



FRANCHISE MARKETING 101



A Guide to
Planning Your Franchise
Marketing Strategy

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FRANCHISE MARKETING 101:

A Guide to Planning Your Franchise Marketing Strategy

There's a whole lot that goes into marketing for any business, but it becomes even more difficult for a franchise business. It's more complicated than a multi-location business because each branch is run by a separate entity. And each of these entities has certain autonomy over their individual location(s). Plus, franchisors have to sell both their products and services to the customer and their franchisees.

Franchise marketing strategies are more difficult to implement and don't guarantee universal success across all locations. However, they are absolutely essential for any applicable business. These include broad digital strategies, SEO, social media, offline marketing, and paid ads.



1. What is Franchise Marketing?

Franchise marketing must take into account marketing at a broad corporate level as well as by individual location. What makes franchises unique is the fact that, despite having a coherent brand, locations are owned by semi-autonomous entities.

Because of this, there may be variations on how to approach your marketing strategy. These are often based on geography, demographics, competition in the area, franchisee preference, and more.

The fact that franchises operate in the way that they do is part of what makes it an exciting business. But it does add some complexity and nuance to the marketing department.



2. Factors that Make Marketing More Difficult for Franchises

There are a number of factors that make franchise marketing much more difficult than marketing for other types of businesses.

It's difficult to balance an entire franchise's strategy with the strategies of each individual franchisee. Inherited franchises can leave behind problems that are difficult to fix. Shared marketing costs often lead to disputes over what the franchisor does and doesn't provide for each franchisee. And there are so many different levels of marketing, including broad and local, that it's hard to allocate marketing dollars to the right places.

#1: Franchisor/ Franchisee Relations

The basic premise of any franchise is that a franchisor sells the rights to its brand to a franchisee. The franchisee can take advantage of the established brand recognition and trust to help bring in more customers quickly. In return, the franchisee must pay a flat fee or commission-based royalties every year. Though there is some level of autonomy for each franchisee, they still must abide by franchisor rules and regulations. This can be contentious when the franchisor and franchisee disagree on certain marketing strategies or brand identity issues.





#2: Inherited Franchises

Some franchise owners walk into nightmare situations. The past owner of the franchise ran the business into the ground and they're left to pick up the pieces. It's these scenarios that often lead to the contention mentioned above. A desperate franchisee is unlikely to heed the advice from corporate and may break marketing and branding rules.

#3: Shared Marketing Costs

Most franchises allocate certain amounts of their marketing budget to a mix of overall brand identity and individual franchisee marketing. The terms of any co-marketing agreement are laid out from the beginning of the relationship. Though a good contract upfront will help, it does make planning marketing a bit more complicated.



#4: Multiple Levels

Again, a great franchise marketing strategy must serve both the corporate branding interests while also meeting the needs of each individual franchisee.

For the franchisor, marketing must cover the following:

- ✓ Brand identity 
- ✓ Website design 
- ✓ Website infrastructure 
- ✓ SEO 
- ✓ PPC campaigns 
- ✓ Reviews 

Email marketing



Video marketing



For the franchisee the focus is a bit different:



Customized strategy



Local SEO, PPC, and social media



3. DIGITAL MARKETING: SEO and Social Media

No matter which you slice it, though, the future of franchise marketing is digital. Now, that's not to say that some more traditional forms of marketing are out the window. There is still a time and place for printed media, mailer ads, radio and television, and others.

But the shift to more digital advertising is significant, nonetheless. Businesses are making more sales and generating more leads through online channels than ever before. And the rate at which it's changing is accelerating. For the rest of this blog, we'll focus primarily on these digital strategies.

Before we really dive into the digital side of things, one thing is really important for franchisors to remember: Franchisee marketing must take a local approach. Luckily, with the advancement of digital marketing, it's now easier than ever to combine a local marketing strategy with your digital marketing strategy. More on that below.





Franchise SEO

Search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO) are integral aspects of any successful digital marketing venture.

The goal of this strategy is to increase your presence on various search engines for keywords that you anticipate your potential customer base might be searching.

For instance, a sporting goods store would want to be a top search result for the term, “new tennis equipment.” Therefore, they’ll create content on their website to try to appear high on search results pages for this term. This helps ensure that their brand is reaching the right eyes.

There is a **LOT that goes into great SEO marketing**, so it takes a broad approach:

✓ You need to provide value to your readers with strong, unique content.



✓ The website should be fast and well-functioning.



✓ All eCommerce stores must have secure logins and payment portals.



✓ Keep a consistent web presence across all third-party platforms.



✓ Add local SEO strategies when applicable.



How to Get Started with SEO

1. Start by improving your landing pages and blog.

Landing pages should be targeted to specific high-intent keywords. Your blog can be much broader and target various secondary keywords that are related to your higher-intent landing page keywords.

With franchises, it's important that the franchisor assists franchisees with content to rank well. You don't want all franchisees to be entirely reliant on the franchisor for all marketing material, but some support is essential.

