

Local marketing initiatives boost franchises

In addition to the franchisor's marketing efforts, success comes when a franchisee markets his or her business among the local community and success or failure of retail franchises primarily depends upon such local marketing initiatives.

Sally J'Arlette-Joy, founder of Sandwich Baron, says the key to success lies in a corporate marketing strategy dovetailing with a franchisee's local marketing strategy. Failure is usually a result of a franchisee believing he has bought a business for which everything is laid on for him.

Marketing tips

She has a number of proven marketing tips that are relevant to any franchisee.

"Much of our focus has been on maintaining a strong internet presence and we would similarly recommend this to franchisees - when you Google 'sandwich', 'Sandwich Baron' is the first website that comes up. However, to maintain that search engine presence requires constant updating.



Sally J'Arlette-Joy

"My advice is first put aside a modest budget for online advertising. Understand that no form of marketing can outperform word of mouth praise based on the quality of service. Person-to-person marketing is the most effective, albeit a time-consuming strategy.

The buying experience has to be the franchisee's primary focus. "Know and welcome your customers and have your staff make a fuss of them. I did this with my first store and had people coming to buy from me every day." As the owner, make them feel that seeing them is the absolute highlight of your day, which it should be. Then they will buy frequently. This phenomenon makes face-to-face marketing so successful.

"Get to know local businesses and make an appointment to take their CEOs a free lunch. They will often then give you access to their entire staff. This can be achieved by looking in the local newspaper for local businesses and their contact details. Scout around your location to a radius of 9-10 kms. Do not forget smaller customers. In many neighbourhoods, residential properties have been converted into businesses and staff often do not go out, so bring the food to them.

"Service levels must come first. Outlets require sufficient staff to deliver quality service and products before flooding the neighbourhood with marketing. Poor service will turn away customers and they are unlikely to return if you get it wrong in the beginning."

Social media marketing

Another means of attracting new customers in greater bulk is via digital tools. J'Arlette-Joy recommends an email strategy, utilising social media channels, as well as a presence on all the business platforms including LinkedIn. Facebook is recommended as the primary marketing tool for franchisees, as their marketing efforts can be targeted according to demographics and geographic.

"The idea is to build up as many contacts as possible. To get full value from Facebook, franchisees need to advertise on it. We now have a large address list at head office, which we use to promote specials and incentives group-wide. The same should be done on a community basis, and we encourage franchisees to do so.

“Send out emails offering a free meal to anyone who provides the names of five friends. Get a substantial email list together. Then you can start marketing to them directly. Ideas include daily specials, interesting information on things they are interested in, such as Banting or offering them a free meal on their birthday. A favourite with franchisees are flyers attached to the food packet.

“Success depends on how much energy an individual franchisee puts into it. An important element of marketing is that it has to be continuous. People change jobs, addresses and clear out their desks, losing your phone number. You have to contact them regularly to maintain the relationship. A business’ success also depends on how well that franchisee gets to know her customers. When you get to know your customers, your business is bound to succeed,” concludes J’Arlette-Joy.

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