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Unique Franchise Opportunity- Franchise Interviews Meets With Arizona Pizza Company

March 10, 2006

Greetings Prospective Entrepreneurs,

Franchise Interviews is excited to announce that every other Friday at 3PM will be the release of a new interview. This week we get to meet with an exciting and unique franchise opportunity. If you haven't yet heard of Arizona Pizza Company, you will. We got to meet with the Founder, Owner, and President of The Arizona Pizza Company, Bill Stevens. We hope you enjoy the interview as much as we did!

We are also adding a new section to our newsletter called Ask The Entrepreneur Who Owns One. This section we will get an inside look from experts, franchisees and franchisors on entrepreneurship and franchising.

FRANCHISE INTERVIEWS- A TASTE OF THE ARIZONA PIZZA COMPANY

According to Franchising 101, the Federal Trade Commission franchise rule requires a franchisor to give a disclosure document to a prospective franchisee on or before the first personal meeting and at least 10 business days before the prospective franchisee can give the franchisor any money. This document contains 23 items of information we will discuss in future editions. The first item in the disclosure document contains information on the franchisor, its predecessors and affiliates. One of the elements you are paying for when you purchase a franchise is the franchisor's experience.

The First Arizona Pizza Company opened in May 2001. Designed to enhance the customer's dining experience, the restaurant has a casual, attractive, southwestern theme; a beautifully crafted, intimate bar featuring wood and brushed nickel accents and a marble bar, built-in television sets strategically placed throughout; brushed nickel fixtures, a giant stone chimney; and wood-fired pizza oven which emits tantalizing aromas. And to really capture the spirit of the concept, the Kokopelli flute player was integrated into the theme.

Franchise Interviews- What were you doing before starting Arizona Pizza Company?

Bill Stevens- I owned multiple restaurants. I have been in the restaurant business since I was 20 years old. Arizona Pizza was the culmination of all the different restaurants that I owned.

Franchise Interviews- What were some of the factors that made you decide to go into your own business? Many entrepreneurs we interview knew at an early age they wanted to go into their own business. Did you have the same experience?

Bill Stevens- My grandmother always told me as a little kid how I would be very successful as well as a millionaire. Your question makes me think back to my first paper route. I tried to get a paper route when I was real young and my mother wouldn't let me.

Franchise Interviews- Do you remember how old you were?

Bill Stevens- I would say I was around 11 years old and remember I had to beg my mother. I couldn't get a job anywhere because I was too young. The paper route was almost like owning your own business.

The way it worked was the papers came to your home. At the end of the week you collected all your money and then you had to pay the publisher "x" amount of dollars and anything left over you got to keep.

Franchise Interviews- What were some of the biggest obstacles you had to overcome in starting Arizona Pizza Company?

Bill Stevens- The one obstacle for most people is money. The biggest obstacle for me in the beginning was understanding all the documentation. We already had a great system in place with Arizona Pizza Company. However, it had to be documented, and that took a whole year to put all of that information together. The reason I started Arizona Pizza Company was I kept creating restaurant concepts and then opening new restaurants. I was on restaurant number four and said to myself I should design a package that I could replicate over and over again. I didn't originally intend to franchise the concept, but I knew I wanted to be in the restaurant business on a larger scale.

Franchise Interviews- Did you know Arizona Pizza Company was going to work as well as it did?

Bill Stevens- I had a strong feeling Arizona Pizza Company was going to work but never thought as well as it did. As I previously stated, I never planned on franchising the concept. I did plan on building some more restaurants for myself. A franchise attorney from out of state ate at the restaurant during his summer vacation. He had a second home in the area and he read about the opening in the newspaper. When he visited the restaurant, he was surprised at how smooth the operation ran. He called me about franchising the Arizona Pizza Company concept. For me, I just enjoy building these restaurants and putting them together.

Franchise Interviews- What factors do you contribute to your success with Arizona Pizza Company?

Bill Stevens- There is no cutting corners. We use the best products consistently. We give a great product at an inexpensive price. The whole concept was developed with the family and kids in mind, yet geared toward a broad demographic base that included families, singles, old and young. I know every aspect of this business. I understand the needs of the different types of customers. I know all the pieces of the puzzle from menu development, equipment, financial planning and cooking. I have done every single job and I know it so well.

Franchise Interviews- Why did you choose the restaurant industry?

Bill Stevens- There was an old pizza place for sale and I said I am going to try that. In a million years I didn't think I would be a restaurateur.

Franchise Interviews- What is a typical day like as an Arizona Pizza franchisee?

Bill Stevens- I will tell you why an Arizona Pizza is a great franchise. It's not as large as an investment or even as big as an Applebees or Chilis. It's a smaller scale restaurant but you're not the guy behind the counter of a deli making the subs. You are more like a project manager than a hands-on worker. You do the accounting of sales from the previous day. You also might put in and receive your orders and then be at the hostess deck seating customers.

Franchise Interviews- What type of skills does someone need to have to become an Arizona Pizza Company franchisee?

Bill Stevens- Strong organizational skills and the ability to multi-task. Also the drive to work and be your own boss is important.

Franchise Interviews- What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs looking to buy a franchise?

Bill Stevens- To not just be focused on the fees and the royalties. They have to research what a typical day is like as a franchisee. They also need to look at the history and experience of the franchisor.

Franchise Interviews- How has your life changed since starting Arizona Pizza?

Bill Stevens- It has changed for the better because now I have more people working for me. I am starting to do the things I like to do like and am good at -- such as evaluating and improving our systems, and designing and building restaurants

Franchise Interviews- How big would you like to see Arizona Pizza Company get?

