

11 WAYS TO IMPROVE THE VALUE OF FIELD VISITS



Field managers are employed to inform, inspect and inspire franchisees to higher levels of performance. And most franchisors spend 10-20 per cent of their royalty revenues on this important franchisee support function.

But field managers have a tough job, often working alone out on the road, and they don't always know what they are going to face when they walk through a franchisee's door.

Here we share 11 tips to help field managers deliver greater value and improve the effectiveness of their visits. These topics are covered in great depth in our Foundation and Advanced Field Manager Bootcamps.

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1 WORK UP A JOINT AGENDA WITH FRANCHISEES PRIOR TO YOUR VISITS

Collate a list of the things you both want to cover. Once the agenda is agreed don't deviate from these topics, but do allow time for discussion of additional issues.

2 HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE FOR EVERY VISIT

Ask yourself "If the visit were to go as well as it reasonably could, what would be achieved?" Imagine yourself achieving this result and how you would feel as a result. Review this in your mind just before you start each visit.

3 WHEN MAKING INITIAL CONTACT GIVE PEOPLE YOUR COMPLETE ATTENTION

Only after you have greeted the franchisee and their staff, and checked that everything is still on track for your visit, should you raise any compliance or business issues. You never know what has happened prior to your arrival so don't jump to conclusions.

4 BE FRIENDLY BUT NEVER FRIENDS

If you decide to socialise with a franchisee, for instance by having a meal together, always do this with a business purpose in mind. If you are spending time with a franchisee just because you enjoy their company you may be opening yourself and your company to a complicated relationship which is likely to go unpleasantly sour.

5 ARRIVE AT DECISIONS TOGETHER REGARDING THE MEANING OF DATA TRENDS

Although you may have done your own analysis, initially keep your conclusions to yourself as these may be incomplete without further information from the franchisee. A great outcome is arriving at conclusions together, which may be different and better than your own.

6 MAKE IT CLEAR WHY DATA IS BEING COLLECTED

They can sometimes be defensive or even a bit paranoid about how you intend to use their business information. Draw out any concerns and remind them your analyses are for the purpose of improving their profit.



7 EXPLAIN COMPLIANCE CHECKS IN TERMS OF BRAND PROTECTION

If a franchisee becomes defensive remind them how much money and effort has been invested in building the reputation of the brand and how quickly this can be undermined to the detriment of everyone.

8 KEEP CONVERSATIONS CONSTRUCTIVE

If a discussion goes negative stay solution focused by asking “What” questions. What do you want to see happen? What has been working? What can we do to help you move forward? Draw attention to what has been achieved and build on this.

9 FINISH VISITS ON A POSITIVE NOTE

The tone of your next visit will commence from where this visit ended. If the visit has been

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challenging, acknowledge this but also point out any positives that have been achieved. It is a good idea to make a short call a day or two afterwards to thank the franchisee for their focus and attention and reiterate the progress made during the visit.

10 LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND KEEP YOUR ENERGY HIGH

The energy you give out, which is a product of how you are feeling, will have more bearing on the effectiveness of your visits than any other single factor. Get enough sleep, exercise regularly and keep an adequate quota of fun in your life. Also spend time with positive people who care about you.

11 FINALLY, ALWAYS ASK THE MAGIC QUESTIONS AT THE END OF EVERY FIELD VISIT

“What was useful about this visit, and what could I do to make my next visit more useful for you?” These are powerful questions that demonstrate you care about the franchisee’s success. And you are likely to learn a lot about how to improve your own performance!

Greg Nathan is a psychologist, founder of the Franchise Relationships Institute (FRI) and author of several popular franchising texts including, *The Franchisors Guide to Improving Field Visits*. FRI conduct regular Bootcamps to improve the capability of field managers.

To find out more, go to www.franchisere relationships.com or contact events@franchisere relationships.com.