

Entrepreneurs find franchising is road to success

By Judy Calmer
special writer

For some people, owning their own business is the way to go. For a lot of people, owning a franchise is the only way to go.

Take, for example, Monte Nagler, 42, owner of Midas Muffler on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington. "I worked at Ford for seven years," Nagler said, "and I was tired of working for someone else. I wanted to work for myself."

Ralph Delmotte, owner of Speedy Printing, missed being in business, so he bought the printing store just under two years ago. After owning a refrigeration business and, teaching high school, Delmotte sums up his attitude about owning a business again in three words: "I love it."

DELMOTTE'S L-SHAPED printing store is filled with sunlight, and he talks about monthly growth and expansion as if recession were non-existent.

Business, he says, "is interesting. You meet people over the counter, and you get to go back and do creative things — work with your hands."

"Another thing — I believe in franchises. When you have a franchise, you get supplies cheaper," he says, "because you have quantity buying. And you have co-operative advertising. And (the company) gives us good service and repair and paper."

Though the work is "mostly small jobs right now, every month it's grown. So I really have no complaints."

No complaints, either, from Paul Van Hull, six-year owner of Farmington's Goodyear on Grand River. Owning a franchise, says Van Hull, is like being self-employed and "I think it's great."

YOU'RE INDEPENDENT, said the 39-year-old owner of four Goodyear locations, "but it's a risk. You're out there by yourself and you can either make it or break it. But it's more fun to make it than break it."

Van Hull is one more convert to the list of those who would rather be their own boss than work for one. A former sales representative for Standard Oil of New Jersey (now EXXON), Van Hull describes his gradual move into franchise ownership in terms of wanting independence.

"A lot of the people I was calling on were independent business people and they were the happiest people I ever met. So I decided to give it a shot."

"There are problems with franchises which I don't have with Goodyear," he said. A lot of franchises charge excess fees, he said, both up front and on a monthly basis. "Some franchises

charge up to \$24 thousand just to use their name and logo."

VAN HULL SAID that before he went into the business, "I understood what the economics were." And although he has been successful with all four locations, Van Hull admits, "I have never been able to figure out the Farmington market. It's unpredictable."

The two most successful locations are in Plymouth and Southfield, Van Hull said, adding "Westland's the toughest one because it moves with the economy so much."

But owning a business, he says, is where "I fit. For me, it's where I belong." Nagler, of Farmington's Midas Muffler shop, admits it would be "a little tougher now than it was 12 years ago" to open a business. "Things are more expensive now."

YET WHEN Nagler heard Midas was expanding in the Detroit area back in 1969, he took a chance. Seven months later Midas opened for business.

The main advantage, Nagler points out about franchises, is that it's "a great opportunity for someone to own their own business with relatively little investment. It also provides you with the advantage of a known name. This is probably the biggest advantage of any franchise."

The end result: "You're pretty much assured a success when you open."

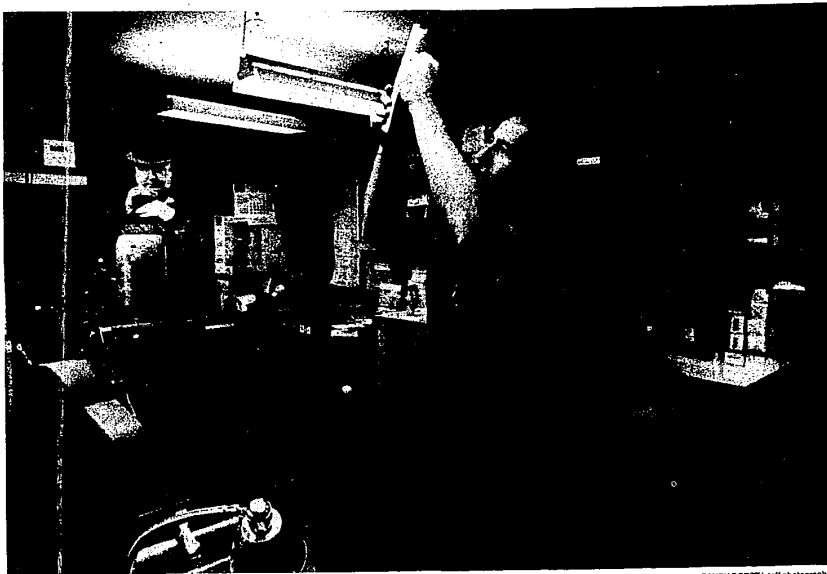
Another plus, Nagler said, "is the power of national advertising." Every month money is put into an advertising pool, Nagler explained of Midas' franchise agreement. Ads are then bought from this fund. Other franchises, though, operate through co-operative advertising. Goodyear, Van Hull explained, is under that very type of agreement.

"WE GET dollars from Goodyear, based on how much merchandise is bought," he said. The same kind of agreement can be found working at Speedy Printing.

Many franchise owners will attest to the success of their operation due to the pre-planning and market testing strategies of the company.

