pizza-and-subs spot that local high schoolers stop by during their lunch period, revving their engines and honking and joking. Several of Cancro’s own high school colleague buddies from the original Mike’s went off and became teachers or state troopers. “You know what

happens the first month after they retire?” asks Cancro. “They get a check. I retire, I get nothing.” Of course, life is easier now. “I don’t drive to Pittsburgh and Columbus, Ohio, to Nashville, to Atlanta and home. I fly. I stay in better hotels,” he says, with a laugh.

But there’s still business to be done. In March, Jersey Mike’s raised \$21 million for local charities, which included one full day of sales on the company’s annual Day of Giving. His owners are looking to open more shops—though in some cases they’ve maxed out the number of Mike’s that their region can reasonably contain. So Cancro is looking into buying a new concept—likely coffee, chicken, or Mexican—that his franchisees can bring to their communities instead. And he keeps in mind the specter of other sandwich franchise collapses—like Quiznos and Blimpie, which both went from thousands of restaurants to just a few hundred. Cancro says he hasn’t studied the reasons for those collapses (analysts tend to chalk them up to issues with capital, company ownership, and poor relations with franchisees), but that doesn’t stop him from using their stories to affirm his success strategy: “Maybe they didn’t pay attention to the details.”

Cancro still has that restless energy he looks for in others. The bigger the company gets, the more people they can feed, the more good they can do, and the more energized Cancro becomes. You can sense it in the questions he’s still asking, driving his lifelong love affair into its next chapter: “What are we doing? How are we serving? How are we raising up together?” **E**

Cancro sees it, the bigger you are, the more you need to be able to rely on the team you’re building. “When you get up to 100 or 200 stores, you’ve got enough capital and enough people, and you really figure things out,” Cancro says. “Hopefully you have the right people coming in. The franchisees, the owners—they help you grow.”

Jersey Mike’s team is still full of zealous trainers (and Cancro himself will take any chance he can to hop behind a slicer). “A lot of chains out there are, like, five, 10 days training,” says Cancro. “Ours is 2.5 months [and] three people to open up a Jersey Mike’s.” The staff makes the subs in real time—“it’s not like a burger where the buzzer goes off and you flip it”—so the new owners have a learning curve. It still takes at least a month to get on the slicer.

In owners, managers, and younger staff, Cancro and his team seek—as much as anything—energy: “The pace, the speed, the sense of urgency.” The training enables them to work swiftly from opening day, encouraged by the two-week presence of at least two Jersey Mike’s corporate staffers overseeing operations and lending a hand. “We do not leave until they’re really good.”

This, too, comes out of that “nucleus” way of thinking—that no Jersey Mike’s location should feel like it’s out there on its own. It’s always part of something that feels small.

On top of the support they get from corporate, Jersey Mike’s owners around the country have taken it upon themselves to build training facilities for their staffs to learn in. “And then at the training

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When a local, independent business becomes known for something special—a product or service, or even just a unique vibe—customers love knowing they're getting a truly one-of-a-kind experience. Here, seven mom-and-pops around the country share what helps them stand out.



1/ The Roxbury

Roxbury, New York

"When people ask us about our hotel we say, 'Imagine if Alice in Wonderland married Willy Wonka, and they took up residence in Oz.' *That's* what we want The Roxbury to feel like. We're a 'pop-and-pop' business—we met in NYC in 1988, and have basically been married for 33 years. We spent our first decade together in the theater, but putting food in our mouths became so overwhelming that Greg let a temp job on Wall Street turn into a real job. Then 9/11 happened. We realized we were happiest 'putting on a show' together. We had this little cabin in the Catskills, and we bought a rundown motel 30 minutes down the road. Never in our wildest dreams did we foresee that 20 years and four expansions later, we would have 43 rooms, suites, and cottages."

—Owners Gregory Henderson and Joseph Massa

2/ ReWax and UnWine

Jersey City, New Jersey

"Our hands-on candle-pour parties offer our customers an opportunity to let loose in an immersive candle-making experience. We meticulously designed these parties to be a multisensory experience, so from the moment customers enter our studio, they are greeted by a soothing ambiance, Top-40 music, and 'scentsational' aromas. Our staff guides them through the entire candle-making process, and customers get to choose from a wide range of fragrances, colors, crystals, and florals. We've really tried to create a haven where people can escape the stress of everyday life and find solace in the simple act of making candles."

—Owner Ashley Shillingford

3/ Botanical Bar

Indianapolis, Indiana

"Botanical Bar is known for our beautiful selection of indoor houseplants that also have various health and wellness benefits. One unique service we provide is our in-house plant repotting service, since we know repotting can be a daunting task for many plant enthusiasts. We're the first Black- and woman-owned plant shop in Indianapolis, and during our first year in business, we hosted a series of community workshops aimed at helping people become better plant parents. The response from the community was overwhelming, with people of all ages and backgrounds attending and actively participating. Witnessing the joy and excitement as attendees gained confidence in their plant care abilities was incredibly rewarding."

—Owner Victoria Beaty

4/ Cheaper Than Therapy

San Francisco, California

"Our customer service is what I'd like to be known for—we've never had a drink minimum because I hated that at other comedy clubs; comedians stay and party with the customers; and I even learned to play piano to keep the party going after the show—but to be honest, we're most easily remembered for a giant foam clown head that sits in our downstairs bar. We operate in the old Shelton Theater, and many, many years ago they did a play and had a custom giant clown head made. It was made downstairs and is too large to go through any doors, so we moved it into the bar during a remodel, and it just lives there now."

—Owner Jon Allen



5/ Pinballz Arcade

Austin, Texas

"Pinballz is known for having one of the largest collections of pinball machines and classic video games in the country, along with many other attractions—from wrestling to comedy nights, e-Sports, live music, murder mystery events, whiskey tastings, brew fests, kid-specific events, and much more. Over the last 13 years, we've seen couples meet at Pinballz—some got married here and many now bring their children. We even helped one young man pop the question. At that time, all our games spit out redemption tickets. We had *Will you marry me?* come out of one of our Skeeball games as she played. Her answer: 'Yes!'"

—Owners Darren and Mikki Spohn

6/ Alpacas of Oregon

Sherwood, Oregon

"Most alpaca farms that are open to the public allow you to interact with animals through a fence, but on our farm, people sign up for a one-hour immersive experience. They get to hand-feed and pet alpacas while we educate them, and they also have the opportunity to visit our barn store to buy alpaca yarn and other products. People tell us every day how much they appreciate spending time with the animals. We get people from all over the world, but our favorite customer is Angela Marie. She is a lovely person who has visited the alpacas probably over 20 times. After she visits, she usually texts us a couple of edited videos that are ready to be posted on social media. She's so good to us and very talented!"

—Owners Doug and Suzanne Campbell

7/ The Beer Spa

Denver, Colorado

"Our unique service is called 'beer therapy.' Guests unwind in a giant tub packed with fresh hops, barley, and medicinal herbs. A cousin of marijuana, hops are a mild sedative, and hops extract offers antioxidant, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties, while barley is rich in vitamins and antioxidants. We're excited to break the stigma of a day spa as a female experience. With our gender-neutral design and warm customer service, we want everyone to feel comfortable. In fact, nearly half our guests are first-time spagoers, typically coerced by their partner with the promise of beer. By the end of their experience, that person is often begging to come back! Many couples have made The Beer Spa their monthly date night."

—Owners Jessica French and Damien Zouaoui



HOW DAVID BEATS OUT GOLIATH

Can mom-and-pop shops truly compete against big-box behemoths and e-commerce giants? Yes, experts say—but they have to think and act truly local.

by **FRANCES DODDS**

Amazon, Walmart, and other big brands can do a lot of things: They can leverage their size to sell at very low prices. They can offer two-day, one-day, and sometimes even same-day delivery. And their return policies can be very flexible.

So how can a mom-and-pop shop compete with all that? Well...they can't.

But they also shouldn't try to.

"You can't 'out-tech' big business," says Jon Reily, an e-commerce expert and senior vice president at Bounteous, which creates digital experiences for brands. "But you sure can 'out-touch' them."

In an age of internet shopping and big-box consolidations, Reily says consumers are hungry for bespoke products and genuine connections—and that's not something big retailers do well. "I would actually argue that we're at the beginning of a 'golden age' for small and independent businesses," he says. "Big-box stores have found their niche for consumables and 'disposable' items, but they can't compete when it comes to specialty goods, craftsmanship, or services."

Case in point: Just look at the companies that made Yelp's list of "America's Favorite Mom & Pop Shops" (see page 60). Many of them offer unique, high-quality products or one-of-a-kind services. It's right there in their names: Maui Goat Yoga, Pinballz Arcade, Cheese Importers, The Beer Spa, and ReWax and UnWine (that last one offers boozy candle-pouring parties).

Lea Lana's Bananas is another company like this. "We offer a very unique product," says owner Lea Lana Gutierrez, who operates in Las Vegas. "There is no other business that offers gift boxes of chocolate-dipped frozen banana pops in a half dozen or dozen."

Gutierrez says their biggest competitor is Edible Arrangements, which also offers chocolate-dipped fruit and same-day delivery. But Lea Lana's Bananas wants to stand out with its quality and customer service. "We use a specific banana—no substitutions—and only Ghirardelli chocolate," she says. "We could save a lot of money by switching to cheap chocolate or cheap bananas, but it's something I just won't do."

Gutierrez hires mostly teenagers—including her own three kids—but takes her "banana squad" very seriously. She's looking for happy, positive, hardworking people—which is why she trains them carefully and pays them competitive hourly wages, even during slow seasons, and offers quarterly raises based on performance. "These teens make more money than I do!" she says with a laugh.

Mom-and-pop shops also have an edge when it comes to creating "experiences"—something consumers increasingly want.

"Amazon does not provide an experience; it's simply a transaction," says Marguerite Pressley Davis, founder of Finance Savvy CEO, which helps small business owners improve their financial literacy. "Your job as a small business owner is to think through how you can turn a purchase into an experience. Is it about the packing, the follow-up, the communication, or customer services? All these create an experience that people are willing to pay for."

At Botanical Bar in Indianapolis, Indiana, which sells high-quality houseplants, owner Victoria Beaty thinks about this a lot. She's built a store with a "calming atmosphere, infused with boho-chic and Neo soul vibes," she says, and offers special services like plant repotting. She's also hosted community workshops to help customers become better plant parents, and says, "The response from the community was overwhelming, with people of all ages and backgrounds actively participating."

That's why it works—because at the local level, it's all about community.

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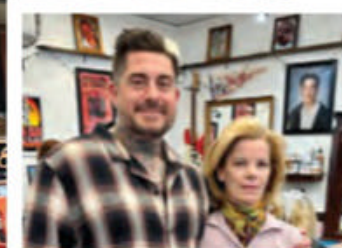
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**Pet Industry Market Size, Trends & Ownership Statistics (americanpetproducts.org)

MY FAVORITE CUSTOMER

For small, independent businesses, loyal patrons are benefactors, protectors, muses, and mascots. They make sure the show goes on. Here, three business owners celebrate an irreplaceable member of their community.



1/ The Book Loft of German Village

Columbus, Ohio

"Our store is known for its very unique layout. Inside is a maze of 32 rooms, all with different genres of books, connected by a series of staircases and hallways. To enter the store, you walk through a city-block-long courtyard which, during warmer months, is a garden. For a number of years, one of our most special customers, Stephanie, would visit and bring her dog Harvey. He would wait patiently in the courtyard as she picked up her books and had a few laughs with staff. When it was time for Harvey to pass, we made a nice spot in a flower bed in our courtyard to bury his ashes. Now Stephanie brings her new puppy Mabel to the store."

—Store manager Michael Babcock

2/ Resurrect Art Coffee House

Seward, Alaska

"Our business is in a former church, right in the center of our little coastal Alaskan town. Many of our customers went to Sunday school in the church, and a handful were married here before it was converted to a coffeehouse and art gallery in 1993. But our standout customer is Mike Brittain. Mike has been a boat captain in our harbor for nearly 50 years. He comes in almost every morning, and is incredibly kind, quick-witted, and warm. He knows everybody's dog and has many trained to do tricks. On mornings Mike is out captaining, we usually have a sticky note by the register that says, 'Mike B won't be in today, but he'll be back tomorrow.'"

—Owners Micheley Kowalski and Michael Stewart

3/ Skull & Combs Co.

New Haven, Connecticut

"We have mismatched antique dressers and mirrors as styling stations, vintage dentist office furniture in the waiting area, tons of pop culture artwork to gaze at, and even a shop dog named Boba who jumps on your lap while you're being shampooed. We're a place where people from all walks of life can come and be treated with respect. But our most loyal customer ever is Mercedes. She's been coming in every Friday at 11 a.m. for a shampoo and blowout for four years. She's from Spain and is a professor at Yale, where she teaches Spanish, and she is the sweetest woman. She adores disco-era music—which we play for her regularly—and particularly loves 'Dancing Queen' by Abba."

—Owner Jason Bunce

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WRANGLING THE MANY-HEADED MONSTER

For mom-and-pop business owners, just as inflation calms in one area of operations, it rears its head somewhere else. The best way to stay on top of it, experts say, is to stay flexible.

by **KIM KAVIN**

Every month, the National Federation of Independent Business asks its members to name their most pressing problem. The survey lists lots of possible answers—taxes, regulations, labor, and more—but as of April, about a quarter of small businesses continue to list inflation at or near the top of the list.

That's down from 31% of small business owners a year ago, but it's still a historically high level of concern about inflation.

"Anecdotally, we hear from small business owners all the time about their struggles to deal with inflation pressures. Whether it's in the product that they sell or increased compensation, it spans all the different types of costs they have to absorb," says Holly Wade, executive director of NFIB's Research Center.

Mom-and-pop businesses are trying all kinds of strategies to buffer the blows. At Savannah Taste Experience, which offers food tours in the scenic Georgia city, cofounder Stu Card says inflation has "impacted the cost of every dish, and has slowed tourism measurably." Card has taken various steps in response, including changing the tasting menus at some restaurants to feature different foods, paying more for the same tastings, absorbing some costs while passing others on to consumers, and offering additional, cheaper tours.

Founder Charles Foreman at the Everyday Sundae ice cream shop in Washington, D.C., says he's lucky he locked in product prices on two-to-four-year contracts before the current inflation surge, but he's still feeling the hit on paper goods and utilities. "One thing I've done is train my staff on proper portions and specs for each item," he says.

Card and Foreman are doing exactly what the NFIB urges its members to do: understand that inflationary pressures will come and go, impacting different parts of a business at different times, so it's best to be flexible and ready to try different tactics to address them.

"Last summer was the pinnacle of the energy crisis, with higher gasoline costs and things like that," Wade says. "That has eased off now, but labor has not, and inventory and supplies—depending on what they need—has not. For those in the restaurant industry, for instance, food is still very expensive for a lot of them. For construction, a lot of the supplies are very expensive still."

Supply-chain disruptions, too, continue to contribute to inflation pressures, according to the NFIB's monthly surveys. That's not likely to change, Wade says, because of the way economies of scale function.

"The larger companies get the first deliveries, and then it goes down the food chain," she says. "So when there's a supply-chain disruption, even a mild one, it disproportionately affects those smaller businesses. The bigger companies have people to navigate those bottlenecks and have a better chance of securing the goods."

NFIB members report that they're battling inflation with a combination of cutting costs in-house, absorbing price increases on products and services, finding ways to increase productivity, and figuring out where to raise retail prices without sacrificing sales.

A key tip is to think granularly, Wade says. For instance, don't just raise prices across the board. Instead, try to determine which products make the most sense to raise prices on.

"It's often hard for a small business owner to take the time to think through where they can become more efficient," she says. "Maybe they can arrange their employees' tasks to be more efficient and curb costs in that capacity."

She also recommends using the SCORE program through the U.S. Small Business Administration, which offers webinars on managing inflation pressures and cutting costs.

"When things start getting disrupted," she says, "it's really important to take inventory of how you run your business so you can not only see how to cut costs, but *where* it makes sense to cut costs."



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IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Mom-and-pop businesses have long been linchpins in their neighborhoods—providing places to gather, have a bite, or see familiar faces. They support their city’s residents, who are glad to return the support. Here, three local entrepreneurs share a time they felt especially connected to their communities.



1/ Everyday Sundae

Washington, D.C.

“When I first opened, there was a group of mommies who came in every Friday with their kids. One Friday, one of the moms, Nicole Harkin, noticed me giving free ice cream to a group of kids I know from the neighborhood, whose families don’t have a lot of resources. The next week, Nicole came in and passed me an envelope with five \$20 bills and told me to keep up the good work. That simple gesture started our community ‘scoop fund.’ Now customers donate to the scoop fund to pay it forward and purchase cones for the next customer. This has allowed me to support local school groups like Black Girls Rock, and some of the daycares and families in our community.”

