

WHY BAD STORIES HURT BRANDS

How can you reduce the odds that serious franchisee leads prematurely disqualify your brand from consideration? Read on.

Candidly, many franchise brands are blowing it

You're likely investing larger and larger budgets to generate leads from many different channels. So much attention and effort goes into creating that first spark of interest...crafting a great online ad, text, email or video designed to get a form filled. And rightly so.

But, what experience are you delivering next?

Any honest examination of many franchisors' brand storytelling would candidly conclude that your approach isn't persuading enough people to engage.

And serious leads will disqualify brands that tell poor stories

Why? Too many brands forget that anyone with the potential to become a serious lead is likely researching multiple brands. If they've settled on a category, then they're on your and your competitor's websites. So, take a step back and visit a few of those sites. Do they pretty much read the same? Does one stand out? Because that's the brand a serious lead will spend time researching first.



SERIOUS LEADS RESPOND WELL TO THREE ASPECTS OF STORYTELLING

We've been helping brands do franchisee recruitment for almost two decades now. The Internet and the ready availability of information has elevated the importance of storytelling and how you present your brand's key strengths. Stories must emotionally as well as intellectually engage with today's more discerning brand researcher.

Serious leads expect the same experience from you that they get from successful online retailers, answering questions like: what's this going to do for me, did I get the information I expected, do I believe it and do I understand my next step? The best online retailers, i.e. Amazon, have made this thinking process intuitive. Serious franchisee leads expect the same intuitive experience. It's hard to argue most franchise brands are deliver the goods.

That means there's ample opportunity to craft a better brand story that builds trust, confidence and credibility. If not, your potential serious lead moves on...a lost opportunity for you.

Serious leads hold real power. Your story is your "audition". So, to move a franchisee lead from curious to serious, your story has got to do three things very well...

1. ANSWER: "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?"

Is your franchise story all about the brand? A serious franchisee lead wants to quickly understand how they'd benefit from aligning their personal and professional worlds with yours. This approach should inform every aspect of your story.

We're all drawn to making a conversation about us. But consider the person you chatted with who asked a few questions, got you talking about yourself and said very little. It's likely you'd walk away from an encounter like that and think, "that sure was one interesting person." By making the conversation about you; not them, you left a positive impression.

That's the way you should tell your franchise brand story. Satisfy "what's in it for me" questions and you'll set a deep hook with serious leads.

A great story is insightful and relevant to a serious lead. A great story draws serious leads in and captures their attention. When you write a great story make sure it appears everywhere. Tell the same story in brochures, sales sheets, social media, videos, the Franchise Disclosure Document, direct mail, on the phone, email campaigns, webinars, presentations and blog posts.

Searching for the right franchise opportunity is like shopping for any other high-end product or service. A lead, with intent, will thoroughly research available options. In fact, 75% of a franchise lead's research is already done before they decide to contact you. Make sure your serious leads immerse themselves in your story.

2. ANSWER: "IS EVERYTHING HERE?"

Is your story complete? Can a serious lead easily find the information they want? Do you tease or do you educate? Do you set up artificial barriers to information? Do you prematurely ask for financial disclosures or phone calls to reveal more information? Or do you give a serious lead many reasons to contact you?