Before any agreement had been finalized with Midas, Nagler met with that company's real estate people, who came to Detroit and scouted for property. "An almost guaranteed way to be independent and make a profit, franchises are springing up in areas previously unheard of, a trend which seems to have taken off around the late '60s and early '70s. That's when people started seeing the rapid and successful

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Ralph Delmotte looks for flaws in his work before rolling the presses at the Speedy Printing shop in Farmington.

Sick economy boosts franchises

By Judy Calmer
special writer

Despite a sagging economy, the desire by people to own their own businesses is on the rise.

More and more people have started buying into franchises — "probably quite a few more now," said Al Cook of Detroit's Small Business Administration, than 10 or 12 years ago.

Nagler said, decided where it would be profitable to build, based on traffic counts, population counts and whether a new property would be too close to an

growth of places like McDonald's and Burger King, said Cook, and decided to was the easiest way to get into business and have a big name along with the benefit of national advertising.

Franchises, though, aren't to be confused with company-owned outfits, said Cook, assistant district director for management assistance with the SBA.

Company-owned businesses are just that: businesses owned by the parent company and operated and managed by managers. Franchises, which many think are a type of business, are not.

A franchise is "a method" of doing business, Cook said, or "a method of marketing products or services."

Better-known franchises — such as Elias Brothers, 7-11 stores or McDonalds — can easily be confused with company owned outfits, like Mountain Jack's restaurants or Burger Chef. Then there are operations which can be both franchised and company-owned at the same time. Wendy's restaurants and Holiday Inn are two such examples.

Individually owned businesses — those not recognized as being part of an organization — also crop up among outfits that could easily be mistaken for franchises. "Mom and pop" stores are probably the most blatant example, but Merle Norman studios also fall into the individually owned category.

According to Cook, the individually owned businesses "just use the name (of a well-known company), but the company does very little for you."

McDonald's is likely the biggest and most successful franchise, Cook said; following that example are more exotic franchises. Bookstores, some small business assistance firms, "we're even beginning to see franchise day care centers," Cook said.

All sorts of people are jumping on the franchise bandwagon, "either those who want to start a business, or some who want to franchise their ideas out as additional ways of doing business," Cook said.

Increased membership is goal of new area League president

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

Charlotte Yaverski thought she was going to be president of the Naperville (Ill.) League of Women Voters this year.

But that was before her husband's job promotion brought her to Michigan.

Last New Year's Eve, the Yaverski's and their 12-year-old son and 15-year-old daughter moved to Farmington Hills.

One of the first things she did was look for a local chapter of the LWV. "I transferred my membership to the West Bloomfield-Farmington Area League of Women Voters," said the woman who was elected its president last month.

"I love the league. I've been a member nine years, first in Pennsylvania. Originally, I was from Massachusetts, and we lived in New York," she said of her mobility.

"I didn't have to think about it long," she admitted, when local league members asked her to take on the West Bloomfield-Farmington League presidency, which had been vacant for the past year.

Her previous league experience has been in budget and finance. She knew something of the West Bloomfield and Farmington areas because she served on the Illinois LWV state board with a former Farmington League president, Mary Lazarton.

HAVING NOW MEET old and new local LWV board members, Yaverski is "impressed with how many of the 'old timers' are staying with it and some who have been president before," she said.

"I'm grateful because I feel I can rely on them. You can know the league, but in a new state, I'll need to know more about the area."

One of her goals is to increase membership. "I think the league is in a state of flux. Many members think if they can't be super active, they can't belong. I don't think that's true. You'd eliminate an awful lot of people with that attitude."

Membership has declined as more women have taken jobs outside the home, and several membership meetings will be conducted at night, Yaverski said.

Another of Yaverski's goals is to make the league more visible. "People have to know you're there," she said.



Charlotte Yaverski

STILL TRYING to get a feel for the important issues, Yaverski "can see the condition of Michigan's economy will have a lot of effect on local government and what the schools can do," she said. Voters Guides for coming local and state elections will be important, she added. But candidates' nights for the local June school elections have been dropped.

"It's so hard to get attendance" from those who are not already well acquainted with the issues, she said.

"The ones who aren't informed don't seem to want to be. But if you don't have candidate nights, you really get complaints."

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Man found dead in Canton

Canton police are investigating the death of a 42-year-old Farmington Hills man in the parking lot of the Center Stage lounge on Ford Road last week.

Police found the body of Thomas Goodman in a truck about 3:40 p.m. Wednesday. The body appeared to have been at the location for several hours, said Lt. Larry Stewart.

The cause of death has not been determined yet, said a spokeswoman for the Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office.

GOODMAN WAS a self-employed sweeping contractor. Services were Saturday at Ross B. Northrop Funeral Home, Redford.

He is survived by his wife Kathryn, sons Michael, Lawrence and Thomas, daughters Maureen, Katie and Christina. Other survivors include his parents, Raymond and Dorothy Goodman of Livonia, sister Margie Ambrose of Livonia, and brother Raymond E. Goodman, M.D., of Toledo.