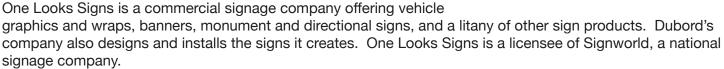
Chris wanted to

BE in control

A Sign of the Times

Outplaced East Lyme Man Opens One Look Signs Company

People across the country have felt the effects of downsizing and reorganizations within corporate America. With the job market still struggling to find its feet, many are securing their future while realizing a dream through entrepreneurship. Local East Lyme resident, Chris Dubord, did exactly that when he recently opened One Look Signs.



Dubord had worked as director of informational technologies for a major pharmaceutical corporation. Pharmaceutical companies have been at the forefront of downsizing, laying off as many as 45,000 people per year, according to statistics gathered by outplacement firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas.

After Dubord found himself out of work due to organizational changes, he utilized the services of a local outplacement firm in order to plan and enact his next career move. There, he attended a seminar on franchising given by Luc Deslauriers, a franchise consulting expert and owner of FranNet Connecticut. FranNet works with budding entrepreneurs to match them with franchise businesses.

"I was very interested in pursuing franchising as an opportunity for re-employment," said Dubord. "I was looking for something where I could utilize my engineering background in an industry like light manufacturing, and signage was an industry that jumped out to me."

Dubord is not alone in following his business-owning aspirations. According to the International Franchising Association, the governing body for all franchises, nearly 14,000 franchise outlets were added last year across the country. That number marked a two percent increase over 2011 and pumped an additional \$37 billion into the nation's economy.

"I always had a desire to run my own business," said Dubord. "With Luc's help, I was able to focus my search into a smooth and seamless process. I was able to speed up or slow down my decisions based on his insights and where I was in the process."

For more information on Dubord's One Looks Signs business, visit his website at www.onelooksigns.com.





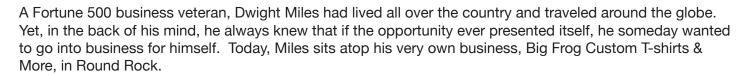
About FranNet

Dwight wanted to

BE an entrepreneur

BUSINESS VETERAN JUMPS ON T-SHIRTS FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITY

Local Man Opens "Big Frog Custom T-shirts & More" in Round Rock



Big Frog Custom T-shirts & More, a national franchise based in Dunedin, Fla., specializes in designing and printing custom t-shirts, apparel and other promotional items. With the company's direct-to-garment technology, customers can print individual shirts, a unique trait for retail t-shirt shops. The rapidly growing franchise has more than 30 locations across the country. This is Big Frog's third location in the Austin area, with other Texas locations already open in Houston and Dallas.

From the early beginnings of Miles' corporate career, hard work and managing a full load were never difficult for him. He started his ascent up the corporate ladder rather low-key as an intern at packaged food giant, Kraft Foods, while also playing baseball for the University of North Texas. Following several promotions, mergers, company moves and an M.B.A. later over the next 25-plus years, Miles eventually blossomed into the global marketing chief for Golf Pride Golf Grips.

He admittedly "took every job ever given to me," but was finding the burden of the travel and extended stays away from his family taking their tolls. After leaving Golf Pride and landing at consumer goods purveyor, ConAgra, the downsizing reality of corporate America caught Miles and he found himself out of work. But he knew his years in executive sales and marketing roles had prepared him for a leap into business ownership.

"My Dad was an entrepreneur, so it was always in my blood," said Miles. "I knew it was only a matter of finding the right fit and taking the leap. I knew if I took my same work ethic I've always had, and apply that to my own business, that I could be successful."

But Miles learned business success is more than simply desire. While attempting to launch a start-up business, Miles remained undeterred and continued to work the professional connections he had built throughout his career. In a stroke of fortuitous good fortune, Miles heard a speech about franchising opportunities by Kyle de Haas, a business consulting expert with FranNet of Central Texas, at one of his local networking meetings.

FranNet works with budding entrepreneurs to aid in their search for a franchise business and to sort through the plethora of information available and steps necessary.





"Dwight had an incredible skill set and great experience," said FranNet's de Haas. "I knew we would find a great fit for Dwight and he was so focused through the entire process."

After narrowing down his research to a handful of concepts, Miles began to focus on the Big Frog franchise.