—Owner Charles Foreman

2/ Tango's Empanadas

Boise, Idaho

“I’m from Argentina, and when my husband and I settled in Boise, I decided to introduce Idaho to empanadas. We were just opening our second location when the pandemic hit. We asked the landlord of the second location if we could park our food truck in the parking lot, but it was shared with the grocery store chain Albertsons—who said we had to go. I posted on our Facebook page asking if anyone knew a spot we could put the food truck, and a few days later, we got a call from Albertsons. They said the store had received so many calls from people—some saying they wouldn’t shop there anymore, others asking them to let us return—that Albertsons gave us permission to go back.”

—Owners Monica and Luis Bremmer

3/ Savannah Taste Experience

Savannah, Georgia

“We specialize in food tours, and in early 2019, we learned that one of our favorite restaurant owners, Theresa Weston (pictured), was at risk of losing Walls’ BBQ—which was handed down from her grandmother. We began a GoFundMe campaign and found volunteers to update the property for new code requirements. Unfortunately, Walls’ BBQ didn’t survive the pandemic, but we still get emails about trying to revive the restaurant, and hope to have good news in the near future. We view these community support projects as not only a responsibility, but as providing value to us in a quantifiable way. They are always our best local marketing efforts.”

—Cofounder Stu Card



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MAKE A PLAN AND STICK TO IT

Independent businesses are unique, so there's no cookie-cutter formula for marketing, experts say. It's all about trying things out—but try things for long enough to really know if they're working.

by **KIM KAVIN**

Marketing opportunities are endless, but marketing budgets are finite. Is it better for a mom-and-pop business to put money into online and social media marketing, or to invest in real-life sponsorships and events?

As with many things in business, you can only find out through trial and error, says Rus Graham, cofounder of New England-based Rushton Gregory Communications.

“The difficulty with marketing programs is that everyone is unique,” Graham says. “There isn't a cookie-cutter approach.”

Graham urges clients to think about the difference between qualitative and quantitative marketing. A qualitative opportunity might be something like a local summer fair where a business can set up a booth, and the owner can have high-quality, in-person interactions with possible customers. By comparison, a quantitative opportunity is something like digital advertising, where the goal is getting in front of as many eyeballs as possible.

“Often, if I'm doing a campaign for somebody new, it's a mix of things,” he says. “I'll use an e-newsletter or sponsored content or something like that to tell the brand's story in their voice. That's a smaller reach, but it's more qualitative, so they can try to get people to engage. Then I combine that with straight banner ads on a website or in a newsletter. That's qualitative, because somebody signed up for the newsletter or went to the site. But with those, you look at impressions. You can put your logo in there, an image that projects who you are, and maybe four words or your URL.”

Michael Babcock uses a combination of marketing tactics for The Book Loft of German Village in Columbus, Ohio. Offline, he plans book signings with authors and partnerships with libraries and other local organizations. Online, the store is all about Twitter: “We use it as a humorous way to interact with people. Focusing on interactions and not ‘promotion’ in the traditional sense has drawn a great deal of attention and customers to our store.”

Jessica French and Damien Zouaoui, owners of The Beer Spa in Denver, say they also promote their beer-inspired spa services through a combination of offline and online methods. Offline, they replicate their spa experience at The Great American Beer Festival each year. Online, they do email marketing to share their story and mission, and use public relations and social media to showcase client experiences. They're mostly on Instagram, but they also post on TikTok and Facebook.

Trying out creative ideas is good, but it's key to track every effort to ensure marketing dollars are being spent wisely, says Wanda Kenton Smith, owner of Florida-based Kenton Smith Marketing.

“Always monitor your spend using all available marketing analytics and measurement tools,” she says. “Determine prior to investment how you will quantify ROI, and then doggedly track every campaign so you know exactly how your campaigns are performing and can make adjustments accordingly.”

Graham agrees, adding that particularly when you're just starting a mom-and-pop business, it's less important how much of the budget to put into marketing, and more important to think about what, specifically, you are trying to achieve.

“Get a feel for the competitive landscape” he says. Be thoughtful about the marketing plan you lay out, and then stick with whatever you implement. Graham says one of the biggest mistakes people make is quitting too soon on a good marketing plan.

“Once you put it in place, know that the horizon is farther away than you think,” Graham says. “Don't second-guess yourself. You may make little tweaks to your plan, but if you're heading in the right direction, stick with it.”



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AMERICA'S FAVORITE MOM & POP SHOPS



→ Scan for an interactive map of the list

Everyone has a favorite mom-and-pop shop.

But is it possible to find... the favorite of the favorites, nationwide?

That's what we wondered. So we called Yelp for help.

To create this list, Yelp's team first identified independently owned and operated businesses with a maximum of four locations, in 10 different small-business categories. Then they ranked those businesses using a variety of factors, including the total volume and ratings of reviews they've gotten on Yelp. Those results were then filtered by geography, so that businesses across the country appear in each category. Last, they checked to make sure the businesses were marked open, and that the restaurants (where applicable) had a passing health score.

Will you think that *your* favorite local shop belongs on it? Probably! And who knows—maybe they'll appear on next year's list. In the meantime, swing by any of the shops on this list and say hi. We hear they're pretty great.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1	Spectra Art Space	Denver	CO
2	Illusions Bar & Theater	Baltimore	MD
3	Cheaper Than Therapy	San Francisco	CA
4	Pinballz Arcade*	Austin	TX
5	Martin Auto Museum & Event Center	Glendale	AZ
6	The Theatre	Reno	NV
7	The Black Fedora Comedy Mystery Theatre	Charleston	SC
8	Trickery	Chicago	IL
9	Laughing Sun Brewing	Bismarck	ND
10	Experience Nutridge	Honolulu	HI
11	Imagine Museum	Saint Petersburg	FL
12	Bacchanal Fine Wine & Spirits	New Orleans	LA
13	Sight & Sound Theatres*	Ronks	PA
14	Spring Haven Farm	Chapel Hill	NC
15	Tennessee Brew Works	Nashville	TN

FITNESS & INSTRUCTION

1	Maui Goat Yoga	Kula	HI
2	North Mass Boulder	Indianapolis	IN
3	The Little Giant Muay Thai	Falls Church	VA
4	Blue Buddha Collective	Scottsdale	AZ
5	Recess Fitness Club	Dallas	TX
6	Kintsugi Yoga	Las Vegas	NV
7	All-Pro Tae Kwon Do Studio	Los Gatos	CA
8	The Training Lab	New York	NY
9	Salt Spa & Yoga	Charleston	SC
10	Sari Weis Personal Training	Chicago	IL
11	Bristlecone Company	Cedar City	UT
12	Ambitious Athletics	Washington	DC
13	Convergence DBC	Brentwood	MO
14	Portland Yoga Collective	Portland	ME
15	Vail Stables	Vail	CO

BEAUTY & SPAS

1	Vintage Barbershop Hawaii	Honolulu	HI
2	The Beer Spa	Denver	CO
3	Hollywood Nails	Fairfax	VA
4	Plan9piercing	Las Vegas	NV
5	EverTrue Microblading Salon - Flatiron	New York	NY
6	Skull & Combs Co.*	New Haven	CT
7	Mudra Massage & Wellness	Portland	OR
8	Bare Arizona	Scottsdale	AZ
9	Bluebell Spa DC	Washington	DC
10	Secret Garden Nails & Beautique*	Bellevue	WA
11	Sana Skin Studio*	Fort Lauderdale	FL
12	Life Stage Massage	Hoboken	NJ
13	All About Hair	Artesia	CA
14	Akalonnie Salon	Katy	TX
15	Ringpfeil Advanced Dermatology*	Philadelphia	PA

HOME & LOCAL SERVICES

1	Pink Plumbing & Sewer	Phoenix	AZ
2	Lani's Tailor & Atelier	Redmond	WA
3	Rain of Las Vegas	Las Vegas	NV
4	Hero Air	Chicago	IL
5	Texas Electrical Connect	Austin	TX
6	5 Points TV Installations	Hialeah	FL
7	A Few Good College Men	Gaithersburg	MD
8	Bronco Pro Kleen Carpet Cleaning Denver	Denver	CO
9	Tony LaMartina Plumbing	St. Louis	MO
10	MMPC	Long Island City	NY
11	Isle Locksmith	Honolulu	HI
12	Auto Pro Detailing*	Fremont	CA
13	Kingdom Electric	Portland	OR
14	Star Locksmith	Brighton	MA
15	Residential Express Services Heating & Air Conditioning	Springfield	VA

SHOPPING

1	Blue Sky Bridal*	Seattle	WA
2	Novapetal Flower Lab	Phoenix	AZ
3	Resurrect Art Coffee House	Seward	AK
4	Botanical Bar	Indianapolis	IN
5	Powell's City of Books	Portland	OR
6	Spotted Leaf Plant Company	Somerville	NJ
7	Baldwin & Co.	New Orleans	LA
8	Jangmi	New York	NY
9	Flamingo Road Nursery	Davie	FL
10	Red Rock Running Company*	Las Vegas	NV
11	The Book Loft of German Village	Columbus	OH
12	Tang's Bridal/Alterations/Bespoke	Manassas	VA
13	SaviorBack	Irvine	CA
14	Bond & Bevel	Caldwell	ID
15	Mia's Creative Tailoring	Denver	CO

EVENT PLANNING & SERVICES

1	Flair Boston	Boston	MA
2	The Pure Imagination Party Company	Orange County	CA
3	Toast & Jam	Chicago	IL
4	Ikaika Photography	Hanalei	HI
5	Lawless Forge*	Seattle	WA
6	Dos Chris' Bakery & Charcuterie Co.	Phoenix	AZ
7	Alpacas Of Oregon	Sherwood	OR
8	The Garden of Reno	Reno	NV
9	Park Hill Fine Art Portraits	Fort Worth	TX
10	Dream Wedding	Flushing	NY
11	River Ventures*	Crystal River	FL
12	LaZoom	Asheville	NC
13	ReWax and UnWine	Jersey City	NJ
14	Shellie Ferrer Events	Park City	UT
15	Lucky Catch Cruises	Portland	ME

FOOD

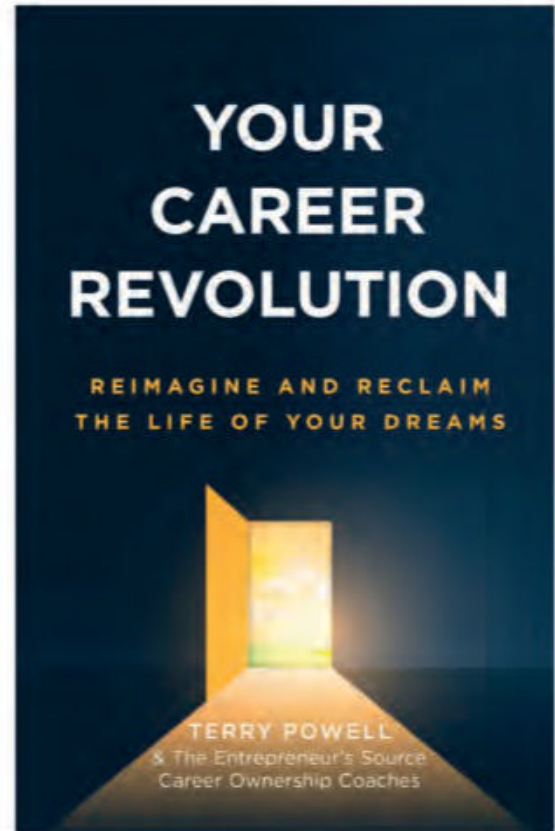
1	Everyday Sundae	Washington	DC
2	Jackie Smalls	Wayne	NJ
3	Cheese Importers	Longmont	CO
4	Waffle and Berry	Honolulu	HI
5	lil' Vegerie	Redondo Beach	CA
6	10/Fold Biscuits	Myrtle Beach	SC
7	Let's Chill Ice Cream	Coral Springs	FL
8	Lea Lana's Bananas	Las Vegas	NV
9	Sweet Greek Pastries	Spring	TX
10	Coneflower Creamery	Omaha	NE
11	Hole Doughnuts	Asheville	NC
12	The Lab Bistro Co.	Virginia Beach	VA
13	The Early Bird Cafe	East Meadow	NY
14	Tango's Empanadas	Boise	ID
15	Rev Coffee Roasters	Smyrna	GA



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5	Zeke's Kitchen & Bar	Smyrna	GA
6	Anton's Craft Kitchen	Oklahoma City	OK
7	Lewis Barbecue*	Charleston	SC
8	Sushi Kaunta	Kent	WA
9	Xalisco Latin Cuisine	Redmond	OR
10	Malinche Mexican Culinary Experience	Ellisville	MO
11	Anatolia Mediterranean Restaurant	Somersworth	NH
12	Original Breakfast House	Phoenix	AZ
13	Geronimo	Santa Fe	NM
14	Zeneli Pizzeria e Cucina Napoletana	New Haven	CT
15	Huli Sue's BBQ & Grill	Asheville	NC

NIGHTLIFE

1	Tomi Jazz	New York	NY
2	Kove	San Diego	CA
3	Chiba Bar	Colorado Springs	CO
4	The Neighbors Retail & Cocktail	Orlando	FL
5	Elevated Taproom	Phoenix	AZ
6	Cosmic Coffee + Beer Garden	Austin	TX
7	Ko'olau Distillery	Kailua	HI
8	The Setting	Washington	DC
9	The Gramophone	St. Louis	MO
10	Flora	Beaverton	OR
11	Mahogany Jazz Hall	New Orleans	LA
12	The Silver Stamp	Las Vegas	NV
13	Somerset	Cincinnati	OH
14	Phocific Standard Time (PST)	Seattle	WA
15	Trace Brewing	Pittsburgh	PA

HOTELS / B&Bs / TRAVEL

1	The Vine House Bed & Breakfast	Temecula	CA
2	The Chadwick Bed & Breakfast	Portland	ME
3	Horseshoe Bend Slot Canyon Tours	Page	AZ
4	Spoke and Vine Motel	Palisade	CO
5	The Motor Lodge	Prescott	AZ
6	FivePine Lodge & Conference Center	Sisters	OR
7	Everglades River of Grass Adventures	Miami	FL
8	Ray's Bucktown B&B	Chicago	IL
9	The Roxbury	Roxbury	NY
10	Blue Swallow Motel	Tucumcari	NM
11	Savannah Taste Experience	Savannah	GA
12	Desert Pearl Inn	Springdale	UT
13	Rachael's Dowry Bed & Breakfast	Baltimore	MD
14	Bobby's Bike Hike - Chicago	Chicago	IL
15	Seven Oaks	Lake Geneva	WI



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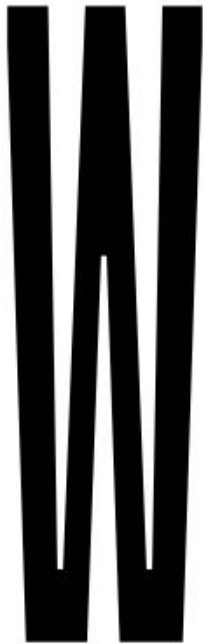
\$12 Billion

Question

Brex

was a fintech unicorn that grew too fast and nearly imploded. To turn it into the multibillion-dollar company that it's become, its founders had to step back and ask: "What do we do, and who are we for?" Finding those answers wasn't easy.

by **LIZ BRODY**



When a handful of Brex executives traveled to Santa Barbara for a leadership offsite in August 2021, instead of enjoying the breezy California beaches, they filed into a windowless, subterranean hotel meeting room. There, they holed up for three days—debating, soul-searching, and hair-pulling, their stress ricocheting off the four walls around them.

They were there to save the company.

Back in 2018, before Brex came along, founders often had a problem: Because many had no personal or business credit history, they were unable to get a corporate credit card—even if they'd just raised millions of dollars. Brex became a very Silicon Valley way of solving that problem: The company was founded by two Brazilian immigrants, one 19, the other 20, who

had dropped out of Stanford and practically reinvented the very nature of how a startup credit card could work. Four months after debuting their breakthrough card, they raised over \$100 million and achieved unicorn status—then grew to 1,200 employees in three years. “That’s when everything started breaking,” says cofounder Henrique Dubugras.

As they settled at the table in the bowels of the hotel that August, the company’s future hinged on one question: What *is* Brex? The startup had begun with a singular mission, and a simple story to tell. But as it grew, that had gotten complicated. Now it was a lot of things to a lot of people, many of whom were unhappy. Brex had lost the defining clarity that had made it once stand out so boldly.

To address that big question and get back to the heart of Brex’s *why*, Dubugras and his cofounder Pedro Franceschi had a proposal. It seemed counterintuitive—and risky as hell. If it didn’t work, all those employees could be left without jobs. But the way they saw it, a radical problem required radical change. “This was the company moment,” says COO Michael Tannenbaum. “It was very scary.”

BREX’S BEGINNINGS go back to Brazil, where Dubugras and Franceschi were just two kids living in different parts of the country, debating coding programs with each other on Twitter. They became friends, then collaborators. When Franceschi was 16 and Dubugras was 17, they started their first serious business—a Stripe-like mobile system for small e-commerce fintech called Pagar.me, which grew to \$1.5 million in gross merchandise value. “They created something that, technically, is probably one of the best pieces of software that our team has ever seen,” says Andre Street, cofounder of a large European payments company called Teya and the Brazilian fintech Stone, which bought the company in 2016. The money the teenagers pocketed helped them go to Stanford, where they’d both been accepted.

