

Being the boss

By Sherry Karasik
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New franchise opportunities are reviving the American Dream in northern New Jersey, as those with business experience decide that being their own boss is what it's all about.

But it takes more than an entrepreneurial spirit to turn any franchise opportunity into a successful enterprise. Passion is the one essential when it comes to owning and flourishing in your own business, says Jason Street, president of Applegate Inc. Applegate Inc. offers the opportunity to operate an Applegate Farm Franchised Store featuring "homemade" ice cream, ice cream products and other items such as ice cream toppings, candy, caramel apples, confectionery items, cookies, cakes, pies, and frozen and unfrozen desserts.

"We are not your typical franchise," says Street. This long-standing family-owned business located in Montclair is not looking for investors, but other family-oriented business-minded people who share the same values. "Selling ice cream is a fun business, and the atmosphere is happy. This is a business where family can work together. You have to be the kind of person who enjoys serving others, who has good people skills, and is a hands-on individual."

Currently there are franchise locations in Nutley, East Hanover, Cranford, Freehold, Totowa, Summit and Upper Montclair. The estimated initial investment to establish an Applegate Farm Franchised Store ranges from \$137,650 to \$322,000. The comprehensive training, which focuses on various operational and managerial aspects of the store, includes both classroom and on-the-job training, assistance in the construction of the location, and in-store training. "(Franchise owners)



Operating an Applegate Farms Franchised Store, and serving up a wide range of ice cream, snacks and desserts, can be a sweet proposition for a budding entrepreneur.

chise owners) are never left alone until they are ready to be left alone, and we continue to offer assistance," Street adds.

Commercial cleaning is now a \$78.5 billion industry. Jani-King, the world's leading commercial cleaning franchise company with more than 10,000 authorized franchise owners worldwide, offers an opportunity for would-be business owners. Through a network of more than 100 regional offices, Jani-King contracts commercial cleaning services, with the work being performed by franchise owners. The company is recognized as one of the top franchise companies: No. 1 in home-based franchise, and No. 3 in low-investment franchise.

According to Robert Kindred, director of public relations at corporate headquarters in Dallas, the start-up cost begins at about \$8,000, depending on how much initial business is desired. Franchisees undergo an extensive two-week training program.

"Some start off part-time for six months to a year and then go full-time. Much of the growth is dependent on the individual and what they want to do with their business," says Kindred.

When considering a franchise business, many recommend looking at the fastest-growing, most profitable industries in today's economy. One of the few businesses that flourish in a bad economy is dry cleaning. OXXO Care Cleaners, a premier garment-care center, is revolutionizing the traditional dry cleaning industry, says owner Solomon Misham. The company's boutique-style air-conditioned stores; environmentally safe cleaning products; technologically advanced, state-of-the-art European garment care equipment; and 24-hour ATM style pick-up windows are making OXXO an exceptional franchise opportunity.

No prior experience is necessary, either. "Most of our franchise owners are entrepreneurs, professionals who wanted to go off into their own business. OXXO requires the owner to be at the store at least the first year; they must be a hands-on person. Investment depends upon size of store, but ranges from \$250,000 to \$500,000," he says. OXXO has locations in Fair Lawn, Denville, Teaneck, Englewood and Northvale.

Saladworks serves up an opportunity for would-be franchise owners that is irresistible—offering healthy food to an increasingly health-conscious population. Again, people skills and business management experience is key to being successful in this franchise, with an investment from \$215,000 for a food-court location and from \$427,000 for a full-size cafe store. Corporate headquarters is located in Conshohocken, Pa., with several New Jersey locations.

"A concept has to have been in business for at least 10 years to fine-tune its business model," says CEO and



John Scardapane, CEO and founder of Saladworks, says his health-conscious franchise offers a proven business concept.

founder John Scardapane. "A franchise company and its corporate culture need to be well-enough established to be able to teach it to somebody. Since Saladworks has been around for almost 20 years, we have successfully been able to replicate the concept of any individual regardless of their background or experience in business." Scardapane's best advice for any franchise seeker is to follow the company model as closely as possible to maximize your business potential—the bugs have already been worked out, so you won't repeat the same mistakes. ♦

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