



FranchiseInterviews.com on BlogTalkRadio.com

One of the first national/international radio shows dedicated to educating and motivating aspiring entrepreneurs on franchising.

July 2008

Volume7, Number 4

Franchise Interviews Meets with Dana Rambow, Co-founder and CEO of AristoCare

Franchise Interviews- What were you doing before starting AristoCare?

Dana Rambow- I have been a nurse for the last 25 years. Eighteen of those years were spent in home health care. Before starting AristoCare, I was a Regional Vice-President for Integrated Health Services and was responsible for 80 locations in 8 states.

Franchise Interviews- That's a pretty big job!

Dana Rambow-Yes. I had several states where I had a larger number of agencies and had area managers in those states assisting me. I had a very strong team. I also had a financial expert that did all my P&Ls for my group so it wasn't like I did it solo. I was Integrated Health Services' turn around specialist. They would give me all the failing agencies before shutting them down to see if I could salvage the territory.

During the time that I traveled, my father repeatedly told me I should start my own company. I wasn't super motivated to do that at the time because I had a very nice salary and benefits. However, with the beneficiary cap change in Medicare in 1998, IHS had just lost 15 million dollars in the first quarter. With those cutbacks, IHS decided to sell their home health care division. I was then faced with either moving from Tucson or travel five days a week and some Saturdays, which was not conducive to being married, having children and enjoying a high

quality life. At that point I said I am now ready to start my own business.

Franchise Interviews-Did you always know that you wanted to go into your own business?

Dana Rambow- I was brought up in that atmosphere. From the time I was ten or eleven my father owned his own business. At 14 years old, I worked in his office on Saturdays and in the summer. I was a pretty highly motivated kid. I enjoyed working and having my own money. I didn't necessarily know as a child that I wanted to own my own business.

After putting in 4 years of service with Team Health Care Services, we were acquired by IHS, where I climbed the corporate ladder for another 4 years. Having my destiny in my own hands looked a lot more appealing after giving another entity my blood, sweat and tears and feeling like the rug was pulled out from underneath you. My financial security definitely got shaken with that scenario.

Franchise Interviews- One of the things I admired about AristoCare is that you have lots of family around you.

Dana Rambow-My husband is an attorney and is our CFO and General Counsel. I brought my dad out of retirement. I said to him if I was going to do this, he was going to come out of retirement and work with me. Unfortunately we lost him last year. He was big part of my life and an important part of the business. My mother and sister are also involved in the business.



Owner and Founder Dana Rambow, RN, is nationally recognized, specializing in Home Healthcare for over 25 years.

My sister is our franchise sales liaison and she has done very well at prospecting potential franchise candidates and helping us build our local business.

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

Dana Rambow-I think some of the back office functions. It was a big learning curve in handling all the office functions such as billing and payroll. Also coming to terms with operating a family business on a day-to-day basis. It was also a big change for my husband who came from a very structured legal background. *-continued on back page-*



Aristocare at the Senior Care Awards Ceremony – Toledo, Ohio

Franchise Interviews-What factors do you contribute to your success?

Dana Rambow-I think industry experience is a big part of our success. We are a very hard working family. As a Regional Vice-President, I was used to working 70 hours per week. I think our tenacity certainly helped. Starting your own business is not easy. I tell people during the first year to plan on not seeing a lot of your family. My kids were so excited that I was going to start this business and do less traveling. They said, "We see less of you now than when you were traveling!" When you are getting a business up off the ground, it is a time intensive adventure.

Franchise Interviews- There was a great article written by Entrepreneur Magazine on the senior care industry.

Dana Rambow- Last year at the Franchise Expo in Washington, D.C. there was discussion about that article. That was one of the reasons we were four people deep at our booth for three days.

Franchise Interviews-What do you look for in a franchisee?

Dana Rambow-We have been highly selective in choosing franchisees. We have turned down many prospective franchisees. We learned a lot from other people's mistakes.