In their first year at the university, however, Dubugras and Franceschi also got into Y Combinator for the winter 2017 batch. Virtual reality was “the next thing” at the time, and they pitched a VR startup that would turn your phone into a little desktop computer. But they quickly realized they knew too little about the technology to even begin—and looked around for another idea to take advantage of the program. That’s when they spotted the problem: Their Y Combinator colleagues had raised a lot of money but couldn’t get a corporate card for the life of them, because they didn’t have the financial history the banks required. *That*, the friends decided, they could figure out.

They dropped out of Stanford to start Brex in 2017, wooed Michael

Tannenbaum from the online bank SoFi to become CFO, and scored a second-story office on Market Street in San Francisco on the cheap. Although it had a great address for a wannabe financial company, the space was very startup. “There was always a lot of poop on the doorstep and usually a couple homeless people at the door who you had to go, ‘excuse me,’” recalls Dubugras. Inside, they concocted a place to hold meetings—along with cobbling together their different cultures. Dubugras and Franceschi, for example, were used to taking nice, leisurely lunches, because in Brazil that’s how you bond with coworkers. “Oh my God,” says Tannenbaum, who often ate takeout at his desk. “It wasn’t just the length of the lunches. They’d be like, ‘Let’s have sushi.’ And I was like, ‘I took a pay cut, obviously, to come here, and I can’t even afford to eat with you guys!’”

But they all worked fast, and they convinced a New York bank called Emigrant to back them. By June 2018, they were ready to launch their first card. To create it, they rebuilt the tech from the ground up and innovated an underwriting model based on cash balances (instead of FICO and financial history) that constantly evaluated a client’s financial strength to adjust the credit limit. Clients had to pay it off at the end of each month, which at least saved them from paying interest. The application took minutes.

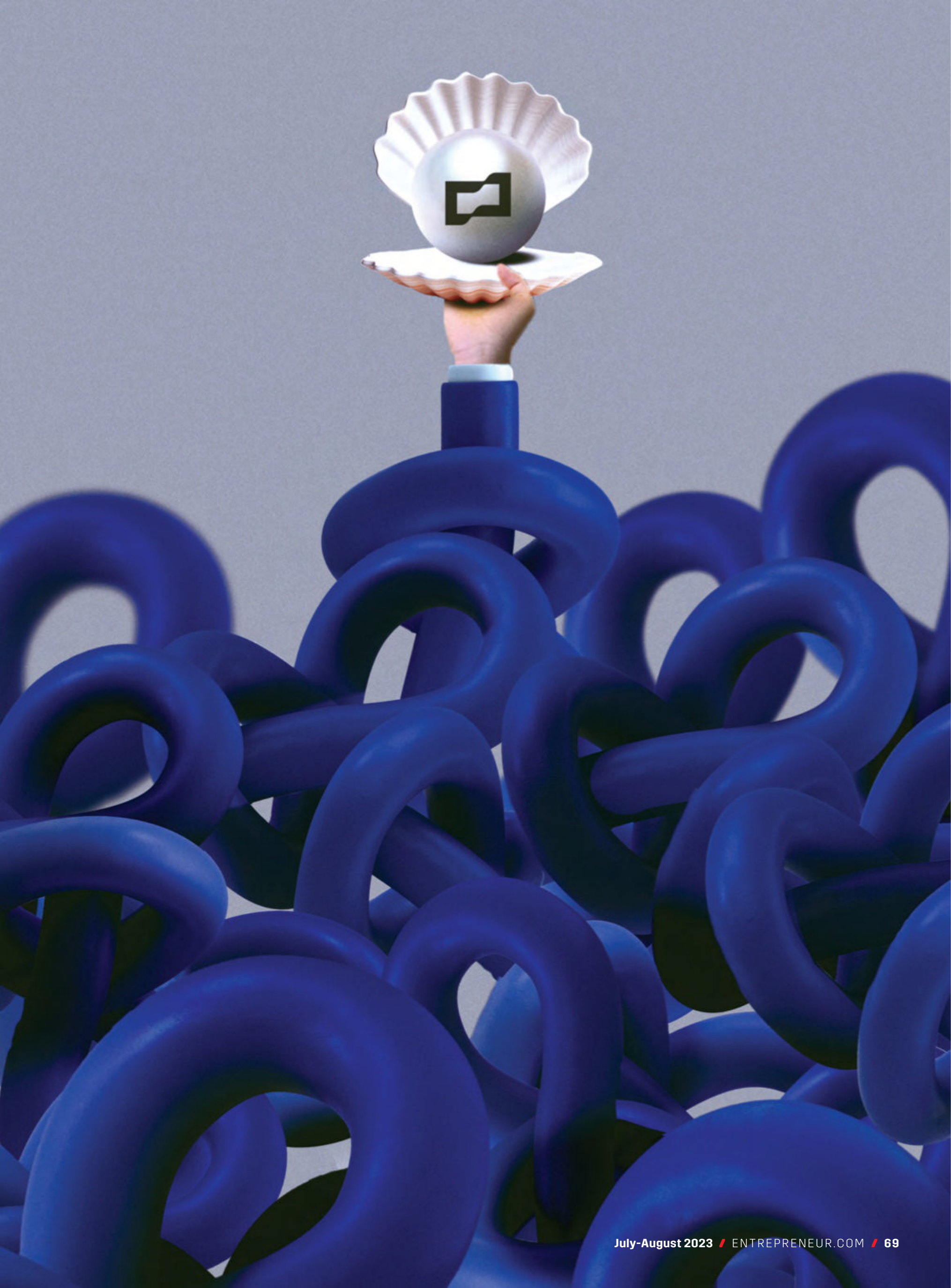
This meant that, for the first time, founders who raised at least \$250,000 (now it’s \$100,000) could be eligible for a corporate card—and with 10 to 20 times higher credit limits than they could get elsewhere, along with no personal liability. “That was very different from how a traditional small-business credit card operates,” says Nick Ewen, content director for The Points Guy, a travel site that evaluates credit cards. And Brex’s card came with rewards and a spend management tool to incentivize its use, because the company made its money on transaction fees.

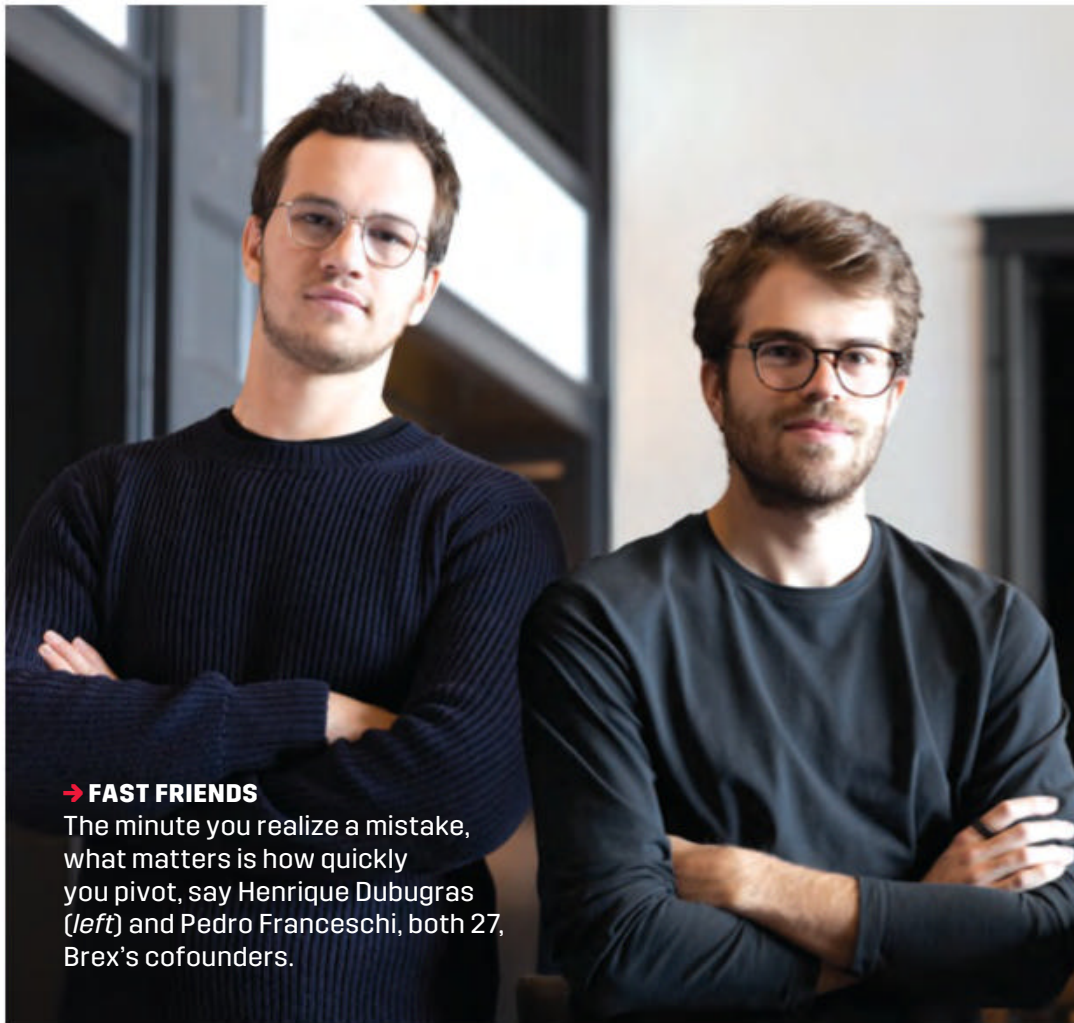
At first, the Brex team devoted every calorie of effort to making sure that card worked. “The degree of focus on one customer, early-stage startups, served us really well,” Franceschi says. But in the fall of that same year, Brex raised \$125 million in a Series C round, earning it unicorn status—and then, like any high-growth, venture-backed company, it started looking for ways to expand. The first steps were clear: “Our customers were telling us, ‘Hey, I love your credit card, but I hate my bank account,’” says Dubugras. “These startup founders want products that are simple, easy to use, great design. So they were asking, ‘Can you build a version of a bank account that is that?’” In October 2019, Brex answered yes: It launched business cash accounts.

What next? Dubugras and Franceschi wondered. They could try to sell more cards, but that alone couldn’t fuel massive growth; the market of eligible startups was just too limited, so they took a wider view and saw three different paths. The first was to adapt their credit card and business accounts to e-commerce companies and specific industries. A second possibility was to go after the masses of hyperlocal businesses—mom-and-pop shops, restaurants, little retailers—all of which Brex classified as “small businesses.” The third was to start building financial products for midsize companies—which is to say, companies a step or two larger than they were already serving.

“We decided to do all of these ideas at the same time,” says Dubugras. “We just kind of went everywhere.” It was the end of 2019. Brex had 400 employees.

Over the next year or so, this decision would transform Brex. It went from serving a narrow group of clients (startups) with specific products (credit cards and bank accounts) to producing a suite of fintech products for a very wide range of companies. And for a while, this worked. Every kind of business, from tiny retailers to midsize firms, was signing up for services, creating thousands of new custom-





→ **FAST FRIENDS**

The minute you realize a mistake, what matters is how quickly you pivot, say Henrique Dubugras (*left*) and Pedro Franceschi, both 27, Brex's cofounders.

ers per month. Brex expanded, too: It bought up talent as if it were Black Friday, and was on its way to 1,200 employees in 2021.

But that year, “our systems started going down,” says Dubugras. “We started having more fraud and losing a lot of money because of that. Our original startups complained, ‘The support is too slow. You don’t care about us anymore. Where are all the new features that you promised?’ And the small businesses were unsatisfied with their product too.” As Brex tried to solve these problems, its team came to realize just how different these two kinds of businesses were—and it became clear that, as the company’s product roadmaps diverged, many of its customers were left unhappy.

Looking back, the founders saw that their ambitious but scatter-shot strategy had been a mistake. “We’d thought it was just the product innovation that made us so successful. But a big part of it was just the clarity of the original message, you know?” says Dubugras. “We had been the ‘credit card for startups.’ And had we not lost that message, and stayed in our lane, we would have grown more.”

As he and Franceschi headed for Santa Barbara for their off-site, their minds were on how Brex could recapture its story—and its purpose.

WHEN EIGHT TOP EXECUTIVES gathered in that hotel, one might have thought the first order of business was logistical. In other words, how could Brex better execute to solve the problems with its existing products and build new ones that its customers wanted? But Dubugras and Franceschi knew that wouldn’t address the brand’s larger, existential crisis.

The way they saw it, Brex couldn’t just revert to simply issuing credit cards. Investors and stakeholders expected hypergrowth! But there had to be a way to reclaim the brand’s origin story about being a financial solution for startups—and still scale. And Dubugras and Franceschi had an idea: Brex would refocus on startups, by also growing *with* them. That meant building products not just for companies at launch, but for those that grow into

midsize and even global companies too.

The kicker was this: Brex wouldn’t wait for its startup customers to get big. It would immediately begin building products for large enterprise clients. And it had a specific one in its sights: the massive company known for getting customers food from their favorite restaurants, DoorDash. At the time, DoorDash was looking for a partner to build out its new spend management system—and although it was already piloting a solution with one of Brex’s competitors, Dubugras and Franceschi bet there was still time to win that business. “We thought, if we can make something that supports the complexity of DoorDash but is simple enough so everyone in the company understands it, we will have something that works for the smaller guys too,” says Dubugras. “And it will allow us to get really big clients today.”

Around the table at the offsite, this big idea landed with a thud. “A lot of the other leaders had decided that a natural thing to do was to go slightly upmarket and start to bring the features up a little bit,” says Tannenbaum. “But Henrique and Pedro said, ‘No, we’re gonna go *all* the way up. We’re gonna do DoorDash.’ We were like, *Whaaat?*” Brex had simply never built anything with the complexities required for a client that size.

And yet, Dubugras and Franceschi weren’t done dropping bombs. They also proposed that Brex no longer focus on its small business clients without venture funding—the local mom-and-pop shops it had started serving only a year before; nor would they accept new ones. Tens of thousands of these customers were now using Brex, but they represented only 2% of its revenue, didn’t have a lot of growth potential, and were asking for new products like loans and lease financing that Brex didn’t want to create.

Shifting away from these clients would be no small move. Brex had spent time and money acquiring them, and like the first idea, this one was hard to swallow at the executive retreat. Many of Brex’s leaders wanted to stick with the company’s current plan. “Some of the thinking,” says Dubugras, “was like, ‘We just haven’t given it enough time. Maybe we *can* do it all. And we already promised all this to all these partners and investors.’” The room was stuffy with tension, yet the founders felt like they’d outlined the best path. “It was our job to consider all the practicalities,” says Dubugras, “but also think about the longer term, and where is this company going to be and what are we going to do in the world. And pick our battle.”

And so they all emerged into the fresh, salty air with a new vision. Going forward, Brex was the brand for fast-growing companies—helping them grow from startups into the next DoorDash. Now all it had to do was win the actual DoorDash business.

HERE’S HOW IT WENT down at DoorDash.

Dubugras and Franceschi got a meeting, as they tell it. *We know you’re piloting a new expense management system with a competitor of ours, they said. Is their solution perfect for you?*

The answer was no—DoorDash had an issue with it.

“We’re like, ‘Okay, just give us a month to come back with a plan of how we’ll build something much better,’” says Dubugras. When Brex made the PowerPoint presentation, it got the green light to join the competition.

Now it was time to actually build a complicated, enterprise-level spend management system. To pull it off in short order,

“

We had been ‘the credit card for startups.’ Had we not lost that message, and stayed in our lane, we would have grown more.

”

Tannenbaum switched roles from CFO to COO. He took responsibilities off the founders’ plates, especially Franceschi’s, so they could focus full bore on this project. Everyone chipped in.

“DoorDash actually evaluated three suppliers who were up for the opportunity to service us,” says Jerome Barley, DoorDash’s head of global travel and expense, who left Capital One in part to help DoorDash migrate to a new spend system. The company’s needs were quite elaborate; one of the many things it wanted was a feature to control budgets in hyperspecific ways. “Brex was the only one that delivered. And their speed to market from a technical perspective was really similar to how we operate,” he says. “Brex reminded us of DoorDash.”

Only eight months after the offsite, on April 13, 2022, Brex announced its new system—with DoorDash as a client.

The platform, called Empower, shows a finance leader where every dollar is going in real time—down to the individual employee. “So it really gives us the opportunity to drive deeper insight into spend,” says Barley, who still meets at least twice a week with Brex’s team for routine issues and to discuss new and upcoming features. For example, he wanted one specifically to help DoorDash’s sales teams, who constantly travel from merchant to merchant. The original mileage tool required a user to enter every stop they made. That was time-consuming and tedious. The new one will allow for multiple points in a day without logging all the addresses. “For our sales folks,” says Barley, “this will be huge.”

But the hard work at Brex had only begun. Once it was officially serving enterprise clients, it was time to set other things in motion—including the new vision for Brex.

