

# the franchise review

ISSUE 66 EDITION 2 2021

## New Directions

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the new normal

Digital strategies

Culture, values  
and resilience

Franchising  
Code of Conduct  
changes



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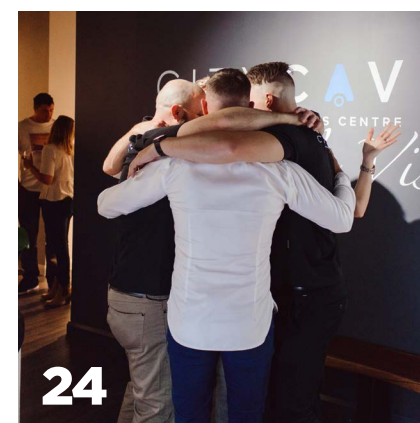
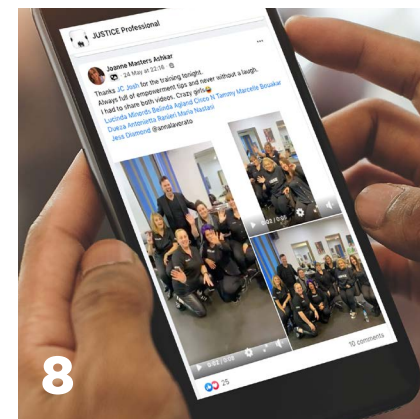
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As Australia's peak industry association for the franchising sector, the FCA responded positively overall to the Franchising Code of Conduct reforms announced in June by the Federal Government.

# Franchise Code changes introduced as businesses recover

By **Mary Aldred**,  
CEO, Franchise Council of Australia

Given the dramatic impacts of COVID on small businesses across Australia, the FCA was reassured by the Federal Government's approach to introducing the changes in the context of today's economic reality.

The past eighteen months has proved to be the most difficult economic environment Australian businesses have ever experienced. The FCA was wary of further business failures that may arise where there are rapid or overly punitive regulatory changes.

The government appears to have taken into account the significant reforms already introduced by the FCA in response to the issues raised through the 2018 parliamentary inquiry into the franchise code of conduct and subsequent taskforce.

The FCA consulted extensively with franchisor and franchisee members as part of the industry consultation process. This included the FCA's Policy Advisory Committee, a group comprising franchisors, franchisees and advisers, and the FCA's Franchisee Advisory Committee.

In addition, the FCA's Legal Committee, representing the majority of specialist franchise lawyers in Australia, was asked to provide feedback on any potential excessive compliance costs or unintended consequences.

The Government consulted heavily with the FCA through development of the new regulations and is aware of not only the steps taken to introduce new measures to ensure compliance, but also the actively supportive role played by franchise networks and the FCA to deal with COVID-19 and assist franchises and small business through the challenges.

The FCA has worked hard to address the key themes that arose in the 2018 Parliamentary Inquiry:

On the need to better engage franchisees, the FCA made significant changes. The FCA now has franchisees represented on its Board and has established a Franchisee Advisory Committee that meets regularly to consult and proactively raise issues.

The FCA revised member standards and guidelines and, during Covid-19, established a pro bono legal assistance program for franchisees needing legal advice.

The FCA also prepared and published a Franchisee Guide for prospective

franchisees, containing clear, detailed information on due diligence imperatives across business, finance, legal requirements.

However, the franchising sector has not unequivocally endorsed all the proposed regulatory changes.

Member input is important to the FCA, especially feedback on the key issues for our sector in implementation of specific aspects of the revised Franchise Code of Conduct.

Feedback from a section of our membership following release of the Code revisions is that there are particularly significant business implications of the policy on rebates.

To this end, the FCA is continuing to talk with the government on behalf of members impacted by the rebates policy to develop an evidence-based case of unintended outcomes.

The FCA hopes that by clearly demonstrating the detrimental economic and employment impact on those affected businesses, the government will consider a review of the rebates policy.

For the broader membership, the FCA proposes to implement a comprehensive education and information program including a series of workshops and online sessions on general compliance requirements for both franchisors and franchisees.

## Franchise Disclosure Registry

The FCA welcomed funding for a franchise registry to improve the availability of information to prospective franchisees.

The Federal Government has asked the FCA to provide input on the formation and structure of the registry as part of the implementation process, and we have been in ongoing consultation with Small Business Minister Stuart Robert as part of this.

As part of this and the broader Franchising Code of Conduct reforms, it is essential that franchise businesses have appropriate lead time to update their systems and implement changes to ensure compliance with new requirements.

The FCA welcomes the Government's commitment to undertake an extensive education and engagement process to inform and support the sector's transition to the registry.

## FCA initiatives since 2018 to address issues raised in the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Franchise Code of Conduct

- New member standards and guidelines
- Franchisee representation on the FCA Board
- Franchisee Advisory Committee giving feedback to the CEO
- Stronger focus on education, training and resources
- An updated FCA Franchisee Guide
- A new member complaints system

## Businesses on the road to recovery

Franchise networks reported further recovery in revenues in the first quarter of 2021 as positive sentiment strengthened, according to the latest Australian Franchise Business "Pulse Check" survey conducted by FRANdata.

However, the continuing risk of further government lockdowns remains a key challenge, with 51% of survey respondents citing this as their main ongoing concern.

The Pulse Check survey includes responses from 113 Australian franchise systems covering 21,368 business outlets.

45% of respondents reported March 2021 quarterly revenue increases exceeding 10% compared to the March 2020 quarter. This is up from 33% in the previous quarter, reflecting the ongoing general recovery in trading conditions and a solid performance by many franchise networks.

While the risk of further lockdowns and border closures was the major concern for more than half of survey respondents, other challenges included franchisee recruitment (33%), compliance (32%), wellness of franchisees and staff (32%) and workplace relations issues (30%).

The FCA is recommending a consistent national approach on agreed thresholds for lockdowns to improve business and community confidence in this area. ■



From the first Noodle Box restaurant in Melbourne 25 years ago to the multi-brand franchisor of a stable of QSR brands, innovation has always been part of Concept Eight's DNA. *The Franchise Review* sat down with Grant Lee, CEO of Concept Eight, to learn more about how the brand has repositioned itself to respond to key changes in the marketplace, and the purpose and values that underpin Concept Eight's decision-making processes.

# Thinking outside the box at Concept Eight



The story began in the 1990s, when Noodle Box founders Josh James and David Milne fell in love with the street markets of Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Burma while travelling around South East Asia after they left school.

It was there that the idea of replicating the street vendors' wok cooking was born, with the first Noodle Box opening in Chapel Street, Prahran, in 1996.

"It really was a first because unlike the typical Asian restaurants of the day the kitchen was in front, you could see your food getting cooked, you could see all of the ingredients that were about to go into your meal," Grant said.

Until a couple of years ago, the business was defined as Asian, wok-based cooking, with its two brands, Noodle Box and Wokinabox, operating in every state except New South Wales.

Then came the moment that saw Concept Eight reposition itself and expand its value proposition for franchise partners.

"When we looked at the size of the QSR market about two years ago, it became apparent that the market is dominated by chicken, burgers and pizza. Combined, they have about 75 per cent of market share. We realised to really grow we needed to be in these segments," Grant said.

The decision was made to get into premium chicken and the premium burger business, which today sees brands Pattysmiths, Supreme Leader and Alabama Wings also operating under the Concept Eight umbrella.

"What we believe separates the Concept Eight business model is that most QSR businesses are focused on one brand, one cuisine, one target market - and they do it really well. However, that's not our model. We're a multiple-brand franchisor with dumplings, noodles, southern style fried chicken, Korean style chicken and burgers. We're focused on offering our franchise partners a variety of cuisines, not just a single cuisine," Grant said.

It's a strategy that's working for the business and its franchise partners.

"Whilst the last 12 months have been very difficult for most in retail, the QSR

segment has witnessed extraordinary growth," said Grant.

"And we are no different. This financial year Concept Eight sales have increased by 30 per cent on a like for like basis and 50 per cent overall. In addition, we managed to build 15 restaurants, which is amazing given head office was in lock down for a substantial period of the year."

## Responding to a changing market

Changing consumer behaviour, developments in technology and the impacts of Covid-19 have all influenced business decision-making at Concept Eight, with the franchisor identifying six changes it believes will drive the market over the next decade.

"Firstly, the big one is the **home delivery market**. There was a report in 2018 by UBS Bank that forecast the market would grow to \$360 billion by 2030. I don't think that's in dispute anymore, it's just whether it's in 2030 or occurs earlier," Grant said.

In response to this change, Concept Eight began constructing restaurants where the majority of sales are either takeaway or home delivery.

**Technology** was the second change they identified - with impacts across the business including ordering and delivery, loyalty, rostering, compliance, finance and point of sale. At Concept Eight, integrating these technologies and implementing a robust financial dashboard has been key, allowing the business to effectively capture and use big data to inform decision making.

An app has also been utilized to help Concept Eight meet its legal responsibility as franchisor under workplace laws.

The Culture Firm app, which is integrated into the brand's intranet software, allows restaurant team members to confidentially report any inappropriate workplace behaviour - such as harassment, bullying and underpayment. While usage of the app has been minimal, where reports have been made it has provided a user-friendly pathway for resolution.

## Changing customer preferences

were seen as the third big change, with consumers increasingly choosing takeaway (home delivery, drive through or pick-up) at the expense of dine-in. Concept Eight launched their own app to enable customers to easily order all the brands, virtual or core, and consume food in accordance with their preference.

The **rental market** has been another change in recent times.

"One of the positive things to come out of Covid was a decline in rents. The rental market was getting out of hand, with 5 per cent annual increases built in for no real reason, particularly when inflation was declining," Grant said.

"We now see that the balance of power, apart from the big malls, is shifting back to the tenant and that's a great thing. We've been spending a lot of time over the last 12 months renegotiating every single lease we have and most of the landlords have been terrific and understand that times have changed."

Fifth on the list is **local area marketing**, which has been revolutionised by social







media, which at Concept Eight has now replaced mass advertising as a channel to reach and engage with customers.

Finally, the **growth of food segments** outside of pizza, chicken and burgers is another consideration.

"We look at the rise of Mexican cuisine and Vietnamese food is big at the moment. But probably the biggest one we see over the next 10 or so years would be the shift to plant-based food, or food that's positively good for you," said Grant.

### Bringing people on the journey

It's one thing to identify change and to make the decision to reposition the business to take advantage of market opportunities. As any good franchisor knows, it's another equally important thing to ensure franchise partners and the head office team are brought on the transformational journey.

At Concept Eight, a clear purpose, corporate values and commitment to communication all contributed to ensure franchise partners understood the rationale for change.

"The way we managed to bring the franchise partners along with us was just to sit down with them and explain the changes that needed to be made, the reasons why (because our industry was going through massive change) and things were never going to go back to the way they were and keep them informed at each step of the way. There's nothing complicated about that, it's what every good management team would do," Grant said.

A recent study conducted for Concept Eight by the Franchise Relationships Institute validated this approach.

"Every single one of our franchise partners was interviewed as part of the study and they all agreed. As a result, we believe we're on the right track because we've been told we've got one of the highest net promoter

scores amongst any of the franchisors in Australia," Grant said.

At head office, the team has faced the transformation of the QSR market through home delivery and the Covid shift to working from home.

According to Grant, it's very unlikely the team will return to working five days a week in the office.

"And again, people cope with change as long as they know what the changes are and how will it affect them and they have a clear plan to navigate the changes," Grant said.

"What also helped, even before Covid, all of the team at Concept Eight understood their role, they had their own individual KPIs, they had the ability to execute their role, whether it was from home or the office and they knew Concept Eight's Purpose - why we were coming into work each day.

"All of that really helps bringing the franchise partners and the team along for the journey."

### Concept Eight's purpose and values

Concept Eight's strategy to diversify its offering was underpinned by a clearly defined Purpose and Values.

"We're really big at Concept Eight on our Mission Statement, Vision and Purpose, our business is anchored by our Purpose," said Grant.

"Our Purpose is to enable the aspirations and dreams of our franchise partners by providing them with the best support we can and the security of profitable and growing brands. Every major decision is made by asking 'is this in the best interests of our franchise partners?'"

Nearly four years ago, the management team sat down and defined their workplace values, deciding on a list of five principles that would underpin their operations, and which have guided the decision-making process at Concept Eight:

**1. Innovation:** "We believe food is fashion and we need to constantly be changing. You need to love innovation and change," Grant said.

**2. Team first:** "Nothing gets done without people. And we believe the best decisions are made by the team, not by individuals. If it's an important big decision, we will chat about it as a team to ensure we're making the right decision."

**3. Expertise:** "We have a saying at the office, 'let the cobbler cobble', because we believe that individuals are subject matter experts. The head of finance knows more about finance than all of us, our head of network development knows more about his area of expertise. We also defer to them at the end and let them make the call after they've heard from the rest of the team."

**4. Customer centric:** "We're always trying to improve customer service for both our franchise partners and the customer eating our meals"

**5. Just own it:** "We strongly believe that once you've committed to do something, you need to find a way to make that happen."