"Kyle found Big Frog for me and it matched perfectly with what I knew – the consumer experience," admitted Miles. "Plus, with a franchise business, the franchise has already stubbed its toes to learn how to best operate its business. They present you with a plan to follow – and it really presents itself as a business kit. Couple that with outstanding customer service, and you're set up to succeed."

Miles is not alone is his business-owning aspirations. According to the International Franchising Association, the governing body for all franchises, nearly 14,000 franchise outlets will be added this year across the country. That numbers marks a two percent increase over 2011 and will pump an additional \$37 billion into the nation's economy. FranNet has actually seen even better results with a 33 percent increase in new franchise placements in the first quarter – all signs that a struggling economy is potentially on the mend.

Miles may know the key to a successful business. "I have everyone focused on outstanding customer service," said Miles. "About 70% of our business comes from referrals and repeat business, so our best salesperson is our customer."

Miles' Big Frog outlet is located at 2051 Gattis School Road, Round Rock, Texas, 78664. Or you can reach his store at (512) 341-0701 or online at www.bigfrog.com/roundrock.

About Big Frog Custom T-shirts

Big Frog Custom T-Shirts is a retail franchise concept offering environmentally friendly, direct-to-garment custom-imprinted items with no minimums, no art charges and 24-hour turnaround. There are currently more than 30 Big Frog franchises in 11 states throughout the U.S. The parent company is headquartered in Dunedin, Fla.

About FranNet

FRANNIASKS What do you want to BE?

Douglas & Karen wanted to

BE an example

Douglas Grochau spent more than 20 years in the full spectrum of finance functions, serving as a CPA, Controller, and Operations Finance Executive. He worked for Hilton Hotels and Intercontinental Hotels Group, providing strategic and operational business support for managed and owned assets, as well as running, redesigning and off-shoring support functions of shared service centers.



According to Douglas, "We decided it was time to start our own business, as my wife and I had been researching different possibilities for some time on our own." Karen was an attorney but did not want to return to the field of law at the moment, so they thought about businesses that would allow both of them to contribute.

"My wife and I were open to everything. We went through several discovery phases but kept coming back to the same idea," Douglas says. The Grochaus ultimately purchased an Omega Learning franchise in South Forsyth. "We always wanted to go out on our own, but we also wanted to set an example for our children by teaching them some of the nuts-and-bolts skills and exposing them to those things earlier in life. We want to help our children understand the various pieces of the business puzzle and build something we can pass along to them."

The business offers multiple revenue streams: tutoring, test prep, and a private academy, which appealed to Douglas. He liked that the business centered on helping kids and parents. "We have children in high school, middle school, and elementary school; thus, we find ourselves very plugged in to the community," he says.

When asked what he would do differently, Douglas answers, "I wish I had gotten involved with the Forsyth County Chamber earlier – they had all the information I needed and were very helpful with location selection and permitting issues during the build-out phase." He adds that his parents had their own businesses, so he understood he would have to wear a lot of different hats.

"The first year is a lot of work. No big surprise there!" says Douglas.

He has been surprised to discover that the tutoring business is not seasonal. "We have had a great summer and have been growing every month. We did a lot of marketing before we ever opened, so we had students when we opened the doors."



For others considering franchising, Douglas offers the following tips:

In researching, do your due diligence and get advice from others who have gone out on their own. Talk to franchisees other than those suggested by the parent company.

Don't get emotionally attached to a business concept. You have to choose the business that will best support your desired outcomes, and this is sometimes not what you expect.

Be prepared for long hours. It is very rewarding to be your own boss, but be ready to do a lot of different things and wear a lot of different hats.

You are buying a system, so be sure you follow it. It works!

In closing, Douglas says, "We don't want to grow so fast that we can't take good care of our customers."

FRANAIASKS What do you want to BE?

Jeannie wanted to

BEbalanced

Jeannie Moreira spent 20+ years working in corporate America, starting off in sales right after high school. After graduating college with a degree in Accounting, she worked in tax, accounting, and finance. Jeannie then transitioned into the operations side of the business, where she spent most of her time working in the customer services organization.



"The last couple of years at NCR, I oversaw operations for as many as 3,500 entry- to executive-level staff, managing customer relations, cost containment and reduction, quality assurance and human resources throughout the Americas," Jeannie says.