I speak at a lot of national conventions so I have an opportunity to meet and mingle with a lot of other franchise owners in other industries. They share their challenges and I recognize that half of their franchisees shouldn't be franchise owners. It drove us to believe we don't need to be in a hurry to have the wrong people.

We try and spend a day and a half with solely just them versus multiple people because we look at this

venture as a ten-year marriage. Our Discovery Day does not occur until we have determined that the candidate meets this criteria and we need to feel that they can be successful in our business model.

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

Dana Rambow-Our business is a 24-7 business. Our scheduling and billing software is web based so they can lead normal office hours from the standpoint of being physically in the office. Basically they are out in the community marketing their services and branding their name. They are dealing with operation issues, clients, caregivers, and they might be participating in billing and payroll process. We do a majority of the billing and payroll for them but they have to do the verification of their timesheets. They also have to physically get their invoices out after we have prepared the invoices. Mainly they are going to be building their business.

Franchise Interviews-What kind of skills should someone have if they want to become an Aristocare franchisee?

Dana Rambow-They don't have to know home health care but they have to first and foremost have good business skills. You don't want someone to give away the store. A passion for taking care of people or giving something back to their community needs to be there. Also they should not afraid to market their business because it's a huge component in the health care business. It's not the kind of business where you can just send a little direct mailer. This is a very personal service industry so face-to-face marketing is a big component of building those relationships. They have to be ok doing it themselves or recognize they need to hire someone to do that task.

Franchise Interviews-This is one of those businesses that you actually feel good at the end of the day.

Dana Rambow-Absolutely. There is a ton of psychic income you gain from helping people's quality of life. It's not all about dollars and cents. There is a caregiver shortage across the country and in our corporate culture and business model, appreciating your employees is a huge part of maintaining those

employees. If you don't have good caregivers in this industry, you don't have anything. They have to have a passion for the industry and a compassion for their employees, and clients.

Franchise Interviews-What is the training like for a new franchisee? Is that philosophy part of the training as well.

Dana Rambow-It is. The training is a full three weeks. We have a full two weeks here at the office and a week in their office once they are open. It is a comprehensive, multi-faceted and interactive training module that took us 15 months to develop.

INDUSTRY FACTS

- Today the rapidly growing senior population is fueling the demand for in-home health services. Annual expenditures for home health care are projected to be \$41.3 billion in 2003 according to the National Association of Home Care.
- According to the U.S. General Accounting office, spending on long-term care services for the elderly is projected to increase at least 250% and could nearly quadruple to \$379 billion by the year 2050.
- Today more than 12 million Americans require some long term care, and 8 out of every 10 would prefer to have care provided in their homes!
- 34% of seniors 80 years of age and older require some type of assistance as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau and the older population will continue to grow significantly in the future. (See chart below) The older population will burgeon between the years of 2010 and 2030 when the "baby boom" generation reaches the age of 65.



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Franchise Interviews Meets with the P.B. Loco Franchise Opportunity

FranchiseInterviews.com- What were you doing before starting the P.B. Loco franchise? It seems like there is an interesting story of you, Jodene, and Keri coming together.

Ken of P.B. Loco- Jodene and I worked together. We were both lawyers in the same firm. She went to a different firm here we started P.B. Loco but we did stay in touch. During our time at the firm, we worked on some cases together. At some point it came out that we both had a desire to start a business.

Keri was living in New York. She moved back to Minneapolis and was thinking about joining a law firm there but then she decided she would like to do something different. We talked to her and told her we were also interested in doing something different. We all had the idea we wanted to start a business. It was then a matter of determining what type of business. What we really liked about peanut butter is it's not really something completely new to people. We didn't want something trendy but rather something that has been around for a long time but we could add some new twist to. We did some research and found that 92% of Americans eat peanut butter on a regular basis.

FranchiseInterviews.com- Have you always dreamed of going into your own business? Did you picture yourself doing this?

Ken of P.B. Loco- My parents reminded me that when I was a kid, I started writing and selling a school newspaper to my elementary school classmates.

FranchiseInterviews.com- How has your lives changed since starting the P.B. Loco concept? I imagine your lives are a little different from the legal field?

