



The Lemon Tree Family Hair Salons is seeking franchise owners with a sense of style for opportunities in the Garden State.

Isn't it time you were promoted?

By Gwen Donovan
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Have you ever dreamed of being your own boss? If so, franchise ownership could turn that dream into reality. Many companies are searching for investors to help them increase their presence in the Garden State.

A Special Touch—a Richmond, Va.-based franchise providing house cleaning services—is looking to expand into the Garden State, according to company President Jonathan Bergstein. Owners receive a number of benefits, including a free cell phone, a Web site, a call answering center and up to 20 qualified leads each month as part of the \$15,000 franchise fee, he says.

"We teach you how to deal with customers and employees,"

Bergstein explains. "We fly (franchise owners) to Richmond and pay for their lodging and transportation, and give a one-week intensive training course, plus two months worth of cleaning supplies." Start-up costs range from about \$20,000 to \$25,000, Bergstein notes, which

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include the franchise fee and as well as insurance and workman's compensation costs. A Special Touch also assists business owners with advertising, hiring, day-to-day operations, contracts and office locations, although he reports that start-up businesses can initially run the franchise from their own home.

A recognized name on Long Island and the greater New York metropolitan area since

the mid-1970s, The Lemon Tree Family Hair Salons has about 70 franchises and is looking to grow beyond two of the state's current locations in Hamilton and Edison.

John Wagner, executive vice-president, says the benefits of owning a Lemon Tree franchise far outweigh the risks. "When you're a franchise owner, there's no more living paycheck to paycheck, no long commute or fear of being laid off," he notes.

No matter what your background is—salon owners are former police officers, construction workers and even nurses—the company provides step-by-step guidance, Wagner stresses. "This chain was built on affordability for the everyday family who has a dream of having their own business and being their own boss," Wagner remarks. He says typical start-up costs from \$40,000 to \$60,000 can yield any-

where from \$3,000 to \$10,000 a week, "depending on the effort owners put into it."

A fixture in Upper Montclair since 1848, Applegate Farm has grown to become one of the largest retail outlets for ice cream on the East Coast, notes company President Jason Street. Today, the growing franchise has locations in East Hanover, Nutley and Totowa as well as the original Upper Montclair location, with new locations scheduled to open this Spring in Freehold and Cranford. Each store offers homemade ice cream and a number of confectionary and bakery items.

Street says the company is seeking qualified individuals who possess outgoing and energetic personalities, and those who are committed to quality and customer service. He says while previous restaurant, food service or business experience is a plus, it isn't required.

Estimated investments range from about \$140,000 to more than \$300,000, including a \$25,000 franchise fee, Street notes. Training focuses on operational and managerial aspects of running an Applegate Farm franchise, including both classroom and on-the-job training, he adds. ♦