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Hey Franchisors: Stop Asking Your Franchisees to Do Everything!

Franchisees are asked to wear a lot of hats, but does that approach foster or hinder growth?

BY GLENN WHITEHEAD

Owning and running a franchise is a big-time commitment. One of the biggest mistakes that franchisors make is expecting their franchisees to not just be budding entrepreneurs, but also savvy marketers, empathetic HR managers, skilled business developers, prudent accountants, and energetic team builders, to name only a few of the hats every franchisee is expected to wear to be successful.

But is that realistic? Is it scalable? Is it maximizing profitability? NO!

At the heart of every budding franchisee is a desire to flex their entrepreneurial muscles. Be it tasty donuts or professional cleaning services, whatever attracted your franchisees to buy-in was not because they were excited to work on their bookkeeping skills, but because they believe in your brand's vision, products, and services.

Your business has a mission statement, a primary goal, and a key objective to keep your business on track with its ultimate purpose. This means your franchisees should always be singularly focused on achieving that goal; after all, that goal – whatever it is for your organization – is what drew franchisees to select your franchise in the first place.

In today's ultra-competitive business environment, franchise-based businesses can no longer expect every franchisee to ex-

cute effectively across a variety of tasks. This expectation inevitably leads to burn out and from an execution standpoint can seriously dilute the quality of the end product, essentially making your franchisees less effective.

When a franchisee's focus is diverted from the overall goal by the realities of business management, they become less effective at what matters most: acquiring, servicing, and leveraging their customer relationships. A jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none may be an admirable trait for a parent around the house, but it's certainly not for your franchisees!

So, how and what can franchisors simplify, build, or acquire for their franchisees to relieve the daily realities of location management and refocus franchisees toward organizational growth? To achieve this level of organizational focus, franchisors need to provide simplified solutions that switch task responsibility from the franchisee to franchisor.

After all, should it not be the franchisor's responsibility to analyze organizational and operational systems, identify areas for improvement, and remove burdens as much as possible so that the franchisee can execute at a high level? Two of the most impactful ways a franchisor can support both the franchisee and the organization as a whole, is through *Software Centralization* and building a *Managed Group Marketing Program*.

#1. SOFTWARE CENTRALIZATION

It's time to retire diverse and unrelated business management software tools and integrate disparate tools into a single-portal, user-friendly data-management system that provides franchisees with a coordinated and centralized set of daily executable strategies; and franchisors with the ability to both engage and monitor each unit's success.

Imagine your franchisees coming into work every morning and rather than queuing multiple websites and software applications, instead log into a single portal that manages all the tasks and tools they need to perform their daily duties with ease.

How much time could the franchisee save? How much simplification could the franchisor facilitate? When you can track in real time where your organization and franchisees are succeeding and where improvements need to be addressed, how much more effectively could your brand operate?

How elaborate or comprehensive this system should be is up to each organization's specific needs, but a module-based management-information-system can include:

Staffing / Scheduling - the ability to organize and schedule staff, rooms, vehicles and establish some common repeatable connections between the team and your resources

Accounting - ongoing invoice generation, branch forecasting, EFT transfers, revenue acceleration, inventory management, and market analysis

Reporting - building reports on all the key franchisee perfor-

mance metrics on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis to maximize resource allocation

Field Audits - documented audits help to ensure every franchisee is operating at peak performance, combining franchisees' audits and financial data into a complete Franchisee Dashboard

CRM - maximize customer data by tracking relationships and work together to identify and grow the most valuable customers, empowering staff to make quick, informed, and insightful decisions

Marketing & Lead Management - a daily task-driven Marketing Automator to accelerate sales cycle from prospecting to closed deal

Training Modules - ongoing reinforcement of training concepts and KPI's through a web-based, 24/7 comprehensive training database

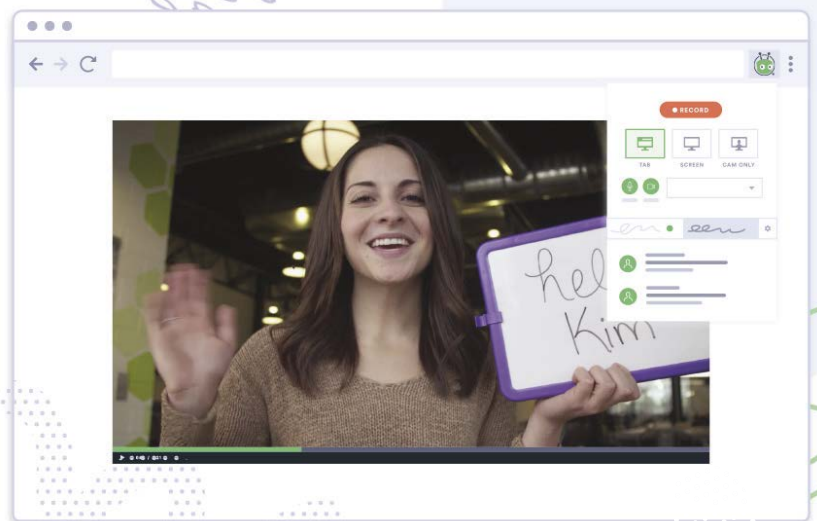
Marketing Resource Database - providing email-marketing templates, sales call scripts, ad-requests, and ready-to-print collateral

Call Tracking - provide responsive call-tracking and service performance evaluation

Software centralization provides a powerful resource-management tool, with time-saving benefits invaluable to both franchisor and franchisee. For any multi-unit organization seeking steady and profitable growth, the better systems you put into place, the easier that growth becomes.