### Growth and the future

Concept Eight's future plans are underpinned by a culture of innovation, responsiveness to change, and values-based decision making with the touchstone of supporting and growing profitable brands for franchise partners.

"I was taught by my first employer that if you're not growing, you're dying. So, we're firmly focused on above market growth in all aspects of our business," Grant said.

"Every day we're trying to get better at what we do. We're trying to improve our sales for all of our restaurant's day in, week in, every year.

"We will keep growing our virtual brands, we'll keep growing Noodle Box, we'll keep growing Pattysmiths, we intend to move into the NSW market and who knows, maybe one day offshore." ■



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Right: Just Cuts Campbelltown Owner Joanne Ashkar shared some video and pics from a team training night with Operations & Retail Manager Josh Barnett in the Stylist FB Group – May 24 2021

# Digital driven hairdressing Just Cuts continues to grow online in 2021



**By Amber Manning**  
CEO, Just Cuts

At the beginning of 2021, I shared a quote from American business entrepreneur Steve Jobs with the Just Cuts Academy Team to shape our strategic planning for the next 12 months:

*“You’ve got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology – not the other way round.”*

For every franchise network, 2021 is all about the customer, or as we say at Just Cuts, the Client. And as we all know, for businesses like ours the Owners must always be our number one customer.

COVID isn’t going away anytime soon, which means moving business operations online remains crucial, but we can’t do that at the expense of fostering strong connections, both internal and external. Hairdressing is by definition a close contact, personal service after all.

Just Cuts is driving e-commerce growth everywhere we can. While it’s true to say you can’t get your haircut online, you can use digital tools to enhance and simplify the customer experience.

And making hair easier for everyone is something that hasn’t changed for us in 30 years.

## eLearning solutions

In early 2020, Just Cuts had already moved our training, compliance and monitoring systems online, which was critical for Owners all over the world as the pandemic progressed.

However, we knew the welfare of our Teams during COVID was something that went beyond business as usual, which is why we’ve partnered with mental health NFP AccessEAP to provide Owners and Teams with free digital counselling tools to support their mental health needs.

This year we’re continuing to drive engagement with the platform’s smartphone app through compulsory Team Leader training, because we understand workplace wellbeing isn’t something you can tick a box for once annually, especially now. It’s something we work on and maintain every day.

We’ve invited Owners and Teams to sign up to webinars hosted by AccessEAP on both food and mood covering exercise and eating, and workplace bullying covering impacts and responsibilities.

Like the rest of the business community, franchise networks must learn to live with this virus and that means having long term strategies in place to both retain staff and enhance performance.

And while the road to good mental health is a personal journey, this digital tool provides a simple and effective solution that promotes good mental health for all our Just Cuts Owners and Teams

## Digital Owner engagement

While digital tools like Zoom provide easy channels for communicating, it’s critically important that franchises foster tangible, two-way connections within their networks.

I believe the best discussions don’t use mute or shared screens.

Rather than advising in a traditional teacher and student format, motivate your owners and teams to talk to each other, creating open discussions where individual flair and ideas can flourish.

Our bimonthly ‘Owners on the couch’ sessions are proving immensely popular with our Owners, who can ask advice and share insights with each other on what’s working and where to improve.

As a result, Just Cuts Owners are now regularly meeting on zoom and have created Whatsapp support groups to share encouragement and just stay in touch, which we actively encourage.

Building personal bonds between Owners lays the foundations for a strong culture at Just Cuts.

Every member of the Just Cuts Academy is encouraged to engage with Owners on our Facebook group, especially our operations team who regularly share top style tips and video tutorials.

We’ve just started our Fast Five series where we spend 30 seconds with a Stylist and quiz them on popular local hairstyles and top hair tips, then we share the video on the Stylist Facebook page.

For every digital communications tool you use this year, think of a way to ensure you’re creating a truly vibrant conversation online, rather than a traditional classroom or seminar environment.

## Growing sales

With COVID continuing the shift towards online shopping this year, it’s imperative to build digital sales strategies into your franchise where possible.

If you’re in the close contact business like Just Cuts, online can be tricky, but this year we’re using digital tools to implement both internal and external strategies to grow sales of our haircare range.

While JUSTICE Professional products are exclusive to salons, digital sales are now almost our top global performer. To maintain the connection between salon and customer online, Clients can nominate their favourite local salon at the checkout so Owners receive a cut of all digital sales.

We created a seasonal app game for our Stylists called the Empowerment rewards program, a quarterly retail sales ranking for Stylists where they accumulate points they can redeem for prizes.

Stylist participate by earning points for every JUSTICE Professional product sold through the app, which displays the live leader board on a daily and weekly basis.

At the end of every month and season the top Stylist rankings are shared on the Stylist Facebook group and congratulated by the team. Stylists can earn double points by engaging on the Stylist Facebook page with weekly winners to promote a team mindset.

Rewards vary from salon tools to gift cards which are redeemable in a large variety of stores. As of March 2021, Stylists can also choose to donate the value of their rewards to either of our charities at the Royal Flying Doctor Service or SANE Australia mental wellbeing appeal.

I’m proud to say many Stylists have already begun choosing this charitable reward option, highlighting the community focused workplace culture we’ve built together at Just Cuts.

With parcel tracking for JUSTICE orders on the horizon this year, my advice to franchises and Owners alike is to build digital strategies into everything you sell.





**In 2021 our goal is to drive digital growth wherever we can, as it future-proofs our franchise.**

The great thing about digital is it's simple to modify, which suits us perfectly. For the next 30 years of small business success we will need to keep evolving our model to keep up with the pace of change.

As soon as a Client sits down in one of our styling chairs, Stylists listen to what they want.

I know if we take that same approach with implementing digital strategies, Just Cuts is staying true to who we are in always delivering for our Owners and Teams while making hair easy for Clients. ■



Above: JFO (Just for Owners) EDM update sharing latest Stylist online survey results to support recruitment and retention at Just Cuts - Monday May 10 2021

## CASE STUDY

### Mother's Day 2021 Campaign

Our marketing team created a Mother's Day competition, complete with imagery and vouchers, which launched in mid-April across Australia and New Zealand and concluded on Mother's Day.

To enter the draw to win over \$5,000 worth of gift cards, Clients had the option of accessing the entry form either in salon or online – a decision which led to a marked increase in website traffic.

The promotion converted to a 31% increase in unique users for the month of April 2021 on the previous month, and an over 50% increase in users on the same time in 2020.

Of the well over 20,000 new users on the website, just under half were in between 25-44 – a key demographic for Just Cuts as we work to keep digital natives engaged with our brand.



Above: Mum for the Win 2021 Mother's Day AU online & in salon competition artwork

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# Understanding the reasons behind high performance in franchising

By Renae Fogarty,

National Sales Manager, Op Central

For too long, the focus has been on identifying the low performers and high performers in franchising, but we really need to be examining what is working for the high performing franchises. Maybe you already know what those factors are, but it's that elusive 'why' that's so important. Why are particular franchises performing well? The truth is, the franchises that are performing well have similar characteristics and do similar things to improve their performance (and to better understand their performance).

Thanks to analytics and the insights you can gather from it, we are able to better understand why the high performing franchisees are performing so well - and now that we do understand, we're seeing some similarities among the high performing franchises. Some of the insights might be pretty straightforward, but there are a lot of insights that can be gathered from this information, and thus applied to other franchises.

## The unsurprising reasons why

If we sat down and thought about why particular franchises are performing well, we might all come up with the same reasons. The common 'why factors' of high performance include:

- Profitability
- Strong use of brand
- Employee / franchisee engagement
- Learning and development
- Innovation

Knowing these factors is important, but understanding why they contribute to high performance is crucial. Let's take a better look at each factor.

## Profitability

Of course, the profitability of a franchise is front of mind for franchisors. A franchise that isn't making money, just can't be successful. It's common for franchisors to view profitability as the franchisee's responsibility, but it's unwise not to view it as a shared responsibility. Franchisors that work with their network of franchisees and spend time understanding the ROI, earnings, spend, etc. are more likely to perform better. It's important to closely review this information, paying close attention to red flags and why they may be occurring and acting on any issues quickly.

## Strong use of brand

Any franchisor will tell you that a strong brand is important to performance. Your brand is everything and the better performing franchisors know this. These franchisors spend a lot of time developing tools to improve compliance over brand adherence and systems that improve their brand strategy.

## Employee / franchisee engagement

An often-overlooked factor in high performance is employee engagement. Employees are essentially ground zero for your franchise. They're representing your brand, serving your customers and managing the daily operations. Higher performing franchisors value employee engagement and believe that happy employees = happy life. All franchisors should evaluate their employee engagement levels and how they can improve engagement.

## Learning and development

The world is constantly changing and it's important for us to be able to change with it. Continuous learning and upskilling is one of the best ways to prepare for change. The high performing franchisors understand the importance of implementing engaging training programs that fortify knowledge, improve understanding, and help develop skills. But learning and development isn't just about preparing for change, it's about growth and innovation too. Focusing on developing engaging learning experiences will undoubtedly contribute to a franchise's performance.

"...the most important thing their systems do, is provide analytics that give real insights into why things are or aren't working."

## Innovation

The killer ideas do get you ahead in this world. Innovations, big and small, can be the difference between success and failure. The most revered franchises paved the way with bespoke systems and a unique take on their industry. Without different ideas and innovations, the most successful franchises wouldn't be what they are today.

## Strong systems and processes are key

These 'why factors' tie back to one thing; systems and processes. Almost all high performing franchises have amazing systems and processes put in place. Not only to improve performance, but to better understand why they are performing so well. The systems they use come down to much more than just POS and rostering, they are a part of every inch of the franchise.

The high performing franchisors have taken the time to implement strong systems and tools that factor in the entire business. These systems take care of communications, compliance, training and onboarding, employee engagement, auditing and so much more. But the most important thing their systems do, is provide analytics that give real insights into why things are or aren't working. This understanding of why things are working allows for scalability, reduces monetary and time costs and allows you to do what you do best. Without strong systems in place, franchisors will never be able to be the best that they can be.

## What can you do now to improve your franchise

The best way to improve your franchise and understand why things are or aren't working is to invest in the systems that can provide you with these real insights and help you improve your operations. There are systems out there that can help you with each of these common 'why factors' by focusing on franchisor and franchisee relationships, compliance, auditing, engaging employees, managing policies and procedures, and more.

Any system you look at, will need to have:

- 1. Integration capabilities:** Data lives in lots of weird and wonderful places, standalone systems are going to hold you back today and even more so in the future.
- 2. Custom report builder:** What matters to your franchise system is different to someone else, so it's important that you can trim away the details you don't need and focus on those you do need.
- 3. Deep native functionality:** Whilst it's great to push and pull data in and out of multiple systems, find a system which offers more functions - at a high level - and it'll cost you much less in license fees and messing around with data than having 10 standalone systems!
- 4. Integrated financial reporting:** It's a no-brainer in many ways, but you cannot assess all of the operational factors without looking at the end output of those factors in the form of financial reporting. ■

For more information on **Op Central** and how it can help improve your franchise's performance, visit [opcentral.com.au](http://opcentral.com.au)

## Find out more at the NFC21 Panel Discussion

There will be a dedicated panel discussion on the topic of "Understanding the why of high performance in franchising" during the FCA's 2021 National Franchising Convention. Panellists include: **Aaron Smith** Founder, KX Pilates **Darren Lane** CEO, Degani Coffee **Amber Manning** CEO, Just Cuts **Scott Bradley** GM Operations, Schnitz



# Snap lockdowns are the new normal Adjusting to a new way of doing business

By Ian Jensen-Muir  
CEO, Belgravia Health + Fitness

During the lockdowns of 2020, the entire Genesis Health + Fitness network, which consists of more than 40 clubs across Australia, lost almost 100% of its revenue overnight. This had never before happened in more than 20 years of the Genesis brand being in the market. Gyms were amongst the first to close and the last to be permitted to re-open, so the rocky road seemed like a very long one.

It was certainly a challenging time for the entire business, as it was for many other Australian businesses, but the Genesis team and franchisees rose to the occasion and clubs have started the year with strong membership figures as loyal members and new members head back through the doors.

Moving into 2021, it would be unwise for any business to assume things will return to 'normal'. There's a lot of commentary of what the 'new normal' will look like and while it's too early to accurately predict all aspects of our new reality, what is known for sure is that it's certainly not going to be the same as it was before. Lockdowns, changes in restrictions and hotspots are going to become a usual part of doing business in the foreseeable future as Australia works together to keep communities safe. People's mindsets, preferences and priorities have also shifted, in some cases significantly and irreversibly. In the fitness industry, for example, there is a far greater importance now placed on wellness as opposed to other pre-pandemic priorities like weight loss and physique.

The focus now for those franchises that want to continue to thrive is on what must come next to ensure franchisees remain in the strongest position possible, regardless of any further bumps ahead. No one could have predicted the events of 2020 and no body knows anything for certain about 2021 or the years ahead. What can be identified are the critical elements of your franchise operation that need to be in place and working optimally to be able to face the future. Much like

the children of today are prepared for the unknown careers of the future by building future-proof core skills, the businesses of today need to focus on the core elements that will see them well-armed as the march into the new normal, whatever that might look like.

