



WHAT'S NEW WHAT'S NOW & WHAT'S NEXT IN CANADIAN FRANCHISING!

What's new and what's next is something that is on many people's minds at beginning of a New Year. Maybe they're thinking about what's next when it comes to the big decision of investing in a franchise. Fortunately, franchising in Canada continues to grow and so do the opportunities to own a franchised business. No matter what you're looking for, franchising allows you to join with an established brand with a proven system.

FranchiseCanada takes a closer look at three sectors – emerging quick service food options, mobile franchises and home improvement – that are offering exciting opportunities to franchisees for 2016 and beyond.

EMERGING QUICK SERVICE OPTIONS

Increasingly, restaurants are providing unique menu options to distinguish themselves and stand out from the competition. The current market is customer-driven, with customers expecting more variety and bang for their buck. "There's a lot of creativity in feature menus to keep the customer coming back. You're not going to get bored of the same thing anymore," explains Wayne Maillet, President of Franchise Specialists, a franchise consultant agency. "I see more creativity in menus." He attributes this trend to restaurants trying to differentiate themselves in a very competitive industry. "It used to be that the burger was the burger and it was standardized. Now there's a whole variety of burgers," he explains.

New meal alternatives to the basic burger, like poutine, are gaining in popularity too. "There's so much creativity behind the variations of the poutine. I'm seeing that in many restaurants," Maillet observes. Read on to learn about two quick service franchises that are exploring where these new options can take them as they move forward in 2016.

You've got options! When investigating different franchises, ask about unique opportunities, like food trucks, that may be available.

**CHEESE CURDS
GOURMET BURGERS +
POUTINERIE**

One franchise that is building on the classic burger template is Cheese Curds Gourmet Burgers + Poutinerie. “We try to be different by giving people choices in building their burgers and choosing their own toppings. And poutine is an untapped market; you can put pulled pork on poutine and it’s a meal,” says Bitt Pratt, CEO of Cheese Curds Gourmet Burgers + Poutinerie.

The restaurant concept grew out of Pratt’s 37 years of experience in the industry: “I took little bits from here and there to create my own take on the burger.” Customers can build their own burger by choosing from a number of toppings and sides. Since there is so much choice “The franchise appeals to every demographic; the cost of the burger depends on toppings,” Pratt explains.

Pratt carefully considered the venture into franchising before he took the plunge. “I slowed the franchise process down so that we didn’t rush into franchising,” he says. “For a franchise, standardization is



Cheese Curds
GOURMET BURGERS + POUTINERIE

critical, so we needed to develop a comprehensive franchise process.” Now that they are growing their system, the focus remains on the franchisees: “As a small company we really want to work with our franchisees to make them successful and to help them succeed.”

Franchisees are totally involved in the day-to-day operations of the franchise. “This is a hands-on business for the franchisees – they’re actually creating food.” In fact, the franchisees are trained on how to make everything in-house. “Instead of using processed products, we’re making everything from scratch, because in the current market people expect more and want high-quality food,” explains Pratt. A big part of Cheese Curds Gourmet Burgers + Poutinerie’s appeal is that creativity with the menu. “We want to create new burgers every month so that our customers come back again and again.”

“Finally,” Pratt explains, “Burgers are comfort food; they’re not going away.” With their exciting menu and abundant choices, he predicts “This concept is going to explode.”

**MELT“wich”
food co.**

MELTWICH FOOD CO

When Tom Mavrou, Director of Operations of the MELTwich Food Co., was cooking up a new restaurant concept he knew he wanted to try something different. “We saw that the burger business was inundated; chain upon chain and concept upon concept,” he observes. “We saw that there were only a few grilled cheese places and that there is still a lot of room in the sandwich market.”

He describes his concept as an opportunity to be unique. “Grilled cheese is a concept that we can have our own take on. We can be a little different.” In fact, he says the distinctiveness of the franchise concept is what initially attracts franchisees and customers alike to the franchise.

In addition to the classic grilled cheese, there are many options for additional toppings. There are vegetarian options and they serve wine and local craft beer, all at a low price point. “The concept is unique and urban. The consumer has a lot of choice,” says Mavrou.