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Vidyard for Chrome makes it easy to connect with franchisees and team members through video.



www.vidyard.com/franchise

Just as it is not valid to expect franchisees to effectively balance daily administration and sales responsibilities with high-level brand execution, it's not feasible to expect each franchisee to be able to achieve successful community-level marketing penetration for your brand without a high-level, comprehensive, and synchronous strategy operating concurrently.

When your CRM's customer and prospecting data is directly connected to your finance and audit reports, as well as to your marketing resources and call-tracking tools, the franchisee is better equipped to coordinate with staff, understand where their leads are in the buying process, when and what marketing collateral to respond with, etc.—all because you have all that data in one centralized location. **That is real power.**

#2. EXPANDING YOUR 'GROUP MEDIA BUY' INTO A FULLY 'MANAGED GROUP MARKETING PROGRAM'

Your franchise organization likely already has an AdFund in place and hopefully a strategy allocating that budget toward a national campaign. But is it effective? Does it support the franchisee's local needs?

More important than simply collecting AdFund dollars, the strategy your organization has in place in regards to how to help the franchisee spend those funds regionally is crucial; the expectation that franchisees have the expertise to effectively execute a regional strategy with the allocated budget is where many organization's strategies fall flat.

An effective, centralized strategy not only creates national visibility, it removes the burden from the franchisee and maintains concurrent and consistent visibility across the variety of channels where your customers exist. Your customers won't discover a local promotion the same way: one might hear a radio ad, while their neighbour doesn't listen to the radio but sees your commercial when watching their favourite content on YouTube, while yet another potential customer becomes engaged through your social media advertising.

Having a robust presence across multiple streams of media locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally, and capturing customers across many media tiers can come with a hefty price tag; a robust strategy that buys nationally, executes locally, and removes the burden from the franchisee can get your brand a million dollars' worth of advertising for a half-million-dollar budget and ensure a more effective buy for everyone.

As a franchisor, you need to ask yourself, *'Is our current AdFund able to cover the scope of the media landscape and balance the needs of the franchisee and franchisor effectively?'* Simply put: How responsive, comprehensive, and adaptable is your media buy program?

It's not just about buying media – it's about managing the resources available more effectively.

Navigating traditional and digital advertising requirements locally and nationally can easily exhaust resources leading to poor advertising performance. This is especially true if franchises don't have a clear differentiation between franchisee/franchisor responsibilities, or poor control of localized advertising. By working together as a group rather than separately as distinct locations, brands can achieve greater visibility and penetration in all levels of the marketplace.

From the franchisee's perspective, knowing that their marketing needs are being effectively met removes the burden of attempting cost-prohibitive advertising and allows them to direct and hone their localized efforts at the community level so they can more successfully create stronger relationships within their own neighbourhoods.

By implementing a fully-managed media buy program that leverages the buying power of the group, Franchisees are able to spend less individually, achieve greater market penetration, maintain brand consistency through uniformity, reduce competition between franchisees, and avoid duplication.

Just as it is not valid to expect franchisees to effectively balance daily administration and sales responsibilities with high-level brand execution, it's not feasible to expect each franchisee to be able to achieve successful community-level marketing penetration for your brand without a high-level, comprehensive, and synchronous strategy operating concurrently.

Ultimately, the large-scale success for the organization as a whole is dependent on localized franchisee growth. Providing systems and processes that strategize, simplify, and set up franchisees for success will result in more effective franchise systems. From administration to marketing, when franchisors simplify processes across the spectrum it allows for better brand performance overall, increased unit satisfaction, and consistent organizational growth. 🌱

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Glenn Whitehead is the Founder & CEO of Kre'Adiv House, a full-service marketing agency serving franchise & multi-unit based organizations. Kre'Adiv House has earned dozens of advertising and marketing awards for strategically unifying large-scope organizations, with an emphasis on growth and expansion. In addition to running Kre'Adiv House, Glenn is the founder of the Plant Matter Kitchen restaurants, providing high-quality, great-tasting plant-based cuisine while spreading awareness about the importance of putting good food first for health, for the environment, and for animal welfare. Glenn has also worked as the Senior VP for Oxford Learning Centres with over 155 locations in Canada, the U.S. and around the globe, while serving as partner and President for ChainSync Franchise Software company. A sought-after public speaker, business advisor, and media consultant, Glenn is a passionate advocate for creating stronger and mutually successful partnerships. You can reach Glenn at glenn@kreadivhouse.com or 226.663.5505.