

# Characteristics of successful franchisees

To be a top performing franchise takes a little more than following the beaten path and there are certain characteristics that separate the best franchisees from those who simply make a living or even fail.



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“It often comes down to taking something which has been tried before and doing it better, or with a bit of a twist. The characteristics of successful franchisees are those who provide the best service, who care the most for their brand, market themselves the best and are proud of their efforts,” says Sandwich Baron founder and CEO, Sally J’Arlette-Joy.

One of her most successful franchisees is a man who so lives his brand that every braai he attends, he dons his Sandwich Baron shirt. “Yes, that actually brings in new customers, he claims.”

The ingredients to success are not all soft issues. J’Arlette-Joy says she has seen many new franchisees waste their working capital on unnecessary equipment that adds nothing to the business or quality of food. “My advice to franchisees is always not to spend money on equipment or staff until you actually need it. But when you do need it, spend the capital immediately.”

Despite her warnings to the contrary, some startups insist on buying state-of-the-art ovens or fridges – and live to regret it.

## Staff morale adds to success

The manner in which franchisees treat their staff is also a contributor to success or failure. “You have to treat staff decently, but not be overly friendly. The nature of employment is that staff are happy when they are busy and can become grumpy when it is quiet. Your best employee satisfaction tool is to ensure they are always busy - rather than by fraternising with them. An important part of the service ethic is to train staff. A good franchisee will train staff, whereas a bad one will find training too much of a chore.”

Her experience is that staff incentives do not contribute to success of any degree. What counts far more is treating them with dignity and respect. “Being busy motivates staff by assuring them of long-term work prospects. They must also always be paid on time. It is important to create team spirit. Additional characteristics of a good franchisee are being in the store at all times, aware of what is happening on the floor and anticipating problems before they materialise. What is fatal for staff morale is for a franchisee to blame an employee for faults of the franchisee himself.”

## **Service is key**

Service is another key contributor to success. A good franchisee will only work with the best sources of food; will have controls in place to manage stock and all operational costs. He or she will always take care to resolve any customer complaints. One key indicator of a successful store is the absence of customer complaints being lodged with head office.

“A good franchisee understands nobody will care about their business as much as they can, and they generally are on top of every aspect of the business.”

For this fundamental reason, J’Arlette-Joy says her first words of advice to any aspiring franchisee are to pick a franchise sector for which they have passion. “That degree of hands-on control will otherwise not be possible,” she concludes.

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