

MONDAY CONVERSATION

# The right franchise depends on investor's goals, skills

By Richard Ryman  
Press-Gazette Media

DE PERE — Press-Gazette Media talks to businesspeople in its Monday conversation feature. Today, Jerry Rieder of Rieder Franchise Consulting explains how people can become owners of a franchise business.

**Q.** Tell us about your business?

**A.** Rieder Franchise Consulting offers free services locally, nationally and internationally, designed to assist our clients in identifying high-value franchise opportunities that meet personal, professional, investment level and financial goals. Services include highly individualized and in-depth evaluations of client franchising goals, objectives, skill sets, experience level and areas of interest that give us the input necessary to develop customized franchise recommendations based on related research.

We do a 10-point analysis of success criteria for all franchises evaluated for a given client and specialize in finding our clients opportunities that they may not find on their own; often niche franchises that align with our client's goals and objectives as well as frequently being more moderately priced than large-chain, big-box franchises, but still have very good up-side revenue and income potential.

**Q.** What are some critical things people who are looking to go into a franchise need to know?

**A.** It is important for our clients to know the different types of franchising business models and how they align with their goals, objectives, lifestyle requirements and skill set; key steps that are required during the franchise are due diligence and evaluation processes, and the fully loaded cost and related royalties. Other key variables include the quality of the initial and ongoing training and operational support the franchise provides, as well as the quality of their systems and software for running the business.

We assist our clients in making an informed decision by focusing heavily on the educational side of the franchising process, which includes providing significant training information and materials that are both general franchising process-related and franchise-specific. Our goal is to simplify and provide support throughout the process for both our clients and the franchisors to make it as seamless, positive and rewarding as possible.

**Q.** How many companies do you represent and in which industries?

**A.** We represent nearly 500 franchisors in 32 industries or business categories. Everything from food and beverage, automotive and computer services to cleaning and maintenance, retail sales and senior services. Franchises outside our partner network



Jerry Rieder, owner of Rieder Franchise Consulting of De Pere, assists clients in identifying high-value franchise opportunities.

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will also be considered and evaluated if that is best for a given client. Our clients are often surprised at the wide variety of franchising opportunities available, as many people associate franchising to only large-chain, high-priced franchises. Our client services are free, as we are compensated by the franchisor network for finding qualified candidates for their business opportunity and assisting them through the franchising process.

**Q.** How difficult is it to become a franchise owner?

**A.** Becoming a franchisee is more attainable than most initially think. There are a wide variety of business models that fit most people's goals, business experience and investment levels. A franchise in most cases is primarily a "business in a box," where you are investing in the established processes, systems, technology, training, marketing and operational support the franchisor provides as part of your investment.

Franchisors are extremely vested in their franchisees' success as that is the primary driver of their continued success. Costs vary significantly. We work with franchises that cost from

less than \$25,000 to more than \$1 million, and have ongoing royalties of 0 to 18 percent of revenue. Of course, expected return on investment varies accordingly and detailed financials are provided by the franchisor to assist in the evaluation process.

The majority of our clients invest in franchises in the \$5,000 to \$350,000 range. Virtually all of them finance their franchise through a mix of liquid capital and borrowed funds. If they do not have a lender or need general financial guidance, we assist in finding options through a network of financial experts we partner with that specialize in franchise funding.

The franchise-acquisition process begins with a client selecting one or more of the franchises we recommend to begin the discovery process. We then introduce the client to the franchisors for in-depth business reviews. If there is continued interest by both our client and the franchisor, sessions are then scheduled between the client and existing franchisees for additional due diligence and validation. This is often the key stage of the franchise-evaluation process as operating franchisees are typically open about their businesses, including discussing successes, challenges and financial performance of their franchise.

We encourage our clients to talk to a variety of franchisees, including those in similar markets to mitigate their risk and develop an in-depth understanding of what it takes to be a successful franchise owner. Many franchises also have a "Discovery

Day," which is a final step in the evaluation process where the potential franchisee spends time at the franchisor's corporate headquarters meeting the leadership team and talking through any final questions prior to investing. During this time, or potentially earlier in the process, a Franchise Disclosure Document also is provided by the franchisor. It is basically the contractual terms for purchasing the franchise.

Franchising is heavily regulated by the Federal Trade Commission to ensure full disclosure by franchisors. The final step, which can begin at any point in the process, is securing financing for the franchise.

**Q.** Is there anything you'd like to add?

**A.** I have dealt with a wide variety of people looking to start their own businesses and found that those clients who have a solid business background, a desire to be entrepreneurial and willingness to take moderate risk are ultimately most successful in franchising. While there can be challenges in starting your own business, there are challenges with any job, and when you work for someone else you do not control your own destiny. One of my favorite sayings is, "If you aren't achieving your dreams, then you are helping someone else achieve theirs."

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# Introducing the Greater Green Bay Chamber

On Oct. 20, we hosted Robert O'Neill, former Navy SEAL, at our much-anticipated annual dinner at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay.

But his appearance wasn't the only one that was much anticipated and long awaited. After three years of research, analysis and work, we were also excited to announce the chamber's new name, the Greater Green Bay Chamber, as well as our rebranding for the chamber as a whole.

The journey we've been on for the past three years I've been president has rendered more than just a name change. The process has included creating a new vision and mission, and is supported by an internal alignment that enables us to live them.

The chamber has remained inclusive and regional in focus, and sought something that would strongly state that we are here to serve the greater Green Bay area.

The brand repositioning we revealed that night is a fundamental repositioning and rebranding effort that is intended to visually represent our collaboration, our inclusiveness

Laurie Radke



as the convener, bringing together resources to enhance economic, workforce and community development. We are the champions of business development for greater Green Bay because strong business builds strong community.

This last line is of particular importance. The chamber has been purposeful in putting economic development and workforce development at the forefront of our efforts. That's because, at the end of the day, the chamber is in the business of economic and workforce development.

Yes, quality of life and community development are the ultimate outgrowths of much of what we do, but we are best able to serve our membership by keeping a more specific focus on economic and workforce development.

With regard to economic development, we're in the process of hiring an economic development vice president. Upon his/her hire, we'll be

looking to that individual to own the creation of a five-year plan to incorporate economic development services for the benefit of the greater Green Bay area.

To uphold the expectation that Advance, the chamber's economic development branch, serves as the lead for economic development in the region, we will also work with other regional partners.

On the workforce development forefront, we're fortunate to have a very impactful and vested Partners in Education board of directors.

Partners in Education is embracing a request for engagement from Achieve Brown County initiative, helping them work toward outcomes on the community agenda.

In addition, Partners in Education will continue to serve in an advisory role for our own workforce development programs as they meet the needs of our education partners and the business community.

Along the way, what you may note most are visual changes — to the chamber's logo, as well as to the logos of our branches (Advance and

Partners in Education) and our main programs (Current and Leadership Green Bay).

These are intentional efforts to emphasize that these are outgrowths of the Greater Green Bay Chamber. By more strongly associating the chamber's branches and programs with the chamber as a whole, I think even the most avid chamber supporter will be surprised at the breadth and diversity of our programming and services.

Yet they're all tied in under the chamber's tagline, "For business." Because the organization that was conceived as the Business Men's Association, now known as the Greater Green Bay Chamber, is, at its foundation, "for business."

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