

A rectangular sign with a gold-colored frame is centered on a dark blue background. The sign has a white background and features the words "SHARING" and "SUCCESS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. The sign is illuminated from above, creating a soft glow and a slight shadow on the wall behind it.

**SHARING
SUCCESS**

A wooden-framed sign is centered on a dark blue wall. The sign has a white background and features the words "SHARING" and "SUCCESS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font, stacked vertically. The sign is illuminated from above, creating a soft glow and a slight shadow on the wall below it.

**SHARING
SUCCESS**

The Great Frame Up

WHERE PICTURE FRAMING IS AN ART.®



Franchise Concepts, Inc. is an industry-leading family of companies that provides customers with the highest quality custom framing services on the market. For more than 35 years, their various brands have helped clients select, purchase, and frame memories and art.

The Great Frame Up is the largest and longest standing of the group's three companies, having begun in the suburbs of Chicago in 1971. Four years later the business began franchising – making it one of the oldest and most experienced franchise brands in its field. Today, the very first The Great Frame Up store is still operating and its franchise system has grown to more than 100 locations nationwide, with several opening as recently as 2015. In the years since establishing The Great Frame Up, Franchise Concepts has also grown to include Deck The Walls and Canadian-based Framing & Art Center – two more brands that have forged lasting reputations for providing high quality framing services coupled with great customer service. Altogether, Vice President of Franchise Developments for Franchise Concepts Dave Dahl estimates the group has roughly 150 stores across North America.

VARIETY OF CHOICE

According to Dahl, each of the group's brands is set apart by their extensive product offering and easygoing customer service. The Great Frame Up, for instance, offers a "warm and welcoming environment" to customers. They also offer the most comprehensive selection of frames and mats available in their industry, as well as a large selection of prints, posters, framed art, wall-hangings and structural pieces.

Each and every The Great Frame Up store – as well as every Deck the Walls and Framing & Art Centre store – offers a variety of framed art of that is displayed in a gallery area, which customers can view, purchase and bring home ready to hang. Their stores also offer unframed art, prints, and posters which customers can arrange to have framed to fit their décor. On top of that, a computerised catalogue system is present in each store, as well as online through the group's website shopforart.com. Customers who use that website can arrange to have specific pieces shipped directly to their local store.

Each individual store is also encouraged to carry a selection of "local art" – something that reflects the community they are in. If

there's a professional sports team nearby, they might carry art and products related to that team. Stores in New York, for example, include plenty of New York Yankees material. Locations in the Upper North East, meanwhile, include a lot of maritime art, while stores in the southern states have NASCAR-related products.



"Anything that's generally available in the art world is available in our stores," Dahl explains. "If you can buy it, you can buy it in our stores."

"We're set apart by our breadth of product offerings," he adds. "No one else in the industry offers the variety of choice that we do. We recognized very early on that that would be the key to our success, so we've made it a priority. Most other franchises and chain art

and framing businesses have different strategies. But we like ours, it works well for us, and we've never strayed away from it."

In addition to offering a large scope of products, The Great Frame Up also employs knowledgeable and extensively trained staff who are available to walk customers through



the selection process. With just a brief discussion about the home or office in which the finished art will hang, the company's designers and framers are capable of creating a "unique design sure to compliment a customer's room, personality, and style."

When it comes to their clients, Dahl says The Great Frame Up forms extremely close and long-standing relationships. Franchise Concepts forms the same kind of relation-

ships with their franchisees, who come from a wide variety of backgrounds. According to Dahl, he's seen franchises launched by everyone from nuclear physicists to plumbers to other professionals who retired from one career to start another.

"We're able to take people from all types of backgrounds and turn them into a business person," Dahl explains. "All someone needs is good communication and customer service skills. We can teach everything else."

"In terms of franchising opportunities, the costs range from \$112,000 to \$180,000 for a turnkey operation," he continues. "And we offer a complete service, first in terms of locating the correct marketplace for the area they want to be in, and then in selecting real estate within that marketplace."

