

THERE IS
MORE TO LIFE
THAN YOUR
DESK JOB

**Franchise Ownership as
Your New Financial Future**

BY THE FRANCHISE GURU MEG SCHMITZ



Introduction

When I was 30 years old, my former husband and I bought our first business. Although the decision was not made jointly to own a franchise (this is an important topic to note), the outcome was surprisingly rewarding, and ended up forming a baseline for my work with future business owners. The concept was what many in the industry referred to as a “gold-standard franchise.” It had an outstanding reputation, and over the 11 years that followed, I absorbed everything I could from the corporate office, regional support team, and my fellow Great Clips owners all across the country.

I truly realized what was meant when people described franchise ownership as “being in business for yourself, but not by yourself.” I had the freedom of owning my own business, combined with the safety and security of a solid and proven financially-rewarding system.

After eleven years of developing my staff and expanding to five locations, someone made me a spectacular offer for my five-unit business. My employees and our salons represented the ideals of Great Clips in every way. The dedicated staff, the franchise system, and the locations’ cleanliness created an excellent asset, and I was able to create a turn-key opportunity for a new owner. I accepted a fair and generous offer to walk away, and took every lesson I learned from fellow owners and Great Clips leadership, as well as my own mistakes and successes, and jumped into franchise consulting in 2002.

If you were to visit my website, you would notice that my signature includes a leaping frog and lily pads. I specifically chose those images because my mother, who is a hospice nurse and volunteer, used to tell patients that from lily pad to lily pad, the leap from life to death is the scariest unknown of all, but that she was there to make sure the patient landed safely. I hope that you will come to understand that my role in working with my candidates over the past decades has been infused with my mother’s devotion to her patients. When I encourage people to “take the leap” I hold up my palms and ask you to imagine that you are the frog. We will find the right lily pad on which to land.

This book is the direct result of my experiences these last three decades as both a franchise owner and consultant. While writing it, I was reminded of all the wonderful people I have helped buy a business over the last 17 years. Seeing the life-changing experience through their eyes provided me with a variety of insights into what franchise ownership can mean for different people.

Everybody's Stuck

After nearly 30 years of consulting and working with hundreds of people every year, I have noticed a common trait; most people believe they are STUCK.

Some think they are STUCK in corporate jobs, clocking in every day, working hard without reaping the full value of that hard work, being unable to utilize their best skill sets, and feeling unfulfilled by the work they were hired to do.

Others love their corporate job, and actually feel fulfilled by their work. But when the economy takes a turn for the worse and they inevitably get laid off, then these refugees feel STUCK in the corporate turnstyle: find a company job, work a company job, get laid off when the economy takes a hit, repeat. The revolving door will continue to spin as long as companies are bound by their board of directors to cut costs.

No matter the specifics of their situation, these Corporate Warriors all feel STUCK, as if their situation is the only option.

You Have Options

I greatly enjoy and repeat this quote to my Corporate Refugees: "You are not a tree. If you don't like where you are right now, then move!"

If you are willing to take some calculated risks and put in the work, you can leave your current situation, take control of your destiny, and never feel stuck again.

Let's walk through this together.

Two Corporate Refugees Walk Into an Ebook

Who is a Corporate Refugee? YOU ARE. But there are two types of Corporate Refugees, similar in many ways, but different in a few critical points. Let's figure out which one best describes you.

1. The Original Corporate Refugee

The term "Corporate Refugee" started showing up in my world during the 2008-2011 economic crisis. It was used to describe the hordes of people laid off en masse by Corporate America as a direct reaction to the market's downturn, creating an entire population of people with no office, no paycheck, and no sense of purpose.

Corporate Refugee status does not discriminate, either. From customer service reps and administrative assistants to department heads and C-Suite leaders, everyone was at risk of finding themselves in the unemployment lines. The factors that emerged to create this marketplace were out of their control.

The original Corporate Refugees reacted to their newfound unemployment by desperately seeking out similar positions in different corporations. These people wanted to re-enter the job market and find their comfort zone. This was the same market that just expelled them, and they put themselves at risk to have the cycle repeat itself.

Over time, the economy was able to right itself. As of this writing, there are more jobs available than people to work them. No need to talk about Corporate Refugees anymore, right?

2. The NEW Corporate Refugee

In recent years, I have taken note of the NEW Corporate Refugee.

Today in 2019, the economy is good. And as we mentioned, because of this there are more jobs available than people to work them. But a good economy doesn't change the fact that most companies will prioritize profits over people every single time. The easiest expense to cut is labor and associated benefits. That lack of loyalty means even in a strong economy, there's always the potential of being laid off.

And while the Original Corporate Refugee was REACTIVE to their worst-case scenario coming true, the New Corporate Refugee sees the benefits of being PROACTIVE.