Additionally, she developed staff training; analyzed service metrics to identify areas in need of improvement; redesigned policies and procedures, and implemented solution-oriented programs, including the development of curricula and staff training programs, to directly impact bottom-line profitability.

Jeannie was responsible for policies, procedures, and reporting accuracy. "I developed analytics, control charts, and statistical assessments using Lean and Six Sigma principles to evaluate the cost efficiency of existing operational procedures and implement strategies and programs in line with process improvement initiatives," she explains.

When asked what led her to consider franchise ownership, Jeannie says, "For many years I had been thinking about owning my own business but never took the time to really explore those options. After spending 20+ years working in corporate America, I like many others was handed my 'pink slip'. I headed down the path of searching for similar types of corporate roles, all the while really trying to analyze what I really wanted to do. During this time, I attended different seminars, webinars, listening, learning, and becoming educated on the job-hunting processes of today. Fortunately, one of the seminars that I attended was where I met Leslie Kuban."

"My interest was piqued, as the opportunity presented itself to me – possibly a way for me to own my own business. I was already used to working 70+ hours per week, I already had the desire, and my passion to succeed and help others far exceeded my fears. It was then that I started to re-evaluate – I knew that I could not pursue looking for employment in corporate America while also pecking around the franchise world. I decided at that point to focus on pursing owning a franchise."

To Jeannie, franchising was a whole new world compared to what she had known. "This was a different language, and frustrating at times, not knowing what you did not know, not knowing what questions to even ask. I am so thankful that I had Leslie to help and hold my hand throughout the process."



Jeannie was initially surprised by the franchise options that were presented. She says, "I remember thinking 'this woman is giving me types of businesses that are ridiculous for me'...from cleaning businesses, to language businesses and the bug business, I thought – Really?"

But Jeannie kept an open mind and focused on the business model she and Leslie had created. Jeannie asked questions and looked for whether there was any synergy.

"Ultimately, I had narrowed my decision down to two franchises, and decided to go with Mosquito Squad. Once I was able to get past the perception of maybe being referred to as the 'bug lady' – I realized there is so much more! It was about the passion that I had in being able to give people back the freedom of being able to enjoy their backyards. It was about being able to become an expert in my field, where I can help educate and teach others how they can be safer as it pertains to the these types of pesky, nuisance bugs, while also helping to reduce and eliminate the diseases that these bugs are associated with," Jeannie says.

"In addition to the passion, it was the business model that I could align to - from the operational model to the financials. And it was about the franchisor – the people...Could I work with these individuals, do I feel like they are supportive...What great people! Everyone I met was willing to help – they all made me feel so welcomed, answered questions honestly, and really showed their personalities. It was not just the franchisor – but the other franchisees as well."

Jeannie continues to feel the passion for her business today. She admits that there are still challenges and unknowns, Jeannie is confident that she made the right decision. "Delighting the customer continues to drive me. Hearing from my clients that their friends comment and want to know 'how come you don't get bit from mosquitoes in your yard?' brings a smile to my face, and again reinforces what I am doing to make a difference in the lives of others."

When asked if she would do anything differently, she says, "The only thing that I would want to change is to have had the ability to have more time, prior to the season starting. I will probably be wishing this same thing next year!"

If I could offer any suggestions to others considering franchising, it would be as follows:

- Do your research and homework about the franchise(s) that you are considering. This includes not just searching on the internet, but talking to the franchisor AND the franchisees.
- Make sure that you are passionate about what it is that you will be doing.
- Ensure that you have enough capital In addition to whatever the suggested capital needed, a buffer of at least 20% is helpful and often needed, especially if you are expecting to draw a salary.

"Integrating my business passion with my other life passions is what the balance is all about. Doing so while being able to give something to others is like icing on the cake!" Jeannie says.

Kevin wanted to

BE supported

Former Executive Now Takes the Sting Out of Backyard Pests

Local Atlanta Man Opens Mosquito Squad Franchise

Kevin Lobdell spent 30 years in corporate finance roles with several companies. After Black and Decker ultimately bought Niscayah, the company for which he served as chief financial officer of its U.S. subsidiary, Lobdell was offered an early retirement, allowing him to utilize his career's worth of business experience and invest in himself through a Mosquito Squad franchise.



Mosquito Squad is the largest outdoor pest control company specializing in combating insect bites, as well as protecting families and pets from the dangerous diseases spread by insects, such as Lyme Disease, Encephalitis and West Nile Virus. Mosquito Squad has nearly 200 franchised locations across the U.S.

