

Small-Business Franchisees Share Their Thoughts

Franchising World highlights franchisees from five businesses that represent the variety of brands, products and services available in the sector. The businesses include a mobile, on-site technology services company, a floral retailer, an executive search firm and a wild bird specialty shop. The business owners share their insights on getting from point A to point B in the world of franchising.



David and Kim Boyd, Wild Bird Center of Dunwoody, Ga.

What attracted you to franchising and the particular system you ultimately acquired?

Clarke: I was previously employed by some very forward technology companies, both as an innovator and as a user. While I enjoyed most of the work, I was never able to provide my clients with what I felt they deserved and expected because I was always subject to the company's current business climate. I felt the franchise model presented by Concerto Networks would allow me to control my own future and service my clients the way I would want to be treated as a customer.



Dean Clarke
Concerto Network
Essex County New Jersey

Castoro: Franchising provides a structured system that has been developed over years. Franchising takes a lot of the guess work out of running your own business, and these guesses are some of the main reasons why so many businesses fail. Franchising will increase your chances toward success as long as you stay within the model



Bill Castoro, Area Developer, New York
Expetec Technology Services



Brian and Elizabeth Galler, KaBloom, St. Louis, Mo.

that you paid for.

Expetec has a support system like no other in the computer service franchise. They have a major stake in the success of your business. Expetec has changed over the years, and in the computer industry it is so important to change. If a company is unwilling to change in the computer-service industry, that company will fail.

The Gallers: The research that we conducted showed that there was a better chance of success with a franchise than with a start-up company. We felt as though the management team of KaBloom was top notch and that it was a business that both Elizabeth and I could enjoy together. We also thought that KaBloom would provide long-term value for our royalties and it wouldn't be a franchise that after a year or two we would think that we could do all on our own.

Griffiths: Quite frankly, I was attracted to the fact that franchising offers proven business methods, so I wouldn't have to reinvent any process or procedure. Sanford Rose Associates Executive Search was well put together, had been in operation for over 40 years and had strong brand identity. Finally, the professionalism of the SRA corporate staff was a key driver in my decision-making.

The Boyds: Having never owned a business before, franchising seemed obvious to us because we needed the expertise in areas of the business where we had no previous experience. Wild Bird Center, in particular, was helpful in the logistics of setting up the store, from layout to merchandising. While providing a great roadmap, we also saw enough freedom in the system to allow me to make the business our own.

What was it like in the beginning stages?

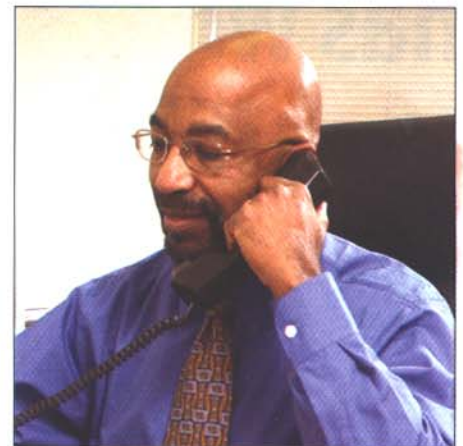
Clarke: After attending Concerto Networks University in San Diego, I joined my local chamber of commerce and conducted a presentation to demonstrate the value Concerto Networks would bring to small- and medium-sized businesses. I also did some advertising in some local publications. From these small efforts, word of mouth started taking hold and every month, business gets better and better.

Castoro: I converted from an existing competitor in the computer franchise category, so I was up and running already.

The Gallers: We were only able to get up and running with the support of

KaBloom and our family and friends. The three-week KaBloom training prepared us for running our store and the support of Regina Gardner, our KaBloom franchise business consultant, ensured that we got off to a great start. We continue to get great support from KaBloom.

Griffiths: Even before training began in September 2001, just after 9/11, the Sanford Rose staff provided a detailed blueprint of all the things connected with getting my business started. I was also fortunate to have a friend in commercial real estate, who helped me find ideal space for my new office. I completed training the end of September and was open for business October 15. The start-up process went smoothly, and the SRA staff continues to make suggestions and recommendations as my business has grown.



**George S. Griffiths, CPC
President and Owner
Sanford Rose Associates – Louisville, Ky.**

The Boyds: After completing the business plan and securing financing in June of '04, we signed the franchise agreement. From that point, there were really three phases before opening: negotiating the lease and lining up local contractors, formal franchise training, and finally, many hours of ordering, checking in, and displaying merchandise. Although, we were doing most of the work ourselves, having the franchise assist in lease negotiations and existing franchisees offer assistance at any time was invaluable. ■