## Communication at all levels

No matter what challenges are faced in the future, last year was a critical reminder about the importance of communication at all levels of the organisation in times of uncertainty and crisis. When communicating effectively, it's more likely an optimal solution will be found to the problem at hand and the impacts on the brand and its customers will be minimised. Regular internal communication, clear communication with government, honest communication with franchisees and proactive communication with the Genesis member base are critical moving forward.

## Streamlined processes

Being able to move swiftly and efficiently as required has become the new essential goal for every business. Even the large and long-established organisations that are typically slower to respond have had to learn to be more flexible and nimble. Streamlining relevant processes and response plans in light of learnings from last year has been key for Genesis to remain agile in an ever-changing environment, with a big focus on communication and support for individual gym sites and affected members. During the shorter, more localised lockdowns experienced this year, for example, the team has been able to swoop into action because those plans and processes are now in place and well-refined.

## Community at the heart

Community has always been a big part of the Genesis offering, but it's more important now than ever before. People are looking to belong to something bigger than themselves, to find new meaning as their priorities shift and to feel they're not alone when times get tough. By creating a solid sense of community for members and ensuring they can remotely tap into their trainers, connect with gym buddies and receive reliable information and updates, we are able to support them, encourage peer-to-peer support and work through future lockdown periods with minimal disruption. Genesis is building a stronger community through a range of tools including Facebook groups and the Genesis Health + Fitness app.



## Innovation front and centre

It would be unlikely that any business would go through this sort of world-changing event and not realise that certain innovations are required to respond to shifts in consumer demand and mindset. It's important to listen to your customers and really understand what they need from you now – and don't assume it's the same thing they needed from you 18 months ago.

Genesis is looking at some major innovations for this year to bring more services and support under one roof and to tap into the growing consumer interest in wellness. Technology like body scanners and massage guns will be rolled out – it's all about convenience and making it easier for members to achieve their goals without having to visit various providers at different locations. Reformer Pilates will also be introduced as a new wellness offering, in addition to classes like yoga and stretch. Traditionally, Reformer Pilates in boutique studios has been cost-prohibitive for many consumers so by offering it as part of the Genesis mix, it's far more accessible for members, particularly at a time when many are feeling a budget squeeze.

From a franchising perspective, innovation will take the form of more flexible options for new franchisees with the introduction of a reduced-footprint model. Some of these smaller sites may be up to one fifth of the size of some of the larger Genesis clubs and will focus on offering only the core, 'hero' elements of the Genesis model. This cost-effective option will appeal to many new franchisees and open up additional opportunities in regional Australia as well.

Overall, Genesis is optimistic about the second half of 2021 and this is shared by most in the industry who have been able to respond to the challenges with enthusiasm and an open mind. While 2020 was particularly challenging because what was faced was new, this

year is a different story and we have the chance to navigate the twists, turns and bumps armed with key knowledge, refined skills, practised processes and the confidence that comes with knowing 2020 didn't beat us. ■



## About Ian-Jensen Muir

Ian is the CEO for Genesis Health + Fitness and Belgravia Health and Fitness. Ian commenced with Genesis Health + Fitness in 2012, expanding the direction to Belgravia Health and Fitness through the introduction of the new franchise offerings Coaching Zone and Ninja Parc.

## About Genesis Health + Fitness

Genesis Health + Fitness is part of Belgravia Health and Fitness, the Australian leader in Fitness franchising with over 20 years' experience in creating active, healthy communities. Its portfolio includes Genesis Health + Fitness, Coaching Zone Group Personal Training, Ninja Parc Indoor Obstacle Course and JUMP! Swim Schools.



Having a strong digital presence for any company is nothing new. But with the recent health crisis, consumer behaviour has changed dramatically over the last 18 months. With so many people restricted to living in lock-down situations and forced to work remotely for long periods of time, the reality is that people are now, more than ever, accustomed to doing business online.

# The importance of having a digital marketing strategy



**By Amanda Payne,**  
Marketing Manager,  
Asia Pacific, InXpress

As a result, businesses have had to adapt quickly and are now providing, either part of full online product or service offerings to their customers.

So, what are the main things to consider when developing your business's online presence? Below are the primary components of a good digital marketing strategy.

## Website

It's basic, but it has to be mentioned. In order to gain a solid online presence, you need to have a good website, one that showcases your brand, your products and/or services and one that will successfully capture sales and/or leads.

It goes without saying that you need to have the ability to generate sales or at the very least, capture leads on your website. You'll want to be able to capture important information such as contact details so that you can continue to market to your leads. Furthermore, asking the question 'where are you located' and 'how did you find us?' will allow you to optimise your marketing channels.

Once you've developed your website,

there are a couple of things you need to consider:

### 1. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

– SEO is the process of maximizing the number of visitors to your website by ensuring that the site organically appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine. For example, Google uses an algorithm to determine which sites it will return to the user who has typed a keyword into the search bar. The algorithm includes things like keywords used throughout the content of your website, number of backlinks you have to your website and how many times other people have visited your site.

**2. Google Analytics** – setting up and linking your Google Analytics account with your website allows you to analyse the activity on your website to see how it is performing, providing useful information such as number of visitors, how long they spent on your website and demographic information of your visitors. This can help you better target your audience with your campaigns.

## Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

While a CRM is not in itself an advertising platform, it does allow you to manage and nurture your leads and customers using an array of digital marketing tools.

We all know the saying 'It costs more to find new customers than to retain existing customers' so it is of the utmost importance that your leads and your customers are managed properly.

In essence, a good CRM helps a business to a) manage their leads and sales process and b) allows them to optimise the value of their customers. The more you understand your customers, the better you can service their needs and ultimately improve sales.

In 2020, InXpress implemented a new CRM. Since fully integrating the system into our marketing and sales processes, we have seen a 5% increase in suspect to prospect conversion rate. This has in most part resulted from improvements to lead tracking, data segmentation and custom communications via automated workflows. The additional reporting we

now have from our CRM has also given us greater visibility over our marketing campaign performance and sales pipeline.

## Online Business Directories

In today's era, when people start researching suppliers and products, they will most likely start by searching online. So having your business listed with online directories is today's version of being listed in the phonebook, but with even greater benefits.

First and foremost, many of these online business directories, such as Google My Business (GMB) are free, or charge minimal fees. It is also very easy to set up a listing and does not require regular maintenance, so any leads from these channels will come at a very low cost.

GMB, for example, allows you to add your website link, making it even easier for people to access your website. The more links you have going back to your website, combined with having more visitors on your site, means that you will continue to improve your website's SEO rating.

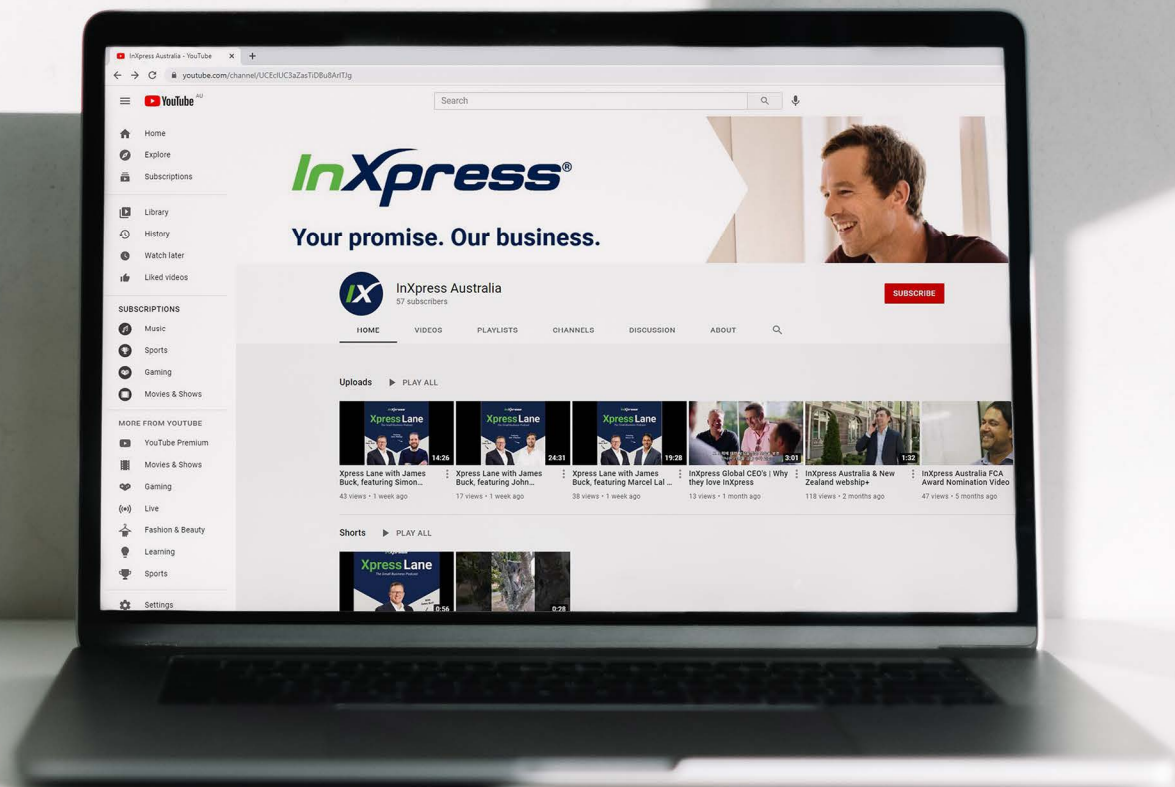
There are also SEO benefits to having your business listed on multiple directories. If you choose to list your business with a directory that is industry-specific, chances are they are using the same keywords as you, which means these sites will also be easier to find by your target audience.

Furthermore, having more backlinks to your website, means that more people are likely to visit your site. The more visitors you have to your site, the greater the credibility of your site, making it a more trustworthy option to present to users searching for your products or services.

## Social Media

Without a doubt, one of the most powerful marketing channels is social media – such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube – because they are the most commonly used platforms for consuming content. Not only that, but social media sites attract a wider demographic of audiences, so it is much easier to find and interact with your target audience in these platforms.





Given that most audiences who are interacting on social media will often allow themselves more time to consume content, it stands to reason that they will likely afford more time to engage with your brand via these channels when presented with the opportunity. This presents greater possibility to generate genuine leads.

Social media sites present users the most relevant content for that user, allowing you to present your brands and services to your audience at the most opportune time - when they are ready to receive it.

InXpress has a strong social media strategy and is active on all of the above-mentioned channels. Over the last 18 months, we have increased our social media audience by 35% and currently 25% of our sales leads are generated from social media, both organic and digital paid advertising.

### Digital Paid Advertising

Most often, the cost of a digital paid ad is structured so that you pay-per-click (PPC) i.e., when someone clicks on your ad - the benefit being that you are only paying when your audience engages with your brand.

The most popular forms of digital paid advertising include:

- Google ads - including search term ads, display ads & video ads
- Social paid ads - including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter & Instagram
- Sponsored banner ads via third-party websites

There are many benefits of using paid digital advertising, including: improving your SEO ranking; growing your social media audience; rapid insights and analysis; measurable results; and the ability to target campaigns to reach specific audiences.

And best of all, as you continue to trial your messaging using these various digital platforms, you will continue to optimise campaigns, thus continuously reducing your cost per click.

In 2020, InXpress enlisted the support of an agency to help us optimise our Google and Facebook Paid Ad campaigns. Year on year, we have doubled our ad clicks and reduced our cost per click by 15%.

### Content Marketing

Online Content Marketing through videos, podcasts, news articles, blogs, and social media posts does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services.

Content marketing is a more palatable way for potential customers to consume your content. Rather than flashing an ad in their face, you can tell them your story.

InXpress has invested heavily in our Content Marketing strategy and so we have recently launched a Podcast Series called **Xpress Lane**. Hosted by InXpress Country Manager, James Buck, the series has been developed for those who are considering starting a business or those who have established a small business and would appreciate advice from

experts who can steer them in the right direction. The concept of the Podcast came from the fact that, not only are our Franchisees small business owners, but so are their customers, and so in developing a Podcast targeted towards these individuals we are promoting our brand to both potential franchisees and to potential customers.

Content marketing establishes you and your people as subject matter experts in their field of interest, thus reinforcing your brand as being one that can be trusted. It also helps for your customers to resonate with your brand's core values, thus creating brand advocates.

But most importantly, content marketing helps to attract leads and boost web traffic, complementing your mix of digital activities and further boosting your SEO rating.

### So what does this all mean?

With more people working remotely and accessing resources online, it is clear more than ever before, that having a strong online presence is extremely important for any business.

All of these components mentioned above can work singularly to provide results, however when implemented together, they work cohesively to further improve SEO rankings, increase brand awareness and engagement, generate leads and increase sales.

And it is never too late to start planning and implementing a digital marketing strategy. ■

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# 2021 National Franchise Convention



**Bernard Salt**



**Gabby Leibovich**



**Mark Carter**



**Rachael Robertson**

The 2021 National Franchise Convention will be an unmissable event for franchises looking to obtain vital knowledge and strategies for consolidation, revitalisation, innovation and growth in a vastly changed business environment.