When the franchise opens up in a new location they don’t do a lot of advertising “Because it’s an interesting concept people are curious to know what it’s all about – it’s a novelty.” However, Mavrou is clear to point out that this is not a fad. “Grilled cheese has been around for many years,” he states.

Potential franchisees are attracted to the business because, “We’re still a small company and we work with our franchisees,” explains Mavrou. “We’re a young, flexible company and we really get to know our franchisees. The system is small and built on personal relationships.”

As for the ideal MELTwich Food Co. franchisee, “We want someone who is willing to work hard to achieve their goals. We want them to want to be their own boss, and take ownership of their business,” describes Mavrou.

Looking forward, the plan is to expand in the Ontario market, starting in the GTA where two new franchises are already in the works. Soon, another franchise will be opening in Winnipeg, Manitoba “and then we want to go across Canada from there,” says Mavrou.

MOBILE FRANCHISES

More and more franchisors are offering the option for franchisees to be mobile. “It allows them to differentiate themselves and really cater to the needs of the customer in a way that the physical location can’t,” says Wayne Maillet. “Once franchisees see mobile franchises, they see the advantages to meet the needs of the customer as compared to a fixed location. And it is often more attractive to the franchisee because of the lower cost.”

Without a fixed location, “Typically there is a lower operating cost, whereas a physical location might have high rent and then if a competitor were to open up a location across the street you can’t move. But with a mobile location, now you’re able to truly reach that customer, wherever that customer is,” says Wayne Maillet. He goes on to say that “this can give you a great competitive advantage over a competitor with a locked-in physical location that the customer has to go out of their way to get to.”

This category is ideal for the franchisee who doesn’t want to sit in an office all day and wants to be out meeting people and going to different locations. Below are three thriving franchises from across the diverse category of mobile businesses.

Many franchises across diverse categories can be operated as a mobile franchise. Or sometimes you can even work out of your own home. Search franchise brands on Lookforafranchise.ca to find the franchise that’s right for your lifestyle!



MATCO TOOLS

Matco Tools has franchises all throughout Canada, the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Over the past year they’ve added over 40 franchises in Canada alone.

Each Matco franchisee, or distributor, has their own territory where they meet with customers in their place of work. “They wouldn’t be able to serve their customers the way that they do if they had a fixed store front,” explains Julie Jozwik, Franchise Marketing Manager for Matco Tools. Distributors go from business to business in their Matco trucks, selling tools to the mechanics and technicians who need them. “They can come onto the truck, buy what they need, and then go back to work. It’s a matter of convenience,” Jozwik explains. “You have your mobile store with you. You provide technicians with the tools they need, when they need them.”

According to Jozwik, one of the highlights of the job is the relationships formed with the mechanics and technicians. “Our franchisees are dedicated to

the business and to their customers. They see their customers every week which allows them to build relationships with the technicians and mechanics they sell to,” she says.

Over 60 per cent of current Matco franchisees were automotive mechanics before joining the team, however that experience is not necessary. “You need to be ambitious, a good communicator, enjoy being with people, and have the ability to learn business acumen,” says Jozwik. “Having the ability to communicate and build relationships is a great asset.”

“With any franchise there are concerns about how you’re going to do. You’re your own boss and you’re working for yourself. But the good news is that you have control over how you sell and how you manage your finances,” asserts Jozwik. Distributors are also encouraged to meet with other franchisees in their district and learn about their best practices and get business advice.

“Matco has a proven business model. We’ve learned what works well and we’ve implemented best practices. We’re constantly improving things and we work hard to make sure that our business is a great fit for our prospective franchisees,” summarizes Jozwik.



HEART TO HOME MEALS

Heart to Home meals, a company that creates frozen meals and delivers them to seniors' homes, grew out of the concept of their sister company, Wiltshire Farm Foods in the UK. Michael Gazer, President of Heart to Home Meals in Canada, explains: "We're addressing the fastest-growing demographic out there. Helping seniors is a massive growth industry and there is a huge opportunity for companies like ours to service that market."

All the meals are made in a federally inspected facility in Brampton, Ontario. "We make meals that meet all the dietary requirements seniors are looking for: low sodium, high fibre, minced and pureed," explains Gazer. Franchisees are not involved in the food production. Instead, they have specific territories and deliver the meals right to the senior's home.

