

Brand and deliver

Effective marketing is essential for any new business to grow and prosper. Lidia Benvie-Ferreiros of Franchise Brands, the holding company for ChipsAway and Ovenclean, details the promotional support potential franchisees can expect from their franchisor



A franchisor should provide guidelines on the use of the brand within various situations, such as van livery

Chances are, you don't have a marketing background. Even if you do, with 101 things going through your head when you start a new business, it will probably be the last thing on your mind, let alone something you have time to do. And that's when investing in a franchise should come into its own.

One of the key benefits and distinguishing features of buying into a franchise over going it alone is the experience the franchisor will have in launching new franchises and helping franchisees develop their businesses to

achieve the best possible results. Further to this is the established brand name, which you are then licensed to use.

But no matter how good a product or service you have to offer, a business will find it hard to grow unless its potential customers are aware of its offering - and this is where marketing comes in.

Marketing can be defined as 'communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling that product or service' and encompasses a huge range of activities - from social media, online advertising,

direct mail, PR, email marketing and websites to networking and design.

It's imperative prospective franchisees find out what marketing support is available before investing what is likely to be a substantial amount of money. There are three key areas to concentrate your research on: the initial training and launch promotion, centrally organised marketing and ongoing marketing support.

Training and launch promotion

The launch of your business is a critical time and very much dependent on the

for newspaper adverts, organising promotional artwork, leaflet distribution and arranging business stationery.

But we don't just pick newspapers out of a hat or deliver leaflets to any postcode. Both ChipsAway and Ovenclean have been established for over 20 years, so not only do we have a lot of experience regarding exactly what marketing is proven to work, but, using the most up-to-date data and research methods, we are able to target those customers most likely to consider having a ChipsAway repair or book an oven clean, ensuring our launch marketing has more impact and higher response rates.

Essentially, a franchisor should be able to make the best informed choices on your behalf, helping you achieve the best start to your business as possible, which is of the utmost importance to the success of a new venture.

Centrally organised

Centrally organised marketing is one of the big bonuses of joining a franchise, as the franchisor can capitalise on economies of scale. The marketing team will be able to pool the relatively small amounts of money from each franchisee to enable much larger advertising activity that benefits the network as a whole.

TV promotions, for example, would be out of reach for most companies, yet Ovenclean now has the network size to advertise nationally. Our first TV campaign started in February and we also manage a comprehensive online marketing campaign, including pay per click, search engine optimisation, e-marketing and blogging.

Similarly for ChipsAway, although the company has been advertising on TV for the past six years, the number of leads it generates is increasing year on year. This is fully integrated with all other aspects of marketing activity, ensuring true campaign synergy.

It also goes without saying that a user friendly, lead generation driven website is essential and an important consideration when choosing which franchise to invest in. People connect to the internet for so many aspects of everyday life through phones, tablets and PCs, so a few years ago we invested heavily in developing consumer focused, mobile optimised websites

for our brands, which has paid off substantially - website lead volumes are up 28 per cent over the past year alone.

Centrally organised marketing activity is designed to generate business for the network and is managed by head office, but it is also important for franchisors to involve franchisees in the decision making process and make sure the campaign results are fully communicated and transparent, so franchisees know not only how their money is being spent, but also how effectively. If the results are good, there is no reason why the franchisor would not want to shout this information from the rooftops.

Ongoing support

It's essential to maintain a consistent brand image and message and, as a minimum, your chosen franchisor should provide guidelines on the use of the brand within various situations. This may include such things as van livery, signage, websites, newspaper advertising and the use of the logo. Many franchisors will also have approved artwork for franchisees to personalise and use locally, which not only means you don't have to go to the effort of creating your own, but also helps maintain a professional brand image and reputation.

There may well be certain situations that require modified or new artwork. If this occurs at either ChipsAway or Ovenclean, we are happy to help come up with the appropriate material, which can then be shared among the network for the benefit of everyone. A marketing department that is open to new suggestions is a great resource to have at hand as a franchisee.

A franchisor should provide franchisees with the appropriate support both initially and on an ongoing basis as described above, but it is also up to the individual franchisee to formulate a marketing plan and work to it with the support and encouragement of the franchisor.

Ultimately, as a franchisee you are your own boss and if you put the effort in you will achieve the results you desire. If you want to grow a business with a strong and professional brand image, it's essential you choose a franchise with the same attributes and we, as a franchisor - with our experience and expertise in the industry - are here to help and support you every step of the way. **WF**