

## Essential Habits of Franchise Success:

How setting goals, asking for help and taking action can help you succeed

By Carolyn Herfurth and Bev Bachel *The Franchise Review* May 2006

How was Wayne Cooper able to move to Mississippi, yet continue operating the business he started in Minnesota just two years earlier? How does Denise Shaw juggle multiple client projects, yet make time to meet her son at the bus stop every day? How was Chuck Karpinske able to give up an executive position with a successful dot-com and move to Iowa to start a successful multi-unit service business with his wife?

They bought a franchise based on their goals.

Whether you're just beginning to explore your options or are well on your way to purchasing the franchise of your dreams, developing three essential habits will help ensure your success in choosing the right franchise—and beyond.

### Habit No. 1: Set goals

Do successful franchise owners have more talent? More energy? Unlimited cash? Better resources? No, of course not. What they do have is the goal-setting habit.

Wayne Cooper began his franchise search at age 67 with the clear goal of wanting to generate post-retirement income without having to work full time. Knowing he'd want to spend winters in warmer climates than Minnesota, he chose a business—[Interface Financial Group](#)—that was portable and mobile. Now, he earns the income he desires, yet operates his business from Mississippi.

Whether you dream of financial freedom, more rewarding work or greater control of your life, goals are the steppingstones that make dreams of franchise ownership real. Here's how to get started:

- 1. Define your goal.** Grab a blank sheet of paper, and write your goal at the top of the page. Make sure your goal is specific so you know exactly what you're trying to accomplish. For example, "I want to buy a franchise that allows me to earn \$100,000 and take off one month every year to sail in the Virgin Islands" is more specific than "I want to earn more money and have more time to myself."
- 2. Assign a deadline to the goal.** Use a real date, such as "by September 30, 2007."
- 3. Develop an action plan.** Developing a step-by-step action plan for your goal is critical. Imagine trying to eat an apple in one bite. That's what buying the right franchise can feel like if you don't first break your goal into smaller chunks. Brainstorm the steps you need. Once you have your list, group similar items, arrange the tasks in a logical order and assign each a deadline.

We know from our experience of working with hundreds of franchise buyers and other entrepreneurs that those with clear goals and step-by-step action plans achieve far more—far more quickly—than those without goals or a plan. The most effective action plans arrange tasks in logical order—and include a specific deadline for each task.

### Habit No. 2: Ask for help

Another habit successful franchise owners share is the ability to ask for help. Take Denise Shaw, for example. Although she had owned and operated a successful business in Australia, she knew that buying the right franchise was much different than starting a business from scratch. She began her search by contacting franchises that were of interest to her, but they didn't fit her primary goal of being home for her son when he was done with school each day. "That's when I opted to seek objective guidance from someone who could help me better target my search," says Shaw, a [Gotcha Covered Blinds](#) franchisee.

One way to get the support you need is by forming your own personal Success Team, a group of people who believe in you and will help you achieve your goals. Your Success Team can include friends, family, neighbors, colleagues and other business owners, as well as professionals such as attorneys and accountants. Your Success Team can even include people you haven't yet met.

Wait, people you haven't even met? How do you do that? Simply call or e-mail them and ask for 15 minutes of their time. Not everyone will be willing or able to help you, but if you go about it the right way, you'll be surprised at how many people will.

#### To ask for help:

- 1. Introduce yourself.** Be brief and honest—you don't need to exaggerate. For example: "I'm looking to escape my cubicle and am considering buying a franchise."
- 2. Compliment the person in a meaningful way.** Explain why you want to meet the person. "You own a successful franchise, and I'd like to learn your secrets of success."
- 3. Ask for help.** "Would you be willing to speak with me for 15 minutes? I'd like your advice about how to ensure I buy the franchise that's right for me."
- 4. Say thank you.** Think about how you can return the favor or help someone else. You'll find most folks are flattered that you want their advice. And some may even become friends or mentors.

### Habit No. 3: Take action

What's the key difference between a person with good intentions and a successful franchise owner? Action. Once you have your action plan and Success Team in place, push yourself to get started. In fact, doing one thing, no matter how small, moves you closer to success. What's more, completing a task triggers the release of endorphins. In other words—you'll feel great!

Consider, for example, Chuck Karpinske, who took steps to identify and acquire a business that would move him and his wife closer to their son's family in Des Moines, Iowa. He was diligent and focused as he investigated several business models. Today, he and his wife own two [Martinizing Dry Cleaning](#) stores with plans to open several more throughout Iowa during the next few years.