This franchise is "great for someone who doesn't like being trapped behind a desk or a counter," asserts Gazer. "Some days they're out driving the van for 8 hours making deliveries and sometimes

they're out giving demonstrations at senior homes, Royal Canadian Legions or hospitals." On any given day, franchisees could also be in their office answering the phone and taking orders.

"It's for people who really like being active, having a change of scenery, not staying in one place," says Gazer. "That's the kind of person who is going to do well."

An ideal Heart to Home franchisee has a number of different skills and is hardworking and flexible, but, above all, Heart to Home meals is looking for people who have a genuine desire to help others. "Our customers are on average 75+ years old and have mobility issues, so our franchisees want to make a significant difference in people's lives. They are people that have compassion and empathy. We're seeing customers' faces light up with their weekly delivery."

While Heart to Homes is a mobile franchise, "All franchisees have an office. They can choose to work from home and have a walk in freezer in their garage, or they can work from a commercial space with an area in the front for administrative work and processing."

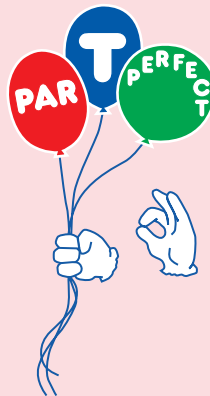
"There's limited competition today. The market size is large, the investment costs are low, and we have a reasonable franchise fee," concludes Gazer.

PAR-T-PERFECT PARTY PLANNERS INC.

Without a fixed franchise location a Par-T-Perfect Party franchisee can go right to the customer. "We do everything from birthday parties to corporate functions to grand openings. Clients want us to come to their location to service them," says Michelle Gibson, CEO and Founder of Par-T-Perfect Party Planners Inc. "That gives us a lot of flexibility in what we can do. We can be wherever people want."

"People always spend money on their kids," Gibson notes. However, the franchise goes beyond kids' birthday parties. "We've had a steady increase in demand. Clients looking for different kinds of parties and franchisees are looking for a broader base of services to offer."

As for the benefits to the franchisees, "The biggest advantage is keeping the costs low and being able to serve a greater range of clients because you're not just seeing the people who can come to you," says Gibson. Additionally, franchisees do not have the costs of a warehouse or storefront and all



the set-up costs associated with them.

Also, since the franchise is portable, some franchisees have moved to completely different territories. They can take their work with them. "Franchisees have the ability to service more clientele because they're more flexible. You can set up quickly because you don't have to build an office," explains Gibson.

An ideal Par-T-Perfect franchisee is creative, likes people, especially children, and is well-organized. The franchise model is "suited well to someone with a family, because they're connected to the community and activities that centre on children," notes Gibson.

Par-T-Perfect also supports their franchisees. "We're always available to talk to them on the phone or by email. We have a complete intranet internal system with a library of information, forums and chat rooms." Ongoing support includes a weekly video hangout, mentoring and an annual conference.

Looking forward, the company will continue to grow: "Across the country we are getting more corporate national contracts, not just for parties but for grand openings and special events," says Gibson.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Home improvement is on the rise! With listings in this category up an exciting 62.9% from 2010 levels, this is an exciting time to join this sector. Whether home owners are sprucing up their home getting ready to sell, or if they're just renovating for their own enjoyment, these services are in demand. As Spray-Net President Carmelo Marsala explains, "The home improvement sector is great for franchisees because they don't initially require a physical location for their business, there's little to no inventory to carry, very low or no fixed costs, significant margins, and people are always renovating, so it's essentially recession-resistant." Read on to learn about some of the benefits to joining a home improvement franchise.

For more information about this growing sector turn to the Special Focus on House & Home Franchises on page 59. Take a more in-depth look at some exciting opportunities in this section, including moving and various home improvement franchises!



PREP'n'SELL

Shows like *Flip This House*, *Property Brothers*, *Income Property*, and *Love It or List It* are extremely popular right now, asserts David Collier, President of Prep'nSell. "People love home renovations and the profits home transformation can bring about. People are becoming more aware of how they can bring extra value to their property," he explains.

From carpet cleaning to decluttering to renovations, Prep'nSell franchisees are project managers that prepare homes to go on the market. "Our company provides a home face-lift," explains Collier. "Even very minor improvements like decluttering can bring out a price increase. Home owners now recognize the value in prepping their home for sale."

