

International Franchise Expo Continues to Set the Bar High

The 2011 IFE will deliver a range of highly qualified prospects.

BY JOEL GOLDSTEIN



The International Franchise Expo has become the preeminent franchise trade event due to the thousands of excited franchisee candidates seeking a new career by attending the expo. The IFE, which is sponsored by the International Franchise Association and conducted in 2010 at the Washington Convention Center, allows attendees to experience hundreds of great concepts.

For many franchise businesses, the quality of prospects was better than ever.

"We met with candidates who expressed tremendous interest in our concept from all over the world—from places like India, Philippines, and are looking to take Golden Krust back to their countries," said Lowell Hawthorne, president and CEO of Golden Krust Bakery, a specialty food company. Hawthorne added, "IFE is just a better connection than any other way you can field a prospective franchisee. We appreciate every lead we collect, but nothing beats meeting face-to-face here at the show."

Jeff Travitz, CFE, director of franchise sales for the Goddard School was equally encouraged. "We collected more leads at the 2010 IFE than at all three expos we exhibited at last year. [It was a] Surprising and amazingly good show. Best show we've done in three years and this is our 14th year exhibiting at the IFE," Travitz added. "IFE has been really worthwhile for Goddard. Good quality attendees and good conversations. We'll get deals out of exhibiting at this year's IFE and if we don't, it's our fault."

Finding the Right Candidate

From an entrepreneur interested in buying her first franchise to franchisees looking to invest in multiple locations and concepts, the 2011 IFE will deliver a range of highly qualified prospects. In fact, several exhibitors mentioned the growing success they are having in growing their concepts through the IFE and other shows.

"IFE 2010 was our third time participating in the event. We're growing in the Northeast," said Greg Delks, CFE, director of franchise development for Firehouse Subs. "We

have 381 stores and we're now expanding into Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the mid-Atlantic region and the IFE produces great leads for us and that's why we continue to come back. We didn't just meet the people walking the show—we sent a pre-expo e-mail invitation to our database of prospects to drive additional traffic right to our booth. The quality of people that are here are educated and ready to buy a franchise," Delks added.

Chris Bailey, director of franchise development at Bojangles' Famous Chicken 'n Biscuits agreed that attending visitors were experienced and serious about investing. "People who are attending the IFE have invested their money and their time to be here, so you're seeing a more serious candidate on the show floor. The attendees we've met at the IFE are already successful businesspeople. They bring their experience with them and the leads have been consistently excellent."

Building Your Brand

Of course, just about every exhibitor reports that the top motive to attend the IFE is the opportunity to build brand awareness. Presence at the IFE gives their concepts immeasurable brand visibility.

Tony Foley, CFE, president of United Franchise Group Services, said the Expo delivered for the company this year. "I have been part of these expos for more years than I care to remember, and the 2010 IFE has been the best show for us internationally that I have ever been part of," Foley said. "We met with a couple on the first morning of the expo and by the afternoon they had returned to our booth with the completed profile application for being our new Master Franchisee for one of our brands in the country of Jordan." Foley added, "We've met candidates from Ecuador, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and they have all been high quality leads for us, best I've seen in years."

Education for Franchises

Not only do exhibiting franchises take part in IFE's educational offerings especially designed for them, but many visiting franchise companies participate to get the most current information and also to continue to acquire CFE Credits. The most respected professionals in franchising lead the conference program, which includes in-depth symposia

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 21)

on technology, expansion, operations manuals and more.

Until Next Year

Plans are already under way for the 2012 International Franchise Expo which will be conducted June 8-10. Rick Del Sontro, president of Zippy Shell USA, a provider of secure and affordable mobile self storage and moving solutions said, "The people here at the expo are committed to being in business for themselves. I think they have a much shorter timeframe to make a decision than the leads we generate from alternative sources. Being in front of somebody gives you a feel for who they are and, of course, gives them a better feel for who you are."

Face-to-face recruitment is to be the best way to meet prospective new franchisees. The franchise expo events continue to be the most effective resource to expand your brand. ■

Joel Goldstein is the group marketing director at MFV Expositions, the producer of leading franchise events worldwide. He can be reached at jgoldstein@mfvexpo.com. For more information about exhibiting at any of MFV Expositions' upcoming trade shows, visit www.mfvexpo.com or call 201-881-1666.

GET HELP ENTERING NEW GLOBAL MARKETS

As franchise companies develop, they are wise to seek the new markets and now there's help. The International Franchise Association and MFV Expositions have partnered to provide U.S. Pavilions within four popular trade shows scheduled around the world. Each trade event includes opportunities to expand your brand's presence and learn vital demographic and economic information about the country. They will include:



May 10-13, 2011
Middle East & North Africa International
Franchising & Licensing
Cairo, Egypt



June 8-11, 2011
ABF Franchising Expo
Sao Paulo, Brazil



November 2011
Franchise Expo India
Mumbai, India

For information on exhibiting at these events, contact MFV's Corali Romero at 201-881-1662 or cromero@mfvexpo.com.