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Cover Story

A New Breed of Franchising



Doug Warren (left) was confident Danielle O'Neill (right) could succeed with Trade Secrets.

Trade Secrets, one of Canada's largest and most successful chains of beauty product and salon service stores, is working with a whole new breed of franchisees. Determined to make their mark early in life, many young people with entrepreneurial flair are foregoing college and university to get into franchising and run a business.

The turning point

Danielle O'Neill, 23, is one such franchisee, now poised to move onto her third store within a short period. A past Ontario champion in all-round gymnastics, she is very competitive and determined when focused on her dream.

After a short stint in post-secondary education, she began working at a grocery store in Newmarket, Ont.

"I loved the people there," she says. "They taught me the importance of customer service. I was hard-working and dedicated and soon promoted to bakery manager, but I had dreams and aspirations for more. Like so many other people, however, I wasn't sure how to venture out on my own, as I had virtually no business experience."

In late 2009, Danielle began to wonder why she was heading back to work in the bakery while many of her friends were returning to university.

"This 'reality check' was a turning point for me," she says. "I started to think about my future and became more open-minded to new opportunities."

That fall, she attended a franchise show in Toronto and met Doug Warren, director of franchising for Trade Secrets. At the time, a corporate-owned store in Newmarket needed someone new to run it.

Fully engaged

At just 21 years old, Danielle felt fear and self-doubt—but with the encouragement of her family, along with corporate training and ongoing support from the franchisor, she got into the business in early 2010.

"I was fortunate to have a great trainer in Crystal Lewis, district manager," she says. "She taught me the business, encouraged me daily and kept me on the track to success. The entire management team is fully engaged with and committed to the store."

Danielle says the secret to her success has been the combination of a disciplined adherence to the franchise system and a shared passion for helping customers feel better about themselves.

"I encourage all of my staff to treat our clients as if they were guests in our homes," she says. "We are here to ensure every visit will be a positive and memorable experience."

Managing to own

After 30 per cent sales growth in 2010, a second store became available at Georgian Mall in Barrie, Ont.

"We entered a manage-to-own agreement, purchasing the store in 2011," says Danielle. "By sticking to the Trade Secrets formula and adding a seasoned beauty professional, Ann King, as store manager, we grew sales by 37 per cent in Barrie, while Newmarket grew another 29 per cent. A strong corporate sourcing and procurement team ensures our stores are fully stocked with the latest salon-quality hair, skin and body products."

Now, a third store is in the offing within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Danielle is ready for the challenge.

New concepts

At the same time, Trade Secrets' management has developed two new franchising concepts, for which all prime sites are now available.

The first, Taylor and Colt, is a 'barber spa' concept, offering hot towel service, haircuts, esthetical services, styling and related retail products for male customers, who will be able to relax and enjoy complimentary newspapers, espresso and cappuccino.

Filling a significant gap in the underserved male market, the franchise system will include strict criteria for prime real estate site selection, lease negotiation, store design and full construction, purchasing power, full training, support, national advertising and a tremendous variety of highly sought-after barber products and services.

The second new concept, Wax N Blow, encompasses services in huge demand by today's female consumers, including mini-makeovers, eyebrow threading, waxing, nail painting, shampooing, hair blowing and drying, among others. This beauty-service concept is for customers who want to be pampered in a quick but professional way.



Taylor and Colt is a new 'barber spa' for men.



Wax N Blow will offer mini-makeovers, hair blowing and drying, waxing and many other quick, professional services.

Again, each franchise will also offer related retail products, laid out in a fun, beautiful and funky store with an exciting atmosphere. Wax N Blow is now available in retail sites across Canada, with applications and deposits starting to come in. The package includes site selection, lease negotiation, store design and construction, complete training, support and ongoing advertising. **331**

Trade Secrets

Established: 1989
Units: 67
Franchise fee: \$20,000
Investment required: \$100,000 - \$400,000
Startup capital required: \$100,000 minimum
Royalty fee: 6%
Advertising fee: 1.5%