## Keynote and Plenary Speakers

Be inspired and enlightened by NFC21's keynote speakers:

- Leading Demographer, **Bernard Salt AM**, on **Jobs, Businesses the Post-Corona Customer**. This keynote will deliver insights on trends as Australia rebuilds and rewards businesses that are bold, proficient, agile and determined.
- Co-founder of Catch of the Day, Menulog, Scoopon and Luxury Escapes, **Gabby Leibovich**, sharing his story of **How to build a billion-dollar business**.
- Peak performance, productivity, talent development, sales, culture and business resilience expert, **Mark Carter** delivering an immersive keynote on **building a culture of talent creation, high performance, customer loyalty and competitive advantage**.
- The second Australian woman to ever lead an Antarctic expedition to Davis station, **Rachael Robertson** providing her toolkit for **Leading on the Edge - Building team excellence in a high pressure environment**.

Find out the latest policy and regulatory updates in plenary presentations from:

- **Sandra Parker PSM**, Fair Work Ombudsman. Responsible for promoting harmonious, productive, cooperative and compliant workplace relations.

- **Martin Fergusson AM**, Fair Work Commission minimum wage panel member, former Minister for Tourism and current chair of Tourism Accommodation Australia.

## Plenary panel sessions

Obtain business-critical information at the following plenary panel sessions:

- **2021 Franchising Code of Conduct Amendments:** A practical discussion of the central changes to the Franchising Code of Conduct and key considerations for compliance.  
PANELLISTS: **Mary Aldred**, CEO, Franchise Council of Australia; **Sean O'Donnell**, Partner, HWL Ebsworth Lawyers; and **Penny Ward**, Senior Counsel, Baker McKenzie. Facilitated by **Tamra Seaton**, Director, MDS Legal
- **Helping our people get their mojo back:** Supporting your network for post-pandemic wellbeing and resilience.  
PANELLISTS: **Beth Pocklington**, Head Of Franchisee Development, Forty Winks Franchising; **Nicole Noye**, Chief Executive Officer, Collective Wellness; and **Daniel Mesiti**, Multi-Unit Franchisee, Boost Juice. Facilitated by **Greg Nathan**, Founder, Franchise Relationships Institute.

## Concurrent panel sessions

Attend NFC's concurrent panel sessions to hear franchise professionals and industry experts sharing their practical advice on:

- Understanding the 'why' of high performance within your network
- The international landscape
- The future of payroll compliance: automation, benchmarking and analytics
- Consumer trends and market insights
- The innovation imperative
- Cybersecurity risks and mitigation strategies
- Commercial Leasing
- How to stop losing customers and actually grow
- Culture workshop with Mark Carter
- Strategic network planning for post-COVID growth
- What is the key to a successful marketing campaign?
- The clock's ticking on sustainability
- Recruitment solutions in the new world
- Managing business disruption
- Communication best practices

## Social program and exhibition

Network with your franchising peers and SME colleagues:

- Celebrate franchising success as we announce all the finalists and winners from an exceptional field of Awards entrants at the **2021 Business Essentials FCA National Excellence in Franchising Awards** (Monday 23 August).
- Finish NFC21 on a high with **Networking drinks** and canapes in the exhibition area where you can continue to network and build relationships with your franchise colleagues (Tuesday 24 August)
- Enjoy your morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea breaks in the **Exhibition Hall** showcasing the latest products, services and technologies available to the sector (Monday 23 & Tuesday 24 August)

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# How big would your business be if you never lost a customer?

This isn't a common question businesses ask themselves, yet it should be. Instead, they tend to focus on the impact and outcome of acquiring more and more customers. But what about your existing customers? You worked hard to acquire them, are you working just as hard to keep them? Probably not.



Customology  
CUSTOMERS FOR LIFE

So, why are your customers leaving? There are many assumptions here, customers only buy when you discount, the product isn't what the customer wants, there's too much competition and the list goes on, however, in most cases these matter less than you think.

Customer growth and retention specialists, Customology, recently surveyed thousands of Australian customers to understand exactly how they feel about the way brands reward, recognise and communicate with them. The results were revealing!

## The Unspoken Customer

When a customer complains, it can be frustrating, yet also liberating in a way, because you learn where something has gone wrong, which gives you the opportunity to fix it and put things right for the customer (which often leaves them happier than before they complained). The real concern should be those customers who don't give any feedback and simply disappear - leaving you with no idea why you lost them. It

was these customers that Customology really wanted to understand, to learn what they expected from the brands they shop with today. So, what did they say? Here's a quick snapshot:

- 77 per cent believe new customers receive better incentives than loyal customers
- 55 per cent don't believe they are rewarded for their loyalty
- 57 per cent are rarely or never thanked after making a purchase
- 45 per cent don't believe they are targeted in a relevant way
- 63 per cent believe they should be rewarded for referrals
- 51 per cent did not receive any form of communication after their first visit, despite sharing their details

## Back to basics - it's uncommon sense

The key findings from Customology's research revealed that customers are feeling undervalued and unrewarded. On the flip side, it also revealed significant growth opportunities for brands who can

make a change to give customers the recognition they are seeking. Sometimes, this means going back to the basics, even down to a simple thank you - thanking your customers for their support, for making a purchase - letting them know they are appreciated. Which brings us to the moneymoon period. The moneymoon is the timeframe between a customer's first purchase and the next time they are likely to purchase from you. This could be a week, or it could be a year. What you do within this window and how you communicate to your customer is so important. Over communicate, they'll feel bombarded and like a number on your database, under communicate, they'll forget all about you. The frequency and relevancy of your communications are vital to help you secure that next sale. Let's look at an example, say a customer just bought a sofa from a furniture store. They would appreciate recommendations on how to clean the sofa properly, or products that could complement their new sofa, i.e. a coffee table, side tables, floor lamp etc. They are not in the buying

window for a new sofa and certainly don't want to see the sofa they just bought is now on sale.

## Deliver what's best for the customer

Relevancy doesn't just apply to the contents of the message itself, but also which channel is relevant for the customer? Email may be the cheapest, but that doesn't necessarily make it the most effective. Customers are on the move - it's up to you to keep up.

Typically, the first form of communication a customer receives is a feedback request survey. Often, before they've even had a chance to use the product or realise the benefits of the service. Businesses prioritise NPS during the moneymoon period, which is a huge mistake. Yes, it is important, but not as important as thanking your customers or providing them with additional value. Also, why ask your customer what they might do, when you could encourage them to actually take action? For example, reward them for a genuine referral, rather

than ask them if they would refer. Are you really listening to the voice of the customer, and giving them a seat at the table? If not, you certainly should be.

## How to find growth opportunities

It's actually a lot easier than you think. Our first recommendation is always to put yourself in the customer's shoes, to really 'think like a customer', and understand what the entire experience is like from their perspective. You really will learn a lot from undertaking something so simple. Next, leverage your customer and transactional data to help you segment your customers into different groups. We recommend the RFM approach; how recently your customers purchased (Recency), how often they purchase (Frequency) and how much they spend (Monetary). You can create a simple version of an RFM model using a spreadsheet. The insights from this exercise will reveal who your most loyal customers are (those who spend most, most often), which customers have

the potential to become loyal, and also which customers are one-off purchasers and costing you more in marketing costs, than you made from the original purchase they made. Once you know who you are talking to, you can have a much more relevant conversation. You'll also be able to maximise the return on your marketing investment. Customer retention is such a huge missed opportunity, don't get distracted by quick acquisition wins, you've spent time and money acquiring your customers, don't let them be tempted by one of your competitors. ■

## At NFC21

Customology's General Manager, Michael Barnard, will be attending the FCA's national convention next month, joining a panel of franchise business leaders, who will reveal practical strategies to help you drive profitable growth through your existing customers.



As the founder of any brand, you are likely to find that your franchisees will in most cases have a lot in common with you. After all, you collectively believed in your product and its value to the point that you put everything on the line for it. You all know the benefit it would give to a greater audience.

# A hire calling Why you must put your faith in people and values

By **Jeremy Hasell**,  
Founder/Director, City Cave



It is extremely important, as your business grows, the people you employ to serve your franchisees should have similar interests and engagement with your product. This helps ensure the brand in which you have invested so much into will be delivered faithfully to those who need and value it.

After years of trying to study, learn and understand what it takes to grow a large organisation, it comes as no surprise to me that company culture is so crucial in any brand. It delivers a message to everyone that we value what we do.

When a company's culture is fractured, value-based decision-making stops and the message is lost along the way, just like in a bad game of Chinese whispers. Ultimately, unless you take decisive action, your franchisees will have a distorted view of what you are trying to deliver.

Just as you and your franchisees have invested in the business and its values, so too must your support team invest in your organisational culture.

## Setting your foundations

When co-founder Tim Butters and I created City Cave we had a clear understanding of what we were trying to do.

1. Help people find a place to escape the busy-ness of life
2. Assist in the pursuit of personal achievement
3. Create an environment that contributes to an overall wellbeing.

These simple goals have extended far past the capability of a float pool and it has given us a foundation to build a successful franchise business. From day one, our mission was clear and since then it has been just time in practice that has got us here.

## Delivering on your mission

As the business has expanded, we have gone from being the only employees, to managing employees, to employing managers, to now training franchisees to do all of the above. In that time, we have made every mistake under the sun - with the promise of every other to come.

When hiring the challenge mostly is, what is too much responsibility and what

is not enough? We risk struggling to let go and often micromanage the team, limiting their ability and lessons learnt by letting them make mistakes.

As Phil Knight wrote in *Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike*, "Don't tell people how to do something, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results." This rings true for founders and CEOs; it is an emotional tug of war. We have an attachment to our 'baby' that makes us want to hold the hand of our team members, which simply holds them back.

Since launching City Cave in 2016, we've come to understand two things that will act as practical advice for those who are building a team in an emerging brand.

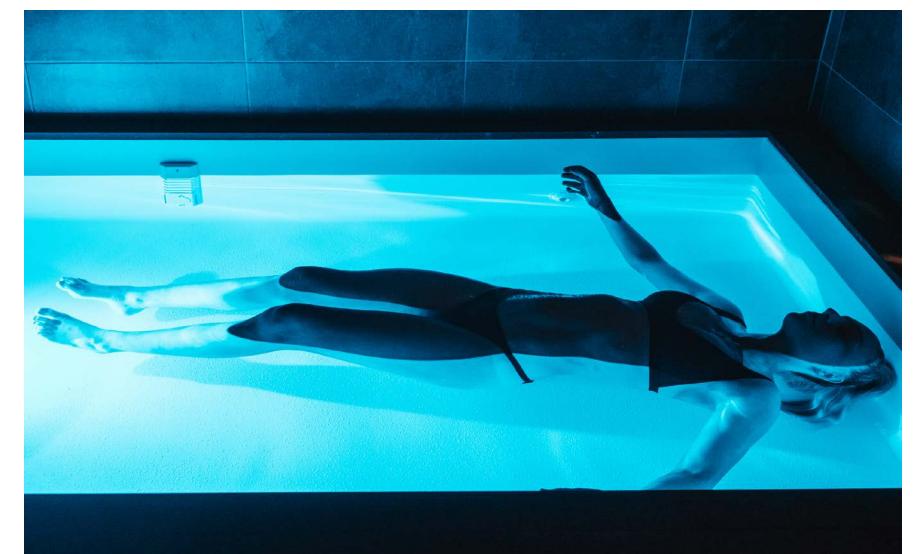
**1. Values come first** - and aligning those values is, in most cases, more important than aligning required skills.

**2. Hiring calls for balance** - Sure, hiring needs process and after executing the process it should leave you with few candidates. From here 'process' is invalid and you must trust your gut.

When your business is growing at a fast pace, you must make dynamic decisions. You won't ever hire at the 'right' time because your budget and your focus are always drawn into other areas. This is why the process of hiring is so important, especially for a relatively new business. I've found franchising to be a fantastic industry where your neighbouring franchisor or mentor will be willing to share their process.

**Your franchisees rely on you making your hiring decisions properly.** They are investors in your brand and in turn the employers of your employees.

A brand less than four years old is still developing its values and they are somewhat forged with the people you employ. When you make the right hiring choices, the values that reveal themselves will be pure to the business you have built and those with whom you built it.







expanded internationally and our network will more than double again this year.

All of this can be attributed to having the right team of people who have been carefully picked in accordance with our brand values.

As a bonus, not only do we have a great team on the field, we have an even better team off the field. We exercise together, we celebrate together, we are challenged together and we all contribute to each other's personal successes together.

### Recruit like-minded employees

The message for business founders and CEOs should be clear.

You must understand that hiring isn't just about acquiring the right skills – it's about committing to the right values and surrounding yourself with like-minded people. After all, these are the people who will shape your business and make decisions that will determine how customers perceive your product.

The best part of it all is that, when you get hiring right, you then spend your days with people you care about and whose company you enjoy. Business is hard enough without having to constantly manage staff who are not the right fit, and your chances of success will escalate if you have a team of people and a network who care about the same things you do.