Collier states that "Renovations are becoming the next housing boom. The construction sector is worth \$25 Billion in Ontario alone; both Prep'nSell and RENOmagic (Prep'nSell's sister company) are well positioned to capitalize on this market."

He says that for homeowners to keep up to date; "You should put 1 to 1.5 per cent of your home's value into the upkeep of your house every year." He goes on to explain that if a homeowner hasn't done anything in 20 years, then they need to put in that money to keep up with the homes that are fresh and offer current features. "Households usually have two incomes but the buyers don't have a lot of time. They want to move into a place where they don't need to do a thing."

The company is focused on creating connections and partnerships with real estate agents. "The real estate agent can focus on sales and hand over the renovations, cleaning or staging to Prep'nSell," says Collier.

As for the ideal Prep'nSell franchisee, "A franchisee has to have common sense, a little design flair, some experience with renovations and has to like to help people" describes Collier. Business or sales experience would be an asset, as well as great people skills. He goes on to say that, "It's nice for them to have had some experience with renovations, but they don't need to be a builder or contractor. Our franchisee is a project manager, we don't want them swinging a hammer."



SPRAY-NET INC.

Spray-Net Inc. started franchising in 2013 with just two permanent exterior paint solutions franchises. Within a year and a half, they have seen rapid growth into 18 territories across the country.

“With housing prices on the rise, people are buying smaller older homes and renovating them, and people who already own homes don’t want to move, because to do so would be expensive. Both sets of people are looking to personalize and modernize their home,” says Marsala.

Marsala says that the services they provides also make sense from the perspective of both a potential home seller and franchisee: “If they are selling, it increases the value of the home; the value outweighs the cost of the service. It makes sense for the customer and it makes sense for the franchisee.”

While marketing costs may be higher because of the need to attract and build up that customer base, “Once you have built your brand and your name in the area, you will get referrals coming in. That’s the fun part of the business,” explains Marsala.

Spray-Net does not require franchisees to have industry experience, but they must be willing to be slightly more hands-on when needed. “They have to be a very specific kind of person to fit the franchisee profile,” notes Marsala.

What does 2016 and beyond look like for Spray-Net? “All of our territories in Quebec are sold out. We’re in Nova Scotia and Ontario. The plan is to sell the rest of the Ontario territories so that they can leverage the national marketing campaign, as well as the major cities in Canada,” say Marsala. “We’re working to be across Canada in 2016 with 36 territories”



THE GARAGE DOOR DEPOT

Most people don’t think about it but a large portion of the population has a garage door. “If you own a house there is a 70 to 75 per cent chance you’ll have a garage door,” says Garage Door Depot Director of Franchise Development Jason Brown. “Those doors need upkeep, just like everything else in a home.”

Since they started franchising in 2010, the garage door installation and repair company has seen significant growth year over year and today has independent operating franchisees in almost all major cities and regions within Canada.

The Garage Door Depot plans to have a total of 40 franchisees in Canada “We’re limited to a certain number of franchises in major markets in Canada. There are only so many large city areas

where we can put a franchise into,” clarifies Brown.

There is, however, another way to join the Garage Door Depot Team. In 2016 they are rolling out The Garage Door Depot Neighbourhood Franchise Program that will take care of the less populated areas that don’t support enough sales for a traditional franchise. “The whole idea was to capture some of the smaller market where we really haven’t expanded,” explains Brown. “It’s an add-on to an existing franchise for home improvement or home renovations, like a siding, roofing or door and window company.”

Garage Door Depot franchisees go through a comprehensive training program before setting up shop. They are also provided with a complete set of manuals, which includes pre-opening manual, policy and procedures/operations manual, checklists, agreements, and forms, and ongoing support.

No matter the trends or what is popular, in order to achieve success in 2016 and beyond, prospective franchisees need to do their homework. Visit LookforaFranchise.ca for resources, franchise listings, and information on what you need to do find out if an opportunity is right for you. Gathering information and evaluating how well a franchise opportunity fits with your passions, finances, goals, and skills is a vital part of franchise success that is always a step in the right direction. 🍀

CONCLUSION