On June 17, 2022, the company executed that other part of its strategy—shifting away from small and local businesses. Franceschi spelled it out in a 13-part tweet that began: “Yesterday we made the difficult decision to stop serving traditional small businesses at @brexHQ. Brex remains deeply committed to serving startups, so let me explain how we got to this (painful) decision, and why it allows us to serve startups even better.” He outlined the company’s need to focus on better products for its core users, and said the impacted small businesses would have two months to migrate off Brex.

This was a heavy announcement. It felt like kicking guests out of your home, after first inviting them to stay and making friends. Also, 11% of Brex’s team was devoted to serving these clients—so this meant laying off 136 people. On a human level, Dubugras says, “it was terrible and horrible,” but financially, he was convinced it was required for the company to move forward. The backlash was fast

and brutal. Upset customers took to Twitter, writing that Brex is “dumping small businesses” and “torpedo[ing] your company’s prospects.” News stories described the company as abandoning small businesses in favor of bigger-paying clients. And there was a lot of confusion about who, exactly, Brex would stop working with. What was the line between the “small businesses” Brex was moving away from, and the “startups” it still embraced?

“That was the worst day of my working life,” says Dubugras. “It’s okay when you’re getting a bad article about something that happens to everyone. But this was, like, our fuck-up.” Why? For all sorts of reasons, Brex should have never started serving those small companies in the first place, and it should have had a smoother way to let them go.

For a while, Brex was in damage-control mode. Then it adjusted. And on its site, Brex explained carefully—without using the term “small businesses” at all—why it had decided to focus on startups and scaled companies. Then it turned its attention to the future.

AFTER LAST YEAR’S DRAMA, Brex is on a steadier course. It is valued at \$12.3 billion and has 1,100 employees—and although there’s increasing competition, it continues to innovate. Recently it rolled out a robust travel solution and is currently developing advanced AI tools to make smarter spending decisions with technology from OpenAI, the creators of ChatGPT. Brex is still in hypergrowth, having raised \$1.5 billion. And while not yet profitable, revenue is in the hundreds of millions, says Dubugras, declining to be more specific.

The majority of its new business is now coming from midmarket enterprises, who sign up for Empower, the product Brex originally cooked up for DoorDash. New clients look like SeatGeek, which has around 1,000 employees and chose Brex after interviewing 10 vendors for the job. Teddy Collins, SeatGeek’s vice president of corporate finance, was looking for both the best enterprise-grade software and a killer modern user experience. “Brex stood out to bring both of those worlds together,” he says. “Now 95% of our expenses are automatically categorized, and employees are able to complete their expense reports on Slack. Their engagement and satisfaction scores have been really good from the launch.”

As Brex grows its enterprise side, Dubugras and Franceschi are always looking to signal that Brex is built for startups. For example, when Silicon Valley Bank collapsed in March, it stepped in to offer emergency bridge loans to impacted startups, without trying to make any money off them. The offer was ultimately not necessary; the FDIC decided to help the startups instead. But as a result, within the first week, Brex netted 4,000 new clients and about \$2 billion in deposits.

Brex is also still working on its brand messaging. The founders were fast to pivot the company’s product roadmap, but are finding that redefining the brand publicly takes time. Today the homepage calls out: “Control all your spend in one unified platform,” and goes on to promise: “Automate compliance, close the books faster, and keep everyone on budget in real time, worldwide.” That language is all geared toward enterprises with no immediate mention of startups. Franceschi agrees: “These are startups that evolve, right? There’s a lot of work we need to do on clarifying that message.”

Dubugras considers this. “I think it can even be more simple,” he says, looking off as if into the future. “But our messaging is definitely better than we had before. I would say we’re getting there.” ■

Liz Brody is Entrepreneur’s contributing editor.

Franchise / Listings

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The Best of the Best

Looking to buy a winning brand? There's no better place to start than this list of 152 winners.

by TRACY STAPP HEROLD

We call them our “Best of the Best”—the franchises that don’t just rank in our annual Franchise 500, but rank No. 1 in their respective industry categories. In categories as diverse as pizza and pet care, tutoring and tanning, these are the brands that rose above the competition in 2023—and because more than 1,300 companies applied for this year’s ranking, that competition was fierce.

Some brands on this list have been on top for years—even decades—while others are just starting to make their mark in the franchise world. All of them are on this list because of how they ranked in the 2023 Franchise 500. That ranking, based on data gathered as of July 2022, evaluated each franchise company based

on 150-plus data points in the areas of costs and fees, system size and growth, franchisee support, brand strength, and financial strength and stability. Only the 500 top-scoring companies made it into the Franchise 500—and only 152 ranked No. 1 in category, qualifying them to be called “best of the best.”

This list is not intended as a recommendation of any particular brand. If you’re interested in buying a franchise in a specific industry, it’s important to consider all the franchise opportunities available within that industry and do your research to find which one will be No. 1 for *you*. Before investing in any franchise, make sure you read the company’s legal documents, consult with an attorney and an accountant, and talk to current and former franchisees.

AUTOMOTIVE

Appearance Services

Ziebart

Auto detailing, films, appearance and protection services

STARTUP COST
\$416.8K-\$566.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
388/12

Car-Wash Services

Tommy's Express Car Wash

Car washes

STARTUP COST
\$5.3M-\$7.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
110/6

Oil-Change Services

Valvoline Instant Oil Change

Oil changes and preventive maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$178K-\$3.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
817/756

Repair & Maintenance Services

Midas

Auto repair and maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$199.2K-\$739.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,941/0

Wheels & Tires

Big O Tires

Tires, tire services, auto products

STARTUP COST
\$333.5K-\$1.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
434/32

Window Tinting

Tint World

Window tinting, vehicle wraps, mobile electronics, auto accessories, detailing services

STARTUP COST
\$259.5K-\$399.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
107/0

Miscellaneous Automotive Products & Services

DPF Alternatives

Diesel particulate filter cleaning and after-treatment system restoration

STARTUP COST
\$44K-\$199K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
56/0

BUSINESS SERVICES

Advertising Services

Social Indoor

Indoor print and digital advertising services

STARTUP COST
\$76.3K-\$239K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
46/3

Business Brokerages

Transworld Business Advisors

Business brokerages; franchise consulting

STARTUP COST
\$76.1K-\$99.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
359/1

Business Coaching & Consulting

The Entrepreneur's Source

Franchise/business coaching and development

STARTUP COST
\$117.6K-\$125.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
149/0

Coworking Spaces

Venture X

Coworking spaces

STARTUP COST
\$388.1K-\$3.6M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
49/0

Networking Groups

Network In Action

Professional networking and referral groups

STARTUP COST
\$25.7K-\$32.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
77/3

Printing/Marketing Services

Minuteman Press

Printing, graphics, and marketing services

STARTUP COST
\$75.9K-\$187.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
967/0

Property Management

Property Management Inc.

Commercial, residential, association, and short-term rental property management

STARTUP COST
\$58.2K-\$225.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
378/2

Shipping Services

Unishippers

Parcel and freight shipping services

STARTUP COST
\$44.6K-\$233.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
209/69

Signs

FastSigns

Signs, graphics

STARTUP COST
\$234.3K-\$324.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
761/0

Staffing/Recruiting

Express Employment Professionals

Staffing, HR solutions

STARTUP COST
\$140K-\$400K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
857/1

Training Programs

Leadership Management International

Leadership and organizational training and development

STARTUP COST
\$20K-\$27.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
483/0

Miscellaneous Business Services

YESCO Sign & Lighting Service

Sign and lighting service and maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$65K-\$352.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
60/42

CHILDREN'S BUSINESSES

Childcare

The Learning Experience Academy of Early Education

Preschool/educational childcare

STARTUP COST
\$589.4K-\$5.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
287/41

Children's Enrichment Programs: Music

School of Rock

Music education

STARTUP COST
\$395.8K-\$537.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
275/46

Children's Enrichment Programs: STEM

Code Ninjas

Computer-coding learning centers for ages 5 and up

STARTUP COST
\$181.2K-\$451.95K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
385/6

Children's Enrichment Programs: Miscellaneous

Drama Kids

After-school drama classes and summer camps

STARTUP COST
\$33.8K-\$73.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
206/0

Children's Fitness Programs

Premier Martial Arts

Martial arts classes

STARTUP COST
\$183.7K-\$421.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
219/9

Children's Retail

Once Upon A Child

New and used children's clothing, equipment, furniture, toys

STARTUP COST
\$276.2K-\$417.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
404/0

Fundraising Programs

Fundraising University

Fundraising

STARTUP COST
\$77.9K-\$84.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
63/9

Swimming Lessons

Goldfish Swim School

Infant and child swimming lessons

STARTUP COST
\$1.7M-\$3.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
142/4

Tutoring

Kumon

Supplemental education

STARTUP COST
\$67.4K-\$145.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
26,486/41

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Business Financial Services

Expense Reduction Analysts (ERA)

Business financial consulting

STARTUP COST
\$66K-\$85.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
710/0

Insurance

Goosehead Insurance

Property and casualty insurance

STARTUP COST
\$40K-\$118.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,344/0

Tax Services

H&R Block

Tax preparation, electronic filing

STARTUP COST
\$31.6K-\$157.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,270/6,665

Miscellaneous Financial Services

Motto Mortgage

Mortgage brokerages

STARTUP COST
\$62.8K-\$86.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
205/0

Who's Been Best the Longest?

WHAT'S EVEN MORE challenging than earning the No. 1 spot in your category in our increasingly competitive Franchise 500 ranking? Holding onto that spot for 10 or more years in a row. Only 17 brands on this year's list can claim that distinction:



The UPS Store
33 years



Budget Blinds
28 years



Kumon
22 years



Dunkin'
37 years



RooterMan
21 years



Charleys Cheesesteaks & Wings
20 years



Minuteman Press
20 years



Servpro
20 years



Hampton by Hilton
14 years



Once Upon A Child
14 years



Cinnabon
12 years



Express Employment Professionals
12 years



7-Eleven
12 years



Jan-Pro Cleaning and Disinfecting
11 years



Snap-on Tools
11 years



Transworld Business Advisors
11 years



Taco Bell
10 years



**BUDGET[®]
BLINDS**



We were recently inducted into Entrepreneur's Franchise 500[®] "Hall of Fame" for making the highly competitive list for 28 consecutive years!



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- ✓ Low startup costs, in-house financing, and Veteran discounts available*.
- ✓ Amazing product selection including Smart Home automation solutions.
- ✓ Proven business model to convert and retain lifelong customers.

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*Conditions apply. See Franchise Disclosure Document for details. This is not an offering to sell a franchise. Franchise offerings are made through review of the Franchise Disclosure Document. Budget Blinds is a Home Franchise Concepts brand. ©2023 Budget Blinds, LLC. All rights reserved.



→ JERSEY MIKE'S SUBS

FOOD: FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS

Breakfast/Brunch Restaurants

Eggs Up Grill

Breakfast, brunch, and lunch restaurants

STARTUP COST
\$412.9K-\$764.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
56/1

Mexican Restaurants

On the Border

Mexican and Tex-Mex restaurants

STARTUP COST
\$2.5M-\$4.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
25/109

Pizza Restaurants

Boston's Restaurant & Sports Bar

Restaurants and sports bars

STARTUP COST
\$1M-\$2.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
426/2

Sports Bars/Pubs

Walk-On's Sports Bistreaux

Louisiana-themed sports restaurants

STARTUP COST
\$1.3M-\$4.99M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
68/6

Miscellaneous Full-Service Restaurants

Denny's

Family restaurants

STARTUP COST
\$1M-\$2.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,566/65

FOOD: QUICK-SERVICE RESTAURANTS

Acai Bowls

Baya Bar

Acai, pitaya, and coconut bowls, smoothies, juices, avocado toast, coffee

STARTUP COST
\$155K-\$335K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
19/3

Asian Food

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue

Asian-American/Hawaiian food

STARTUP COST
\$151.7K-\$613K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
213/0

Baked Goods: Bakery Cafes

Paris Baguette

Bakery cafes

STARTUP COST
\$635.8K-\$1.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,722/20

Baked Goods: Cinnamon Rolls

Cinnabon

Cinnamon rolls, baked goods, coffee

STARTUP COST
\$112K-\$546.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,805/2

Baked Goods: Doughnuts

ShIPLEY DO-NUTS

Doughnuts, kolaches, pastries, coffee

STARTUP COST
\$525K-\$1.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
324/11

Baked Goods: Pretzels

Auntie Anne's

Soft pretzels

STARTUP COST
\$146.1K-\$523.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,918/12

Baked Goods: Miscellaneous

Kolache Factory

Kolaches, pastries, coffee

STARTUP COST
\$431.9K-\$709.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
31/28

Chicken

Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen

Fried chicken, seafood, biscuits

STARTUP COST
\$383.5K-\$3.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,810/41

Coffee

Dunkin'

Coffee, doughnuts, baked goods

STARTUP COST
\$437.5K-\$1.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
12,957/0

Frozen Desserts: Ice Cream

Dairy Queen

Soft-serve ice cream, burgers, chicken

STARTUP COST
\$1.5M-\$2.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
7,266/2

Frozen Desserts: Miscellaneous

Kona Ice

Shaved-ice trucks

STARTUP COST
\$149.99K-\$189.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,505/7

Ghost Kitchens

Combo Kitchen

Ghost kitchens/food halls

STARTUP COST
\$3.3K-\$357.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
105/1

Hamburgers

Culver's

Frozen custard, specialty burgers

STARTUP COST
\$2.3M-\$5.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
865/6

Hot Dogs

Wiener Schnitzel

Hot dogs, ice cream

STARTUP COST
\$304.6K-\$1.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
321/0

Mexican Food

Taco Bell

Mexican-inspired food

STARTUP COST
\$575.6K-\$3.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
7,435/465

Pizza

Papa John's

Pizza

STARTUP COST
\$200.1K-\$788.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,239/520

Poke

Pokeworks

Poke and Asian fusion bowls

STARTUP COST
\$374.8K-\$610.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
58/7

Salads

Chop Stop

Chopped salads, rice and bean bowls, wraps

STARTUP COST
\$375K-\$699K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
21/4

Sandwiches: Philly Cheesesteak

Charleys Cheesesteaks & Wings

Philly cheesesteaks, fries, wings, lemonade

STARTUP COST
\$251.6K-\$1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
655/55

Sandwiches: Submarine

Jersey Mike's Subs

Subs and Philly cheesesteaks

STARTUP COST
\$194K-\$954.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,384/18

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- ✓ Scalable business model with home-based or retail location.
- ✓ No remodeling background needed – full training and ongoing support.

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Remodeling Franchise!

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Sandwiches: Miscellaneous

Arby's
Sandwiches, fries, shakes

STARTUP COST
\$628.95K-\$2.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,445/1,116

Seafood

Captain D's
Seafood

STARTUP COST
\$868.6K-\$1.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
223/309

Smoothies/Juices

Tropical Smoothie Cafe
Smoothies, salads, wraps, sandwiches, flatbreads

STARTUP COST
\$277K-\$584K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,141/1

Teas

Gong Cha
Bubble tea

STARTUP COST
\$162.4K-\$314.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,168/587

Miscellaneous Quick-Service Restaurants

Clean Eatz
Healthy food

STARTUP COST
\$256K-\$662K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
82/1

FOOD: RETAIL SALES

Kilwins

Chocolates, fudge, ice cream

STARTUP COST
\$215.8K-\$755.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
150/3

Miscellaneous Food/Beverage Businesses

Nothing Bundt Cakes
Bundt cakes and gifts

STARTUP COST
\$483.6K-\$699.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
429/16

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Assisted Stretching

StretchLab
Assisted stretching

STARTUP COST
\$160.3K-\$299.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
208/0

CBD

Your CBD Store
CBD stores

STARTUP COST
\$69.8K-\$90.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
275/0

Chiropractic Services

The Joint Chiropractic
Chiropractic services

STARTUP COST
\$215.3K-\$476.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
724/127

Eye Care

Pearle Vision
Eye care and eyewear

STARTUP COST
\$70.2K-\$978.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
460/111

Fitness (General)

Planet Fitness
Fitness clubs

STARTUP COST
\$1.6M-\$4.9M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,091/233

Fitness: Barre

Pure Barre
Barre fitness classes and apparel

STARTUP COST
\$214.3K-\$457.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
619/2

Fitness: Boxing/Kickboxing

RockBox Fitness
Boxing, kickboxing, and functional strength training fitness studios

STARTUP COST
\$252.3K-\$588.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
40/0

Your Brand-New Bestie

WHILE MANY OF the same brands claim the No. 1 spot in their categories year after year, that doesn't mean there's no opportunity for other companies to earn their way to the top. In fact, 25 franchise companies are making their very first appearance on our Best of the Best list this year:

- Baya Bar
- Beverly Hills Rejuvenation
- Clean Eatz
- Code Ninjas
- Deka Lash
- Dog Training Elite
- DPF Alternatives
- Drama Kids
- Filta Environmental Kitchen Solutions
- Fundraising University
- Mosquito Shield
- On the Border
- Perspire Sauna Studio
- Premier Martial Arts
- Premier Pools & Spas
- redbox+ Dumpsters
- RockBox Fitness
- Sam the Concrete Man
- Sign Gypsies
- Social Indoor
- The Learning Experience Academy of Early Education
- The Vitamin Shoppe
- Venture X
- WIN Home Inspection
- YogaSix

Fitness: Pilates

Club Pilates
Reformer Pilates classes

STARTUP COST
\$185.8K-\$388.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
750/0

Fitness: Yoga

YogaSix
Yoga studios

STARTUP COST
\$294.8K-\$499.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
154/1

Mobility Solutions

Mobility Plus
Sales, rentals, installations, and repairs of mobility products

STARTUP COST
\$249.99K-\$391.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
60/0

Physical Therapy

Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers
Physical therapy, balance and vestibular therapy, preventive wellness services

STARTUP COST
\$180.8K-\$473K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
416/57

Vitamin Stores

The Vitamin Shoppe
Vitamins, minerals, supplements, sport nutrition products

STARTUP COST
\$528K-\$976.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
30/675

Miscellaneous Health Products

The Good Feet Store
Arch supports, related products

STARTUP COST
\$137.2K-\$396.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
184/23

Miscellaneous Health Services

American Family Care
Urgent care/primary care centers

STARTUP COST
\$1.1M-\$1.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
205/79

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Concrete Coatings

Concrete Craft
Decorative concrete coatings

STARTUP COST
\$156.3K-\$233.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
88/0

Flooring

Floor Coverings International
Flooring

STARTUP COST
\$151.4K-\$220.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
239/0



Own an in-demand mobile pet grooming business in your local community!