"Being in charge of the mergers and acquisitions at Niscayah in the U.S., I was constantly evaluating offers and trying to find value in companies we could potentially purchase," said Lobdell. "So being able to evaluate a franchise in much the same manner put me in an ideal position to select the right franchise for me."

After growing Niscayah's Atlanta headquarters from six employees to 51 in six years, and its revenues from \$50 million to \$150, Lobdell initially started a real estate development company following his departure from the company. He started his business from scratch and had to establish all the systems and support himself, and figured there had to be an easier way to go into business for himself.

He also wanted a business that would allow him to remain in Atlanta with his family. That's when Lobdell began to explore the opportunities in franchising. Through a professional networking group, Lobdell met Julie Denise, a franchise consulting expert with FranNet of Atlanta. FranNet works with budding entrepreneurs to match them with franchise businesses.

"I knew I didn't want to run the business forever," explained Lobdell in describing his search. "And I wanted something I could really sink my teeth into, then bring in a manager to manage the day-to-day portion of the business at some point."

After reviewing several franchise companies with Denise, Lobdell invested in the Mosquito Squad franchise. He pointed to several factors for selecting the franchise, including its niche market, the lack of competition, and the strong customer service Mosquito Squad boasts.



"It's received the prestigious 'World-Class Franchise' designation four years in a row by the Franchise Research Institute," said Lobdell. "It's a younger concept, but it's not brand new and has a strong track record of success. You know the company is doing well when others start to copy it."

And Lobdell is not alone in following his business-owning aspirations. According to the International Franchising Association, the governing body for all franchises, nearly 14,000 franchise outlets were added last year across the country. That number marked a two percent increase over 2011 and pumped an additional \$37 billion into the nation's economy.

Lobdell also pointed out a misperception in his opinion of going into business for himself.

"I felt I should only look at industries in which I had experience," admitted Lobdell. "I didn't know anything about pest control, but what I did know was how to use my experience and skill set to manage and grow my business. Mosquito Squad provided me everything I needed to know about their business."

For information on Lobdell's Mosquito Squad franchise, visit his website at www.atlantane.mosquitosquad. com or he can also be reached at 678-765-6530.

About FranNet

FRANNIASKS What do you want to BE?

Rick wanted to

BE reinvented

A Growing Business Growing People

Twinsburg Man Opens Sandler Training Center

Twinsburg, Ohio (October 2, 2013): Instability and uncertainty in corporate America is causing many to turn to themselves to secure their financial and business futures. And after 24 successful years in commercial sales for several of North America's largest steel and aluminum distribution centers, that's exactly what Rick McDermott did when he recently opened McDermott Professional Solutions Inc., a licensed Sandler Training® center located in Twinsburg, Ohio.



Rather than the traditional day-long training typically including a box lunch and a sales binder, Sandler Training provides ongoing reinforcement training addressing attitude, behavior and technique that are customized to the individual client. Its clients are finding traditional revenue streams drying up as competition from web based sales are commoditizing once robust markets. Now clients are looking to reinvigorate their sales staffs to keep up with changing market dynamics.

Prior to finding Sandler, however, McDermott did some soul searching feeling as though there was a better option and chose to put his future in his own hands.

"I felt there was a higher calling than what I was doing," explained McDermott. "I was looking for that certain 'wow' factor out of my business life. I have a strong passion to help people and felt owning this business was the optimal route for me."

McDermott said he began by taking an inventory of his skill sets and laying out the goals that he sought for himself and his family. Those goals touched on all aspects of his life, including his family, his desire to reinvent his own future, and his need to establish a long-term wealth-building strategy. All signs continued to point to his ingrained entrepreneurial spirit suggesting he start his own business.

Through the outplacement services offered by his former employer, McDermott attended a seminar on franchising given by Tracy Rickman, a franchise consulting expert and owner of FranNet Northern Ohio. FranNet works with budding entrepreneurs to match their skill sets, goals and budgets, among other things, with franchise businesses.

"Franchising really caught my eye because it's essentially a business in a box," said McDermott. "I could work a lifetime and not build a brand like what a franchise has already done. And FranNet made it easy to discover the business model that fit me best."



