

Packing a punch

If you would like to learn more about becoming part of the Pack & Send story in the UK call Mike Ryan, Paul Jago (head of franchise development) or Tony Fowles on 0118 9584628 or email admin@packsend.co.uk. You can also visit www.packsend.co.uk
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Pack & Send, the new UK packaging and shipping company, is now on the high street

Pack & Send, the new retail packaging and shipping business that arrived in the UK last autumn, is now offering its unique collection, packing and freight management service from the company's maiden store, which opened in Reading at the start of this year.

The business has an impressive pedigree. Already the category leader in its original market of Australia, the plan is now to grow the brand globally, and the UK is the biggest opportunity yet with plans for a 240-store network in due course. The Pack & Send management team have been working on bringing the concept to this country since 2007, but Mike Ryan, UK chief executive, freely admits that seeing the

first outlet open and trading is the point where the plan starts to feel 'real'.

Roll-out plan

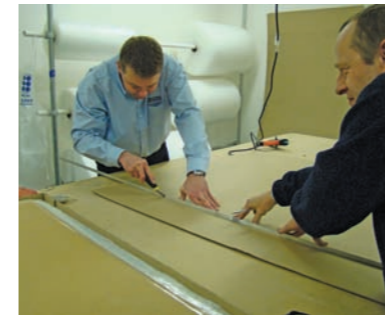
"The Reading store is an in-house outlet," explains Mike Ryan, "which is how we expect up to 25 per cent of all the UK stores to be. The roll-out plan, however, is dependent upon site availability and also on how quickly we approve franchise licenses."

The Pack & Send franchise opportunity is one of the most comprehensive and best proven in the



market. Firstly, there is the high calibre UK team - the board have a breadth of experience across logistics, retail, travel and marketing - and have undertaken stringent due diligence to ensure there are no hitches or surprises. "We are confident that the Pack & Send proposition is genuinely unique and addresses a gap in the market that the major freight carriers cannot address," Mike Ryan explains. "The 14 years of success and 100 outlets across Australia and New Zealand are testimony to this, and our research shows that the UK is an even larger opportunity."

The early experience from the Reading store reinforces this. Virtually the first order after opening was a typically unconventional project that perfectly illustrated how versatile the unique packing and door-to-door delivery service is. Although the Pack & Send philosophy is that the company can 'send anything, anywhere', UK general manager, Tony Fowles, did not expect to have this tested quite so hard, so soon. He explains: "Our customer wanted us to provide safe collection and delivery of some catering items, but the challenging



thing was that the goods were 60 Mars Ice Cream Bars, which needed buying in the UK and delivering still frozen to her in Sydney, Australia!

"Pack & Send, however, was the perfect choice for this shipment. Not only were we able to supply insulated packing and sufficient dry ice to keep the ice cream frozen for the day-long plane transit, but through our contacts with the airlines we were able to arrange refrigerated storage at Heathrow prior to the flight down to Sydney and again at the other end."

Not all Pack & Send customers are frozen desert fanatics though, and the Australian business already has supply contracts with global blue-chips, international shippers and major art and auction houses, as well as servicing the core SME/SoHo market and the many individual online sellers doing business on eBay and other trading sites.

Despite the tough economic conditions in the UK at present, the small business sector, and the SoHo segment particularly, is continuing to show growth. Additionally, the resilient expansion of consumer and business commerce over the internet all means that the demand for retail packing and delivery services is set to continue to rise.

Says Tony Fowles: "If you have a fragile, large, awkward or valuable item for shipping there are very few options available other than investing time and money in personally accompanying the item from door to door - and this is rarely practical or cost-effective. Pack & Send can resolve the issue at a fraction of the cost, and with the care and attention that you would give the goods if you were transporting them yourself."

"We pack any item securely, no matter how large or fragile it is, and we manage the end-to-end transportation in whatever time frame is required. To some degree we do 'exactly what it says on the tin', but with

the UK's largest network of freight services at our disposal nothing is too hard."

Personal attention

The high quality service and personal attention that is a key part of the Pack & Send ethos also supports the higher margins and repeat business that is inherent in the proposition. The UK team are very clear that the mix of in-house and franchise outlets will ensure that the business has robust systems and highly competitive supplier contracts, while still having total focus on customer satisfaction.

"We are being very strict on our selection criteria for franchisees," says Mike Ryan. "A minimum capital requirement of £100,000 is a key point,

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but more importantly, we need people who 'get' the concept and buy into the 'no limits' culture of the business as well as having an appreciation that every outlet and operator under the brand has a responsibility to deliver service excellence."

For those who can demonstrate the drive, enthusiasm and management talent to progress through the



recruitment process there are the rich rewards of leading the introduction of a unique proposition to the UK. "A Pack & Send franchise license isn't a guarantee of commercial success," says Mike Ryan, "but combined with an understanding of, and relationship with, your local business community and a lot of hard work it's not far off. We have been stunned by the interest already shown in the proposition and we now have several sites under active consideration for our next stores. We are very clear on the UK capacity for Pack & Send outlets, however, and have also prioritised some key locations for early development. Potential franchisees are also encouraged by our strategic plan to invest in opening around a quarter of the store portfolio as in-house outlets,"

"You must really love your ice cream to have it shipped halfway around the globe," Mike Ryan concludes, "but as Pack & Send originated in Australia, and is the leading retail freight business there, it is no surprise that the strong brand that they have developed meant that we were the first choice when it came to shipping from the UK."

Pack & Send is now helping businesses and consumers across the UK with more conventional requirements too. The company's range of domestic and international courier services and collection and custom packing solutions are ideal for transporting anything, from spare parts to works of art. **WF**