We all want happiness in our careers and such contentment flows from the decisions you make on a daily basis. My advice? When making those decisions, stick to your values and be true to your vision and why you started the business in the first place. The chances are that it will also improve your prospects of genuine business success. ■

### Live up to your values

At City Cave, we live by four core values: **Empathy, Abundance, Balance** and **Collaboration**. It took Tim and I 10 years to learn why these values are important, 12 months to workshop them, 6 months to articulate them and now they give us a lifetime to live by.

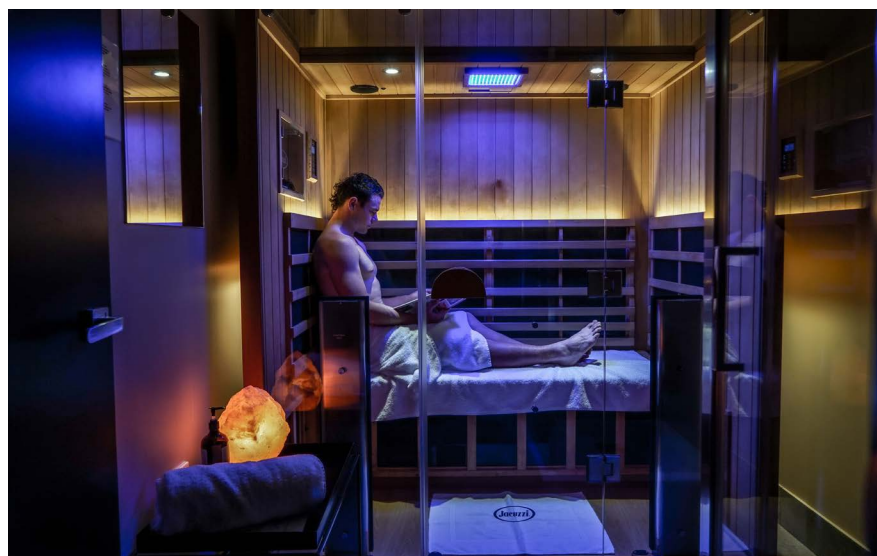
Their importance cannot be underestimated and was reinforced when COVID-19 turned everything upside down last year.

Now, how on earth does a growing organisation build and maintain company culture during a pandemic when offices are shut down, the business world is in turmoil and fear is the leading message across every media network around the world?

Significantly, these values became even stronger during the pandemic shutdowns last year. They ricocheted off the virtual walls of our Zoom calls and everyone quickly appreciated their importance. Our brand successfully emerged from shutdowns with a network of franchisees and staff who were ready to embrace the new world. We knew then that we could trust our values to be our north light.

Having demonstrated its value in the most trying of circumstances, this strong values base has been at the heart of City Cave's recent growth.

In recent months, we have made interstate hires and our team has grown substantially from having two full time and two part time employees pre-pandemic to eight full time employees and both founders working full-time in the business. City Cave has also



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# Why Australians are consuming more plants and how your business can leverage this health driven trend

Many small businesses owners and franchisees are experiencing challenging times right now. Slow sales, small margins and reduced foot traffic - combined with pandemic shutdowns and a non-existent tourist market - are squeezing small business profitability.

In this dynamic environment, any advantage that can help a small business owner meet the needs of current clients, and potentially gain new ones, is gold.

One such trend of importance to food and beverage franchisees is the phenomenal growth in plant-based milks. Dairy-free milk options have become a regular part of Australia's mainstream café culture in recent years, with socially conscious and health-driven café customers driving demand.

For cafes and food outlets, staying on top of the latest health and lifestyle trends can be challenging, but those who do keep pace and satisfy their customers' evolving desires have the potential to stay one step ahead of their competitors.

## Growth in dairy-free

Dairy-free milk alternatives have surged in popularity over recent years with the number of café sales involving plant-based milk increasing exponentially.

Around 95 per cent of all barista-made beverages are milk-based. Of this, 30 per cent are plant-based milk. In some regions of Australia, plant-based milk can be up to 90 per cent of all milk-based café purchases. As a percentage of the total plant-based milk market, soy milk contributes 35.6 per cent of total UHT dairy-free sales and 36.8 per cent of volume.

# RIDING THE PLANT POWERED WAVE

**BY RACHEL GLASBERGEN**  
SENIOR BUSINESS MANAGER,  
THE ALTERNATIVE DAIRY CO



Plant-based UHT sales figures are outpacing dairy UHT sales from both a value and volume perspective. While dairy UHT is still 1.3 times the size (value) of dairy-free UHT, its growth has slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The growth in plant-based sales has not only been driven by new users coming into the category, but also by more people simply adding a plant-based choice to their wider repertoire. These so-called 'dualist' customers may, for example, now be looking for a dairy-free option later in the day after their traditional choice in the morning.

For the barista, this means they should have more milk types available because, increasingly, regular and new customers may be seeking different milk-based options throughout the day.

## Oat milk on the rise

Almond, soy and oat milk are currently the leading plant-based varieties in Australian cafés. While soy milk is still the most used plant milk by volume (55% of all plant milk sold in Australian cafés), almond milk officially overtook soy as the most requested dairy alternative at the end of 2019.

New varieties such as cashew and coconut milk have created some new excitement in the category, and almond milk is tipped to continue to grow, but it's oat milk's dairy-like taste and creamy texture that has industry pundits predicting it's the plant milk to watch over the next five years.

The potential for oat milk is unprecedented. Widely held to be the closest tasting alternative to dairy milk of

all the plant-based options, oat milk is the third largest non-dairy milk behind almond and soy with global sales increasing 425% during 2018 alone. Its annual global growth rate is forecast to be 8.2% over the next 8 years.

## The Alternative Dairy Co is your café specialist

As a leading producer of premium plant-based barista milks, made exclusively for hospitality and food service trade, The Alternative Dairy Co is uniquely positioned to help your business capitalise on this fast-growing trend in café culture.

We've taken the time to get to know café owners so we can really understand the café business. Collaboration is a core value to our brand. We're out there doing a lot of listening and we're not afraid to do things differently if it means a better outcome for you and your customers.

As a result, our business saw sales triple in the first quarter of FY21 and we're working hard to keep that momentum going. Part of our success can be attributed to a clear shift in consumer preference towards locally made products, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a fast-growing taste for plant milks by Australia's sophisticated café goers - 55% of whom prefer their morning brew at their local café and overwhelmingly want it white.

We began crafting plant-based milks exclusively for the café trade since 2018 when we launched our soy and almond barista milks. We then launched oat milk in 2019 to create a strong trio of high-performance plant milks expertly crafted for Australian baristas and latte lovers.

The Alternative Dairy Co has the backing of the Sanitarium Health Food Company, widely credited for introducing Australians to soy milk in the 1980s via the So Good™ brand, and we draw on this long history of providing plant-based foods to Australian consumers.

All our products are specifically designed for use in cafés and our priority is creating a milk that complements, rather than overpowers, it's beverage pairing.

Sanitarium's food technologists, together with leading baristas, have perfected plant-milk products that deliver a superior creaminess, flavour and ability to texture - or 'stretch' - as is the barista terminology.

## Thoughtful ingredients locally sourced

There are many reasons people are increasingly turning to plant milks, but two key drivers stand out. People have long been attracted to the health benefits of plant milks, and a growing number of socially conscious consumers are now also seeking food and drinks with stronger sustainability credentials.

Each of our plant-based milks are vegan-friendly, low in sugar and produced locally on the NSW Central Coast using majority Australian grown ingredients. Sourcing homegrown oats and almonds is a win-win because we're getting the best quality raw ingredients, while supporting Australian farmers.

**For more information on The Alternative Dairy Company's range go to <https://altdairyco.com/barista> and please email [enquiries@altdairyco.com](mailto:enquiries@altdairyco.com) with any enquiries.** ■





As CBDs and greater metropolitan areas have felt the pinch of Covid-19 lockdowns across Australia, it's not just sea-changers and tree-changers who are moving to regional areas for new opportunities.

Franchise systems are increasingly looking outside the major cities as they pursue network growth in thriving regional centres.

And with figures recently released by the Regional Australia Institute in partnership with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia showing the number of people shifting from the nation's capitals to the regions is at its highest level since 2018 - rising seven percent in the March quarter from a year earlier - it's no wonder that franchise systems are turning their attention to these areas too.

The benefits are there for all to see. The establishment of well-known brands in regional Australia provides a further boost to local economies, creating opportunities for both small business ownership and employment for local residents.

And for the regions' newest residents, the addition of these well-known brands to the local retail mix provides a welcome sense of familiarity.

It's a win-win, and one that the FCA has, through the Regional Revitalisation initiative, been working to promote across the country, with local governments and franchise brands alike keen to explore the possibilities.

### 7-Eleven's investment in convenience for customers and growth for communities continues

One brand that is already on the regional expansion journey is 7-Eleven Australia, with the franchisor recently opening its seventh store for 2021 at Woy Woy in New South Wales.

7-Eleven's Tribe Lead for Channel, Braeden Lord, said 7-Eleven's significant investments in network expansion so far this year have created approximately 60 new jobs and there are many more to come.

"Regional expansion, like our new Woy Woy store, is a key priority for our business and is possible because of enhanced supply chain capability and innovation, which enables us to have the right store formats and offers available for customers," Mr. Lord said.

"Our teams are working on a range of new formats and offers for customers. In 2020 we piloted micro market format stores, launched our home delivery offer, and



# Franchising ready to deliver economic & employment boost to regional Australia

continued to experiment with new product ranges and digital services," Mr Lord said.

"The next twelve months will see us continue to adapt and trial a range of new innovations and formats in our network in partnership with our franchisees and suppliers.

"By investing in innovation, we provide new offers and opportunities for our franchisees to meet the needs of customers and to grow their businesses.

"Our stores are local businesses, employing local people and growing local economies.

The Woy Woy store follows the opening of stores in Metford NSW, Derrimut VIC, Rockingham Central WA, William Street Perth WA, Eight Mile Plains Northbound QLD, and Mt Warren Park QLD earlier in 2021.

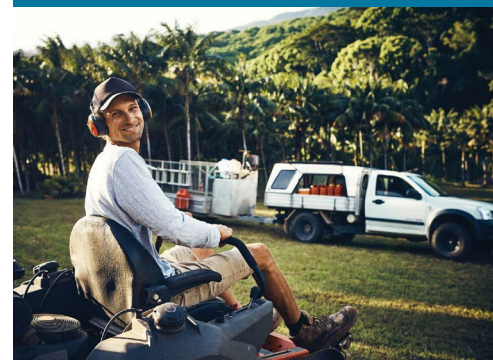
"We've announced plans to open stores before the end of 2021 in Busselton in Western Australia, Shepparton in Victoria, and on the Victorian New South Wales border in Albury Wodonga," Mr Lord said.

"We're also looking to invest in other regional communities so we can continue to grow our network in 2022."

This includes entering the Far North Queensland market for the first time, with approximately 15 stores expected to open in the region over the next two years, with plans to open in Townsville and Cairns before June 2022.

The investment is expected to create more than 200 full time jobs during the building phase, with more than 150 additional ongoing local jobs created to run store operations. ■

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# The nuts and bolts of it

## Developing an award winning Construction Loan proposition

In the latest advertising from RAMS featuring their well-known mascot Raymond A. Ram, the message is abundantly clear. Home loans are what they do. And they do them well.



*RAMS Managing Director,  
Jake Bromwich*

Since 1995, RAMS has been helping Australians realise the 'great Australian dream' of home ownership by providing affordable, simple yet flexible home loans. Backed by Westpac - Australia's oldest company - RAMS is a home loan specialist.

RAMS has established a strong reputation in the mortgage industry for helping customers who need more help by servicing complex key segments with First Home Buyers (also First Time Buyers), Self-Employed customers as well as Construction Lending. In fact it's RAMS' review of its end-to-end Construction Proposition that led to the Franchise Council of Australia's 2020 Excellence in Franchise Innovation award.

RAMS has handed us the keys to this program of work so we can take a look around. From the foundation of the idea, to the formwork and scaffolding, through to the last tile, we unlock the door on the opportunity RAMS identified with one of their key markets and explore how they constructed their award winning proposition.

### Deconstructing the construction proposition

RAMS Managing Director Jake Bromwich says the story started back in 2019 when the RAMS product team identified an opportunity to further cement their reputation as a specialist in construction lending.

"We broke the construction program of work down and sought to simplify the process, enhance the product and its policies, and upskill our network of Loan Writers to have a comprehensive understanding of the residential construction industry, not just construction lending," says Jake.

"This also meant our network of franchisees would be positioned strongly to provide an even greater level of service for our customers, something we at RAMS pride ourselves on; after all, we are a people business."

From the outset the business set about to pull the "machine" apart



and analyse its components which allowed teams to identify and address opportunities for improvement. The whole business was involved in this process, from the teams selling RAMS products (Franchisees) to teams supporting the products (RAMS headquarters teams including Credit, Operations, Risk and Learning & Development). This provided an added benefit of greater engagement between RAMS and its franchisees with HQ teams working together with the franchise network towards a common goal.

Jake says the key benefit for RAMS franchisees with this approach was a more solid customer proposition and greater clarity for their Loan Writers on how to sell construction loans.