Ken of P.B. Loco- Dramatically different. One big adjustment for us has been the wide scope of duties we all have now. A business owner wears so many hats in the same day. To me, that is exciting because I was in an area of law that was very specialized.

FranchiseInterviews.com- Did your legal background help you guys in setting up the whole concept?

Ken of P.B. Loco- Yes. We did use outside counsel for our trademark and franchise work but as far as contracts, drafting and negotiations, it is nice to have a legal background.

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

Ken of 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.

FranchiseInterviews.com- Did you get a lot of nay Sayers in the beginning because your concept is a little different?

Ken of P.B. Loco- Not really. Most people were supportive. Any time you are doing a concept that is new, it is risky and that is part of what appealed to us. No risk, no reward.



The founders of P.B. Loco: Ken Hall, Keri Barney and Jodene Jensen

FranchiseInterviews.com- How did you come up with the idea for P.B. Loco concept? Was it based on an idea that just popped in your head or was it based on research?

Ken of P.B. Loco- A little of each. The more research we did, the more comfortable we felt with the P.B. Loco concept.

FranchiseInterviews.com- It seems like you are in a great location as well. The Mall of America seems like a great place for the P.B. Loco concept.

Ken of P.B. Loco- Yes. Originally we looked at neighborhood locations that would have cost quite a bit less but we were afraid if it didn't do well, we would never know if it was the concept or the location. The Mall of America has so much traffic that if it failed out there we would know it wasn't attributed to location.



FranchiseInterviews.com- How would you describe the P.B. Loco concept to our readers?

Ken of P.B. Loco- We like to say it's a gourmet peanut butter café and retail experience. Sometimes we say it's all peanut butter all the time. Our menu primarily is built around 10 flavored peanut butters as well as plain creamy and plain crunchy varieties. To keep customers coming in all day, we also offer lots of snacks because we have a steady stream of mall walkers and shoppers in the afternoon and morning. We really try to incorporate the peanut butter into foods that can be eaten all day long.

FranchiseInterviews.com- How has the response been to P.B. Loco so far?

Ken of P.B. Loco- It's been great! It's exceeded what we thought it would be. We have been surprised at the passion people have for peanut butter. People have almost a cult like feeling towards it.

We hired an R&D team to help us develop the peanut butter flavors when we initially started. I think one of our best days was the first time we tasted the peanut butter because we really believe in the product. We wanted it to be healthy, but first and foremost we wanted it to taste great.

FranchiseInterviews.com- There has been many studies taken on the benefits of eating peanut butter as well.

Ken of P.B. Loco- Yes. There are a lot of people on high protein diets so we have been able to take advantage of that trend.

FranchiseInterviews.com- Have you been able to identify a typical customer yet? Did you

think in the beginning it was going to be younger kids, middle age or is it a broad audience?

Ken of P.B. Loco- Yes. It is a broad audience. We specifically designed the store to appeal to adults and young adults. We knew by the nature of the products that kids would like it and parents would bring their kids in.

FranchiseInterviews.com- What has been the most popular flavor so far?

Ken of P.B. Loco- The Raspberry White Chocolate. Jungle Banana is second.

FranchiseInterviews.com- That sounds great. I see that customers can also order the peanut butter over the Internet. Have you been getting orders through that medium as well?

Ken of P.B. Loco- Yes. Last summer we were featured on two shows. One was 'What's Hot, What's Cool', and the other was called 'Recipe for Success'. That gave us quite a bit of exposure. We had a couple thousand of franchise inquiries within a couple of weeks.

FranchiseInterviews.com- What is the training like when someone buys into the P.B. Loco franchise system?

Ken of P.B. Loco- We have what we call PB Boot Camp which is 10 days training at our Mall of America store that culminates with the franchisee managing the store for a couple of days. We then provide onsite training during the first couple of days their franchise is open.

FranchiseInterviews.com- Do they have to learn everything about peanut butter?