Get Your Paws on a Business Opportunity in the \$123 Billion Pet Industry with an Aussie Pet Mobile Franchise.

- ✓ Custom grooming van that serves as a mobile storefront.
- ✓ Scalable business model with plan to expand quickly!
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aussiepetmobilefranchising.com



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→ HAMPTON BY HILTON

MAINTENANCE

Asphalt Maintenance

SealMaster

Pavement maintenance products and equipment

STARTUP COST

\$579.8K-\$924.5K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
43/3

Carpet & Upholstery Services

Stanley Steemer

Carpet, upholstery, HVAC, and air-duct cleaning; water damage restoration

STARTUP COST

\$118.2K-\$692.5K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
216/56

Commercial Cleaning

Jan-Pro Cleaning and Disinfecting

Commercial cleaning

STARTUP COST

\$4.8K-\$58.1K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
10,418/0

Commercial Kitchen Maintenance

Filta Environmental Kitchen Solutions

Commercial kitchen maintenance services

STARTUP COST

\$123.6K-\$139.3K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
326/0

Concrete Maintenance

Sam the Concrete Man

Residential and commercial concrete services

STARTUP COST

\$89.1K-\$142.2K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
77/2

Crime-Scene Cleaning

Spaulding Decon

Crime-scene, meth-lab, and hoarding cleanup; mold remediation; house buying

STARTUP COST

\$95.4K-\$160.95K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
51/3

Drywall Repair

The Patch Boys

Drywall repair

STARTUP COST

\$54.9K-\$81.4K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
272/0

LODGING

Campgrounds

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts

Family camping resorts

STARTUP COST

\$108K-\$11.3M

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
82/0

Hotels & Motels

Hampton by Hilton

Upper midscale hotels

STARTUP COST

\$12.3M-\$22.8M

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,824/0

Insulation

USA Insulation

Home insulation and energy-efficient products

STARTUP COST

\$271K-\$399.5K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
100/1

Kitchen & Bath Remodeling

Kitchen Tune-Up

Residential kitchen remodeling

STARTUP COST

\$119.9K-\$173.9K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
261/0

Lighting Services

Outdoor Lighting Perspectives

Residential landscape, architectural, holiday, and hospitality lighting

STARTUP COST

\$85K-\$154.1K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
111/0

Organization/Storage Systems

Closets By Design

Custom closet and home/office organization systems

STARTUP COST

\$152K-\$503K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
70/6

Painting

CertaPro Painters

Residential and commercial painting

STARTUP COST

\$155.7K-\$232.4K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
371/1

Roofing

Mighty Dog Roofing

Residential and commercial roofing services, siding, windows, and gutters

STARTUP COST

\$215.7K-\$383.4K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
195/0

Window Coverings

Budget Blinds

Window coverings, window film, rugs, accessories

STARTUP COST

\$140.5K-\$211.8K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,378/0

Miscellaneous Home-Improvement Businesses

Premier Pools & Spas

Residential pool construction

STARTUP COST

\$53K-\$112.5K

TOTAL UNITS

(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
117/2

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- ✓ Year-round workflow with interior & vertical applications.
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→ SERVPRO

Electrical Services

Mr. Electric
Electrical services

STARTUP COST
\$107.9K-\$244.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
214/0

Garage-Door Repair/ Installation

Precision Door Service

Residential garage door repair, installation, and service

STARTUP COST
\$111.4K-\$590.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
110/0

Glass Repair

Glass Doctor

Auto/residential/commercial glass installation, repair, and replacement

STARTUP COST
\$158.2K-\$300.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
189/0

Home Repairs/Handyman Services

Ace Handyman Services

Residential and commercial repairs, restoration, and maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$112.6K-\$159.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
313/7

HVAC/Duct-Cleaning Services

Aire Serv

HVAC services

STARTUP COST
\$87.6K-\$216.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
231/0

Lawn & Tree Care

Monster Tree Service

Residential and commercial tree and plant care services

STARTUP COST
\$422.2K-\$568.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
248/5

Leather & Vinyl Repair

Fibrenew

Leather, plastic, and vinyl restoration and repair

STARTUP COST
\$97.8K-\$111.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
302/0

Pest Control

Mosquito Shield

Outdoor pest control

STARTUP COST
\$92.9K-\$128.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
317/0

Pet Waste Removal

DoodyCalls

Pet waste management

STARTUP COST
\$73K-\$91.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
68/2

Plumbing

RooterMan

Plumbing and drain cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$45.1K-\$82.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
749/0

Pool Maintenance

ASP-America's Swimming Pool Company

Swimming pool maintenance, repairs, and renovations

STARTUP COST
\$84.7K-\$206.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
345/0

Residential Cleaning

The Maids

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$57.5K-\$155.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,429/160

Restoration Services

Servpro

Fire, water, and other damage cleanup, restoration, and reconstruction

STARTUP COST
\$236.3K-\$296.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,050/0

Window Cleaning

Window Gang

Window, gutter, roof, and dryer-vent cleaning; pressure washing; chimney sweeping

STARTUP COST
\$102.2K-\$145.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
158/71

Miscellaneous Maintenance Businesses

Conserva Irrigation

Irrigation repair, maintenance, installation, and efficiency upgrades

STARTUP COST
\$84.8K-\$110K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
171/0

PERSONAL-CARE BUSINESSES

Hair Care

Great Clips

Hair salons

STARTUP COST
\$178.4K-\$376.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,447/0

Lash & Brow Services

Deka Lash

Eyelash extensions, brow services, skincare solutions

STARTUP COST
\$221.6K-\$540.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
121/4

Massage & Spa Services

Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa

Massage, facial, and waxing services

STARTUP COST
\$591.2K-\$740.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
524/15

Med Spas

Beverly Hills Rejuvenation

Medical aesthetic, health, and wellness services

STARTUP COST
\$698.6K-\$1.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
13/5

Salon Suites

Phenix Salon Suites

Salon suites

STARTUP COST
\$632.3K-\$1.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
335/6

Saunas

Perspire Sauna Studio

Infrared and red-light-therapy sauna studios

STARTUP COST
\$444.1K-\$590.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
25/0

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Franchise Owner



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*For territories open more than 24 months, average sales in 2022 were \$6,497,275. For territories open more than 60 months, average sales in 2022 were \$7,194,784. First-year offices averaged \$1,080,407 annual sales according to Item 19 in the Franchise Disclosure Document. This statement is for information purposes only and is not intended as an offer to sell, or the solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. The following states regulate the offer and sale of franchises: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure. MN Registration #F-1755. © 2023 Express Employment Professionals



DIY/Paint-& Sip Studios

Board & Brush Creative Studio

DIY wood-sign workshops

STARTUP COST
\$64.6K-\$93.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
252/3

Sports Equipment & Apparel

Destination Athlete

Equipment, apparel, fundraising, and performance solutions for youth, high school, and college athletic teams

STARTUP COST
\$28.3K-\$93.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
207/0

Travel Agencies

Dream Vacations

Travel agencies

STARTUP COST
\$1.8K-\$21K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,618/0

Miscellaneous Recreation Businesses

American Poolplayers Association

Recreational billiard leagues

STARTUP COST
\$22.9K-\$29.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
332/6

RETAIL

Apparel & Accessories

Uptown Cheapskate

Young-adult-clothing resale stores

STARTUP COST
\$346.3K-\$544.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
88/14

Convenience Stores

7-Eleven

Convenience stores

STARTUP COST
\$125.3K-\$1.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
75,992/5,895

Senior Care

Interim HealthCare

Medical and nonmedical home care, medical staffing

STARTUP COST
\$125.5K-\$199.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
627/4

Tanning

Palm Beach Tan

Tanning

STARTUP COST
\$629.9K-\$931.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
400/251

Waxing

European Wax Center

Body waxing services, skin and beauty products

STARTUP COST
\$349.6K-\$553.95K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
888/5

Miscellaneous Personal-Care Businesses

Restore Hyper Wellness

Wellness services

STARTUP COST
\$641.96K-\$1.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
138/17

PETS

Dog Training

Dog Training Elite

Dog training

STARTUP COST
\$126.9K-\$147.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
243/10

Pet Care

Dogtopia

Dog daycare, boarding, and spa services

STARTUP COST
\$688.3K-\$1.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
226/2

Pet Stores

Pet Supplies Plus

Pet food and supplies, pets, bathing/grooming services

STARTUP COST
\$493.2K-\$1.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
428/234

Miscellaneous Pet Businesses

Aussie Pet Mobile

Mobile pet grooming

STARTUP COST
\$179.98K-\$198.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
78/0

RECREATION

Adventure Parks/ Entertainment Centers

Urban Air Adventure Park

Adventure parks

STARTUP COST
\$3.4M-\$7.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
155/4



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THE TEAM YOU TRUST



→ THE UPS STORE

Furniture & Appliances

Rent-A-Center

Rent-to-own furniture, electronics, tires, computers, appliances

STARTUP COST
\$363.3K-\$569.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
395/1,974

Tools Distribution

Snap-on Tools

Professional tools and equipment

STARTUP COST
\$201.4K-\$465.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,555/216

Miscellaneous Retail Businesses

Ace Hardware

Hardware and home improvement stores

STARTUP COST
\$292K-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,524/222

SERVICES

Dry Cleaning & Laundry Services

Tide Cleaners

Dry cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$703.5K-\$1.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
212/14

Dumpster Rentals

redbox+ Dumpsters

Construction dumpsters with attached portable restrooms

STARTUP COST
\$646.2K-\$748.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
281/0

Embroidery & Screen Printing

Fully Promoted

Branded apparel and promotional products

STARTUP COST
\$128.2K-\$362.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
276/0

Estate Sales

Caring Transitions

Senior transition and relocation, online auctions, and estate liquidation management

STARTUP COST
\$58.9K-\$82.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
265/0

Home Inspections

WIN Home Inspection

Home inspections

STARTUP COST
\$35.9K-\$41.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
270/0

Laboratory Testing

Any Lab Test Now

Health and wellness, drug and alcohol, and DNA lab testing services

STARTUP COST
\$144.2K-\$227.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
220/8

Locksmith Services

Pop-A-Lock

Mobile locksmith and security services

STARTUP COST
\$137.8K-\$170.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
616/7

Moving/Junk-Removal Services

Two Men and a Truck

Moving, storage, and junk removal services

STARTUP COST
\$105.5K-\$435.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
323/3

Photography & Video Services

Hommati

3D tours, aerial videos, photography, augmented reality, and other services for real estate agents

STARTUP COST
\$61.7K-\$84.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
144/0

Postal & Business Centers

The UPS Store

Shipping, packing, mailboxes, printing, faxing, shredding, notary services

STARTUP COST
\$122.2K-\$508.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,463/1

Real Estate

HomeVestors of America

Home buying, repair, and selling

STARTUP COST
\$80K-\$456.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,155/0

Security Services

Signal

Private security guard and patrol services

STARTUP COST
\$93.2K-\$241.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
970/0

Yard Sign Rentals

Sign Gypsies

Special-occasion yard sign rentals

STARTUP COST
\$4.2K-\$9.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
769/1

Miscellaneous Services

Pirtek

Hydraulic and industrial hose maintenance, repair, and replacement

STARTUP COST
\$219.4K-\$899.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
586/1

TECH

Electronics Repairs/Sales

CPR Cell Phone Repair

Electronics repairs and sales

STARTUP COST
\$50.4K-\$217.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
471/0

IT Services

TeamLogic IT

IT managed services for businesses

STARTUP COST
\$110.9K-\$142.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
252/0

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A Sweet Scoop of Success

Want to open 15 units in 15 years? Follow the playbook of **Primo Partners**—Ben & Jerry's only Black-owned multi-unit franchise group. **by EMILY HOLMES**

When Antonio McBroom graduated from college in 2008, he was given a gift of opportunity: The Ben & Jerry's where he'd been working had gone up for sale. He joined forces with an old friend, Eric Taylor, to buy the franchise, and then one of their marketing interns, Phillip Scotton, became their third partner. The trio formed a limited liability company called Primo Partners, and they've since opened 15 Ben & Jerry's locations across eight states.

What's the secret to their success? In a way, McBroom has been in the ice cream business since he was a child, when he bought ice pops in bulk and then sold them to customers at the bar and restaurant his grandmother ran out of her home. But at Ben & Jerry's, the partners think far beyond the individual product. They also prioritize hiring and mentoring future leaders of color, and donate portions of their revenue to nonprofits working on racial equity, education, and voting access in the communities their shops serve. Here, McBroom shares some lessons he's learned about how to grow something profitable—and meaningful.



→ **PARTY OF THREE**
The trio in Primo Partners are longtime friends.

What was your first attempt at expanding?

It was definitely some trial and error. We baby-stepped expansion. Instead of opening a second store, I opened a 'half store'—I took an ice cream cart and put it at a shopping mall close by. I operated it just seasonally on the weekends. That gave me the experience of having two locations operating at the same time.

But as I did that, I lost focus a little bit. I had this brilliant idea that I wanted to remodel my shop. I was going to bring more concepts in, because I had a really seasonal business, and I've never worked so hard to lose \$100,000 in my life! That experience taught me something I keep with me to this day, which is: *Your main*

thing is to keep your main thing the main thing. For me, selling ice cream is the main thing. So rather than worry about, *How do I sell more ice cream in December in a college town when all the students are gone?* I should be asking, *How do I sell more ice cream in my season when there's high demand?* That was a big pivot.

What changed as the business grew?

As you approach \$1.5 million or so in annual revenue, you need a system. One person can't do it all. I was in the mindset that I would just do everything. As we started approaching higher numbers, it became challenging for me to keep it all together.

That's where we started to learn about the Entrepreneurial

Operating System. The idea is that, as you scale, it is more efficient to have folks working in their strengths, with a designated role across multiple markets. Over time, instead of me sitting in all these seats, we could afford to have someone else in this particular seat.

What is your advice for someone looking to open a franchise?

Be deliberate in selecting a brand that's a good fit. Think about the values you have as an entrepreneur and as a person and look for brands that align with those values. The biggest rubs I've seen are when there's kind of franchisee and franchisor misalignment on values. That's really hard to overcome. On

the business side of things, you can always vet the company and do your due diligence, but the values piece is typically deep-rooted and doesn't change. If you're going to invest your time—which is something they don't make more of—be really lined up as partners with that brand.

Anything else?

I think the key piece is just the importance of dreaming big. Set the bar high for what you want to achieve as an entrepreneur and what you expect out of your business. Oftentimes you overestimate what's possible in a year, but you underestimate what's possible in a decade. I live by just setting big, hairy, audacious goals.

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Mohamad Atieh
Multi-Unit Franchise Owner



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Give Yourself Some Grace

Franchising isn't always easy—but if you acknowledge when you're doing the best you can, the way **Weed Man CEO Jen Lemcke** has, then everything will be okay. **by EMILY HOLMES**

When Jen Lemcke and her father bought the entire Weed Man company in 2018, its Canadian franchises were declining, and had sales of \$43.6 million in U.S. dollars. By last year, Canadian franchisee sales were up to \$66.2 million, and the U.S. business was worth \$259 million.

How'd they do it? "People talk to you all the time about work-life balance," she says. "Honestly, it doesn't really exist at times." Instead, she says, if you throw yourself at a big opportunity, and accept what you don't know, you'll figure it out.

That's exactly what Lemcke and her father did. He had a background as a chemical engineer, but wanted to be a franchisee—so he bought his first Weed Man unit in 1986, just as the brand was starting to expand across Quebec. Lemcke went to university, met her husband, and then joined her dad in buying a Weed Man territory in Ottawa. In 1995, her father (through the parent company he founded, Turf Holdings) bought the rights to expand the brand in the U.S., and Lemcke joined five years later to lead that effort. Then in 2018, Turf Holdings bought the entire Weed Man brand—going from a multi-unit owner to the actual franchise owner.