### Recognising the opportunities

To help identify the opportunities to improve their Construction Lending proposition the RAMS Product team, with the support of external consultants, undertook Customer Value Proposition (CVP) analysis identifying value pools and pain points, and then reviewed their capabilities against the market using internal data.

Jake says RAMS ensured their franchisees were engaged by first walking members of the Franchise Advisory Council through the concept.

"Then at the RAMS National Conference, which involved all franchisees nationally, we took the opportunity to showcase the different streams of work and obtain input and ideas," says Jake.

"This was such a powerful engagement exercise that we emulated it internally for RAMS headquarters staff to provide them the same walkthrough experience and feedback opportunity on each of the streams of work."

At the completion of the showcases the business still wasn't content. In face-to-face meetings as well as a tailored survey targeted at franchises that regularly process loans in this key segment, RAMS was able to understand the knowledge base required to write

Construction Loans, highlight skill gaps, and gain a deeper understanding of the Home Loan Manager experience with the operational Constructions Team that helps process loan applications.

"We thought outside the square and also engaged builders who we interviewed to understand where they saw opportunities. Their voice in the review actually resulted in important changes in the RAMS process," says Jake.

### What RAMS was building towards

Jake explains the business sought three key outcomes in refreshing its construction lending proposition.

"Firstly, we knew there were clear opportunities to improve our market position as a construction lending specialist, which had flow-on benefits for our franchisees and the greater RAMS business," Jake says.

Secondly, the RAMS business wanted construction lending to be a point of difference.

"The construction lending space is more complex than standard home lending, so at RAMS we aspired to be the go-to home loan provider for anyone wanting to build their own home, whether they be building, renovating, Owner Occupiers or Investors."

Thirdly, Jake says they wanted to upskill the network and create 'certified' experts in the construction space through a dedicated learning pathway; an internal RAMS certification that franchisees can promote in their local area marketing to demonstrate they are an expert in construction lending.

"We firmly believed the customer journey would be enhanced when compared to other lenders. We believe Loan Writers who have a comprehensive understanding of the residential construction industry in its entirety, not just construction lending, are better placed to provide meaningful help to our customers, particularly for first home buyers, where the process can be complex and confusing."





### If you build it, they will come

Jake says all the hard work paid off and the RAMS business saw immediate results.

"We monitored construction application volumes by numbers and dollar value by month, and immediately following the implementation of our refreshed construction proposition there was a definite upward trend," says Jake.

Jake also says another success measure for RAMS was product performance in terms of construction application numbers as a percentage of total home loan applications.

"Interestingly we also saw an immediate upward trend in both application volumes and value for construction when compared to other loan types. We believed this to indicate to us that customers were attracted to the refreshed offering."

### Keeping them coming

Having an attractive and innovative product proposition is one thing, but having a capable network to help would-be home buyers is critical for success. Sure, RAMS had implemented a Construction Home Loan Certification program, and it had good take-up within the network, but Jake and his RAMS team knew they could do more.

While network engagement was maintained throughout the planning, development and build of the new product proposition, to further support network buy-in RAMS introduced the Construction Loan Champion award.

"The award was introduced to recognise the franchise team which

continuously displays their commitment to providing customers with the highest standards of service and expertise as they navigate the construction loan journey," explains Jake.

"We decided as a business that the award winning team would be chosen based on having invested in strengthening their skills and expertise through training and process improvement in their business."

### The talent supporting the proposition

Robyn Foster, Franchise Principal (RAMS Penrith) and her team were recognised at the RAMS 2020 National Awards as the inaugural Construction Loan Champion. Many factors were involved in Robyn's success including the involvement she and her team have with construction lending.

"We see a lot of construction business come through our RAMS office," says Robyn.

"So it was pleasing to have our franchisor approach us for feedback on the end to end process during the planning phase. Two head office staff visited us here in Penrith and they were very thorough with their questions, even drilling down to understand opportunities for improvement. I really felt our voices were heard when I saw the final product."

"We have such a focus on construction lending that I have two business managers in my team who are dedicated to supporting this function. Construction lending is very different to your regular home purchase."

Robyn explains that for a simple purchase a member of her team may

spend an hour or two with a customer and then see the process through to settlement.

"With construction lending however it is very complex and it requires a lender with the knowledge and experience to guide the purchaser through. That's definitely us at RAMS Penrith."

Robyn adds that there is a lot of labour involved in managing a construction loan. In many cases a build requires at least two valuations, and with some construction projects her team may have to arrange up to eight payments to a particular builder at various stages of the home building journey. But even with the complexity and hard work, Robyn says construction lending is still rewarding.

"We're very much a people-oriented business and my team loves construction lending because it's all about relationships. We have enduring relationships with builders, individuals in our head office teams who get involved in processing applications, and of course our customers."

And Robyn has plenty of proof about the deep relationships she and her team build with their customers.

"We often have customers who send us progress photos so we can share the experience – it's as exciting for us. It's like we've gone through the whole process with them. And to top all that off we often have repeat business simply because of the experience our customers have had." ■

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# The hybrid work environment Don't leave your culture to chance

By Karly Leach and David Misson,  
Senior Performance Consultants at  
Performance by Design

One thing the Covid pandemic has highlighted is that uncertainty, across a multitude of areas in both our personal and professional lives, is here to stay for the foreseeable future. What is certain, is that in the workplace, how things were done previously has changed forever.

The hybrid work environment has emerged from the fog of 2020 as a workplace reality. However, it is a reality that must be managed and structured with intentionality and clear purpose. **The culture of any organisation is directly correlated to performance levels.**

Indeed, recent research from the US has highlighted that organisations who score strongly on culture are 32% more likely to have highly engaged staff and 97% more likely to experience high organisational performance. Culture is critical.

At Performance By Design (PBD), our overarching message is 'Don't Leave Your Culture to Chance.' Organisations need to be intentional about creating and maintaining a culture and environment where there is a clear set of values and agreed behaviours by which team members are held accountable. The question many organisations are now facing is **how to build and maintain a high-performing and effective culture within the context of the hybrid work model.**

According to Gallup research, pointing to 'job requirements' as a reason to bring people back to work, won't work. Organisations need to highlight the personal, cultural and teamwork benefits of a return to the office. One of our clients from the media industry noted that the office is empty on Mondays and Fridays, showing that people are choosing to work from home on these days similar to a long weekend.

This situation raises many questions such as:

- a) Are we maintaining levels of productivity within the workplace?
- b) Do we have the required levels of trust and clear expectations with our employees to know they are still delivering on their objectives?

c) Have we maintained team connection points to continue our relationships and culture?

An organisation's culture is a reflection of 'how we do things around here.' Culture creates a shared experience for employees that is reflected in their collective values and behaviours. In essence, culture comprises the behaviours and attitudes that are recognised, rewarded and challenged on a daily basis. By bringing people back into the office under one banner, employees can more intimately experience the environment, touchpoints, messaging, values and rituals that signal who you are as an organisation.

Another client has instilled a policy of 100% flexibility for 100% of the workforce. This allows each team to decide what connection points are needed across the week and when these will be in person as a team. Our view, is that there is no right answer to the system for each individual team. What is important, is that the team come together and work through the requirements and agree on how the team will operate moving forward as a group. Is it a morning virtual stand-up to start each day? Is it fortnightly half day in person check-ins? Is it mandatory cameras on for all zoom calls? Whatever the case, the team sets the expectations and then each person needs to be held accountable to the agreed process and associated behaviour.

As we have seen with hybrid work, the huge upside is that it enhances flexibility and autonomy. However, the inherent challenge is these benefits can also breed unclear expectations, co-ordination challenges and inequality. Physical proximity and uniting in a shared space bring teams a sense of deepened belonging and connectedness that is missing when working remotely. When working together on-site, it's easier to see how contributions and collaboration impact the organisation and, ultimately, the customer. It is why a critical feature of maximising both the performance and cultural implications of hybrid work is that leaders must intentionally create safe, authentic and high-performing remote AND in-person workplaces.

The importance of maintaining REAL TALK within the business is critical to maintaining its success.

Honest and direct feedback is imperative to developing a high performing team and to reinforcing the business culture. The ratio of positive feedback to constructive feedback of 4:1 allows us to encourage people for displaying expected behaviours, but equally to challenge people when they are not aligning with the business behaviours. REAL TALK is a practiced skill that can't always wait for a face-to-face encounter. The realities of a hybrid work environment are that virtual conversations have considerably increased, so if someone's behaviour isn't in line with the team behaviours the REAL TALK needs to happen in response to that behaviour, either in person or virtually.

When undertaking a PBD workshops, we take teams through the key elements required to design and implement a high performing team, using the 4C's approach as outlined below:

## Clarity

### Who's doing what and when?

One feature the research has exposed with remote work, is that employees feel individual role clarity and the clear articulation of key organisational goals and objectives has been muddled and even lost.

An effective way to work through the clarity element is to ask the team, what's working? And what could be improved? These simple questions give everyone in the team a voice and allow the team to start brainstorming ways to work through the potential issues and in doing so, gain role clarity.

## Collaboration

### How are we bringing the team back together?

Collaboration can positively compound innovation and performance productivity. It didn't stop but inherently changed with the increase in remote work. Remote work makes the co-ordination of highly interdependent tasks more difficult.

As mentioned earlier, the decision of what "hybrid" looks like for each team should be a group decision. Depending on the required output, connection needs to be built into the team's weekly cadence. Culture moves slowly but must be continually fuelled to ensure that it moves in the right direction and collaboration will aide a positive impact on culture.

## Compassion

### Are we showing genuine care for our teammates?

Team members should feel safe and confident enough to provide opinions, suggestions and feedback without fear of retribution. Feedback, both positive and constructive, should come from a place of care and concern for your teammates' development and growth.

Strengthening relationships between team members to develop a deeper understanding of each other, their backgrounds and drivers magnifies trust and builds genuine connection and compassion between the team. Covid has highlighted the importance of compassion, putting yourself in other people's shoes and asking, 'how are you going?'.

## Communication

### What's going on and why?

One of the key downsides, highlighted by research in both the US and Australia, was that workers felt communication lines and cadence was adversely affected by remote work. Many employees felt the casual interactions and meetings that occur naturally when people are in and around the office, made a huge impact in negatively associating remote work with a lack of required communication.

Leaders bring the workplace value proposition to life by talking with their team members about what returning to work will look like for each individual and the team as a whole. These conversations aren't easy -- they require good cultural foundations of instilled values and behaviours, deep relationships between team members, strong systems and processes in place with clear expectations and outcomes mapped out.

Culture is something that we 'do', and leaders are the people who need to step out in front and show the team what that looks like. ■

## Find out more

For more information about the Performance By Design process, go to [performancebydesign.co](https://performancebydesign.co) or for advice on best-practice franchise HR and employment law, reach out to [bdcpartners.com.au/human-resources-management](https://bdcpartners.com.au/human-resources-management)



# Where do I find out about employment obligations?

As part of franchisor responsibilities under 'Vulnerable Worker' provisions inserted into the Fair Work Act, it is important that franchisors provide guidance and education for franchisees, in addition to other compliance activities, such as auditing payrolls. [Taking 'reasonable steps' under those laws](#) will help franchisors avoid being held responsible for breaches of workplace laws by their franchisees.

With increased scrutiny under new state-based wage underpayment legislation and media reporting around employers in the event they fail to meet their employment obligations, it is also important for franchisors and franchisees to know where they can get the information they need to enable them to meet those obligations.

As an example of this increasing employer scrutiny, new Victorian '[Wage Theft](#)' laws come into effect on 1 July 2021. Similar laws providing for the prosecution of wage theft as an offence of stealing already apply in Queensland.

This article sets out either free or low-cost options to enable the franchise community to find those resources.

## FCA's Role

The FCA has an important role in providing guidance and education for the franchise sector – for both franchisors and franchisees – on employment entitlements and compliance issues.

The FCA provides an Employment Compliance Helpline for all financial members of the Association. Franchisees can also currently access FCA membership and the Helpline service, for a super low-cost annual membership fee of \$85 per financial year.

## FCA Employment Compliance Helpdesk – 1300 108 486

The Employment Compliance Helpline service, sponsored and run by long-term franchise specialists, ER Strategies, can provide telephone guidance on almost all employment-related issues. Whilst calls are nominally capped at 30 minutes, FCA members are finding they can access specialist advice on a wide range of employment matters.

## FCA Webinars

Over the last 18 months, the FCA have conducted webinars on topics as diverse as –

- Casual Employment Reforms
- Franchisor Responsibilities under the Fair Work Act
- Employment Implications of JobKeeper
- COVID-19 and Employment Obligations

Members can keep abreast of these webinar topics by ensuring they are registered to receive newsletter updates from the FCA.

## ER Strategies' ECT Academy

As well as training and information materials available from the FWO in regard to 'Vulnerable Worker' provisions in the Fair Work Act, ER Strategies has developed an extensive library of [Online Employment Compliance Training \(ECT\)](#) modules, particularly suitable for franchisees, managers, payroll staff and small business owners.

