

Franchise update | 2011 Q3

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Massage Envy's CMO Susan Boresow on franchisee buy-in

Susan Boresow has experience getting franchisees on board. As chief marketing officer for Massage Envy, she understands that engaging and supporting franchisees is imperative to getting them to buy in and play an active role in the brand's overall marketing efforts.

Before joining Massage Envy, she was vice president of marketing at Pump It Up and held marketing and leadership roles at Cold Stone Creamery, Godfather's Pizza, Mr. Goodcents Subs and Pastas, and McDonald's. We asked her about Massage Envy's strategy for building franchisee interest in marketing, the programs and support they offer, and what techniques work for getting franchisees on board for the brand's marketing initiatives.

How important is local-level and grassroots marketing to Massage Envy's growth and development strategy?

Local store marketing is very important in our growth strategy. We provide our franchise partners the tools and resources they need to implement a local-level campaign that will attract new clients, drive membership enrollment, establish a strong referral network, and encourage member retention. Community involvement is key to ensuring that people are aware that our services can help with overall wellness in individuals by relieving pain, stress, etc.

How do you get franchisees to truly, wholeheartedly buy in to the importance of local-level marketing?

Franchisees must be on board from the very beginning. We also must get their input along the way. This will ensure we are not only providing the resources and guidance they need, but also get a sense of their comfort level in implementing local store marketing strategies. The easier it is for the franchisees to imple-

ment, the more they are willing to use the tools we provide. We also have to demonstrate how these marketing strategies will grow their business, so they see the benefits of their effort.

Does the FAC offer a platform for engaging, encouraging, and supporting franchisees to get more involved?

Absolutely, our franchisee advisory council is a key sounding board for us and provides invaluable advice to fellow franchisees. They know better than anyone what the barriers might be and can help problem solve. They are always willing to provide solid recommendations on how marketing at the local level can be made easier and what resources are necessary to facilitate the process.

How do you establish franchisor and franchisee roles when it comes to marketing and getting franchisees on board?

As the franchisor, our role is to provide the tools, resources, and education to help support our regional developers and franchisees. The franchisees play a role in that they pay a percentage of their revenues to support their co-op and marketing efforts nationally and locally. Nationally, 1 percent is spent on national advertising, marketing, public relations, and social media to drive and promote the brand; locally, the franchisees spend their dollars on co-op advertising and local store marketing.

Discuss the importance of creating programs that are easy to implement.

We have tried to provide as many educational and marketing materials as possible, with step-by-step instruction for implementing the various programs. Our strategy is to offer a comprehensive selection of materials for our franchisees. In addition, we've increased the frequency of webinars and online tutorials, as well as opportunities to share best practices. Some franchisees may not need this level of support, but for those who do we want to make it readily and easily accessible. We want to provide tools and resources that the franchisee will use consistently

and are continually fine-tuning our programs to ensure the greatest ROI for our franchisees, their guests, and the brand.

How do you show your franchisees the ROI that is (or potentially is) available to them?

With many of our marketing programs, like SEO and national promotions, we can provide quantifiable results for our franchisees. Measurement is central to many of our programs and we are constantly evaluating their success based on these metrics. For instance, if there's a promotion for gift cards, we can definitely show a direct correlation between sales and membership increases. We

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share many of these metrics weekly. We have always been very forthcoming with franchisees about potential ROI. We've proudly shared that our average unit volume (AUV) is more than \$1 million so franchisees clearly can see what the potential is for their clinics.

What are some examples of local-level and grassroots marketing best practices that have worked for Massage Envy?

Effective local store marketing efforts range from SEO and member communication like e-blasts and direct mail materials to PR, social media, and of course, fundraisers. Massage Envy recently launched a new digital campaign that includes new iPhone and iPad apps, a lifestyle blog, and enhanced, system-wide social media efforts. When we surveyed our members, we learned that approximately 70 percent own a smart-

phone. Our apps allow guests to not only request an appointment, but to specify the trouble they are experiencing so their massage can be customized before they even arrive at a center. Providing our franchisees with tools like these enables them to deliver optimal service to their guests and members.

How do you complement your national marketing campaigns and branding with local-level marketing strategies?

We provide both seasonal and year-round promotions, advertising, PR, and marketing strategies that can be used to complement the national efforts. Franchisees are provided press release templates, advertising and marketing collateral, social media ideas, and other PR tools they can use. We also provide best practices, media recommendations, creative, point-of-purchase kits, etc.—all designed to drive traffic and profitability in their centers.

What safeguards, systems, policies, and education are needed to keep franchisees in compliance?

The FDD clearly outlines these parameters for our franchisees. We evaluate systems and programs to ensure we have effective processes that are easy for our franchisees to understand and follow. Through a variety of communication and educational materials and tools, as well as our annual franchise conference, we share our branding and marketing standards and policies.

How do you monitor local franchisee marketing to ensure consistent brand messaging?

We have processes and education in place to ensure that our brand messaging is consistent. Through a variety of methods, like Google Alerts, social media monitoring tools, our PR and advertising agency partners, and a corporate approval process, we ensure brand integrity. Of course, our FDD states that only approved creative can be used. There are times when we must contact franchisees to inform them of our policies and provide approved creative materials. ■



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