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FULLFILLING DREAMS

Slumberland Furniture sets its franchisees up for success from day one.

PIZZA PUSH

An aggressive push is bringing Rosati's Pizza's cuisine to new markets.

Thanks to industry-leading print and marketing communications capabilities, AlphaGraphics is supporting a growing base of franchisees.

By Eric Slack



Founded in Tucson in 1970, AlphaGraphics is a global leader in print and marketing communications. Now headquartered in Salt Lake City, the company has more than 275 locations in the United States, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. AlphaGraphics has been franchising since 1979, and all AlphaGraphics centers are locally owned.

Local Presence

From a product and service perspective, AlphaGraphics has a wide range of capabilities. Customers look to AlphaGraphics for solutions in areas such as digital and offset printing, direct mail, multi-channel marketing

campaigns, business cards, banners, brochures, signs and websites.

The locally owned franchise aspect of the company helps ensure that each AlphaGraphics location has a solid grasp of the needs of local markets. "Local ownership ensures that our centers are tied into the local communities and businesses," says Aaron Grohs, president. "Our goal is to provide innovative marketing communications solutions with a high level of personal service and value. We work with customers on all of their print, marketing and communication needs, helping business owners achieve improved results and more visibility for their brand."

This makes AlphaGraphics highly interesting to prospective franchisees, whether or not they have experience with the print and marketing communications industry. For a small independent printing business, it can be difficult to keep up with technological advancements, but AlphaGraphics can provide support such as purchasing power and world-class technology. "We offer franchisees and customers the latest technology innovations and solutions that are impacting the industry," Grohs says.

For those less knowledgeable about the printing business, AlphaGraphics is also attractive because of the level of training and marketing support it provides. "For people who want to be a small business owner, we are one of a few business-to-business franchise models," Grohs says. "We are attractive to entrepreneurs who want to engage in sophisticated business-to-business relationships in an exciting, quick-turnaround, custom manufacturing field that helps customers bring their brand to life through print and electronic communication."

The business-to-business element has additional advantages. Franchisees can leverage their skills, experience and community ties to build their business. AlphaGraphics Business Centers experience higher transaction rates and lower seasonality, and the graphic arts industry is respected and needed by other business owners.

"No two jobs are alike," Chief Development Officer David Buzza says. "Franchisees can express their own vision while staying true to our system standards. We have well-rounded solutions for owners that want to capitalize on the capabilities within this industry."

Ongoing Support

AlphaGraphics demonstrates its commitment to franchisees from the start. New franchisee training includes a rigorous four-week course of instruction in Salt Lake City. It begins with a general orientation to small business and moves into the depths of the graphics industry and the company's products and solutions. Franchisees are provided with training that helps them become proficient in business development and sales, and ongoing support is provided in financial, operational and marketing areas.

"We encourage engagement within our network through organized peer groups sharing best practices," Grohs says. "We also pair new owners with an onboarding partner who supports and guides them to help build a strong and healthy foundation for their business."

AlphaGraphics continues to invest in technologies, systems and support to enhance operations. One of its key initiatives is enhancing agOnline, a turnkey Web-to-Print marketing solution that is accessible to all franchisees.

"We just completed and selected our new platform for agOnline and are currently implementing it in each of our centers," Grohs says. "It presents an opportunity to help customers increase efficiency and reduce costs with online management of their print and marketing needs."

Management information systems (MIS) have been another focal point for AlphaGraphics. As the nerve center of the business model, it helps franchise owners estimate project costs and track performance.

"We implement common standards across the company to help franchisees have the best solutions," Grohs says. "Our goal is to integrate agOnline with our MIS production system, streamlining the online ordering and production process to lower costs and provide faster and better service to customers."

Additionally, AlphaGraphics is expanding its signage business. The company sees this as a strong growth area, which is why it is placing emphasis on enhancing its signage offerings and supporting customers with the most creative solutions.

With a strong history and a robust network of franchisees in place, AlphaGraphics is confident in its growth strategies. The company continues to find new and innovative ways to support franchisees through its national scale, by working closely with suppliers to deliver increased value and lower costs.

"Our goal is to find franchisees who can follow a proven system and utilize their management, sales and marketing skills as a core competency," Buzza says. "Our franchisees must be attentive to detail, problem-solvers, strong communicators and multi-taskers, capable of working in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment and able to build strong relationships with their customers."



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215 South State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 595-7259
www.alphagraphics.com