Here, she explains what it takes to go big—and why you should go easy on yourself when you do.

You started with a Canadian brand. What was it like expanding into the U.S.?

It took a lot of effort to expand. We ended up soliciting sub-franchisors (regional franchise business consultants) in large geographical areas. We had the systems down, but we are taking care of a living organism, and there's different grasses across the U.S. We needed to test our systems before we rolled anything out.

It was a lot of fun. It was also tough. I had three kids. I had a nanny, and my husband was incredibly supportive. You're trying to raise a family and you're trying to be there for everyone. I used to segregate my home family and my work family—some days [my work family] needed me more than

my home family. Then some days my home family needed me more, so I became really good at balancing things and not missing the big things on either side, but sometimes missing the little things.

That must have become even more intense when you became CEO.

My dad and I worked hand in hand. He was the CEO, [then] I was the CEO. He retired in March 2020 and all hell broke loose. I've got 350 franchisees looking at me for answers. There's no manual on how to be a leader in a pandemic. I'm always, *I can do this on my own*. And I just realized I can't.

I made myself completely available day or night. Everybody had my cell phone, but one day



I told them, "I don't have all the answers; please be patient with me and trust that I'm going to try and find the best answer."

What is your management style?

I know they say you should be running your company at a 10,000-foot view. But for me, the best thing I can do is pay attention to detail and not be afraid to pick up the phone. If I see something, I call them like, "Hey, looking at the numbers last night, I think you could do this." I live in the details. I don't know anything other than that. I feel like you win and lose in the details.

Looking back on the last three decades, what's been your biggest lesson?

At the beginning, you're so busy raising kids and you're

running your business. They leave for college and it becomes a different busy, and you're worried: *Maybe I wasn't there enough. Maybe I should have done this.* You go through a period in your life, like, "Is everything gonna be okay?" Then you get to the other side and everything's okay. You did the best you could and they're great. Everything worked out. The company prospered, my kids are fine, and everything's good.

It's tough trying to build a career and be a mom. There are times in your life where you need to focus on certain things and you have to put things aside, but in the end everything's going to work out. Just take a deep breath and give yourself some grace.



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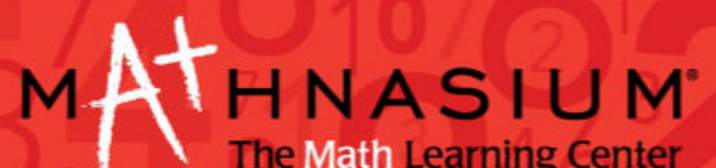
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How a First-Ever Franchisee Stays on Top

Each issue, we talk to a brand's highest-earning franchisee—so you can learn their secrets.

Don Lanier ditched retirement to become Honest Abe Roofing's first franchisee, and is still No. 1. **by KIM KAVIN**

When Don Lanier retired in 2017, he and his wife moved into an RV and relocated from California to Indiana. But RV life was cold and cramped, and they decided to build a house. To get a construction loan, the bank wanted Lanier to show some income, so Lanier decided to go back to work. He applied for a sales job with Honest Abe Roofing, but when the hiring executive noticed Lanier's background in sales *and* home improvement, he thought he might be able to do more. He brought Lanier to the attention of the company's founder and CEO Kevin Newton.

"We told him, you can roof and make a living, or you can have roofers working for you and make a living," Newton says. Lanier chose the latter option: In 2018, he became Honest Abe's first-ever franchisee (they've since expanded to 21 locations), and has held the top revenue spot ever since. His Evansville, Indiana, location reached \$10.2 million in sales by the end of 2022, and he just opened his second location, which his son runs in Louisville, Kentucky. Lanier is projecting \$18 million in sales between both locations by the end of 2023.

Here, he shares three of his core strategies for success.



1/ Run ads on local television.

Online ads, sales promotions, and billboards are good, Lanier says, but local TV ads convert better. "You're already on the second step of the sales funnel by picking up the phone and calling me," he says. "That's different from clicking on something." He invests in 10-, 15-, and 30-second ads on four local TV channels. "They're running over and over and over."

2/ Incentivize your salespeople.

Lanier seeks out competitive people for his sales department and then creates monthly, quarterly, and annual competitions for them. For instance, \$300,000 in sales equals a plaque on the wall. "If one gets it on, everybody else is like, 'Heck no, you're not going to top me,'" he says. As the sales figures go up, the plaques get bigger. For salespeople who set all-time records, Lanier has prizefighter-style belts custom-made.

3/ Respect and care for employees.

Lanier builds his team's loyalty by taking care of them. For example, when his office manager's work was slipping, he spoke to her—and learned her grandfather had just died. "I told her to take four or five days that I paid her for, so she could go and get some closure," he says. "You have to give people time to get things right before you cut them loose. Your personal life will affect your work life if it's not in order."

The Franchisor's Take



How does Honest Abe Roofing spot an amazing potential franchisee?

Founder and CEO **Kevin Newton** says he looks for an unexpected quality: anger. He wants people who are mad enough about their present situation—maybe because they're tired of working for someone else, or they want more financial autonomy—that they'll work toward changing it.

"Nothing changes in your life or my life, ever, until you get angry," Newton says. "When things are just not going well, the strong fight. When anger creeps in, they're able to continue to fight."

In Lanier, Newton saw a person who seemed to be struggling with retirement and angry about wanting more control of his destiny. "This isn't about Don being good at looking at KPIs," Newton says. "That crap can all be learned."

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Children's Enrichment



Pillar To Post CEO Charles Furlough (left) presenting award to Jesse Durham

Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® Facts

- ✓ Franchise Fee: \$34,500
- ✓ Total Initial Investment: \$54,160 - \$66,835
- ✓ Royalty: 7%
- ✓ Provides flexibility and financial security
- ✓ Helps your work/life balance
- ✓ Allows you to take control of your financial future



Former Realtor Named Pillar To Post™ Rookie of the Year

As a Realtor 27 year-old Jesse Durham was so impressed by his dealings with Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® that he decided to become a franchise owner with the No. 1 home inspection company in North America. The Fort Worth resident is serving homebuyers and sellers throughout Tarrant and Johnson counties, focusing primarily on north Fort Worth.

Durham was a Realtor in southeast Michigan before relocating to Texas. “I enjoyed every minute of it, but when we moved to Fort Worth, I decided to make a leap while still staying close to the real estate market. I wanted to put my skills to the test,” said Durham. “Choosing Pillar To Post Home Inspectors was an easy choice for me. I was able to see

firsthand the Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® difference while being a Realtor. It made it clear to me that if I wanted to be successful, then that is the franchise to choose.”

The company rolled out impressive new technologies during the pandemic which hastened their introduction to the public. But it turned out to be just what homeowners needed in 2020, contactless home inspections. One of these was the now wildly popular PTP360 program, available also with a floor plan. This is an Interactive 360° Visual Inspection Summary, a great new innovation and immensely helpful for busy, professional Realtors, saving time, better serving their seller, and giving prospective buyers a far better experience.

“I took advantage of all the new technologies that I wished I had at my fingertips when I was a Realtor,” said Durham. “Because I knew best how to use these great tools, known as our Ultimate Home Inspection™, I had an extremely good first year and was honored to be named Rookie of the Year for 2022.”

The company has achieved the highest standings in various rankings of “Best in Category,” “Top 20 Franchises to Buy,” “Top 10 Global Franchises” and “Top Franchises for Veterans” in addition to achieving 5-Star status with VetFran, a program offered by the International Franchise Association that provides discounted franchise fees to veterans. A professional evaluation both inside and outside the home is at the core of Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® service. Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® input data and digital photos into a computerized report. All information is provided to clients in a customized binder for easy reference, allowing homebuyers or sellers to make confident, informed decisions.

“It has always been a dream of mine to own my own business,” Durham said. “I want my kids to grow up seeing that hard work can pay off.”



For Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® Information:

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You have probably seen the We Buy Ugly Houses® billboards – well, that's us. Franchisees buy homes that are difficult to list on the regular real estate market and

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The HomeVestors franchise system works to locate these properties and provides access to lenders who can provide up to 100% financing for qualified property purchases and repairs. Franchisees have access to proprietary software making it easier to estimate repair costs and understand the appropriate offer to make on a property. With several exit strategies available, franchisees have the ability to grow their business the way they want.

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HomeVestors Facts

- ✓ Franchise Fee: \$39,000
- ✓ America's #1 Home Cash Buyer
- ✓ Over 1,100 Franchisees

"I wanted something that the more I put into it, the more I got out of it."

- Jeff Hotz,
HomeVestors® Franchisee

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Enriching Lives Through The Power Of Music

You may recognize the School of Rock name from the movie, but the real School of Rock is so much more. In under 25 years, School of Rock has become the most revolutionary music education brand in the world. Originally founded from a single location in Philadelphia, the brand is now operating 330+ music instruction schools in 15 countries, with hundreds more on the way.

AWARD-WINNING MUSIC SCHOOL School of Rock understands what it takes to succeed as a franchise, and has won numerous accolades for their concept, growth, and franchisee-centric culture. Not only did School of Rock rank in this year's highly competitive Entrepreneur Franchise 500 for the 10th year, but they were also ranked #1 "Top Children's Music

Enrichment Brand" in the 43rd Annual Franchise 500 for the second consecutive time. Other recent recognitions include Franchise Business Review's 2023 Top Recession-Proof Business and Global Franchise's 2023 Grand Champion and Best Children's Service and Education Franchise awards.

PATENTED AND PROVEN CURRICULUM

Innovation has been key to School of Rock's success, beginning with its core music-education approach, the School of Rock Method™, which was awarded a U.S. Patent validating it as an exclusive concept and practice. The groundbreaking School of Rock Method builds musical proficiency through its proprietary Method App™, Method Book™ collection,

About School of Rock

School of Rock is the best franchise for entrepreneurs with a passion for music and a desire to do something meaningful within their community. An ideal School of Rock franchisee candidate believes in the School of Rock brand and mission to provide a safe and creative space for students to develop into musicians.

School of Rock Facts

- ✓ Franchise Fee: \$49,900
- ✓ Total Investment: \$395,800 to \$537,400
- ✓ Global network
- ✓ Partnerships with top music industry brands
- ✓ Extensive franchisee training

"If you love music, and you want to make an impact on people's lives, you can't pick a better business."

- Franchise Owner, Cecilia Yi

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School of Rock's unique approach to instruction and its supportive, passionate community helps young, aspiring musicians find themselves, hone their talents, and build the confidence they need in their lives. School of Rock is a safe place for kids to learn, develop friendships with other kids who are into music, and carve out a niche for themselves in a world where they might never have felt a sense of belonging before.



For School of Rock Information:

📞 Eric St. Peter ✉️ franchising@schoolofrock.com
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The Top 150 Brands for Multi-Unit Owners

Thinking ambitiously? These franchises are the most welcoming to owners who think big.

by **TRACY STAPP HEROLD**

If you want to understand the franchise industry today, this stat is a great place to start: More than half of all franchise units operating in the U.S. last year—to be exact, 53.2% of those units—were owned by multi-unit owners. That's according to franchise research and advisory firm FRANDATA. And this tracks well with what's happening in franchising more broadly, as ambitious franchisees want to own multiple units, and franchisors see multi-unit operators as an efficient and battle-tested way to expand.

Here at *Entrepreneur*, it made us wonder: What are the top franchise brands for multi-unit ownership?

To find out, we asked franchisors a few relevant questions: Do they offer discounts to franchisees purchasing multiple units? What percentage of their franchisees own multiple units? What percentage of

their brand's total units are owned by multi-unit franchisees? What is the average number of units owned by each franchisee? And finally, do they only sell multiple units or master licenses? Then we factored in each company's Franchise 500 score, which is based on an analysis of more than 150 data points in the areas of costs and fees, size and growth, franchisee support, brand strength, and financial stability.

The result is this first-ever list—a helpful resource for anyone interested in multi-unit ownership. However, this list should not be construed as an endorsement of any particular brand. Whether you're buying one unit or 50, you should always do your homework. That includes reading the company's legal documents, consulting with an attorney and an accountant, and of course, talking to as many franchisees as you can.

1
Taco Bell
Mexican-inspired food
STARTUP COST
\$575.6K-\$3.4M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
7,435/465

2
Great Clips
Hair salons
STARTUP COST
\$178.4K-\$376.9K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,447/0

3
Sport Clips Haircuts
Men's sports-themed hair salons
STARTUP COST
\$266.3K-\$439.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,821/74

4
Jersey Mike's Subs
Subs and Philly cheesesteaks
STARTUP COST
\$194K-\$954.6K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,384/18

5
McAlister's Deli
Sandwiches, salads, baked potatoes
STARTUP COST
\$393.5K-\$2.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
472/44

6
Palm Beach Tan
Tanning
STARTUP COST
\$629.9K-\$931.9K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
400/251

7
The UPS Store
Shipping, packing, mailboxes, printing, faxing, shredding, notary services
STARTUP COST
\$122.2K-\$508.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,463/1

8
Smoothie King
Smoothies, healthful snacks, health products
STARTUP COST
\$263.6K-\$1.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,321/52

9
Restore Hyper Wellness
Wellness services
STARTUP COST
\$641.96K-\$1.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
138/17

10
Marco's Pizza
Pizza, pizza bowls, subs, wings, salads, cheese bread
STARTUP COST
\$286.9K-\$805.9K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,058/45

11
The Joint Chiropractic
Chiropractic services
STARTUP COST
\$215.3K-\$476.99K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
724/127

12
My Salon Suite
Salon suites
STARTUP COST
\$686.2K-\$1.8M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
213/30

13
Pet Supplies Plus
Pet food and supplies, pets, bathing/grooming services
STARTUP COST
\$493.2K-\$1.8M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
454/234

14
Goldfish Swim School
Infant and child swimming lessons
STARTUP COST
\$1.7M-\$3.7M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
142/4

15
Charleys Cheesesteaks & Wings
Philly cheesesteaks, fries, wings, lemonade
STARTUP COST
\$251.6K-1M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
655/55

16
KFC
Chicken
STARTUP COST
\$1.4M-\$3.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
26,277/221

17
Paris Baguette
Bakery cafes
STARTUP COST
\$635.8K-\$1.7M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,722/20

18
Budget Blinds
Window coverings, window film, rugs, accessories
STARTUP COST
\$140.5K-\$211.8K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,378/0

19
Wireless Zone
Wireless devices, services, and accessories
STARTUP COST
\$182.5K-\$443.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
487/0

20
Anytime Fitness
Fitness centers
STARTUP COST
\$474.6K-\$970.1K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,167/16

Jenn Navarro/ My Salon Suite (No. 12)

After **Jenn Navarro** and her husband **Andrew** worked with a franchise broker to find the right opportunity, he became a master franchisee with Anago Cleaning Systems, while she has opened four My Salon Suite locations in the Philadelphia area, with more to come.



What attracted you to My Salon Suite?

First, it wasn't in the Pennsylvania market yet, and second, we had seen the same type of model work in Columbus, Ohio, where we were initially from. We had seen women opening up their own suites and being very successful. And we thought if we're going to put our hard-earned money and work out there, that we wanted to do it in a way that was going to benefit others as well.

What was it like getting started?

We really had to educate real estate brokers on why this would be a good concept for the market, and I even took some of them to Delaware to see a My Salon Suite in Wilmington so they could understand. Finally we signed two leases in February 2019 and then opened our first two My

Salon Suites in June and July 2019.

So you always planned to open multiple units?

We did. Usually, My Salon Suite will sell one, three, or six units at a time, and we decided to go ahead and do a six-pack. We felt like we needed to have more than one location to help build brand awareness in an area where salon suites were a foreign concept, both with the people we're trying to recruit from the spa or hair industry and with their clients. Also, with more units, our marketing money is going further.

Do you think you'll stop at six?

You learn to never say never. We've seen, in other markets, people who are tenants decide that they want to get into the franchise, and other franchisees have partnered with them. I think something like that would be exciting.

