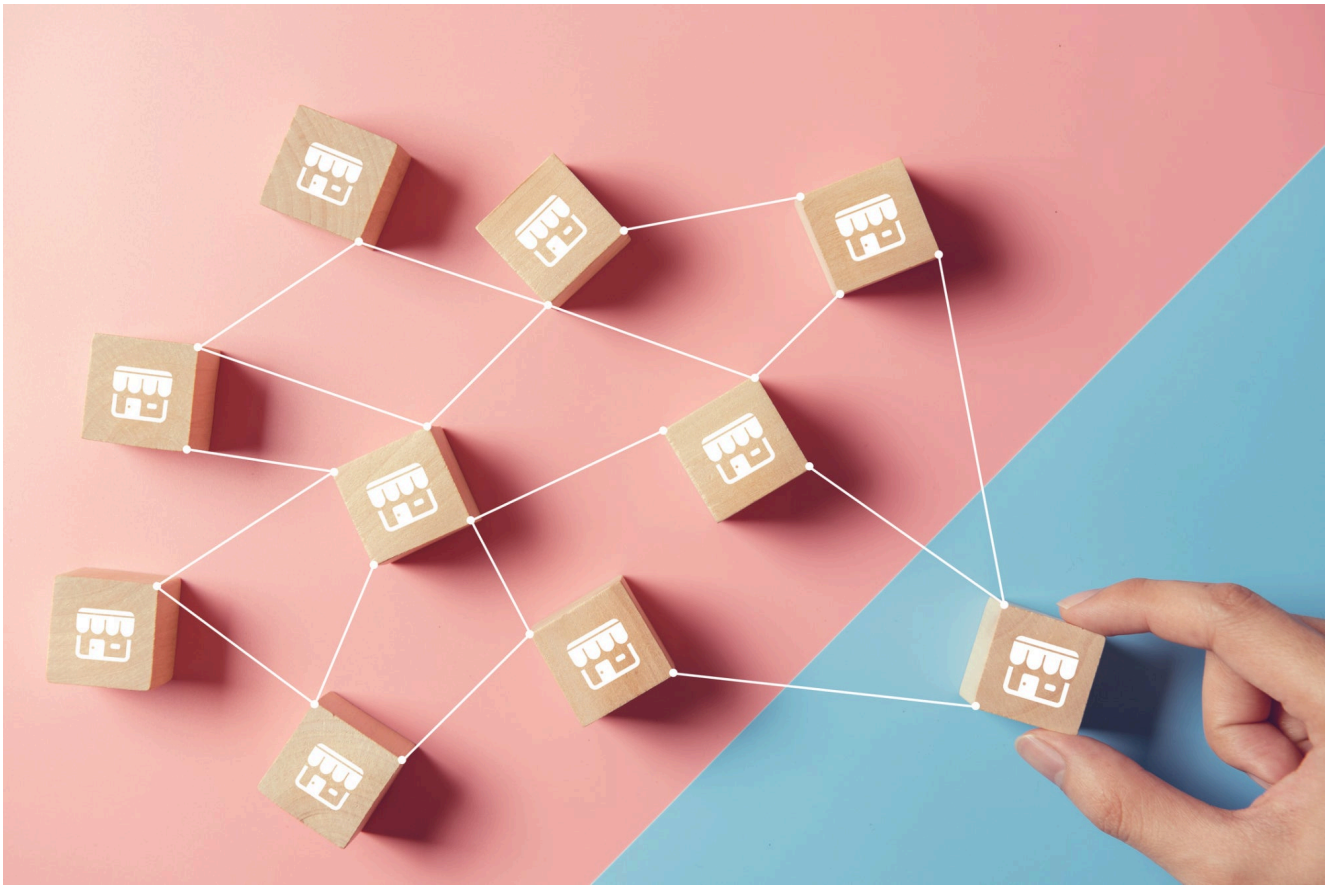
10-Step Roadmap to Franchising Success



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You’re intimately familiar with your starting point — the business you’ve nurtured and grown. You understand your destination — successful franchises around the country or around the world. You have the passion and the proof of concept, but you don’t have the roadmap to move from point A to point B. You’re not alone.

Most business owners looking to expand into franchising are both anxious and excited, unsure and confident. It helps to learn from those who have traveled the road on which you’re about to embark, both to avoid the potholes and to recognize the markers that lead to success.