Ken of P.B. Loco- Yes. One thing that we really train our franchisees to do is to educate the consumers about the benefits of peanut butter. Because this is a new concept there is a lot of education that goes along with it.

FranchiseInterviews.com- Should someone have retail experience to get into a P.B. Loco franchise?

Ken of P.B. Loco- No, not necessarily. It is not mandatory. It could help but we feel our training is exceptional.

For detailed information on becoming a P.B. Loco franchisee, click here: <http://www.pbloco.com/franchise.asp>

PEANUT BUTTER FACTS

- According to Harvard researchers, women who regularly consume peanut butter and nuts have a reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes compared to those who don't.
- Peanut butter is one of America's favorite foods, and Americans eat more than 800 million pounds of peanut butter each year. Peanut butter was invented around 1890 as a health food for undernourished patients.
- The average American child will eat 1500 peanut butter sandwiches before he or she graduates from high school.
- Women and children are more likely to prefer creamy peanut butter, while most men opt for chunky varieties. People on the East Coast tend to prefer creamy peanut butter, while their friends on the West Coast more likely prefer chunky.
- It takes approximately 850 nuts to make an 18 oz. jar of peanut butter.
- "Arachibutyrophobia" is the fear of peanut butter getting stuck to the roof of your mouth.
- Americans consume enough peanut butter each year to cover the floor of the Grand Canyon.
- November is Peanut Butter Lover's Month.
- Seven states account for approximately 98% of all peanuts grown in the U.S.: Georgia, Texas, Alabama, North Carolina, Florida, Virginia, and Oklahoma.
- About 40% of the U.S. peanut crop is used to make peanut butter.



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Franchise Interviews Meets with Bill Stevens, Founder of Arizona Pizza Company

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 want to 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 up new restaurants. I was on restaurant number 4 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



The casual dining atmosphere was enhanced by the wood-burning pizza oven, the Southwestern theme, signature pizza and pasta dishes, and cable television sets strategically placed throughout the restaurant.

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. *-continued on back page-*



The success of the first restaurant eventually lead to the development of the Arizona Pizza system in 2001, when Bill's third restaurant featuring the same theme and much of the same menu, but with greater emphasis on efficiency and economy, opened in Lenox, Massachusetts.

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 investment or even as big as an Applebees or Chili's. 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 is a typical day 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 Chili's. People always comments 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 of customers of all ages and groups.

Arizona Pizza Menu

- 🍷 Starters
- 🍷 Sedona Salads
- 🍷 Calzones & Strombolis
- 🍷 Wood Fired Pizza
- 🍷 Traditionals & Pasta
- 🍷 Sandwiches
- 🍷 Tucson Tacos
- 🍷 Red Rock Wraps
- 🍷 Grand Canyon Burgers
- 🍷 Fat Daddy's Kids
- 🍷 Cactus Coolers
- 🍷 Create Your Own Pizza
- 🍷 Curbside Service
- 🍷 Call Ahead Seating
- 🍷 For franchise information, go to ArizonaPizza.com



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Franchise Interviews Meets with Al Warok, VP of Franchise Development for Cartoon Cuts

Franchise Interviews- What were you doing before becoming a Cartoon Cuts franchisee?

Al from Cartoon Cuts- I spent 14 years working in the telecommunications industry in various roles within sales, marketing, and customer support. My last position was Director of Marketing for Alcatel where I supported a number of very large key accounts including Verizon and Sprint. My business unit was responsible for selling Optical Transmission Products for North America.

Franchise Interviews- It must have been a very big change going from Corporate America to owning your own Cartoon Cuts franchise.

Al from Cartoon Cuts- Yes, you could say I went from high tech to hair. It has been a dramatic change for me. The telecommunications industry has been going through a real downturn in the last 5-7 years. Alcatel was downsizing and there were a lot of changes going on in the industry. I was not very happy the last year I was there and saw this as a good opportunity to get out and try something new. After my departure from Alcatel I spent the first six months looking for something I really wanted to do when I discovered Cartoon Cuts.

Franchise Interviews- Have you always wanted to own a business?