21 Sola Salons

Salon studios

STARTUP COST
\$808.1K-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
568/60

22 Chem-Dry Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

Carpet, upholstery, and floor cleaning, tile and stone care, granite countertop renewal

STARTUP COST
\$69.1K-\$204.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,597/0

23 Cinnabon

Cinnamon rolls, baked goods, coffee

STARTUP COST
\$112K-\$546.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,805/2

24 Wingstop

Chicken wings, fries, sides

STARTUP COST
\$315.3K-\$948.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,841/32

25 Midas

Auto repair and maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$199.2K-\$739.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,941/0

26 Circle K

Convenience stores

STARTUP COST
\$268.5K-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,467/8,660

27 My Eyelab

Eyecare and eyewear

STARTUP COST
\$299.9K-\$601.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
86/71

28 Jack in the Box

Burgers, chicken sandwiches, tacos, salads, bowls, sides

STARTUP COST
\$1.7M-\$2.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,036/172

29 Taco John's

Mexican food

STARTUP COST
\$603K-\$1.96M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
364/5

30 Kiddie Academy

Educational childcare

STARTUP COST
\$370K-\$6.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
300/1

31 McDonald's

Burgers, chicken, salads, beverages

STARTUP COST
\$1.4M-\$2.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
37,664/2,032

32 Wendy's

Burgers, chicken sandwiches, breakfast sandwiches

STARTUP COST
\$329.5K-\$3.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
6,637/412

33 Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen

Fried chicken, seafood, biscuits

STARTUP COST
\$383.5K-\$3.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,810/41

34 Crunch

Fitness centers

STARTUP COST
\$398.5K-\$6.99M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
360/48

35 Skyhawks Sports & Supertots Sports Academy

Children's fitness programs

STARTUP COST
\$30.3K-\$89.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
157/74

36 Monster Tree Service

Residential and commercial tree and plant care services

STARTUP COST
\$422.2K-\$568.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
248/5

37 redbox+ Dumpsters

Construction dumpsters with attached portable restrooms

STARTUP COST
\$646.2K-\$748.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
281/0

38 Interim HealthCare

Medical and nonmedical home care, medical staffing

STARTUP COST
\$125.5K-\$199.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
627/4

39 Wienerschnitzel

Hot dogs, ice cream

STARTUP COST
\$304.6K-\$1.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
321/0

40 Mountain Mike's Pizza

Pizza, wings, salad bar, appetizers

STARTUP COST
\$336.3K-\$611.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
257/0

41 Lawn Doctor

Lawn, tree, and shrub care; mosquito and tick control

STARTUP COST
\$116.5K-\$141.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
625/0

42 Mathnasium

Math tutoring

STARTUP COST
\$112.9K-\$149.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,105/3

Jim Smith /

Mountain Mike's Pizza (No. 40)

Jim Smith has been in the restaurant industry for decades, and held key positions with Taco Bell, Jack in the Box, Starbucks, Mimi's Café, and Tava Kitchen. But he'd never been a franchisee until he saw the opportunity to buy a Mountain Mike's Pizza in southern Oregon in 2017. Now he's got four stores open and more on the way.



What drew you to Mountain Mike's?

I talked to franchisees who've been with the brand for 30-plus years, and they all said how proud they are to be a place for their community to gather, whether it's for birthday parties, celebrating a win, or disputing a bad sports call. So, there's these core values around community involvement and being a good steward for your neighbors that struck a nerve with me.

Did you always intend to be a multi-unit owner?

Not at first. But I would talk to out-of-town customers in my first Mountain Mike's every day, and they'd ask, "When is this coming to my city?" And after hearing that maybe a hundred times, I thought, *Why don't I open more of these?* I have four open now, number five is under construction, and we're on our way to 20-plus.

What are some challenges of owning multiple restaurants?

I think a multi-unit operator has very similar challenges to a single-unit operator, just at a different scale. All my successes come with heartbeats. It's the people within the organization that help you achieve your goals, so you need to spend a lot of time putting the right people in the right place to drive your business forward. As a multi-unit owner, instead of focusing on line-level staff—who's answering the phone and who's making the pizza—you're thinking about who are my restaurant leaders, and what's important to them. It's having the right culture and the right talent to get things done the way you need them to be done when you're not around.



Pizza the way it oughta be!



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12

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SSS GROWTH



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RESTAURANTS OPENING
THIS YEAR



45

YEARS IN
BUSINESS



\$1.6M

AVERAGE UNIT
VOLUME*



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*Based on the Average Unit Volume of the top 25% of our Franchised Restaurants for 2023. This information appears in our Item 19 of our 2023 FDD – please refer to our FDD for complete information on financial performance. Your results may differ. There is no assurance you will do as well.



58 Supercuts

Hair salons

STARTUP COST
\$150.9K-\$312.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,346/18

59 Ben & Jerry's

Ice cream, frozen yogurt, non-dairy frozen desserts, sorbet

STARTUP COST
\$152.2K-\$565.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
572/11

60 ProSource Wholesale

Wholesale kitchen, bath, and flooring products

STARTUP COST
\$816.3K-\$823.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
145/3

61 Snap-on Tools

Professional tools and equipment

STARTUP COST
\$201.4K-\$465.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,555/216

62 QC Kinetix

Regenerative medicine and non-surgical pain management therapies

STARTUP COST
\$220.1K-\$328.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
128/10

63 MaidPro

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$105.6K-\$130.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
265/0

64 Auntie Anne's

Soft pretzels

STARTUP COST
\$146.1K-\$523.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,918/12

55 Drybar

Hair care and blowouts

STARTUP COST
\$596.3K-\$1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
143/0

56 Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers

Frozen custard, steakburgers, hot dogs

STARTUP COST
\$794.3K-\$2.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
414/29

57 RNR Tire Express

Tire and custom wheel sales and rentals

STARTUP COST
\$593.3K-\$1.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
146/24

52 Kitchen Tune-Up

Residential kitchen remodeling

STARTUP COST
\$119.9K-\$173.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
261/0

53 Rent-A-Center

Rent-to-own furniture, electronics, tires, computers, appliances

STARTUP COST
\$363.3K-\$569.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
395/1,974

54 Big O Tires

Tires, tire services, auto products

STARTUP COST
\$333.5K-\$1.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
434/32

49 Checkers and Rally's

Burgers, fries

STARTUP COST
\$790.8K-\$2.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
568/266

50 Primrose Schools

Educational childcare

STARTUP COST
\$651.9K-\$8.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
472/0

51 Club Pilates

Reformer Pilates classes

STARTUP COST
\$193.6K-\$407K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
852/0

46 Planet Fitness

Fitness clubs

STARTUP COST
\$1.6M-\$4.9M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,091/233

47 Buddy's Home Furnishings

Rent-to-own home furnishings, electronics, and appliances

STARTUP COST
\$356.2K-\$879.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
302/36

48 Valvoline Instant Oil Change

Oil changes and preventive maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$178K-\$3.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
817/756

43 Pizza Hut

Pizza, pasta, wings

STARTUP COST
\$367K-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
17,336/22

44 Urban Air Adventure Park

Adventure parks

STARTUP COST
\$3.4M-\$7.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
155/4

45 USA Insulation

Home insulation and energy-efficient products

STARTUP COST
\$271K-\$399.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
100/1

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**Top Quartile
Average Unit Volume***

Average Unit Volume
of \$885,335



\$301,851

**Top Quartile
EBITDA***

Average EBITDA
of \$159,430



5.92%

**YOY Same-Store
Sales Growth****

(2022)



22.68%

**Top Quartile
Net Profit Margin***

Average net profit
margin of 18.01%



23.64%

**Drive-Thru Kiosk
Average Labor***

(2022)

*This is historical representation of what some of our franchised stores earned as described further in Item 19 of the FDD. This information is based upon 66 of 264 Drive-Thru Kiosks that were open during the entire 2022 calendar year and provided complete information. Your results may differ. There is no guarantee you will stay in business that long or that you will achieve the stated levels of same-store sales growth within that time period. See Item 19 of the FDD for more information.

**This is historical representation of what some of our franchisees have earned as described further in Item 19 of the FDD. This information is based upon 185 of 421 Drive-Thru Kiosks that were open during the entire 2022 calendar year and provided complete information. Your results may differ. There is no assurance that you will sell or earn as much. See Item 19 of the FDD for more information.

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500
TOP FRANCHISE FOR
VETERANS
2022
VERIFIED 4

Entrepreneur
FRANCHISE
500
2023
TOP BRAND FOR
MULTI-UNIT OWNERS
VERIFIED 1

65
SmartStyle
Family hair salons
STARTUP COST
\$180.97K-\$309.6K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,561/49

66
Pop-A-Lock
Mobile locksmith and security services
STARTUP COST
\$137.8K-\$170.8K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
616/7

67
Express Employment Professionals
Staffing, HR solutions
STARTUP COST
\$140K-\$400K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
857/1

68
European Wax Center
Body waxing services, skin and beauty products
STARTUP COST
\$349.6K-\$553.95K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
888/5

69
Grease Monkey
Oil changes, preventive maintenance, brakes, light repairs
STARTUP COST
\$245.8K-\$761.95K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
256/246

70
Slim Chickens
Chicken tenders, chicken wings, salads, sandwiches, wraps
STARTUP COST
\$1.3M-\$4.1M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
152/10

71
Jiffy Lube
Oil changes and preventive maintenance
STARTUP COST
\$232K-\$422.7K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,007/183

72
Orangetheory Fitness
Heart-rate-based group interval workout classes
STARTUP COST
\$589.1K-\$1.6M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,489/21

73
Dippin' Dots
Specialty ice cream, frozen yogurt, ices, sorbet
STARTUP COST
\$112.2K-\$366.95K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
235/0

74
Conserva Irrigation
Irrigation repair, maintenance, installation, and efficiency upgrades
STARTUP COST
\$84.8K-\$110K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
171/0

75
The Goddard School
Preschool/educational childcare
STARTUP COST
\$818.3K-\$7.4M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
600/0

76
Denny's
Family restaurants
STARTUP COST
\$1M-\$2.3M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,566/65

77
Tim Hortons
Coffee, baked goods, soups, sandwiches
STARTUP COST
\$246.5K-\$2.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,287/4

78
Pure Barre
Barre fitness classes and apparel
STARTUP COST
\$217.8K-\$487.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
649/2

79
Del Taco
Mexican/American food
STARTUP COST
\$862.7K-\$2.4M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
306/294

80
Cost Cutters Family Hair Care
Family hair salons
STARTUP COST
\$150.5K-\$308.6K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
602/0

81
Tropical Smoothie Cafe
Smoothies, salads, wraps, sandwiches, flatbreads
STARTUP COST
\$277K-\$584K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,141/1

82
Servpro
Fire, water, and other damage cleanup, restoration, and reconstruction
STARTUP COST
\$236.3K-\$296.8K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,050/0

83
Jamba
Smoothies, juices, and bowls
STARTUP COST
\$170.1K-\$843K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
772/44

84
Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa
Massage, facial, and waxing services
STARTUP COST
\$591.2K-\$740.1K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
524/15

85
Kona Ice
Shaved-ice trucks
STARTUP COST
\$149.99K-\$189.3K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,505/7

Matt & Anne Evers / Primrose Schools (No. 50) & Drybar (No. 55)

Matt and Anne Evers had always dreamed of business ownership, and when their search for childcare introduced them to Primrose Schools, they decided to acquire an existing school in Houston in 2015. Today they own five Primrose locations, along with eight Drybars.



Did you have multi-unit ownership in mind from the start?

MATT: When you take that leap of faith to buy a business, initially you're just focused on doing a great job. It was such a culture shock. I went from negotiating contracts in a boardroom to driving a bus to drop children off at elementary school. But then around six months in, something clicks, and you go, *Okay, this is fun. This is a good fit. I like this business.*

So when the opportunity came along to buy a second location, it was much less scary than the first one. Once you go through that transition, you're kind of always looking for that next opportunity. Each location we add on gets a little bit easier, because you've done it before.

So how did Drybar come into the picture?

ANNE: We wanted to diversify our portfolio, and as I was traveling all over the country

for work, I was a very loyal customer of Drybar. An opportunity came up to join the system through a partnership in the Minneapolis market. Then the parent company, WellBiz Brands, began refranchising—selling corporate-owned shops—so we purchased some in the Houston and Austin markets.

How do you work together as a husband-and-wife team?

MATT: I focus on the Primrose side and Anne runs the Drybar side, but we share resources in areas of overlap, like HR, maintenance, and marketing.

There's definitely challenges to a husband and wife running a bunch of businesses together, but at the same time it's neat to bounce ideas off each other. I know the headaches she's facing because I face them, too, and that's a really neat part of this journey we've been on.

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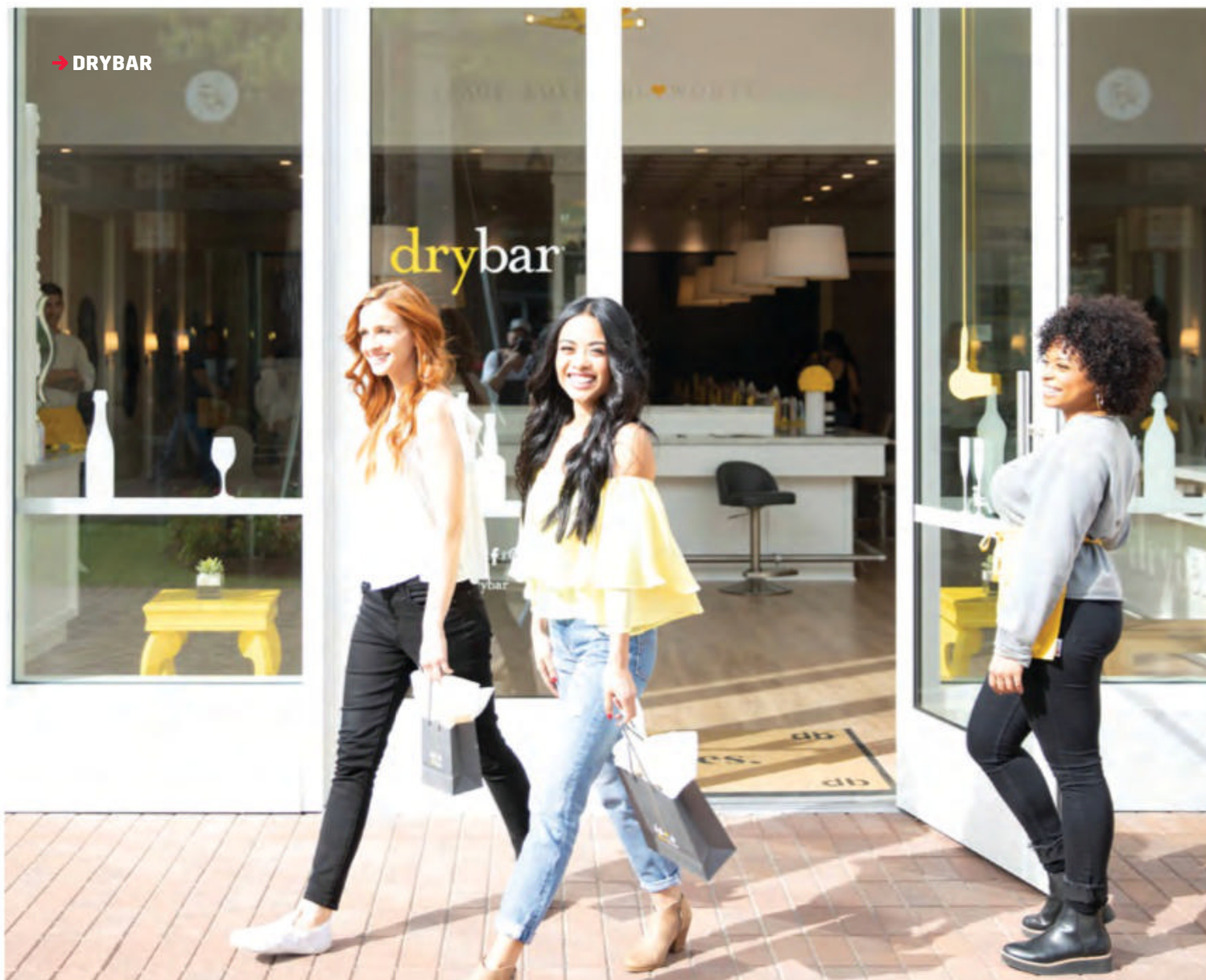
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86 Window Gang

Window, gutter, roof, and dryer-vent cleaning; pressure washing; chimney sweeping

STARTUP COST
\$102.2K-\$145.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
158/71

87 PJ's Coffee of New Orleans

Coffee, tea, pastries, sandwiches

STARTUP COST
\$406K-\$1.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
161/0

88 ServiceMaster Restore

Commercial/residential disaster restoration

STARTUP COST
\$252.7K-\$358.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,300/0

89 Petland

Pets, pet supplies, boarding, daycare, grooming

STARTUP COST
\$300.5K-\$1.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
222/27

90 Assisting Hands Home Care

Home health care, respite care

STARTUP COST
\$87.7K-\$159.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
171/5

91 Burger King

Burgers, fries, breakfast

STARTUP COST
\$1.8M-\$4.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
19,196/51

92 Jeremiah's Italian Ice

Italian ice, gelato, ice cream

STARTUP COST
\$324.6K-\$659.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
66/19

93 Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers

Physical therapy, balance and vestibular therapy, preventive wellness services

STARTUP COST
\$180.8K-\$473K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
416/57

94 A&W Restaurants

Root beer, burgers, hot dogs, chicken, sides, ice cream

STARTUP COST
\$276K-\$1.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
891/2

95 PuroClean

Property damage restoration and remediation

STARTUP COST
\$88.8K-\$231.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
377/0

96 7-Eleven

Convenience stores

STARTUP COST
\$125.3K-\$1.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
75,992/5,895

97 Nektar Juice Bar

Juices, smoothies, acai bowls, non-dairy ice cream

STARTUP COST
\$216K-\$622.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
155/31

