

Franchising

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Michael Paul, the man behind Pack & Send, the PricewaterhouseCoopers Excellence in Franchising Franchisor of the Year 2007, reveals what it takes to win this coveted award.

"Winning this award was a very, very pleasant surprise. I think we always believed we had a very good standard of business and developed from scratch a system, a national brand that has a good relationship with franchisees. It meant an endorsement to us that we have met that standard; always our vision has been to pursue a world class destination. You never reach that destination, you're always improving it and staff and franchisees and suppliers all have worked hard for over 14 years to a common cause."

What brought about Pack & Send?

"About 1992 I experienced the real challenge of sending an unpacked PC from Sydney to Melbourne, it was a near impossible task. That was the moment I thought, wouldn't it be great to have a business that catered for this? The industry was starting to redefine itself, turning away from servicing small businesses and households. There was a gap in the marketplace and this was prior to the internet. Once e-bay appeared our business sky-rocketed."

A leader has to set the path, everyone has to believe in it for it to be achieved.

At the time I was an independent management consultant in the logistics field, with a logistics management background. I actually started at 18 in the mail room and all I did was pack and send!

What has been the key to building the business?

"Our culture. The emphasis of the No Limits policy has been institutionalized across our staff and franchisees and is reflected to our customers. We believe that is our major competitive advantage. This culture can't be copied, it's taken a decade to embed."

What would you do differently if you were setting up now?

"We made mistakes along the journey but we had to experience them to become stronger. We now have very, very robust systems for recruiting franchisees and that was not so 12 years ago. Today we go to extreme lengths to understand that the people joining us are in alignment."

What advice would you give to another franchisee?

"The importance of having a strong vision. What this means to me is closing your eyes and imagining exactly how customers would receive a legendary level of customer service, how the business would operate and how staff would interact with



Michael Paul

customers. It's perfection, a fantasy that becomes your goal and drives you to better systems and better people."

What would your franchisees say about Pack & Send?

"That it's very professional, a quality organization with a brand that has an association attached to it (the No Limits teamwork). The sense that this is a business really going places that they are proud to be part of."

What next for the company?

Locally we are exploiting the demand for our services and will have four more franchises open by the end of 2007. We expect to surpass 100 by the end of December 2008 and then we will have a network of 150 stores, not just in traditional locations but in airports too. Internationally we expect to have a presence in the UK and NZ by July 2008. We are looking for the right partners worldwide, we know we can replicate the model elsewhere."

How do you gauge success?

"The growth of brand awareness, satisfaction of franchisees in profitability and that the business is a platform for achieving their own goals."

What makes a good franchisor?

"Putting all your energies and efforts into a system for franchisees to exploit the best success they can. We have our own code of conduct for all staff levels, a document we communicate that is vitally important to our longterm success. The customers, suppliers, shareholders expect integrity and the highest levels of professionalism. Our franchisees have to feel proud of what they have achieved."

What is your strength?

"An ability to have a clear vision that stretches everyone, embraces the people involved and supports working to that. A leader has to set the path, everyone has to believe in it for it to be achieved. That's probably a skill I've been fortunate to have. Our franchisees are all excited about 2010 and beyond. While the award is fantastic it is about the past and what is exciting is the future. We've been able to get motivated."

Franchisor of the Year 2007 was chosen from written submissions and interview by a judging panel. Entry was into three categories: food, retail and service, and the overall winner selected from the three category winners.