



Franchise Outlook 2018

Franchise businesses anticipate healthy growth during the coming year, as a stable economy and continued good profits encourage investor interest in franchise opportunities.

Cruise Planners already has franchisees of its home-based travel franchise in all 50 states and anticipates further growth nationally in 2018, according to CEO Michelle Fee. The Coral Springs, Florida-based company offers a low-cost, no-inventory business opportunity that franchisees can work at full-time or part-time.

"People are always traveling, and Cruise Planners trains franchisees with no travel industry experience and turns them into travel professionals who can book all types of vacations, not just cruises," Fee says. The concept attracts both Millennials, who appreciate being able to work on the go with Cruise Planners mobile apps, and retirees who are looking for an encore career that offers a flexible schedule, she adds.

Cruise Planners also recently announced its first artificial intelligence initiative. The program will help its network of home-based travel advisors with voice-activated, virtual personal assistants compatible with Amazon Alexa devices. Another AI initiative is designed for consumers to help generate leads. "Additionally, we have the support team in our business development department to hold franchisees' hands every step of the way," Fee says.

Snap Fitness is a fitness club franchise business that features a simple, turnkey system, low startup costs, and comprehensive support from the corporate office. "We have a proven concept that makes it easy for franchisees to succeed," says Peter Taunton, CEO and founder of the Chanhassen, Minnesota-based franchiser.

By the start of 2018, Snap Fitness anticipates having approximately 3,000 locations open or in development in at

least 26 countries. "We're all over the world, with plans to continue expanding into new markets in 2018," Taunton says.

Mosquito Joe has 128 franchisees operating in 234 territories in 32 states and will expand to 33 states in 2018, according to Chief Operating Officer Lou Schager. The low-cost, scalable businesses service a high-growth market providing mosquito control to homes and businesses.

Franchisees of Virginia Beach-based Mosquito Joe receive full training and support that allows them to succeed without previous pest control experience. "We feel operating as a seasonal business is of tremendous value since it provides a great quality of life, earning in seven to nine months an amount of revenue that would normally take 12 months," Schager says.

Dream Vacations has more than 1,100 travel agency franchise locations across the U.S. and anticipates adding 100 more locations to that total, says Janet Harris, senior franchise development specialist with the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, company.

Franchisees, who can also opt instead to do business under the CruiseOne banner, enjoy low startup costs, flexibility, a complete training program, and discounts on their own travel. "Being home-based also enables Dream Vacations franchise owners to set their own hours and create the ideal work/life balance that suits their lifestyle," says Harris. The company offers special deals for military veterans, she adds.

Discovery Map has 132 locations, mostly in the East and West coast and Rocky Mountain regions, and President Peter Hans expects to add 8 to 10 more in 2018. Franchisees of the Waitsfield, Vermont-based company publish hand-drawn maps that direct visitors to local attractions. Discovery Map is a home-based business requiring a modest time commitment. "It's very much a lifestyle business," Hans says.