

The 5 key elements that will help you sell franchises



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- 5. Size matters.

In , author and franchise consultant Mark Siebert delivers the ultimate how-to guide to employing one of the greatest growth strategies ever — franchising. Siebert shares decades of experience, insights, and practical advice to help grow your business exponentially through franchising while avoiding the pitfalls. In this edited excerpt, Siebert offers tips on crafting a marketing message that scores big with prospects. In order to sell franchises, you must start by understanding the nature of your specific franchise buyer.

Franchisors who target their prospects with a generic “ Be in business for yourself, but not by yourself” will often find their message falling on deaf ears. So before you begin your marketing efforts, be sure you understand what it is that you're selling, who you're selling it to, and why they should be interested in buying. Keep these five elements in mind:

1. The many sales of franchising.

The savvy franchisor realizes that when approaching a prospective franchisee, the franchise salesperson must make not just one sale, but rather FOUR separate sales if they are to succeed. The prospect will ultimately ask:

- Should I go into business for myself?
- Should I go into the “ widget” business?
- Should I go it alone or buy a widget franchise?
- Should I buy *your* widget franchise?

To become a prospect in your franchise sales pipeline, you can be fairly sure your candidate has already answered the first question affirmatively. That said, not everyone is right for business ownership — even if they believe they are. You'll need to be sure your prospect understands the positives and negatives of business ownership, or you'll run the risk of awarding a franchise to a candidate who may be predisposed to failure. And nothing will doom a franchise as quickly as a track record of failed franchisees. To answer the second question, the franchisor will need to develop a selling proposition for the widget industry, but chances are it won't be unique.

Rather, all the franchisor's competitors in the widget market will be giving the same pitch. The answer to the third question requires the franchisor to sell the concept of franchising, separately from the advantages of widgets. It's remarkable how many inquiries a franchisor will get from people who don't understand what a franchise relationship is all about. If the franchisee believes that they'll have the freedom to do as they please, you're better off dispelling that notion early in the process. This third question also presents the franchise marketer with a unique dilemma. On the one hand, the marketer wants to say they're offering a can't-miss opportunity in a great market.

On the other, they need to tell the prospect that without the franchisor's assistance, the prospect will be doomed to failure (or, at best, significantly less success). And, of course, the fourth question is where the rubber meets the road — differentiating the offering from its *closest direct competitors*.

This is where a new franchisor will need to focus its creative efforts — in terms of the concept itself, the structure of the franchise offering, and

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ultimately, in the way the USP is communicated to the prospective franchisee.

2. The many “buyers” you need to address.

The marketing message is further complicated by the fact that it will ultimately be heard by numerous people other than the prospect who will influence the franchise sale. In most cases, the franchisor can anticipate that its buyer will be influenced by:

- An attorney they'll retain to review the franchise legal documents
- The lender that will be providing the financing (and they may talk to several of these)
- Their personal accountant (especially for those opportunities with more sizable investments)
- Their trusted advisors and friends (and their know-it-all Uncle Charley, who will tell them they're crazy, no matter how good the message)
- Their spouse and other close family members
- Google (and other search engines), which will determine who gets to read your message online
- State regulators in eight states, who will determine if you can use the material at all

You probably already know how unsupportive these additional “buyers” can be, so your website, videos, collateral materials, and other marketing pieces must address this audience as well as your prospective franchisee (who may often be the easiest of the group to sell to).

3. The many messages of your materials.

You must also be aware that your franchise marketing materials will send more than one message.

The copy that's used in your marketing will need to send two messages:

- A message that conveys the content of your offering
- A message that imparts the emotional impact of your franchise

The franchise buying process is highly emotional. It's integrally related not only to a person's financial well-being, but also wholly intertwined with the way a person does (or wants to) perceive themselves. So simply expressing the content of the offering and the value proposition, without accounting for the emotional impact of the franchise sales process, will considerably reduce your likelihood of closing a sale. Aside from the content, the materials themselves will carry a message. Your first impression will often come from your website.

Fail to make a good impression, and you're done before you start. Print a cheap brochure (or worse yet, a folder with inserts), and you'll send the message that you're not serious about franchising. The quality of the paper stock you use can send a similar message. So do it right.

4.

The many motives of your franchisee.

It's also important to understand that your franchisee candidate won't be motivated by the same factors that motivate you. Many neophyte franchisors

wrongly assume that franchise buyers are primarily motivated by financial returns. In fact, there are more important motives, such as:

- Independence
- Being one's own boss
- Flexibility
- Control of their destiny

So you're well-advised to understand who your prospects are and what really motivates them before drafting the message you'll use to attract them.

If you already have franchisees, talk to them about what motivated them — although you need to be careful to avoid a fallacy of composition. If, for example, all your prior messaging was focused on independence, you might expect to hear your franchisees echo that. To avoid that mistake, you may want to survey franchisees from similar systems to better understand the broader motives in your category.

5. Size matters.

There are absolutely some prospective franchisees who won't consider anything other than a major brand.

But there are also franchise prospects who are only interested in ground-floor opportunities. For them, a well-known brand is actually a turnoff — so again, be careful with your messaging. If you're with a smaller franchise chain, chances are the type of folks you've attracted are looking for a venture that's more entrepreneurial — or perhaps are indifferent to size. So don't try to be something you're not. If you have a ground-floor opportunity, don't hide it — flaunt it.

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