98 Huntington Learning Center

Tutoring and test prep

STARTUP COST
\$148K-\$263.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
277/12

99 Bojangles

Chicken and biscuits

STARTUP COST
\$577K-\$3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
496/277

100 Koala Insulation

Insulation

STARTUP COST
\$147.8K-\$190.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
313/0

101 The Maids

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$57.5K-\$155.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,429/160

102 Teriyaki Madness

Asian food

STARTUP COST
\$346.4K-\$768.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
116/1

103 The Human Bean

Specialty coffee

STARTUP COST
\$386.4K-\$937.97K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
135/13

104 Sylvan Learning

Supplemental education, STEM camps, college prep

STARTUP COST
\$98.1K-\$199.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
556/6

105 Right at Home

Home care, medical staffing

STARTUP COST
\$87.4K-\$156.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
665/24

106 The Honey Baked Ham Co.

Retail specialty foods, catering, cafes

STARTUP COST
\$396.1K-\$673.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
205/199

107 Motel 6

Economy hotels

STARTUP COST
\$222.6K-\$8.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,216/9

108 RooterMan

Plumbing and drain cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$45.1K-\$82.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
749/0

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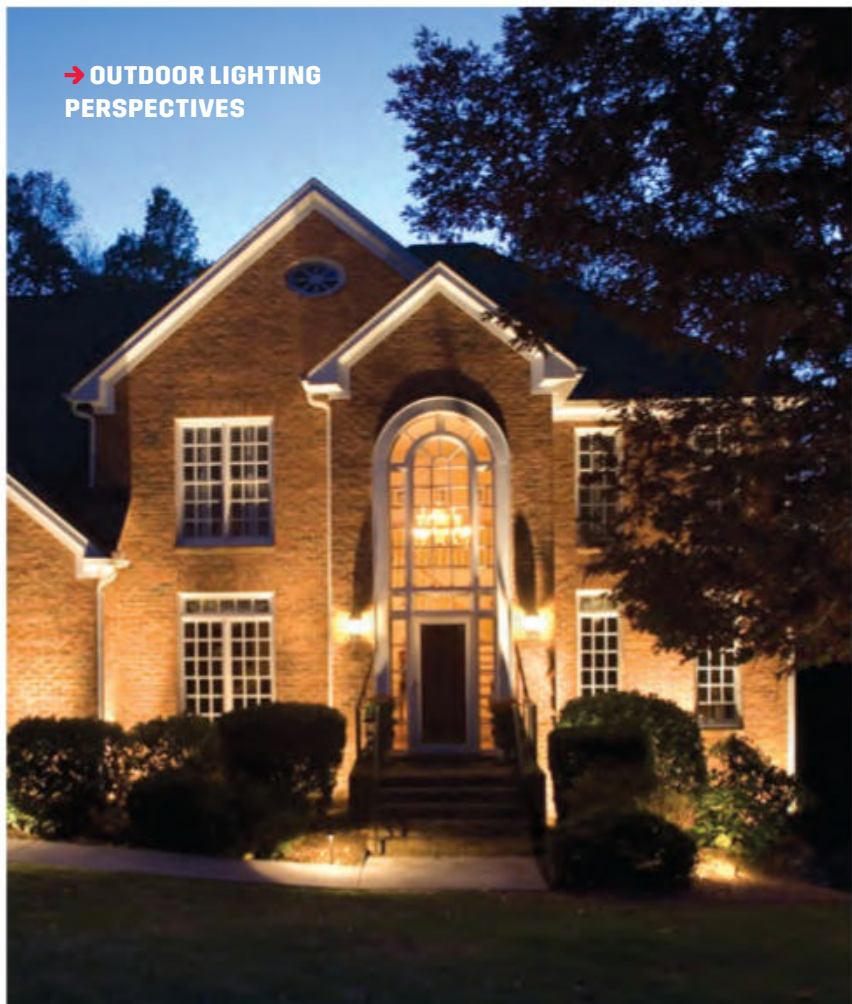
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Franchise / The Top 150 Brands for Multi-Unit Owners



109
Bigby Coffee
Specialty coffee, tea, smoothies, baked goods

STARTUP COST
\$276K-\$517.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
304/0

110
StretchLab
Assisted stretching

STARTUP COST
\$160.3K-\$299.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
208/0

111
Jet-Black/Yellow Dawg Striping
Asphalt maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$62.6K-\$122.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
118/8

112
Schlotzsky's
Sandwiches, pizza, soups, salads

STARTUP COST
\$522.6K-\$1.6M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
298/25

113
Cold Stone Creamery
Ice cream, sorbet, ice cream cakes, shakes

STARTUP COST
\$310.4K-\$580.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,253/5

114
Walk-On's Sports Bistreaux
Louisiana-themed sports restaurants

STARTUP COST
\$1.3M-\$4.99M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
68/6

115
ecomaid
Environmentally friendly residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$120.99K-\$136.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
81/1

116
Homewatch CareGivers
Home care services

STARTUP COST
\$91.8K-\$177.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
221/0

117
 Scooter's Coffee
Coffee, espresso, smoothies, pastries, breakfast items

STARTUP COST
\$797K-\$1.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
525/30

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF OUTDOOR LIGHTING PERSPECTIVES



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Franchise opportunities



Kenny Kaufman / Outdoor Lighting Perspectives (No. 122) & Conserva Irrigation (No. 74)



At age 23, **Kenny Kaufman** and his wife scraped together their savings to buy Outdoor Lighting Perspectives of Columbia, South Carolina. Sixteen years later, they've expanded to 10 Outdoor Lighting Perspectives locations, as well as three Conserva Irrigation units.

How did your franchise journey start?

I grew up with not a lot of money, so I didn't want to take the college route right away. I joined the military and was a medic, and thought I would be an EMT, but in my hometown of Augusta, Georgia, the EMTs weren't hiring. So I went to

work for a lighting company, digging ditches. I fell in love with the business and learned a lot about sales and business management. And after about four years, I decided it was time to start my own. I drove to Outdoor Lighting Perspectives' corporate office and had a meeting with our

CEO at the time. I said, "I only have \$12,000, but I'll guarantee if you sell me this franchise you won't regret it." Now I'm the No. 1 franchisee in the company.

What made you take the leap to multi-unit ownership?

I started my business journey as kind of a control freak, where I thought that if I didn't touch it, then it wasn't going to be good. I think a lot of business owners get stuck in that. But my business coach asked me, "Would you rather own one business that runs at 100% efficiency, or 10 businesses that run at 90%

efficiency?" And that just kind of set everything in perspective for me and set me on the path of wanting to add revenue streams and grow to be a much larger company.

Why add an additional brand to your portfolio?

I set out to grow with businesses that could leverage our existing customer base. Client acquisition is one of the most costly things in business. So if I can take the same client and sell multiple things to them, that allows me to reduce that acquisition cost among each individual brand.



“Huntington has provided me financial freedom and an opportunity to change the lives of our future generation in the most rewarding way.”

Aziz Kabani Huntington Learning Center, Multi-Center Franchise Owner, Orlando, FL



MULTI-UNIT OPPORTUNITIES. MULTI-STREAM REVENUE.



AVERAGE 2022 FRANCHISE CENTER REVENUE

Franchise	Average 2022 Revenue
HUNTINGTON	\$522k
Sylvan	\$389k
Learning Rx	\$328k
Mathnasium	\$311k
Kumon	\$301k
ClubZ!	\$161k

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- Tremendous student results
- More than 5 decades as an industry leader
- Diverse services ensure multiple revenue streams (grades K - 12)
- Turnkey systems and dedicated support teams
- \$5 billion industry and projected to grow to \$18 billion by 2028 (source: Grand View Research)

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Franchise/ The Top 150 Brands for Multi-Unit Owners



118
El Pollo Loco
Fire-grilled chicken

STARTUP COST
\$768.8K-\$2.6M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
303/187

119
Estrella Insurance
Auto, home, and business insurance

STARTUP COST
\$12.3K-\$84K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
194/0

120
The Habit Burger Grill
Burgers, sandwiches, salads

STARTUP COST
\$1.4M-\$1.8M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
67/277

121
Phenix Salon Suites
Salon suites

STARTUP COST
\$632.3K-\$1.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
335/6

122
Outdoor Lighting Perspectives
Residential landscape, architectural, holiday, and hospitality lighting

STARTUP COST
\$85K-\$154.1K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
111/0

123
Burn Boot Camp
Gyms

STARTUP COST
\$200.3K-\$486.3K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
310/9

124
1-800 Water Damage
Property restoration

STARTUP COST
\$50.8K-\$294.98K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
172/0

125
Cookie Cutters Haircuts for Kids
Children's hair salons

STARTUP COST
\$142K-\$356.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
111/2

126
Batteries Plus
Batteries, light bulbs, and related products; repair services

STARTUP COST
\$197.4K-\$465.6K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
618/107

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF L&L HAWAIIAN BARBECUE



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Sarah Yee / L&L Hawaiian Barbecue (No. 143)



When **Sarah Yee** retired after 25 years with McDonald's corporate, she swore she was done with the restaurant industry. But after settling in San Antonio, Texas, she noticed a lack of cuisine from the Pacific Islands and decided to rectify it by opening her first L&L Hawaiian Barbecue franchise in 2014.

When and how did you become a multi-unit owner?

I was just plugging along with the one restaurant for a long time, and then about two years ago, a former colleague—Laurie Hatfield, who had been a McDonald's franchisee—was at a

fork in the road, and I called her and said, "Get out here and give me a hand." And with around 60 years of experience between us, we jointly decided: It's time to grow. So now we've made up for lost time and opened three restaurants in the last 12 months,

and I just signed a contract to open number five in Austin.

What's it like going so quickly from one to four units?

I've always told people the most challenging growth for a restaurateur is growing from one to two. That's the biggest adjustment, because now you're multi-unit, and you need to plan your priorities, your schedule, everything around that. Consistency is the key. We try to share best bets and make sure that all the managers know they're part of a bigger team. We try to foster some fun competition, because it's very easy for a general manager to feel like

they're on an island by themselves. So we have to make sure they feel connected and that they're all part of this organization.

We call our employees *ohana*, which means family. I really try to put action into that verbiage, and one of the things I did to make it more actionable was, from 3:00 to 3:45 every day, seven days a week, we close the restaurants, because what family never sits and has a meal together? Now they get together at the table and get to know each other better, and it's music to my ears. I've seen the teamwork really improve.

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- 3 Unique Attractions

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Franchise/

127

Merry Maids

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$94.5K-\$144.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
996/0

128

Massage Envy

Massage therapy, stretch therapy, skin care, facials

STARTUP COST
\$614.9K-\$927K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,103/0

129

Wild Birds Unlimited

Bird-feeding supplies and nature gift items

STARTUP COST
\$197.9K-\$325.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
357/0

130

The Learning Experience Academy of Early Education

Preschool/educational childcare

STARTUP COST
\$589.4K-\$5.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
287/41

131

Spherion Staffing & Recruiting

Flexible staffing, recruiting, workforce management solutions

STARTUP COST
\$143.1K-\$352.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
215/0

132

EarthWise Pet

Pet food and supplies, daycare, grooming, self-wash, training, walking

STARTUP COST
\$214.5K-\$1.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
152/1

133

F45 Training

Fitness studios

STARTUP COST
\$350.2K-\$565.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,749/0

134

Capriotti's Sandwich Shop

Sandwiches

STARTUP COST
\$417K-\$748.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
153/13

135

SafeSplash/SwimLabs/Swimtastic

Child and adult swimming lessons, parties, summer camps

STARTUP COST
\$47.5K-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
176/16

136

British Swim School

Swimming lessons for ages 3 months and older

STARTUP COST
\$93.7K-\$125.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
172/0

137

Zips Cleaners

Dry cleaning and laundry services

STARTUP COST
\$729.7K-\$1.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
63/3

138

Challenge Island

Educational enrichment programs

STARTUP COST
\$50.2K-\$68.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
179/7

139

Bubbakoo's Burritos

Mexican food

STARTUP COST
\$316K-\$672K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
73/13

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Entrepreneur



The Top 150 Brands for Multi-Unit Owners

140

Amazing Lash Studio

Eyelash-extension studios

STARTUP COST
\$304.1K-\$635.97K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
267/0

141

Tommy's Express Car Wash

Car washes

STARTUP COST
\$5.3M-\$7.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
110/6

142

Donatos

Pizza, subs, salads

STARTUP COST
\$391.5K-\$750.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
118/52

143

L&L Hawaiian Barbecue

Asian American/Hawaiian food

STARTUP COST
\$151.7K-\$613K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
213/0

144

Salons by JC

Salon suites

STARTUP COST
\$1M-\$1.6M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
122/12

145

Tutor Doctor

Tutoring

STARTUP COST
\$94.3K-\$138.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
734/0

146

Moe's Southwest Grill

Mexican food

STARTUP COST
\$566.3K-\$1.6M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
641/1

147

Aqua-Tots Swim Schools

Swimming lessons

STARTUP COST
\$984.1K-\$2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
132/1

148

CycleBar

Indoor cycling classes

STARTUP COST
\$351.5K-\$501.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
290/3

149

Code Ninjas

Computer-coding learning centers for ages 5 and up

STARTUP COST
\$181.2K-\$451.95K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
385/6

150

YogaSix

Yoga studios

STARTUP COST
\$294.8K-\$499.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
154/1

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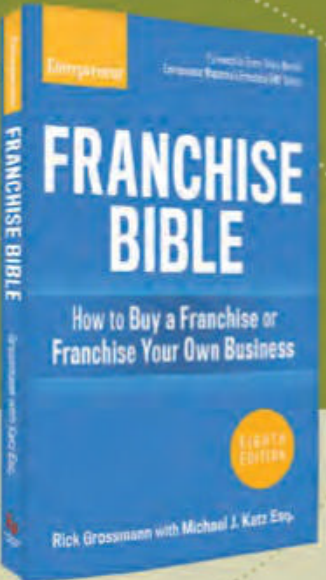
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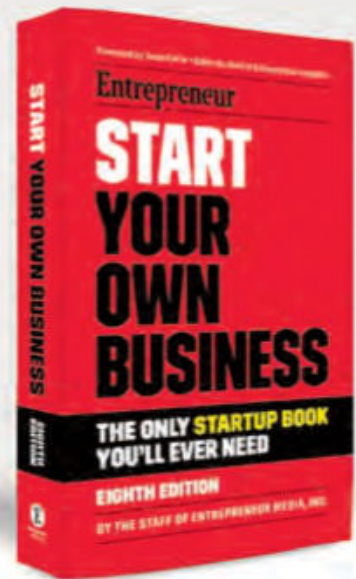
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Finding My Stride

by **Leigh Ann Cannady**, founder and artistic director, Forsyth Academy of Performing Arts



I am not athletic. In high school, for example, I joined the soccer team for a year—and even when my team was losing 9-0, the coach *still* kept me on the bench.

But in 2010, I entered the lottery to run the New York City Marathon.

I'd never run a marathon. I'd never even run a 5K. So why did I do this? Because I needed a big goal. I was in a difficult stage of life, with young children and a failing marriage, and I wanted something to strive for. So on a whim, I submitted my information into the lottery—the process by which a small number of people are randomly selected to enter the marathon. Most people work for years to qualify. Me? Somehow, my name was drawn. I was in.

I figured the only way to finish 26.2 miles was to start by running just one. But even one mile proved too hard, so I scaled back. I ran a few minutes at a time, and then walked to catch my breath. I repeated that for months. I read books, listened to podcasts, talked to friends, found mentors. I learned about training programs, nutrition, hydration, recovery, and on and on. Step by step, I became a runner.

Then, one cold November morning, I showed up at the starting line with more than 45,000 other people and ran the marathon. Did I win? Of course not. Was my time something that “real” runners would consider ridiculously slow? You bet. Did I run the same 26.2 miles as everyone else, cross the finish line with joy, and receive my medal with pride? Absolutely.

A few years after that, I decided to open my own business: It's a performing arts training facility for kids. I've always loved kids and the arts, but I knew *nothing* about business. I didn't know an income statement from a balance sheet. But because of the marathon, I had a model for how to approach it—step by step.

So, again: I read books. Listened to podcasts. Talked to friends. Found mentors. Through it all, I became an entrepreneur. My business started with just 35 kids; now it sees more than 500 students every week for classes in our building. My team is nearly 20 people strong. And I keep my New York City Marathon medal above my desk—not because it's a conversation piece, or because I want to brag about an accomplishment, but because it reminds me that every big goal can always be broken down into individual steps. And when you combine enough steps, you'll make it to the finish line.

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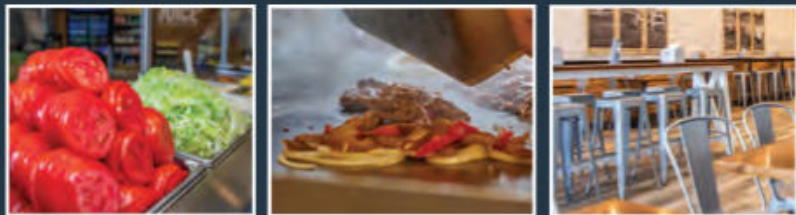
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