



Top ten tips for a prospective franchisee.

THERE are a number of Do's that any prospective franchisee should consider.

1. **Do** meet with the franchisor. This is the beginning of a relationship and it is important that you trust and get on with the franchisor.
2. **Do** talk or meet with existing franchisees. Ask for full access to all franchisees to make sure you are not just speaking to the more successful ones.
3. **Do** fully understand the commitment you are making. This will be your business and you should understand the skills you require and those you might have to bring in.
4. **Do** investigate and understand the market place.
5. **Do** buy into and believe in the product or service. It is vital that you have confidence in the brand you are buying into and truly believe it is better than the competition.

With regard to the Don'ts.

1. **Don't** expect success to be handed to you on a plate. Even if the franchised brand is well developed, the franchisee still needs to put in hard work and experience.
2. **Don't** allow worries to build up. The franchisor should be there to support you throughout the term of the franchise.
3. **Don't** be fearful of competition. Competition is healthy and evidences demand for the product or service that is being offered.
4. **Don't** just sign what is put in front of you. Have any documentation checked out by someone qualified to ensure that you are entering into an equitable agreement.
5. **Don't** rely only on the initial training you receive. The chances are that the initial training will be like learning to drive a car. You learn the fundamentals - only experience will give you all the knowledge you need.

As the franchisor, from my point of view, the main do is to be open and honest with all franchisees or prospective franchisees. The key don't is to accept any franchisee just because they have the money. The brand is only as good as the franchisees running the business and reputation is paramount.

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A small footnote to my number 4 don't. Whilst you do not have to buy a franchise from a bfa member, you should be aware that one of the principal aims of the bfa is to ensure ethical franchising. The bfa vet each of their members to ensure this is the case. In addition to checking the franchise agreement, the bfa make sure that the franchisor has the requisite expertise to support the franchisee and that any projections provided are realistic and achievable.

Brian Smart, Director General of the British Franchise Association (bfa) commented: "All franchisors that carry the bfa membership logo have had their business tested against the bfa's strict set of criteria and have passed the accreditation. Musical Minis has been a member of the bfa for a number of years, showing not only their ability to work to best practice, but showing conscientiousness towards long term investment in ethical franchising. This will be a huge confidence boost for those looking for a franchise working with children".

And our top five interesting franchising statistics for women.

1. Over 30% of all new businesses in the UK are started by women - that's over 130,000 businesses each year!
2. Women now comprise 39% of franchisees compared with only 21% in 2003
3. Women are involved at ownership level within 59% of new entrant franchise units.
4. Franchising is ideally suited to women! Research shows that 15% of women, in comparison to 5% of men own part-time businesses. Franchising gives women the opportunity to continue the childcare role at home, and provides them with the perfect balance between work and personal life.
5. No experience necessary! 45% of female franchisees in the UK chose a franchise in a different industry from their previous jobs.

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