2. Run an efficient website.

It's more important than ever that a website is fast, great on mobile, and secure. Most simple platforms for building a new website provide the basic infrastructure necessary to cover these basics. Once your website starts seeing more traffic it might require additional security due to increased cyber threats.

For franchisors and franchisees, the biggest obstacle in this will likely be merging a CRM system. Customers should be able to login into their account through either the corporate or local website.

3. Keep tabs on franchisees' Local SEO

Again, for franchisees, it's all about the local marketing. And it may take some babysitting.

-  Make sure Google My Business is set up for each. 
-  Check their website's layout and structure. 
-  Confirm it works well on mobile. 
-  Check the security of their payment gateway. 
-  Add their listing to any relevant local directories. 
-  Set proximity standards. 

Some franchise owners might not realize how important this all is. So be sure to be there as a consistent resource for whatever they need. Explain why you have the overall marketing strategy that you do use and be patient. Also, be careful to continue to grant your franchisees a certain level of autonomy.

Social Media Marketing for Franchises

Social media is a great channel to let your franchisees go wild, within reason. Just keep one thing in mind: consistency. Make sure you have an organized channel for publishing and that all content and branding is the same across each of your social channels.

For franchises, this means managing your franchisees' social media accounts as well. It does NOT mean micromanaging every post. After all, you want each local franchise to express their own store and appeal to their unique demographic of shoppers. But you must be wary of rogue accounts that are not properly representing your brand.

✓ Create a social media handbook or guide that becomes part of each onboarding process



✓ Have one main brand page that has affiliate pages for each location.



✓ Maintain access to all location accounts from the main corporate account.



✓ Use Facebook's Business Manager for Facebook and Instagram.



✓ Franchisees should pursue their own media creation and content management.



4. ONLINE ADVERTISING FOR FRANCHISES

There are also a whole lot of paid marketing opportunities online that franchises should take advantage of.

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising is one of the most popular. Search engine ads like Google Ads or **Bing Ads** are becoming more ubiquitously used among franchises.

But there are also review and comparison sites. QSRs can advertise through Yelp, for instance. Or service-based businesses can create profiles on niche review sites. Either way, most of these have free options that will increase your brand presence regardless of how much you spend.

For individual franchisees, utilize all location-based targeting. This feature helps businesses narrow in on their potential customers with ease, saving a lot of time and money



5. ALTERNATIVES TO DIGITAL MARKETING FOR FRANCHISES



01

Trade shows

Not every franchise should be thinking about trade shows, but these are still great ways to get your brand out there. These are great opportunities to see what the competition is up to, meet new vendors, and gather some ideas on how to innovate your business.

Physical mailers

Though we always try to advocate against waste, there is still a time and place for physical mail campaigns. Just don't use plastic. Send out a slick or letter for campaigns that are locally-targeted. These will primarily apply to your franchisees rather than any corporate franchise marketing efforts.

02



Loyalty programs

A lot of franchises set their own pricing, promotions, and benefits, so it's critical that you have a policy in place for any rewards redemption. You want your customers to be able to redeem benefits or use a gift card at any of your franchise locations

03



Referrals

Word-of-mouth marketing through referrals is still an incredibly valuable endeavor. A referral from a friend or family member is much **more likely to convert than any other form of marketing**. Incentivize current shoppers with a simple referral program.

04



Local Events

Finally, attend local events, especially the local franchises. Even if you're a national brand you want to still portray a more local outreach.

Look for city events, community outreach, volunteer opportunities, sponsorships, festivals, concerts, fairs, and anything else that will draw a crowd.

05





CONCLUSION

Overall, best practices for franchise marketing involve striking a balance between franchisee and franchisor control.

Keep in mind that you'll need to bring enough assistance and support to the operation that all franchise owners feel comfortable and well taken care of. At the same time, franchisors must remain more hands-off in certain areas of business. As hard as it might be to avoid micromanaging, a level of trust is important. After all, your franchisees are your business partners. Choose them wisely and don't let just anyone become a representative of your brand.

It's also critical to find a balance between your online and offline marketing strategies. Keep up with the times and take advantage of new resources, but don't forget about more traditional forms of marketing.



MAKE MARKETING EASIER BY FINDING THE RIGHT FRANCHISE POS SYSTEM

All of this becomes much easier with the right franchise POS. KORONA POS is built to help franchisors manage their locations and scale, while also streamlining operations for franchisees.

- ▶ Replicate a proven business model automatically when a new franchise is ready to open.
- ▶ Customize features to fit each individual franchise.
- ▶ Add a custom royalty system that calculates rates automatically.
- ▶ Use the franchisee order portal for inventory management.
- ▶ Implement cross-store loyalty programs.
- ▶ Run franchise-wide promotions or just at select locations.
- ▶ Use integrated gift cards, vouchers, and time-based coupons at all locations or just one.
- ▶ Remotely access a real-time view of sales and inventory metrics for all your locations and make changes immediately.

To learn more about what makes a great franchise point of sale, sign up for a free trial. It's simple to get started and you can schedule a demo with one of our product specialists whenever is convenient for you.