They are fully aware that they are disposable in the face of economic downturn, and are open to new free-agent opportunities that could provide them with a potential new direction in the future, adding an additional revenue stream alongside their day job, and a safety net in case things do go awry.

And now, a new way of thinking

As different as these Corporate Refugees may be, the answer to both of their prayers is actually the same. The answer is not finding a new job in the same industry, or taking on a second job. **The new way of proceeding is to shift gears away from working for The Man to being The Man.** To embrace a new kind of workplace freedom while maintaining the comfort and security of a proven structure and support system. Become a franchise owner!

Leave The Grind. Be Your Own Boss. Build Your Best Future.

Now I know what you are thinking: You think you will not have the financial means to succeed. You aren't ready yet. You want to solve the problems that you see, but writing a business plan is not your specialty. And so you wonder how to gather the right information to embark on a new path to financial freedom, and you question whether you will ultimately be successful. You are smart enough to know you need to make an informed decision, but to whom do you turn?

Follow The Franchise Guru

The truth is that the process, ideas, and tools you need are so close you cannot see them. I mean, you just haven't met me yet.

That I can help you get unstuck is not some sort of wild proclamation. Every single day, I hear from real people whom I helped to take the leap from Corporate America into franchise ownership. They are reaching new heights, scaling new challenges, and NEVER looking back.

Over the course of 10 years, more than 90% of franchise owners are still in business.

What franchise ownership entails

Franchise ownership is business ownership with train tracks, bumper guards, and a safety net. The role of CEO is yours and you will never be fired again.

Every franchise already has an established, proven structure in place that provides a clear path forward for new franchise owners. The franchise company will equip every new franchisee with all the tools needed to make it work, with fewer detours and breakdowns.

When you enter into franchise ownership, you are going into business for yourself, but not by yourself.

Owning an established franchise means joining a network of business-minded people, just like you, who did their research, conquered their stuck brain, and signed on. These owners will share insights, tips, and advice you need to make your business start-up run better.

In the first year, 62% of Entrepreneurs make it, while the number declines to less than 20% by year 10. The biggest drop off is between Y1 and Y2

Why corporate refugees are perfect candidates for franchise ownership

There are some common traits across the Corporate Refugee spectrum that make you ideal franchise owners:

- You have a Type A personality.
- You enjoy working with a team and contributing to the bigger picture.
- More often than not, you do more than just participate. You are a leader.
- You enjoy being a mentor and assigning responsibility to newer or younger team members, because the stronger the team, the greater the results.
- You understand how to work within established structures and systems.
- You thrive under the culture of routine and habit.
- You are driven in general, but are especially passionate to build something great and realize your own independence.
- You understand the importance of generating measurable results from a proven system.

Is there safety in another job, versus staying in the current one?

First, let's remember one important thing: As funny as it was to title this ebook *There Is More To Life Than Your Desk Job*, the truth is, you do not actually have to leave your job to become a franchise owner.

Now, for those of you who fall under that Original Corporate Refugee category, who are deeply embedded in the comfort and routine of working for someone else, the thought of leaving that to own and operate your own franchise business sounds crazy.

But after 30 years as both a franchise owner and consultant, I am of the opinion that owning your own business is not nearly as crazy as subjecting yourself to the revolving door that is Corporate America. Why is it "safer" to work for company after company, knowing they must prioritize the bottom line over keeping you employed?

The fact of the matter is, the reluctance to fully embrace the idea of franchise ownership has more to do with a fear of change. So be open minded, ask questions, get a better understanding of the options that are available, and confront the common fears and concerns people have before entering into franchise ownership.

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“I was in turmoil unexpectedly. I hadn't considered business ownership, but the job search was frustrating. It was time to make a decision, because I felt I could control my own destiny. I knew my personal traits, work ethic, and what I could bring to a business. I wanted to help people, and the most exciting thing for Lisa and me is to see what we have built in five years. We are viewed as a real community partner, and proud of what we've accomplished.”

DAVE MORBECK, COMFORCARE

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Franchise Ownership VS. Starting Your Own Business VS. Working Another Corporate 9-to-5

Let's start with the easy one first:

Working another corporate 9-to-5

This is the one you are probably most familiar with, and the format is more or less the same since the term "9-to-5" was invented. The company, culture, corporate mantra, and systems already exist. The work itself and the end results might not be things you are passionate about, but all you have to do is show up, clock in, and collect a check. Simple as that.

WHY DO IT?

Comfort, security, and less global responsibility. You were hired for specific skills and to tackle the tasks outlined by Human Resources. There is a structure in place, the paychecks show up like clockwork, and the benefits package takes care of you and your family.

THE RISKS?

Many companies priority is to show profitability, and sometimes that includes the risk of cutting good people. That means you give up work/life balance to stay in good graces, but when the market takes a hit or a merger happens, no amount of hard work and loyalty can save you from the almighty layoff.