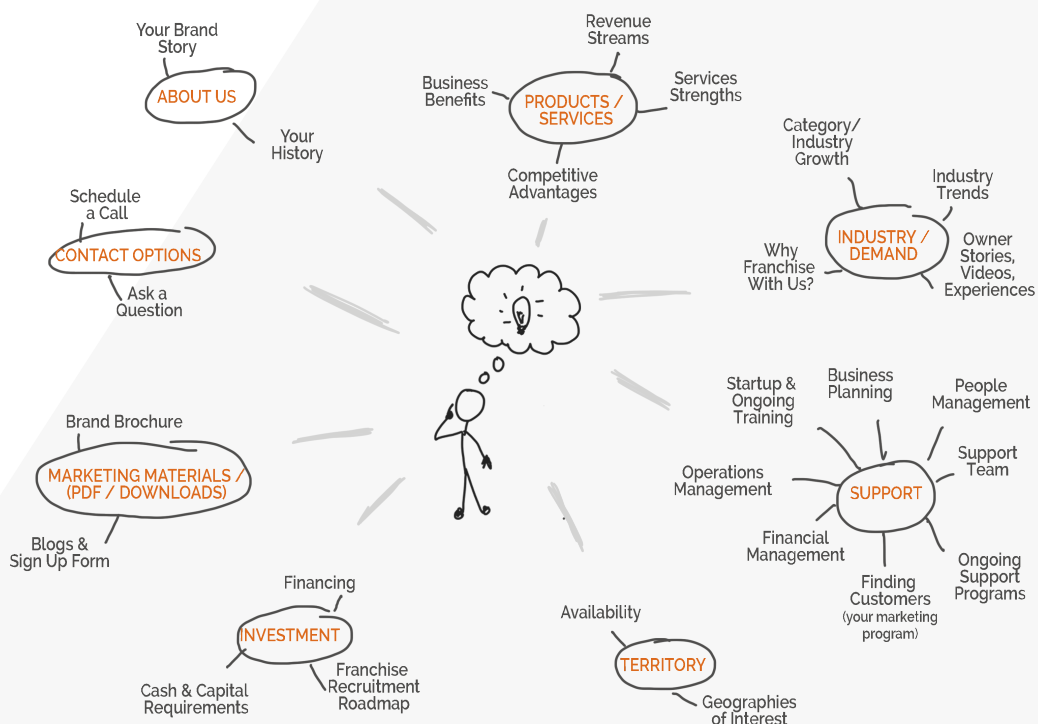
Is your story easy to understand or filled with indecipherable jargon and gobbledegook? Does your story showcase the great things you do for your franchisees? How do you bring that to life? Do your franchisees help humanize your brand and enhance your story?

A franchise brand story, if not carefully organized and mapped out, can be confusing. And confusion encourages a serious lead to just move on. So, fashion an invisible "guiding hand" for a serious lead. You outline the picture, but they start coloring wherever they want.

Adding simple "why should I care" context to your story favorably positions you against other opportunities on their radar. You'll be inside a serious lead's head; guiding them to conclude that making contact is in their best interest.

Make it easy for a serious lead to contact you at a time of their choosing. That means resisting the urge to prematurely demand too much information or contact too soon. A serious lead knows the difference between being pushed, being sold or learning. Avoid the temptation to sell.

A well-executed, self-guided story produces more serious leads. The twist: it's when they're ready; not you. Your job is to prepare them to be ready. In fact, a great story experience often pre-sells over 75% of your entire brand concept before they ever contact you.



3. ANSWER: “DOES YOUR STORY INSPIRE TRUST, CONFIDENCE AND CREDIBILITY?”

Does your story draw in visitors? Do you make claims supported by evidence? Is your story consistent and easy to follow? Is information easy to find? Do all the links work? Are pages uncluttered, easy to scan and include photos and video? Many little things, executed well, score big points building trust, confidence and credibility in a serious lead’s early research phase.

A dedicated franchisee development website is the next best thing to a great physical store. It should showcase your culture and entire business story. A dedicated website is where serious leads will do their research and likely decide whether to contact you. Serious franchisee leads should encounter a rich assortment of words, numbers, pictures and video woven together to persuade and encourage contact.

A great website will be visited again and again by a serious lead that’s truly interested in your franchise opportunity. Your headlines and subheads should draw serious leads in. Skimming and surfing multiple pages is what leads do first. Later on, serious franchisee leads will read well written and organized long copy and come back for more than one visit.

While improving storytelling online is imperative, it doesn’t have to break the bank. When carefully planned, both resources and budgets can align to make how you present yourself on the web significantly better.



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