From the start, Franchise Concepts leverages expertise and experience to help their franchisees achieve success. As part of that, the company makes sure that every franchise sets up shop in an area and address that is well-suited to their business. As a franchisor, Franchise Concepts is even willing to help negotiation better leasing prices from commercial property landlords. Historically,

they have also helped secure cost effective insurance rates or reduced fees for credit processing.

“We’re always trying to find the best possible space that fits our business model, and that balances location and cost,” Dave explains.

“We have a business model that we’ve been following for years, and it’s been very successful.”



From there, Franchise Concepts continues to support their franchisees with plenty of initial training and ongoing support. They also offer marketing support, and help franchisees adapt to advances in technology. For example, the group’s stores are all complemented with equipment that allows them to rapidly cut frames and matting to customer specification.

“We’re always early adopters of technology that comes into our industry,” Dahl says.

“Oftentimes, people who develop new technology in our industry come to us first, in order to have our stores act as test sites for new advances. We always look to be at the front edge of that technology, and once it’s proven, we then deliver it to the entire franchisee body.”

According to Dahl, Franchise Concepts also looks for advancements in that technology once it’s installed, going as far as working with the developer directly to come up with a solution tailored to their business. All franchisees benefit from that kind of forward-thinking.

“We’ve got one very specific program we’ve expanded beyond what is offered to the industry in general, to the point where it’s even renamed for our stores,” Dahl says.

Beyond that, Franchise Concepts fosters exceptionally close relationships with the many companies on their supply chain – which benefits their franchisees immensely. Unlike many other franchises, Franchise Concepts doesn’t wholesale the product of a specific manufacturer. Instead, they work with a variety of people and companies and use their size and scope to get better prices for their stores. That way, franchisees have the free-

dom to choose and work with the suppliers that are right for them and their customers.

THE HIGHEST PRIORITY

Franchise Concepts is an industry member of the international Professional Picture Framers Association (PPFA). Last year, their franchisees walked away with seven awards from that body, at both national and chapter levels. Dahl says those accolades are highly valued, especially because they come from their peers in the industry.

“We’re big supporters of the association,” he says. “In fact, the head of training for our company serves on the PPFA Board. He’s also a contributor to Picture Framing Magazine, which is the leading publication for the picture framing industry.”

In addition to being morale boosters, Dahl says the PPFA awards also helps get the word out on The Great Frame Up and their other brands, and the exceptional work they do at every location.

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Franchise Concepts celebrates that exceptional work in other ways, as well. For example, every year a large number of their franchisees attend the West Coast Art & Frame Expo in Las Vegas, which is one of the largest national trade shows for their industry. While there, Franchise Concepts hosts a special social function for their franchisees in attendance.

Throughout the rest of the year, the company's regional managers also host regional meetings in areas where they have "a density of stores."

"We encourage sharing success among our stores," Dahl says. "In fact, many of the best

ideas we come up with as a corporate identity aren't really developed by the corporate staff. They're polished by the corporate staff, but the idea usually traces back to a franchisee or group of franchisees who have tried something new – whether it's a product or an operating technique."

Moving forward, Dahl says Franchise Con-



cepts aims to continue encouraging that kind of innovation from within their ranks. They are also looking to bolster those ranks. Over the next few years, Dahl says they expect to grow all three of their brands, while also looking for other franchise opportunities outside of art and framing.

“The three brands we have today were all separate companies at one time, and we brought them together under the umbrella of Franchise Concepts” he explains. “We continue to look for other franchises and other opportunities for businesses that we could operate. They might not necessarily be in this industry – they might be in another sector of the retail or service industry. That’s part of our long term plan.”

When it comes to the franchisees they already have, meanwhile, Dahl says Franchise

Concepts will continue to work closely with them to grow their businesses and achieve their life goals.

“The success of our franchisees is our highest priority,” he says, quoting the company’s corporate slogan.

“We all live by that creed,” he concludes. “It’s absolute. So our number one goal in the future is to continue to offer the highest level of support to our franchisees.”

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