

Hot prospect

Value for money is at the heart of **Ovenu's** success



From humble beginnings, Rik Hellewell has developed Ovenu into an international brand. This has been achieved through hard work and a clear understanding of the franchisee-franchisor relationship right from the start when the first franchisee was recruited in 1999.

"Franchising is a partnership," says Rik Hellewell, owner and managing director of Ovenu. "And we understand the importance and impact buying a franchise has for everyone concerned. We also understand the importance of moving our business forward at the right pace for our franchisees, because if they're happy so am I."

FRANCHISING CULTURE

Franchising is now a well-established industry, acknowledged by the banks and other professions and supported by the British Franchise Association. The success of franchising is strongly influenced by the relationship the franchisor develops with franchisees (often referred to as the franchising culture).

And the strength of that relationship begins with the first contact of the recruitment process. The way in which the recruitment process is managed speaks volumes about the approach the franchisor is likely to take when you become a franchisee.

The Ovenu process is deliberately open and transparent. Prospective franchisees are required to spend a considerable amount of time with an established franchisee to see exactly how the business operates and have the opportunity to ask questions about the business and the franchisor.

The decision to proceed (or not) must be the prospects alone. In other words, the prospective franchisee must want to join the franchise network because it is what they want to do, and not have it sold to them.

Equally important to the decision making process for prospects is whether they get value for money from the franchisor for the ongoing support they pay for. The answer if you join Ovenu is a resounding yes.

The start-up and ongoing fees are exceptional value and compare favourably with any other franchise system in the sector. Marketing campaigns to promote the brand and service have included satellite TV advertising, adverts in the national press and glossy magazines and 'off-the-shelf' local sales promotion ideas that franchisees can use such as leaflets, etc.

Despite the support and commitment from the franchisor, the franchisee has to take what's on offer and make it work in their local territory. The best franchise system in the world won't work unless the franchisee is comfortable with the day-to-day operation and is clear about their role and responsibilities within the franchise relationship.

That takes us full circle to the recruitment process and the help given by the franchisor to prospective franchisees to ensure that the right decision is made for the right reasons.



ESTABLISHED

With over 100 franchisees in the UK and more overseas development taking place, Ovenu is demonstrating how to effectively expand its franchise model and maintain its position as the UK's market leader in oven valeting.

Rik Hellewell started Ovenu in 1994. He quickly realised that the potential for the Ovenu service was huge and to ensure the business moved forward on a sound basis decided to seek professional help from one of the UK's leading franchise consultants – The Franchise Company based in Darlington – and joined the British Franchise Association.

The Ovenu franchise business is now firmly established in the UK, although there are some prime franchise areas remaining to be developed, especially in the north and Scotland. There are also a few existing areas for sale with good profits being generated.

Because of the time Ovenu has been operating, there are, from time to time, great opportunities to buy existing territories.

SUCCESSFUL

Value for money is at the heart of Ovenu's success – from franchisor to franchisee and from franchisee to customer. The company's start-up costs and ongoing fees represent excellent value for new franchisees, and because Ovenu is well established it may be possible to acquire an existing franchise area that is up and running.

Gary Hawke (Teesside area) confirms: "The Ovenu package provides superb training and support – Ovenu really does deliver." Rik Hellewell adds: "The demand for our oven valeting service is enormous, but we will take great care to ensure our franchisees receive first-class support because it's only through their continuing efforts and commitment that we will maintain the Ovenu brand as the market

leader, delivering the best value service to our clients."

Ongoing support for franchisees includes marketing initiatives to increase brand awareness and technical developments to increase productivity and profitability. The company's website generates a significant number of good quality enquiries and there are frequent leaflet promotions to sell the service.

The Ovenu franchise model is both simple and flexible, which is why there is a real mix of backgrounds and ages in the network. And franchisees are very much in control of their own work life-balance because they manage their work diary and collect the rewards for their efforts after each job is completed.

EXPANSION

Because of the demand for oven valeting, 2006 should see some of the more established franchisees progressing to a second vehicle or territory. Many of the existing franchisees should also be ready to press on with their own development plans to operate additional vehicles and expand the service in their territory.

The overseas business generally operates on a Master License basis and is beginning to flourish in Australia, parts of Europe and the USA. However, there are still a number of good areas left in the UK, and Ireland remains undeveloped at present.

According to the company, 2006 will see some significant improvements to the Ovenu system and day-to-day operation of cleaning ovens, which will benefit both customers and franchisees. **MM**

To find out more about Ovenu contact Ken Rostron for a franchise pack on 01325 251455 or email info@franchisecompany.co.uk

RAPID RESPONSE NO: MM729