Al from Cartoon Cuts- I think like a lot of people, I always dreamed about being my own boss but either never had the opportunity or was afraid to

venture out on my own. The changes at Alcatel really brought clarity to what I needed to do. I spent a majority of my career creating success and making money for someone else and I thought it was about time to try to do the same for myself. As a small business owner you are the key decision maker and you wear many hats. I was up for the challenge and I believed I had the skills to be successful. It's definitely a different environment than Corporate America.

Franchise Interviews- How long have you been with Cartoon Cuts?

Al from Cartoon Cuts- We have been open a little over 19 months. Prior to opening, I spent several months creating a business and marketing plan to make sure I understood what needed to be done. Moreover, I had to secure funding, identify the appropriate site, negotiate a lease, hire the right people, etc. etc. I would also like to add that the support I received from Cartoon Cuts – especially Jorge Salvat the President and CEO was terrific. Jorge and his staff were with me every step of the way.

Franchise Interviews- How has your life changed since becoming a Cartoon Cuts franchisee?

Al from Cartoon Cuts- It's changed in numerous ways. I don't have a typical 9 to 5 job anymore. As you are growing a business your time



and energy is focused on the success of the business – you have to work hard and work smart – which typically means more time and more stress. Moreover, I am the one guy in charge of everything now. The ultimate responsibility for every decision resides with me. It's definitely a challenge and not for everyone.

Franchise Interviews- You wear many hats now?

Al from Cartoon Cuts- In my previous life, I could delegate tasks to other departments like human resources or accounting but now it's up to me to do everything. You really need to have strong time management skills to deal with everything. You also need to have a lot of perseverance. About the only thing I have not done is cut hair.

Franchise Interviews- That's an interesting comment. Time management and perseverance seem to be common traits of successful entrepreneurs.

Al from Cartoon Cuts- Absolutely, you have to be able to manage your time well. One suggestion I have for someone just starting their own business would be to learn how to say "No". This will save you a lot of grief. Sometimes if you let someone get their foot in the door it is really hard to get them to take their foot out. Regarding perseverance, the first six months were definitely the toughest because it was a new industry for me. The 12-month mark was a cause for

celebration. After that, we focused on growth as well as streamlining costs and processes.



Franchise Interviews- It sounds like your sales and marketing background helped contribute to your success.

AI from Cartoon Cuts- Definitely. The time I spent working in customer service, sales and marketing gave me the strong business acumen to launch Cartoon Cuts. It gave me the solid foundation I needed to operate the business on a daily basis and allowed me the strategic vision I needed to grow the business.

Franchise Interviews- What other characteristics do you think make for a successful entrepreneur?

AI from Cartoon Cuts- If you have a family, you must have their support and understanding. I believe that is key. If you don't have patience, then you need to learn patience. You need to have faith that the next day or next month is going to be better. You also need wisdom and incredibly strong time management and organizational abilities. But first and foremost, you need the passion to succeed. It is passion that will get you out of bed every morning and provide you the strength to deal with the ups and downs of your business,

Franchise Interviews- What do you like best about being your own boss?

AI from Cartoon Cuts- In the first six to twelve months, I really didn't have a lot of flexibility. Now it's getting to the point where I have more flexibility with my schedule. I also enjoy being able to make changes as I see fit without the big company bureaucracy.

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

AI from 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.

Franchise Interviews- That's interesting. You mentioned earlier that flexibility is something you don't get with some of the bigger franchise systems. There is basically no flexibility with big systems.

AI from Cartoon Cuts- Cartoon Cuts is in their infancy in terms of franchising but they proved they could operate their corporate stores. A lot of franchise systems start with one or two stores and immediately go into franchising. Cartoon Cuts decided after 13 years of operation to start franchising.

Franchise Interviews- Cartoon Cuts certainly has a long track record. Going back to something you said earlier AI; the market for kids is huge and that it makes sense to offer services to parents as well.

AI from Cartoon Cuts- We make it convenient for the child and the parent. We don't want to lose track of what our primary business is - our niche is kids but all of our stylists are licensed cosmetologists. Prior to working for Cartoon Cuts they all have worked in either full service salons or traditional hair cutting

salons catering to adults as well as children.