THE REWARDS?

A steady, predictable revenue stream. Nice benefits.

Starting your own business

Many people dream of someday launching their own business. Entrepreneurial-minded people want to disrupt the status quo and believe they have created something truly unique that the world is lacking. They envision the impact and benefits of change, develop a business plan, seek funding, and take on all the responsibilities that come with running their own business.

WHY DO IT?

Because you are a Rule Breaker. To bring your idea to life.

THE RISKS?

Your net worth and tangible assets, as well as your personal relationships, will take a backseat while you create and perfect not only the widget but also the business plan. For you, the entrepreneur, the investment is greatest because finding outside funds to bring your idea to life can be extremely difficult. If you are seeking investors, understand that they are skeptical. They tend to prefer proven leaders, and they want to see real impact, not just a single outcome. You will need to create an infrastructure, support systems, a website, and do market research to monetize your widget. Investors want metrics based on reality, not just projections.

In the case of stagnation, extreme growth, cash crunches, or—at the worst— failure, there will be no existing support system to help you. The financial and emotional toll will be personally greater. And while there are other entrepreneurial business owners out there in the world, growing independently means no built-in, easily accessible community of people to help you navigate into smoother waters.

THE REWARDS?

You're living the dream! You quit the grind, became your own boss, and make your vision a reality. You control the direction of the company and the goals you work towards are yours. Hopefully the reward cycle includes monetizing your widget to provide real income to live on.

Owning a franchise

In my opinion, this is your best bet if looking to explore a secondary income or alternate career path to the traditional 9-to-5. While there is risk associated with any business endeavor, franchising is governed by the Federal Trade Commission, so all of the bumps and warts are fully available for your consideration (along with all of the success stories).

WHY DO IT?

You know you want more control over the work you do, the impact you create, and the ability to balance your dreams with reality. It's time to be the Man! (And without all the risk that comes with owning your own business.)

THE RISKS?

As mentioned earlier, you must execute the proven plan if you want to succeed. As a general rule of thumb, while a vast majority of franchise owners aligned with a great system will thrive in their first year, you could find yourself part of the minority who shutter their business, or fail to even launch, if you don't execute the plan. The good news is that when you follow the operations manual to a T, your franchise corporate staff has metrics and resolutions available to redirect you if you are struggling. They will guide you back to the tested, proven system and robust support network to help you work through and past your troubles.

THE REWARDS?

If you become a franchise owner while still working your 9-to-5 job, you will be creating a secondary source of revenue and a safety net in case your corporate job disappears. I work with a lot of very successful people who have plenty of reasons to stay in the workforce (like another great paycheck) but want a side gig that is rewarding in other ways.

And if you chose to become a franchise owner instead of working another corporate job, well, you will experience a full transformation—being your own boss, being a part of your community, doing work that is meaningful to you, and feeling absolutely empowered. Even though you'd be leaving your favorite co-workers, franchise ownership comes with a built-in network of similar achievement-oriented owners who can not only help you when you need it most, but relate to your joys and pains as well.

I am READY! But wait... where do I start?

You are getting excited, and think you might be ready to explore franchise ownership. But you realize you want to be smart about this and get real information. How do you get a franchise of your own? Do you just buy one? And which one do you buy? Do they all make a lot of money? What do you need to do to be successful? The questions are crushing your mojo, so we need to get you out of your head and away from the endless key-word searches on the internet.

In our next chapter, I have outlined all the answers to your questions, including the one key ingredient that makes smart, successful franchise ownership possible...

Work With an Experienced Franchise Consultant

Ask any successful franchise owner and they will tell you: entering into franchise ownership, especially for the first time, is not something you want to do alone. Good franchise consultants not only help you navigate the rules, regulations, and risks of franchise ownership, they also have strong connections with excellent companies looking for great franchisees like you.

A really good consultant also has operations and ownership experience, and can share lots of first-hand wisdom, including this invaluable nugget: **NOT ALL FRANCHISES ARE EQUAL in terms of quality deliverable to the customer, or support for the owners.** Any high quality company will want to vet you as thoroughly as you want to vet them. You want to present your best self when talking with these companies, or they will not award you the opportunity.

And the best part? **THIS SERVICE IS FREE TO YOU.**

I know what you're thinking: How can all of this valuable time and experience be free? Just like working with an Executive Recruiter, companies pay for a successful placement to professional consultants. Because gold-standard franchise companies want the best referrals, they pay consultants like me to only bring the most qualified candidates to the table. They won't charge you, or pass through a fee.

What I do for my clients

In my 30+ years of helping people successfully transition from Corporate America to franchise ownership, I have developed a reputation as equal parts trusted advisor and consultant. I have extended experience as a counselor, mediator, hospice volunteer, and business owner.