Bill Stevens- The sky is the limit. Our menu is designed for all kinds of people. We want to bring Arizona Pizza as far as we can. We have a different product. We opened up in the land of the giants. We are in a mile radius of all of the biggest competitors in the United States. We are next to the Cheesecake Factory, Applebees and Chilis. People always comment on the fact we are so unique. We figured out a way from all the years of owning restaurants how to do things. We are able to make our lunches and dinners to order where many of our competitors are prepackaging. We also offer a combination of service methods that meet the customers' needs, e.g. take-out, eat-in, curbside delivery. We have developed a system that provides quality food at an economical price and an atmosphere that appeals to customers of all ages and groups.

[For more detailed information on The Arizona Pizza Company, click here:](#)

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The fact is that franchise ownership offers success to new Entrepreneurs with the least amount of risk. —The franchising experts here at FranchiseFunding.net (Diamond Financial Services of New Jersey) — specialize in securing franchise financing for aspiring business people, like you! Unlike single franchise brokers, Diamond Financial has access to a wider range of franchise opportunities and financial institutions that can make your investment happen.

The consultation services are FREE to potential franchise buyers. You'll be provided with your own personal consultant to guide you through the entire process. You can count on unparalleled experience in matching both the criteria of the buyer and those of the franchise.

[For a free consultation, click here:](#)

Franchise Interviews

Ask The Entrepreneur Who Owns One

Franchise Interviews-What is entrepreneurship?

Roy Hibberd, Franchise Expert:

Number one, it is 24-7. In my opinion, even with a good franchise system to back you up, it takes a tremendous amount of work and effort.

Number two, entrepreneurs need to wear many hats running their business. Many times in a corporate setting they have been surrounded by consultants and experts. For example, if they get stuck on an issue or project, they can go to a colleague down the hall or elsewhere in the company. When they're an entrepreneur, for the most part, they lose that support. Of course one can surround themselves with paid marketing consultants, accountants, human resource advisors and lawyers on call. But most can't afford that approach. And, even if they can justify having all that paid outside support, they should still make the

effort to learn and understand each area—the odds that they will succeed in their business will increase exponentially.

When I teach franchising, I spend a large amount of time instructing people on just what it takes to make a successful business grow. Franchising can give an entrepreneur a tremendous boost in the sense that the tools from a good franchise system are generally proven and most of the tools have been perfected over time. You might have a brand that will attract people to the business and all of that may tend to insure success. However, nothing will literally guarantee success except the entrepreneur who gives his or her absolute full time. That can be a bit intimidating for some as they reflect on that.

On a final note in this area, potential franchisees should honestly assess their “people” skills. If they enjoy meeting with and talking to people, they might consider a retail environment where they can be up front and working with their customers. However, if the reverse is true, they might want to look for franchise systems where their management or technical skills are more important.

Roy W. Hibberd
Millennium Franchise Services
Millennium Partners, LLC
732-625-0755 direct

Franchise Interviews- What advice do you have for someone considering going into business for him or herself?

Allen Hagar, President, Right At Home:

Follow your brain, and your heart.

First, do your homework on the industry and the franchisor. Is there a strong market? Is it a good long-term business or a passing fad? Who are the people I will work with? Do they have direct experience in the business and know what I will be facing? Can I afford the start-up costs with this business? Have I visited the franchisor to see the business personally?

Next, decide if this is a business that fits you. Life is too short to be working in something you don't like. Homecare and staffing, for example, is a people driven business. If you don't enjoy a lot of contact with people, it wouldn't be the business for you.

[For more detailed information on Right At Home, click here](#)

FranchiseInterviews.com- What characteristics do you think make a successful entrepreneur?

Ken Hall, Founder, P.B. Loco:

I think having a lot of perseverance and determination is key because there are so many obstacles along the way. You really have to believe what you are doing.

[For more detailed information on PB Loco, click here](#)

Franchise Interviews- Out of all the franchise opportunities available, why did you choose Cartoon Cuts?

Al Warok, Franchisee, Cartoon Cuts:

I did a lot of research before I chose Cartoon Cuts. I looked at a number of other hair care franchise systems. What I liked most about Cartoon Cuts is the fun and unique nature of the concept. They deal with kids primarily. Kid's hair cutting is a niche market. The Frisco area, where my salon is based is

one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. Cartoon Cuts looks for areas with approximately 10,000 kids in a 5-mile radius. We chose our location in the Stonebriar Mall in Frisco because the demographics were off the charts. The hair business could be construed as recession proof because you need to get your hair cut every five to six weeks. You are getting these customers from the time they are infants until they are 12 years of age or older. We also cut adult hair. The other thing that appealed to me was that Cartoon Cuts has 21 company stores on the east coast and is considered the innovator of the kid's haircut experience. They hadn't franchised in the United States but they had two franchise stores in Puerto Rico. When I looked at a lot of other franchise systems, they had very rigid operating requirements. A lot of franchise systems tell you exactly what is going to be done and how you are going to do it. Cartoon Cuts welcomed me into their family and allowed me the flexibility to make changes from store design and marketing to everyday operations.

[For more detailed informatin on Cartoon Cuts, click here](#)

Franchise Interviews
327 Waterford Terrace
Williams Twp. , PA 18042

Phone: 1-888-722-2785
Fax: 1-800-784-8374
Web site: <http://www.franchiseinterviews.com>
E-mail: marty@franchiseinterviews.com

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