Module topics include –

### 'Induction' range

- Work Rights in Australia
- Employment Basics
- Employment Contracts
- Record Keeping and Payslips
- Transfer of Business
- Work Health and Safety: Employer Responsibilities
- Work Health and Safety: Safety Systems
- How to Navigate an Award

### 'Intermediate' range

- Flexible Work Arrangements
- Parental Leave
- Leave entitlements under the NES
- Long Service Leave
- Notice of Termination
- Child Employment Laws
- Public Holidays

### 'Advanced' range

- Whistleblower Protections legislation

ER Strategies has also recently released two new 'Employee Rights' modules, aimed at employees in franchised businesses.

Available via the 'ERS Academy', franchisors and franchisees can access a free trial of the Academy at <https://erstrategies.com.au/training-employment-compliance/>

The FCA has also been working on adding a wider range of training courses (for example, on financial management and buying a franchise), in addition to the ECT modules.

## Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO)

The FWO has been very active in publicising situations where employers have failed to meet their employment obligations, for example in not paying employees their lawful entitlements under awards or enterprise agreements, as well as where they are prosecuting the employer for failing to produce records which can prove or disprove breaches of employment laws.

The FWO is also taking seriously its role in providing more information about employment obligations for employers – and franchising in particular – including creating videos, fact sheets and a range of guides.

Here are some locations on the FWO website ([www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)) where you can find their materials –

### FWO Small Business Showcase

[www.fairwork.gov.au/small-business-showcase](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/small-business-showcase) – the Showcase is a gateway to a stack of FWO resources to help small business employers 'find their way in the workplace'. Resources include –

- Introductory videos providing an overview of employer obligations
- Online courses
- Templates
- Fact sheets

### In-language videos for Franchises

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/franchises> – the FWO has developed short videos in a range of common languages, some aimed at franchisors and even more suitable for their franchisees

- topics covered include –
  - How to avoid common mistakes made by franchisees
  - Getting workplace laws right in your franchise
  - How the Fair Work Ombudsman can help you and your franchise
  - Awards
  - National Employment Standards
  - Pay slips and record-keeping for franchisees.

### Guide for Franchisors

The FWO has also created a guide for Franchisors on their responsibilities under changes made to the Fair Work Act in 2017 – <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/franchises/franchisors>



## Fair Work Commission (FWC)

The FWC is Australia's national workplace relations tribunal. It was established by the Fair Work Act 2009 (Fair Work Act) and is responsible for administering the provisions of the Fair Work Act.

They have some overview materials on –

- employment obligations – <https://www.fwc.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/minimum-wages-conditions>
- awards and agreements – <https://www.fwc.gov.au/awards-and-agreements>
- the National Employment Standards – <https://www.fwc.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/minimum-wages-conditions/national-employment-standards>
- dealing with workplace disputes – <https://www.fwc.gov.au/disputes-at-work>

## Want to know more?

In addition to the extensive links provided in this article, financial members of the FCA can call the FCA's [Employment Compliance Helpdesk](#) on 1300 108 486 to discuss their employment information requirements, as well as get specialist advice on specific matters of concern.



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In the height of the 2019 drought, Poolwerx noticed a spike in traffic on pool blanket content, specifically related to preventing water evaporation. Leveraging smart technology and know-how, the world's leading pool servicing brand created an award-winning pool blanket campaign to generate leads directly to Franchise Partners. Informed by data, the campaign tapped into the zeitgeist while providing a real solution, which saw it successfully resonate with its client base and the community.

## The marketing nous putting Poolwerx laps ahead

**By Rebecca Barnes**

Poolwerx Chief Marketing Officer

### Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink

Summer is peak pool season and it is also the time when pools lose water at a faster rate due to evaporation. In the second half of 2019 as parts of Australia endured drought conditions, water restrictions in many regions prevented pool owners from topping up their pool.

During this time, our sales data indicated an uplift in pool blankets sales across select geographical areas of Australia, a trend we had not seen in previous years. Our local business development managers confirmed this trend on the ground, while Google Analytics and Facebook data showed our website content on the topic and supporting Facebook Ads had led to a surge in traffic. Further analysis determined demand was spiking in areas affected by drought and water restrictions. For pool owners, pool

blankets were the ideal solution to help prevent water evaporation and preserve water while adhering to water restrictions.

Our qualitative brand research, conducted annually, outlines our clients' growing interest in sustainability. With more people looking to make their pool more energy and water efficient, we knew pool blankets – and our expertise selling and installing them – provided a great solution, particularly in drought-affected regions.

We wanted to help our Franchise Partners capitalise on this trend, so we created an omnichannel, national pool blanket campaign from November to December 2019, rolling out to clients – both retail and mobile – through every marketing touchpoint. This included in-store collateral, native digital and social media content, local and national public relations, local area marketing, email marketing and search engine marketing.

Every piece of collateral and communication directed clients to

a specially designed webpage that funnelled enquiries directly to Franchise Partners. This resulted in front line teams able to quickly action tangible leads.

### Diving into smart tech and goals

At Poolwerx, Franchise Partner sales and profitability are our first and foremost key performance indicators. We're not successful if our partners aren't profitable, so we set clear KPIs to track the success of the campaign:

- Sales targets – a targeted campaign is nothing if it doesn't translate into tangible sales.
- Lead generation – the marketing function needs to deliver during the prime summer season. We also wanted Franchise Partners to increase their prospect and client base in the long term.
- Conversion rate – ensuring leads were converted into profitable transactions.





• Marketing ROI – we wanted to ensure every dollar our Franchise Partners invest in the National Marketing Fund returned multiple fold back into their pocket.

To monitor the success of the campaign, the digital marketing team built a custom dashboard to track the number of leads generated from the website, broken down by territory. This allowed access to a live data feed of leads, meaning we could track the performance of the campaign in real time.

Business Development Managers shared the data with their Franchise Partners, giving them accountability for the leads they converted. The granular data also helped identify high-performing Franchise Partners, and we shared their learnings with the network.

### Getting all stakeholders onboard

We leveraged our inhouse marketing team's expertise and that of our external marketing partners, including media buying, creative and PR agencies. We also engaged more broadly with key stakeholders, including clients, the Poolwerx Advisory Council (made up of Franchise Partners), our Business Development Managers and our suppliers to ensure the campaign was collaborative, well planned, and stock was readily available for a smooth rollout.

We undertook daily sales reporting to ensure the campaign was tracking well on the ground and used Google Analytics to track the performance of

the campaign online.

As a business we call our suppliers Partners-in-Profit (PIPs) – we have strong relationships with them and work together to ensure we meet our common goals. To further boost sales, we aligned with our pool blanket PIPs on the 'Black Friday' sales event in November, to further boost sales for Franchise Partners and increase margins. This was a great example of our Franchise Partners benefitting from the strength of our network, our exceptional purchasing power and our relationships with suppliers.

Measuring and quoting on pool blankets can be a labour-intensive process at the height of summer, when Franchise Partners are already juggling peak capacity. Again, calling on our strong relationships with our PIPs, we were able to get them involved in the process. For businesses short on staff, PIPs were brought in to help measure and quote at a client's property. This helped relieve pressure on the Poolwerx teams, allowing them to focus on sales and lead conversions.

### Making a splash

The campaign was highly aligned with our business strategy and overall a huge success. The use of client research and data to determine market drivers saw us deliver an informed campaign that solved a real problem for clients.

The pool blanket webpage and advertising spend led to tangible lead generation for Franchise Partners, with

leads delivered in real time, allowing them to action these quickly and see firsthand their marketing dollars turn into profit.

We also made it incredibly easy for clients to interact with the campaign – online via the website, on social media with impactful content that resonated with audiences, in the media with local and state-wide coverage, in store, in their home. Every touch point was carefully considered.

### Gold-medal results

We set ambitious targets that were all largely exceeded. With close to 1,500 qualified leads generated, the campaign saw a 230 per cent sales uplift through November and December in pool blanket sales, returning our Franchise Partners' national marketing fund investment 21 times over.

The campaign also had a positive ongoing impact on the pool blanket category, with sales for pool blankets continuing at an elevated level even once the campaign concluded. It also cemented our position as a leader in the industry for pool blanket sales and installation.

Overall this campaign set the scene to take our future marketing initiatives to the next level. The investment in real-time data and lead generation is now considered best practice in our business. We are proud that the successful execution of the campaign was recognised by the Franchise Council of Australia where we received the 2020 Excellence in Marketing Award. ■

# PLANT-BASED MILKS CRAFTED FOR BARISTAS

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# Why rewarding customer loyalty makes good business sense

A significant objective for any franchisee is gaining new customers. Placing importance on lead generation should be a priority but without strategies in place to retain leads and convert them into loyal customers, then the effort could be deemed futile.

Subway® Australia and New Zealand Country Director Geoff Cockerill explains that there is a meaningful difference between customer retention and customer loyalty that goes well beyond vocabulary.

"Customer retention and loyalty should not be confused as interchangeable terms. A retained customer may buy from you again, but not necessarily. They could buy from you only once and then choose a different option the next time. A retained customer merely means that customer has not chosen to buy elsewhere, just yet," explains Mr Cockerill.

"A loyal customer, however, will buy from you time and time again, and even encourage others to do the same through quality word-of-mouth reviews and referrals. Loyal customers are advocates for your business and should be seen as a status of customer that is the ultimate goal to obtain, from the starting point of initial retention."

A study conducted by The Deloitte Consumer Review showed that consumers want to be recognised and rewarded as individuals, rather than feeling like nameless, faceless consumers. To do this, Mr Cockerill says strong loyalty programs are the secret to rewarding customers.

"Building loyalty programs that will reward loyal customers to make repeat purchases by incentivising them with discounts or special offers is a foolproof way to show customer appreciation, and ultimately, is the key to keeping customers loyal to your business."

"Research we conducted at Subway led us to conclude this very fact which saw the launch of our Subcard® Loyalty



Program. Subcard is our national loyalty program that rewards members based on how often they visit and how much they spend at Subway restaurants.

"The program rewards customers for their loyalty by allowing them to earn reward dollars each time they make an eligible purchase at a Subway restaurant. We also reward customers with exclusive offers and promotions to encourage customers to visit Subway again and again, and to spend more each time they visit."

"It has proven to be a huge success for the brand with loyalty customers visiting more often and spending around 20% more when they do," adds Mr Cockerill.

Mr Cockerill adds that the economic impact loyal customers have on a business is another reason to take into consideration implementing loyalty programs within your business.

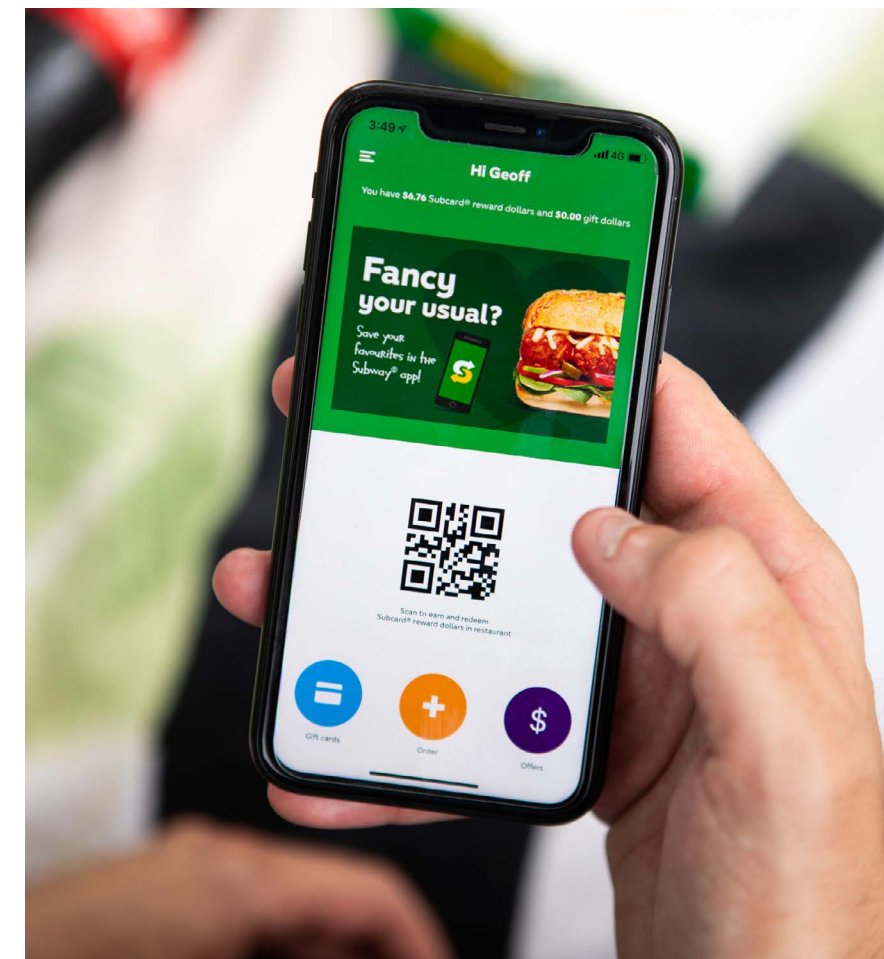
"Acquiring new customers costs money. It is a whole different ball game when considering the marketing, advertising, and other tools necessary to bring in new buyers. Although having new customers means you may be broadening your reach, they will not produce as solid a sales impact as loyal customers."