Franchise Interviews- How would you describe the Cartoon Cuts system?

AI from Cartoon Cuts- We focus on children 12 and under. Three quarters of our stores are in malls and the rest are in strip centers. The reason our stores are different than a traditional salon is our design concept is bright and colorful and geared towards kids. We have TV's and video games at every hair station. We have a video distribution system playing the latest cartoons and movies for the kids while they are waiting or being serviced.

Our signature item is our "Elephant Trunk Wash". We learned early on that shampooing a child's hair in the traditional manner with a chair and sink was not a fun experience for our little clients. Our concept allows the child to lie down on a comfortable bed while the elephant's trunk is used to wash the child's hair. We also offer a "Guest Paging System" for our clients in case there is a wait to be serviced. Our customers are provided with a pager and allowed to go venture into the mall. When their stylist is ready we page them to return to the salon. We value our client's time and our paging system allows them to do other things with it than waiting in our salon. So far as I know - this is a unique offering.

Franchise Interviews- I noticed you have an elephant mascot named "Ellie".

AI from Cartoon Cuts- Before I came on, we didn't have a mascot. I did some research for the company and we found a firm that designed our mascot. The mascot is an incredible marketing tool and it's good for branding the Cartoon Cuts name as well.

Franchise Interviews- How has the response been to Cartoon Cuts in your area so far?

AI from Cartoon Cuts- It's been very well received. We opened November of 2003 and almost one year later, the reader's of DallasChild Magazine voted us the "Best Kid's Hair Salon" in Dallas. The Mall also has monthly retailer awards for the Top 10 retailers based on sales, customer service, and participation in mall programs. We have been selected a top 10 retailer five times since we opened (There are over 165 retailers in this mall). We have also won awards based solely on our customer service.

For more information, go to CartoonCuts.com



FranchiseInterviews.com on BlogTalkRadio.com

One of the first national/international radio shows dedicated to educating and motivating aspiring entrepreneurs on franchising.

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Franchise Interviews Meets with Master Franchisee to Fantastic Sam's Jerome Williams

Many times when you hear the word 'franchise', people think of fast food. However, did you know over seventy-five industries are now franchising? One of these industries that more professionals from Corporate America, the IT world and aspiring entrepreneurs are entering is the hair care industry.

Fantastic Sam's® is the world's largest full-service hair care franchise, with salons located throughout the United States, as well as some salons in Canada, Singapore and Japan. Their first salon opened in Memphis, Tennessee in July of 1974 and we began franchising in 1976. Their salons have earned a reputation for providing quality hair care services, including cuts, perms and color, to the entire family. The goal at Fantastic Sam's® is to provide our guests with unexpected quality, unexpected service and unexpected style at a great value.

With over 1350 salons, Fantastic Sam's® provides a wide range of services including: haircutting & styling, hair coloring, texturizing and a variety of hair treatments. Their stylists are continually attending classes presented by our very own educators to keep up with all the latest styles and trends.

I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Jerome Williams who owns a Master Franchise for Fantastic Sam's. Jerome provided us with the keys to success in finding a franchise, training for Fantastic Sam's' franchisees, and the characteristics of typical Fantastic

Sam's franchisees. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

Definition of Master Franchise

Master franchises offer the opportunity for qualified individuals or corporations to purchase the rights to sub-franchise the brand within a given country or territory. Master franchises acquire an area franchise, as well as operate in its own location. Some of the services normally provided by the original franchisor will be provided by the master franchisee and between them they will divide the franchise fee and subsequent royalties paid by the sub-franchisee.

The Interview

Franchise Interviews – What were you doing before getting involved with Fantastic Sam's?

Jerome Williams – I used to be a medical equipment and supplies sales representative.

Franchise Interviews – That is a big difference from franchising. How did you get involved with Fantastic Sam's?

