

Find Serious Leads by Blending 3 Franchisee Recruitment Strategies

Let's acknowledge that many, if not most franchisors, are still reeling over the havoc the Internet and changed buyer behavior have wreaked on their franchisee recruitment models. The Internet makes all types of brand research easier than ever. And serious leads now expect to find all the information they want online. That said, finding serious franchisee leads now buried in piles of bad leads is more important than ever.

But to find more serious leads, brands must blend their approach to improve three essential franchisee recruitment strategies.

1. **How and What We Tell Leads About Our Stories**
2. **How We Find and Nurture Serious Leads**
3. **How We Intelligently Manage Our Franchisee Recruitment Pipelines**

All three strategies feed off each other. It's a classic $1+1+1 = 5$ formula where the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. Unfortunately, if you don't address all three strategies together, you're likely to be disappointed by the results. Let's explore blending these strategies works.



First, We Must Tell Great Stories

We must embrace content transparency, drop clichés from our vocabulary and persuade our most serious leads that our franchise opportunity is worth consideration. We must eliminate the all-too-common chest puffery in much storytelling today. It's about your leads; not you, at this early stage. It's a courtship. You want the date, but you're not sure either of you wants a long-term relationship yet. So, show your leads affection at this early stage, get the date, build a relationship and see where it goes.

This Internet-savvy lead expects to easily find all the information they need to research your brand. They're impatient. If they don't get what they want, they move on to the next brand on their list. You've lost before you ever had a chance to start. Your calls, emails and texts go unanswered.

At the end of the day, your story must clearly articulate why you're the best choice for them. And to move away from clichés, you've got to include "evidence" or "proof" of every claim you make.

Second, We Must Find, Contact and Nurture Our Leads In New Ways

Rethink how and where you find leads. Acknowledge that most franchise categories are more competitive than ever; with everyone fighting for leads among the same pool of interested people. The lead pool should remain relatively constant for a few more years until Millennials dominate the next wave of people looking for entrepreneurial opportunities.

That generation is bigger than the Baby Boom and we all know the impact the boomers have had and continue to have on every aspect of society. Keep in mind that Millennials and GenX/Baby Boomers have different expectations and attitudes which have meaningful implications for how your story is told.

Brands must stop looking almost exclusively for 4 to 6-week "act now" serious leads. Brands must squeeze every ounce of value from the leads you pay dearly to generate. Let's recognize that most serious leads who ultimately enter your pipeline don't "act now" but in most cases they're dropped off the radar and in many cases there is no effective program to reconnect with them long-term.

Brands need to find and nurture all those interested in your story, but not yet ready for contact. If you don't, those are lost deals. Face it, the "dialing for dollars" franchisee recruitment model only picks up immediate low-hanging fruit and not all of those people at that.

Why should you care? We've learned that up to 30% of signed deals in any given year, come from leads acquired in previous years. So don't waste those future opportunities.

Third, Brands Must Intelligently Manage Their Pipelines

To gain control, brands must reduce reliance on their historical "dialing for dollars" prospecting model. It's becoming unsustainable and expensive to support in an era that requires generating more leads to find the right new franchisee. We must embrace a more disruptive recruitment future, get comfortable with it and push ahead; incorporating more intelligence and automation into our franchisee recruitment methodology.

Here's a frustration we regularly hear from leadership and franchisee recruiting executives...

"If we could just talk to more of the right people, we could do more deals. How can we do that?"

Three Actions to Start Today to Find More Serious Leads

Make sure your franchisee recruitment methodology is sound (which includes more than software) and will work better in this changing environment. Focus on...



1. **First, rethinking how to tell your story**
2. **Second, reimagine where to find leads and how to nurture leads**
3. **Third, learn how to automatically identify serious leads that engage with your story**

Transition away from the “dialing for dollars” model. Find new ways to embrace the Internet, track online behavior, trigger smart communication using email and text messaging to both tell your story and encourage contact. Don't push; nudge.

A Case Study with Real Metrics

Here's a recent success story of how embracing and harmonizing improvements in these three strategic areas positively affected the franchisee recruiting program of Hwy 55 Burgers Shakes & Fries.

This 26+ year-old brand was frustrated. For three years, its franchisee recruitment efforts stumbled along. Leads didn't return calls or emails, hampering growth plans.

In March 2017 they decided to revamp their storytelling, lead generation and franchisee recruitment support strategies.

Here's What Changed:

June 2017 birthed a new approach to franchisee recruitment. Their brand story focused on history and culture and how they're different from competitors. They explained their refreshed value proposition on a new dedicated franchisee website which brought the brand to life for visitors with creative use of dramatic photography and video.

They made it easy to contact them by automatically scheduling a call, requesting territory availability and offering a text me option across various devices. So now visitors experience better, more compelling, differentiated storytelling both online, in email and via text. And when they're ready, it's easy to get in touch.

When a lead completes any form, they begin an automated long-term email and text storytelling cycle that allows the Hwy 55 story to evolve over several months. Their lead management system tracks all behavior and uses sophisticated algorithms to rank how serious a lead is in the brand.

Upon reaching certain milestones, these people become the most serious leads we talked about earlier. These serious leads are diligently worked, culminating in Discovery Day visits and signed Agreements.



▶ HWY 55 OUTCOMES

From June to November 2017

- ▶ 984 new portal leads were generated
- ▶ 6,230 archived leads were reactivated

▶ EARLY RESULTS

- ▶ 107 leads or 10.46% showed serious interest in Hwy 55
- ▶ 282 reactivated leads or 4.5% showed serious in Hwy 55

A rich pipeline has developed for 2018. In just a few months, Hwy 55 signed a new master licensee and entered into agreements to open in seven International market.

Franchise Pipeline Solutions (FPS) automates finding you serious franchisee leads. Guaranteed.