

Recession-Resistant Franchises Pursue International Growth



Eight years after the last U.S. recession, franchise investors are embracing downturn-resistant concepts that are expanding internationally. Great Clips of Bloomington, Minnesota, has been around for 35 years, notes Beth Caron,

director of franchise development for the value-priced hair salons. “A lot of people are attracted to the idea that they can be in a business with a brand that has that kind of history,” Caron says.

Of more than 4,200 Great Clips locations, 150 are in Canada, Caron says. The franchiser plans to open 200 locations during the next year.

Target markets include upstate New York, Long Island, Memphis, South Florida, and Los Angeles.

Cruise Planners responded effectively to the last recession by expanding beyond cruises to include land vacations, all-

inclusive resorts, tours, and more, says Michelle Fee, CEO of the Coral Springs, Florida-based American Express travel representative. “While some people may not be traveling as extravagantly or upgrading during a recession, vacation time is still sacred,” Fee says.

Cruise Planner’s “business-in-a-box” model lets franchise owners work from home with proprietary technology and marketing support. The company has more than 1,800 home-based franchises in all 50 states and is concentrating on expanding in the Midwest and West.

Sport Clips Haircuts saw no impact on sales during 2008 and 2009, says Gordon Logan, founder and CEO of the Georgetown, Texas-based chain catering to a male clientele. “Men are very consistent with their haircuts, every three to four weeks,” Logan says. Sport Clips Haircuts has 1,635 open locations with a presence in every state, plus 40 in Canada. Logan anticipates adding 150 or more in the next year, with particular focus on the Northeast.

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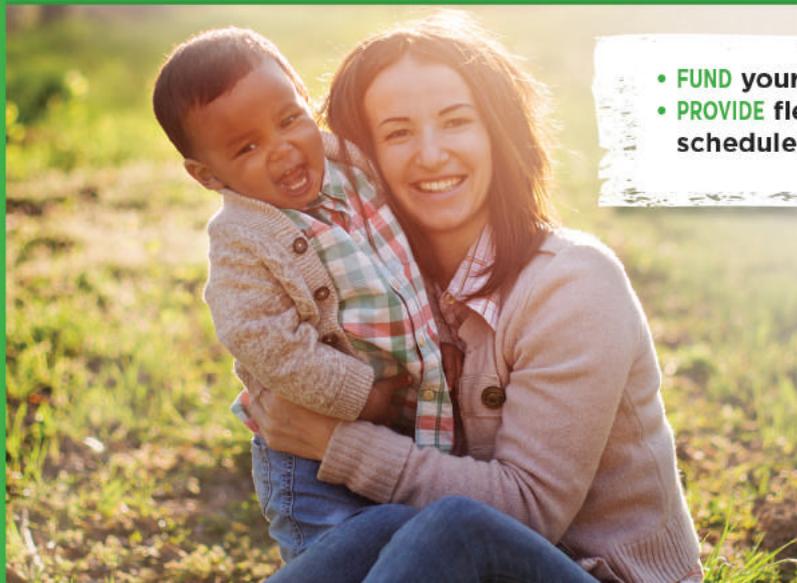
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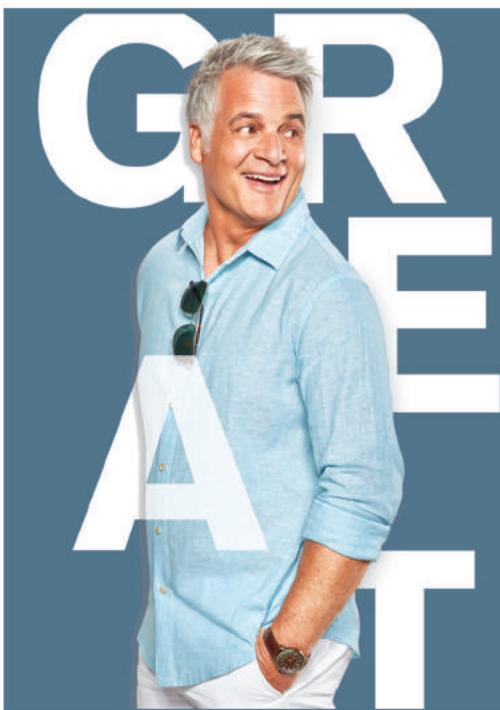
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