

The franchising business—based on a formula that clearly works—is in the process of taking off.

Where the Action Is

FOR THE FIRST TIME I CAN remember, franchising is at the center of a perfect storm,” says Tom Portesy. “Many people have gone back to work, but their lack of love for their jobs is greater than I’ve ever seen. Add to that the number of kids graduating and finding there aren’t many jobs, the returning military, and the lowest interest rates and best real estate values in ages. The only thing missing was access to capital, and that is opening up now. I’ve never seen anything like this.”

That’s saying something. Portesy, an ex-franchisor and ex-franchisee, has spent a quarter of a century with MFV Expositions, which recently produced the International Franchise Expo in New York City. Portesy, president and CEO of MFV, will orchestrate the West Coast Franchise Expo in Anaheim from Oct. 24 to Oct. 26. His company will be running similar trade shows in Texas, Mexico, and England in 2014.

The number of franchisors exhibiting at the shows—from children’s tutoring services and smoothie shops to gaming companies and medical spas—has been soaring. So has the number of attendees. Nearly 20,000 prospective franchisees attended the New York show this June. These are people who want to succeed in business by working *for* themselves but not *by* themselves. They are looking to create equity, set their own

hours, control their own future, and be part of a business that’s based on a formula that works.

The most recent statistics underscore franchising’s strengths. ADP’s National Franchise Report, produced in collaboration with Moody’s Analytics, shows that during the past year the franchising sector added more than

last three years to more than 565. Another 90 or so units are in development, says CEO Russ Reynolds, who adds that the company has aggressive expansion plans for the East and West coasts.

Little Caesars Pizza is on a roll, too, having grown from its start in 1959 into one of the top four pizza franchisors in the world, with restaurants on five continents.

Seniors Helping Seniors, which matches active seniors with less active seniors who are looking for nonmedical in-home help, has also expanded overseas; it recently granted its first franchises in England and Malta. The company is getting “significantly more” inquiries every day than at this time in 2012, says president and CEO Philip Yocom; it’s also,

he adds, seeing a better quality of inquiries.

“Seniors Helping Seniors is a way for people who enjoy giving back to do good and make money by providing a valuable and rapidly growing service,” says co-founder Kiran Yocom. “Love and caring are always in demand.” Represented by franchises in more than 200 territories across the U.S., Seniors Helping Seniors is clearly where the action is—much like the industry itself.

—Heidi Ernst



150,000 jobs to the roughly 8 million already in place. Meanwhile, the International Franchise Association’s Franchise Business Index, which charts the industry’s economic health, rose six months in a row through May.

Batteries Plus Bulbs, a franchising operation that offers customers access to more than 45,000 types of batteries, light bulbs, and related products, is one of the industry leaders in the growth department. Its store count has increased 42% in the

More than
746,800 franchise
establishments
in 300 categories
support some 8.1
million jobs through-
out the U.S., produc-
ing annual sales
of \$769 billion.

Source: International
Franchise Association

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