When I was a young girl, my mother founded a hospice in Chicago. I followed her to community events discussing the beneficial aspects of patient and family support during the end of life. Seeing hospice care in action had a profound impact on me. I learned that what people fear most is change, and I have dedicated my life to helping people overcome that fear, and getting them to their next, new destination with a sense of calm, clarity, and purpose.

When we work together, I want you to understand that you are in good hands. I use my counseling skills to LISTEN to the things that are important to you in "taking the leap" into your business-buying decision. I've successfully helped place professional athletes, Wall Street financiers, military veterans, experienced business developers, Corporate Refugees like you in thriving franchises, and all of them had fear about this decision, whether experienced business owner or not!

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“I had talked with a couple different franchise consultants, and Meg stood out as someone who really cared about me. She was interested in my family and lifestyle, and took it personally to help me achieve the goals that I wanted to reach. Meg was by far my first choice of whom I wanted to go down this path with.”

DAN SCHAUER, VANGUARD CLEANING SYSTEMS

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As your Franchise Consultant, I take an active role in guiding you every step of the way:

ASKING QUESTIONS My first step is to have you complete a brief questionnaire that serves as the platform for an in-depth consultation. Together, preferably with your spouse/partner, we'll make sure this journey will have a profoundly positive impact on your life, and that your partner or spouse understands your drive and goals, and is comfortable with the opportunities and risks involved.

CONSULTATION Part of being a counselor is to be able to see the world through your eyes. I want to know your interests, motives, and goals, as well as the formative experiences that shaped your life, and use this information to help you find the perfect franchise fit. A free one-hour consultation allows you to expand on your answers and give me better context for what makes you tick.

MATCHMAKING To find you the perfect concept options, at an investment level that works for you, I digest all of your interests, concerns, skills you want to use, and things you never want to do again, and research companies that will fit that criteria. I work with a select portfolio of companies, and block out those that have a bad reputation and questionable practices. You need to look only at Gold Standard opportunities.

RESEARCH AND DUE DILIGENCE Based on your financial strength and risk tolerance, we will determine how to fund your franchise investment. Like buying a house, you will have to put real money down, and right-size the rest of your investment to make sure you reach your long-term goals while still paying your bills. We use funding companies aligned with franchising who routinely adjust their products to avoid costly mistakes and save you some serious heartache.

DECIDING TO TAKE THE LEAP This is your research project to complete, and my role is to help you ask questions and dig for the answers. In creating a relationship of trust, I will not let you sign up for anything until you have completed a series of steps that unearth and reveal the realities of business ownership with the company that best matches your skills and desired end result. You need to feel the blissful mix of excitement, anticipation, and fear (like sky-diving, getting married, having your first child, etc) so that you are confident about which lilypad you have chosen to leap onto!

NURTURING YOU AFTER YOUR DECISION Long after you become a franchise owner, I will make sure you experience continued support, long into the future! No matter where in the world you are, I commit to always being available via text, phone, or email to hear your successes, challenges, and questions. There is no better safety net than to talk with people who have experience.

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“The amount of experience Meg brings to the table is incredible. She has seen and done this herself, and she has helped so many people through this process. She understands the psychology of the new franchisee. Meg helped build my confidence, knowing that things happen that you don't plan for, it's all par for the course, and it will be okay.”

DAVE MICHALSKI, RESTORATION1

But before we have our free consultation...

...you will need to arrange a few critical things:

1. Make sure your spouse/partner is on board with this exploration
2. \$70,000 or more in liquid capital with a strong personal credit score
3. \$250,000 Net Worth or More (Assets less Liabilities)
4. Time to dedicate yourself to a solid research project (3-5 hours per week)

#1 IS NON-NEGOTIABLE. This decision impacts not only your life, it impacts the lives of those closest to you. Having your spouse/partner involved in the process will allow you to make a decision together. I ended up divorced because my former husband and I were not aligned on the investment, so my first commitment is to protect your primary relationship.

AS FOR #2-4, if you are not quite there yet, you need not despair. Now you have an idea of what it takes to do this research project, and you have some goals to work towards. And once you hit those benchmarks, then we can take the next steps.

In Conclusion

Whether you are an Original Corporate Refugee stuck in an endless cycle of job > layoff > job, or a New Corporate Refugee looking to build new possibilities while staying employed, franchise ownership is an opportunity to experience the freedom of being your own boss with the structure and support of an established, proven system.

Some next steps:

ASK QUESTIONS! If you are feeling hesitant, need more info, or want clarification on the financial requirements, email me your list of questions. Being skeptical but willing to explore is a great first step.

SCHEDULE OUR FREE CONSULTATION! If you meet the minimum requirements listed at the end of the last chapter, then you are ready to move forward into a deeper conversation.

[Click here to schedule
FREE a 15 minute conversation](#)



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(847) 302-2601 | Schedule a meeting: <https://calendly.com/megschmitz>

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