Jerome Williams – Although I worked in Corporate America, part of my game plan was to one day own a business. At least twice a year, I would meet with a franchise broker. I did that for 5 years until I found something I wanted to investigate further which was Fantastic Sam's.



Pictured above is Master franchisee to Fantastic Sam's Jerome William.

Franchise Interviews – What is a typical day like as a Fantastic Sam's franchisee?

Jerome Williams – Because we are a master franchisee, there is no typical day. It includes some of the following:

- Helping our franchisee under us with daily operation questions,
- Creating new marketing and advertising materials,
- Planning meetings with current and new vendors,
- Looking for real estate for a new franchisee,
- Interviewing and prospecting candidates,
- Resolving problems,
- Negotiating letters of intent for real estate,
- Creating sales and marketing materials.

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An exterior view of a Fantastic Sam's salon franchise

In addition to all of that, we own a Fantastic Sam's in Lawrenceville, NJ, which is our prototype store.

Franchise Interviews – Who is the typical franchisee that purchases a Fantastic Sam's franchise?

Jerome Williams – It may be people from Corporate America, who may have just been downsized. We get a lot of people from the IT world. We also get a lot of entrepreneurs.

Franchise Interviews – What type of skills or qualities should someone have to be a Fantastic Sam's franchisee? What skills do you typically look for?

Jerome Williams – They should have an entrepreneurial spirit. They should also remain open to learning as well as be a team player because franchising by nature is about building a brand.

Franchise Interviews – It seems better that a prospective franchisee doesn't have experience in the industry because they would be more open to learning.

Jerome Williams – Without question. Someone who has owned a salon may struggle because they would ask questions like, "Why are these guys doing it this way?" and "Why do I need to pay a franchise fee and royalty?"

Franchise Interviews – They don't understand franchising.

Jerome Williams – That is right.

Franchise Interviews – What is the training like for a new Fantastic Sam's franchisee?

Jerome Williams – Training is intense. New franchisees go to Fantastic Sam's University, which is a weeklong and is located in the Boston, Massachusetts's area or out in California at our old corporate headquarters. They learn everything from soup to nuts about the business from how to price their products and services and how to deal with people. There is a wealth of information provided in the training. The beautiful thing is training doesn't stop there. For our salon owners, training is continuous. We have a monthly meeting at our regional office in East Brunswick, NJ where other owners can share best practices.

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

Jerome Williams – That is a big question that I would answer with a couple of suggestions. Buying a franchise is a very involved process. If you are doing it alone, I would suggest using a franchise broker because they can present you with various options based on your interest, finances and skills. A skilled franchise broker will help guide you through the due diligence process and present more than one option to look at. That type of guidance, which is usually free, is invaluable. If you are researching a franchise with a partner, then you can divide tasks for your search. The key to both scenarios is education. Make sure you know everything about the opportunity you are looking at. Also make certain you are mentally, emotionally and financially prepared to move forward if you find something that you like.

Franchise Interviews – A lot of times we compare it to a marriage Jerome.

Jerome Williams – Exactly, and like a marriage, you can lose your shirt if you are not careful.

Franchise Interviews – How has your life changed since joining Fantastic Sam's?

Jerome Williams – It's been a big challenge that has provided me to grow both personally and professionally. I can really say my career is rewarding and has provided me with freedom and opportunities are endless!

Why Fantastic Sam's?

*** The hair business is always growing, and so is the number of Fantastic Sam's® hair salon franchises.**

*** Who says that owning your own hair salon business can't be fun? Our franchisees across the country believe the social atmosphere of a Fantastic Sam's creates an environment that's fun, entertaining, and rewarding. After all, when your customers are satisfied, your salon business will grow. And that is why, with over 1350 salons, Fantastic Sam's is one of the country's largest full-service hair care franchises.**

*** Our salons have earned a reputation for offering quality hair care services to the entire family, while our company offers over 30 years of experience in hair care and business management to our franchisees.**

*** We're a unique type of franchise opportunity to own. It's easy for our franchise owners to build a solid customer base because there's always a need for what we provide.**

For more information go to FantasticSams.com