"This is imperative when considering return on investment. Pulling in new customers will take a large investment but rewarding retained customers in order to make them loyal, will be less of a burden on the business' finances."

"At Subway, we found the way to keep our customers happy and rewarded through our loyalty program while keeping costs low, was by reaching them in a way that makes their life easier, which in turn means more chances of loyalty to the brand."

"The Subway app was developed with this in mind. A modern way, that cost less than our out of home advertising, to reach our loyal customers immediately, with rewards and promotions that would boost their brand loyalty."

"We grew this concept to then allow



loyal customers, to earn reward dollars through the app just by scanning a personal QR code at the register during point of purchase. A minimum of \$3 reward dollars allows the customer to redeem their dollars with any Subway purchase.

"The feedback we've had from both customers is positive. It allows our customers to feel that they are not just being rewarded by Subway, but being looked after. With credit on their Subcard, they don't have to worry about having cash on them when they are hungry – they simply swipe their phone for payment."

"The customer loyalty we have gained through this reward program has been incredibly fruitful for the Subway brand across Australia and it is an important piece of wisdom I would like to recommend to other business owners."

"Existing customers are not just more likely to make a purchase than new customers, they are also more willing to forgive a business for any short fallings and this is absolutely critical to any profitability and brand loyalty."

"In business, mistakes will be made along the way, but with a loyal customer base, the fallout from these expected incidences will be less grave than they would be with a majority new customer base who would be quick to abandon the brand," says Mr Cockerill.

In fact, according to Gartner Group, 80 per cent of a company's future revenue will come from just 20% of existing customers.

"The great marketing debate of the importance of customer retention vs customer loyalty will always rage on, but from the point of view of a global brand, the proof is in the customer loyalty pudding. If you treat your existing customers with the same care and attention that you provide to your own business, you will only see growth. After all, they are what makes your business," concludes Mr Cockerill. ■

## About Subway® Restaurants

Subway® offers a fresh alternative to traditional fast food. Customers can choose premium-quality meats, cheeses, fresh vegetables and a range of breads baked daily. With around 1,300 locations across the country, Subway® is Australia's largest restaurant chain and serves nutritious and delicious made-to-order subs, salads, and wraps along with its iconic cookie range. Founded more than 50 years ago, Subway remains a family-owned business with restaurants in more than 100 countries.



# Intellectual Property and Marketing Campaigns

By **Katarina Klaric**

Principal, Stephens Lawyers & Consultants

Marketing and advertising campaigns can play a significant role in building brand awareness, increasing sales and revenue and enhancing the value of company or business assets including intellectual property. In the e-commerce environment, marketing strategies are multi-faceted, involving advertising on different media including television, radio, websites, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Marketing campaigns contain micro messages using a combination of graphic designs, visuals, photographic images, film, scripted dialogue, songs, music and other literary or artistic works. These creative elements may be protected by intellectual property laws - copyright, trade mark or design laws or by agreements between parties.

## Common Misconceptions relating to Marketing Campaigns and Intellectual Property

There are a number of common misconceptions held by companies and individuals concerning intellectual property and marketing campaigns, these include:

- Where a company or individual engages or commissions an agency or third party to create a marketing campaign, they will own the content and intellectual property because they have paid for the work - **NOT TRUE**
- UNLESS YOU HAVE AN AGREEMENT TO THIS EFFECT**
- You can avoid a copyright

infringement claim by only copying a small part, changing some words or design elements or creating a new version of the original copyright work - **NOT TRUE.**

- Photographs, graphic designs, visuals, artistic works, films, videos, songs, music and other copyright material found on the internet can be copied freely and used in marketing campaigns without infringing copyright. **NOT TRUE.**

## Intellectual Property Protection and Risk Minimisation Strategies

Every marketing campaign requires careful consideration and scrutiny of intellectual property rights, at planning stage and prior to launch to ensure that:

- The marketing campaign is an original work and does not infringe the intellectual property rights of third parties.
- All clearances and appropriate licences have been obtained to use third party material and intellectual property rights in the marketing campaign.

- The company or organisation commissioning the marketing campaign retains ownership of the works and intellectual property rights created by third parties for their marketing campaign.

- The scope of rights granted in copyright licence agreements is adequate to give the commissioning party exclusivity in the commissioned works and intellectual property used for the campaign.

Intellectual property laws are complex and expert advice should be sought to minimise the risk of costly disputes involving marketing campaigns and intellectual property rights.

The recent Federal Court of Australia decision in *State Street Advisors Trust Company v Maurice Blackburn Pty Ltd* provides an example of the importance of having the scope of rights in copyright works adequately specified in an exclusive licence agreement, where the commissioning party seeks to prevent others from using artistic works in similar campaigns.

State Street as the exclusive licensee of copyright in artwork (being the

visual art embodied in the statue named "Fearless Girl") and the statue, was unsuccessful in obtaining an injunction to stop Maurice Blackburn from using the artwork and a replica of the statue in a marketing campaign to promote gender inequality issues in Australia. Maurice Blackburn had obtained sponsorship from a number of its superannuation clients in the financial sector to fund the purchase of a replica of the statue from the artist and to fund and be part of the campaign.

Maurice Blackburn admitted to reproduction of the artwork and/or communications to public, via Instagram and LinkedIn posts and tweets on Twitter, and in campaign launch invitations, on large electronic billboards and in newspaper advertisements. Maurice Blackburn did not dispute that it was not licensed by State Street to do the acts comprised in copyright, but claimed that it did not infringe State Street's exclusive rights because the use of the artwork and statue did not come within the scope of State Street's exclusive licence.

The court found that Maurice Blackburn's use of the artwork and statue in its campaign did not fall within the scope of State Street's exclusive licence because the social media posts, invitations, billboard and advertisements did not refer to "gender diversity issues in corporate governance or the financial sector at all", but were more generally directed to "gender equality" in Australia.

Where copyright works are used without the licence of the copyright owner, this can result in court proceedings for copyright infringement and orders for payment of substantial damages. In the recent case of [Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd v Palmer \(No.2\)](#), Clive Palmer was ordered to pay Universal Music Publishing \$1.5million in damages for copyright infringement of the 'Twisted Sisters' song by using some of the lyrics of the chorus of the song in his United Australia Party advertising campaign leading up to the 2019 election.

**This article is not intended to be a substitute for obtaining legal advice. ■**

"Intellectual property laws are complex and expert advice should be sought to minimise the risk of costly disputes involving marketing campaigns and intellectual property rights."





# Giving back brings the Shoebox team together

Shoebox Books & Tax sends 80 care package boxes to overseas ADF Troops for Anzac Day initiative.

Shoebox Books and Tax is built on the concept of clients keeping receipts and invoices in a shoebox ready for their bookkeeper to do the rest, so it's no surprise the brand's annual fundraising initiative is also one out of the box.

Each March, Shoebox Books & Tax packs and sends care package boxes to Australia's overseas troops as Anzac Day recognition.

And in a true display of community spirit amidst the pandemic, the national bookkeeping and tax franchise sent 60 Anzac boxes in 2020 and upped the ante further in 2021, increasing this to 80 boxes for Australia's troops.

A key part of this initiative takes place at the annual Shoebox Franchise Conference and Awards Night where an

auction and raffle fundraiser are held to directly raise funds for the ADF Anzac Box initiative.

The boxes are packed with non-perishable items and classic Aussie goods to support the troops. Items include vegemite, Anzac biscuits, redskins, magazines, razors & much more.

Anzac Day and the Australian Defence Force have some deep significance for Shoebox Books & Tax. One of the founders, Sandie Menzies, has had both her two sons serve in the Australian Army, while the Shoebox Books Geelong Franchisee, Troy B, served several years himself, now working as a Shoebox Bookkeeper with his wife.

Sandie said that the Anzac boxes are a way to combine giving back to the ADF

and getting franchisees involved.

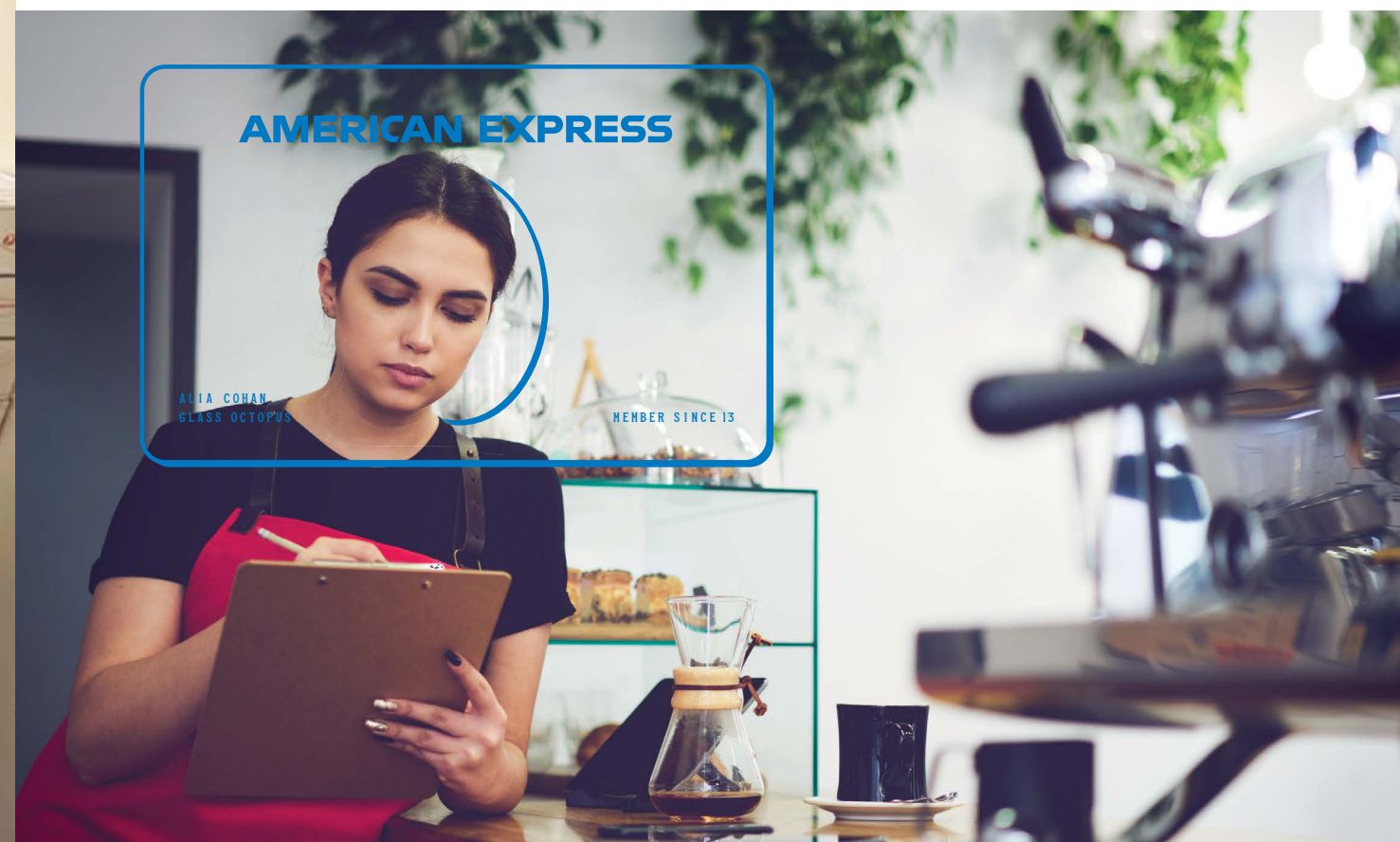
"It's been quite successful over the past few years. With my two sons serving in the [Australian] army and one of our Shoeboxers also having served, we love giving back and showing our support as a brand!" Sandie told *The Franchise Review*.

"Myself, Yvette (other Shoebox founder) and the whole team at Shoebox really want to keep a personal touch to the franchise, and this seems to resonate with a lot of the franchisees."

Not only is this initiative a great form of charity and gives back to the brave individuals who serve in defence forces, it also helps Shoebox Books & Tax come together as a franchise network of BAS and Tax Agents and continue to build a strong brand. ■



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1 American Express Card Members report they spent an average of \$9,222 in the last 6 months, relative to \$5,456 average spend reported by Non-Card Members. Source: American Express commissioned internet panel survey conducted in July – August 2019 based on purchases made in the 6 months prior to the survey. Definition of American Express® Card Members: Respondents who reported that they have an American Express Card and that they used that Card to make accommodations or tourist attractions purchases in the prior 6 months, restaurant purchases in the prior 3 months, and/or retail purchases in the prior 6 months. Definition of Non-Card Members: Respondents who reported that they do not have any type of American Express Card and that used Visa, MasterCard, or debit Cards to make accommodations or tourist attractions purchases in the prior 6 months, restaurant purchases in the prior 3 months, and/or retail purchases in the prior 6 months. 2 Inclusion in marketing campaigns is subject to merchant eligibility criteria. American Express Australia Limited 12 Shelley Street, NSW Sydney 2000 (ABN 92 108 952 085). © Registered trademark of American Express Company. © 2021 American Express Company. All rights reserved.



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