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It can be difficult to decide when to take the onramp into franchising, and the truth is that there isn't a one-size-fits-all model. Here at Code Wiz, we saw a clear road ahead when four factors aligned: a stable and successful enterprise; a unique concept; an in-demand product; and replicable systems and processes.

As we traveled along the franchising highway, we learned ten invaluable lessons that can serve as a roadmap for any business that is ready to embark on its own franchising journey.

1. Document your knowledge

Only you understand the path you took to arrive at this point in your journey. You've navigated that rocky road and cleared the proverbial fallen branches blocking your way. You have a unique understanding of the roadblocks you encountered. Your franchisees won't have that wisdom, so it's critical to document both your workarounds – systems and processes – and your stumbles. Your diligent documentation will form the foundation of your operations manual. Your franchisees will understand the rationale for the choices you made and will keep them from making rookie mistakes.

2. Rely on the knowledge of others

You have the knowledge necessary to create your success, but you don't have the knowledge necessary to replicate it. That's a completely different skillset, which is why it's important to tap into the knowledge of those who have experienced franchising success. They can alert you to potential detours and help you find the best route to reach your goal. In order to find the best advisors, it's helpful to look to your network for referrals and recommendations. Ultimately, you

should find someone who shares your company’s values and your vision for growing your business.

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3. Safeguard your time and money

The ramp to franchising is steep, and can quickly drain your resources. Understanding the difference between services you need and services you want – and sticking with the former – allows you to be judicious in spending money and time. This selectivity means that you won’t pay for expensive bells and whistles, or waste time in unproductive meetings.

4. Use your voice and platform

With your energy hyper-focused on franchising while keeping your business running, you may have the impulse to hunker down and lie low. It’s important to refrain from withdrawing into your shell. Instead, use your voice and your platform. Everyone wants to know the face behind the brand. Seek out PR opportunities, volunteer to lead events at franchising conferences, and be visible in the broader investing community. You’ll gain momentum by increasing your face recognition among peers and potential franchisees.

5. Hone in on your mission

It’s natural to want to recoup your investment. But that investment will be for naught if your franchisees don’t help you improve your offering and grow your brand. Hone in on your organization’s mission and vision. Next, create a culture that reflects those values. The result? You’ll attract franchise prospects and staff that will take the wheel and steer your enterprise around and through every obstacle put in their way.

6. Vet your franchisees

It’s exciting to receive your first batch of franchisee applications, and it’s tempting to accept them all. Don’t do it. This is your road trip, and you don’t want to hand out driver’s licenses to everyone who flags you down. In every stage of your franchising journey, look for people who will burnish your brand. Always choose quality over quantity.

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7. Foster collaboration with franchisees

You want franchisees to adopt your roadmap, but you don’t have to know everything or be everything. Each franchisee brings their lived experience to the table and can offer valuable ideas that contribute to the growth of your brand. While not every idea will be viable, adopting those that are feasible leverages franchisees’ strengths. This also enables them to become part of a collaborative team that contributes to the growth of your brand.

8. Remember your destination

Franchising is a marathon, not a sprint. Over the long haul, it’s easy to look around at brands with exponential growth and react with impatience or doubt. Remember that the best franchisers give their franchisees tremendous support. This support is your milestone for gauging your success. Grow only as fast as you are able to fully accommodate the needs of your franchisees.

9. Embrace support systems

All long-haul road trips are exhausting — even those that don't have flat tires or breakdowns along the way. You'll only arrive at your destination if you accept the help and support of those around you — both at work and at home. The term "work-life balance" may sound hackneyed, but the practice is critical to your success. Your business is a priority, but your mental and physical health must be priorities as well. When you're able to enjoy the trip, the destination is all the more rewarding.

10. Pay it forward

Wherever you are in your journey, there's someone waiting to start theirs. Share your learnings with others. Becoming a mentor to another business owner is a way to pay back those who assisted you by paying it forward. You can prevent others from getting lost, going through ill-advised detours, and encountering familiar roadblocks. One day, those you mentored will be able to help others.

Franchising is an adventurous trek, but one that is immensely satisfying. Success lies in aligning your brand's mission, vision, and culture, and then tapping into the expertise of those who have been in your shoes.

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