



The Art of Building Strong Franchise Partnerships

By Marietta Snetsinger, Chief Solutions Officer, Ascend Franchise Solutions

The underlying success of a franchise organization depends upon the ability to build strong relationships with franchise partners. Many enduring franchise brands share similar values around operating their business model and know the value of continually building relationships with their franchise partners. This philosophy is often well entrenched within their operating systems.

1. Understanding the Franchise Relationship Very Early On

Educating candidates about how a franchise model works early on is central to the recruitment strategy. This is not a relationship based upon **parity** and this needs to be clearly communicated early on in the recruitment process. Candidates must understand the nature of this arrangement well before they sign the franchise agreement.

2. Keep the Lines of Communication Open

Communication within the organization may take on many different forms; however the underlying message ought to be **transparent** and **efficient**. Creating **effective** channels for communication to flow both ways is vital. Encourage franchisees to stay connected to one another or contribute through franchise advisory councils, specifically established for the franchisor to receive **input** from franchisees.

3. Pinpoint Critical Success Factors

Establish a set **critical path** which identifies the order of the decisions, tasks, and actions that need to take place, to best structure success. The path ways need to be **prioritized** and inclusive of **timelines**. This has been **proven** to increase the likelihood of a **successful** outcome.

4. Be Customer Centric

Loyalty is an outcome of **intentionally** creating a **customer centric** organization or way of doing business. This type of **alignment** is often vital to achieving the long, medium, and short term goals of the franchise organization and is at the core of any thriving brand. When all are devoted to meeting the needs of the customer, the likelihood of creating behaviours and habits that perpetuate **success** are greater.

5. Know the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and Unique Franchise Proposition (UFP)

Showing **evidence** of how and what exactly makes a franchise concept **unique** is crucial. At the customer level or as a business opportunity, an organization must **articulate** how their needs can be met, in a way that is **unique** and **different** from the competition. A clear understanding of what makes your franchise concept different will facilitate better positioning for success.

6. Focus on Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

Key performance indicators (KPI's) are **imperative**, and a culture or system that knows the **value** of numbers is far more likely to be successful. What needs to be **measured**, how it will be shared and more importantly how the information will be **used** to make important business **decisions** are all part of the franchise's KPI management structure. Strong franchisors make sure this is engrained as part of the franchise system to keep everyone focused on **profitability** and the relationship to each number within this **equation**.



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7. Adhere to Core Values

Know that your business can't be all things, to all people. It's wonderful to adapt and be innovative where it makes sense from a business perspective, but don't get so far off track that you forget your **original values** and mission. Know what is **sacred** to your entity. Preservation of high standards, **core values**, and performance that franchisees find **compelling** is critical. This is at the core of any successful and long enduring franchise system. At the same time, this does not mean that you are unwilling to try new things but maintaining **alignment** to your core values and goals is paramount.

8. Develop a "Culture of Execution"

Good strategy alone is not enough to ensure success, time and effort must be committed to implementation. Execution built around an **urgency** to take action and "get the task done" rather than around choice about when or if the task will get done is crucial. This ultimately revolves around trusting that everyone will do what they say.

9. Reward Execution

Great strategy and plans, well **executed**, warrant recognition and or reward. When things get done and are on time, make a "big deal" about it! Rewards systems can be informal or formal and be applicable to corporate team or the franchise partners.

10. Be Prepared for Change

Maintain the ability to continuously renew and rebuild from within. It is crucial to adapt and transform in accordance with the times. Your corporate team is all but certain to change and evolve, just as those who make great franchise candidates in the early years may not fit the successful franchise profile in the future. Be adaptable and don't be afraid to make calculated changes within your organization. What's worked in the past may not work today, so always be ready and open to change

Ultimately, building strong franchise partnerships takes commitment, effort, and engagement. Managing the expectations of the franchise relationship is pivotal to strong and sustainable success.

There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.

— **Colin Powell**

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About the Author:

With almost 20 years of experience in the Canadian franchise industry, Marietta Snetsinger is passionate about establishing solid operational systems and leadership within franchise organizations. She has played an important role in developing operational support tools and recruitment strategy with several well-loved brands including M&M Meat Shops and Baskin-Robbins. Marietta is committed to supporting Franchisors as they develop and grow their Franchise systems. Today she is the Chief Solutions Officer of Ascend Franchise Solutions and works closely with small and emerging franchisors, on a daily basis.

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