McDermott said he liked the Sandler Training business model due to the low inventory, its scalability and his comfort in a sales position. He also liked the idea of helping those who used to be in his shoes -- sales professionals and business owners who are looking to close the gaps on revenue and profits through training and executive development.

McDermott is not alone in following his business-owning aspirations. According to the International Franchising Association, the governing body for all franchises, nearly 14,000 franchise outlets were added last year across the country. That number marked a two percent increase over 2011 and pumped an additional \$37 billion into the nation's economy.

"I was really looking for an opportunity to bond with like-minded individuals through my business," explained McDermott. "Sandler is that business."

For more information on McDermott's Sandler Training business, call 330-352-2986, or email him at rmcdermott@sandler.com.

About FranNet

The Wagner's wanted to

BE with family

New Spa is a Family Affair

Husband and Wife Team with Daughter to Launch Business

After 30 years in corporate America, you could say that Keith Wagner needed to recharge his batteries. But rather than simply going to a spa for a relaxing massage, Wagner decided to open his own spa to allow others to recharge theirs. Wagner and his wife, Diana, opened Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa in the Hill Country Galleria in Bee Cave, a business managed by the couple's daughter, Brittany.



Hand & Stone is a franchise specializing in several therapeutic massages, as well as facials and waxing. The business opened its doors in October.

"We always loved the concepts behind health and wellness," said Keith Wagner. "With Hand & Stone, literally, we found a feel good business."

Keith spent his career spanning 30-plus years in business operations performing planning analysis and sales forecasts for several high-tech companies. Many corporate moves and mergers starting in the Silicon Valley eventually landed the Wagners in Austin with Cirrus Logic. In 2006, Keith was brought aboard Advanced Micro Devices leading cross-functional project management teams.

And as is the case across America, AMD announced a 20 percent reduction in its workforce and offered Keith an early retirement about a year ago. Still too young to consider a permanent life on a golf course, Keith and Diana considered the next phase of their lives and began to deeply consider their lifelong dream of owning their own business.

"We brought different skills to the table that we knew would translate well to operating our own business," said Diana Wagner, a successful controller for Avnet. "I have a great job, so we were looking for opportunities that we both would like and could have an interest in, and that I could work in my off hours."

Through his early retirement, Keith was given access to the services of an outplacement firm, where he attended a seminar on business ownership. That's where Keith met Kyle de Haas, a franchise consulting expert with FranNet of Central Texas, and the man who gave the seminar. FranNet works with budding entrepreneurs to match them with franchise businesses. Through their research, one of the businesses that surfaced to the top was the Hand & Stone franchise.

"We had a good overview of what it took to run a business," said Keith, in describing his initial interest in the massage franchising concept. "Couple that with the infrastructure, and the sales and marketing support Hand & Stone brought, we knew we could be successful executing against the business plan we had created."



The Wagners tout Hand & Stone's strong commitment to its customers as one of its driving forces. "There's no long-term commitment necessary," said Diana. "We didn't want people to feel like they were buying a gym membership." They do, however, offer memberships that provide discounts on services and products that start at \$49.95 per month.

The signature massage of Hand & Stone is the "Hot Stone Massage," a proprietarily-designed therapy created by the franchise's founder, John Marco, who found a specific protocol by which heated stones are used in combination with massage strokes. The stones add heat directly to the client's body allowing deeper penetration into the muscles.

The Wagners are not alone in their business-owning aspirations. According to the International Franchising Association, the governing body for all franchises, nearly 14,000 total franchise outlets were added last year across the country. That numbers marked a two percent increase over 2011 and pumped an additional \$37 billion into the nation's economy.

The business has provided few surprises to the Wagners as they embark on their entrepreneurial careers.

"The most surprising thing was that Diana agreed to it," Keith joked. "In all seriousness, though, we've fallen in love with the business."

For information on utilizing the Wagners' Hand & Stone massage services, call 512-263-2227 or visit their website at www.handandstone.com/spa/texas/bee-cave.

About FranNet

FRANAIASKS What do you want to BE?

Will wanted to

BE a mentor

Midlothian, Va. (May 24, 2013): For the past 17 years, Will Vehrs manned the Virginia Business Information Center, where he counseled and trained would-be entrepreneurs on the steps necessary to start a business. After seeing many realize their dreams of business ownership, Vehrs materialized his own entrepreneurial vision and ultimately opened an Express Employment Professionals franchise.

"I started thinking about my future, and thought, 'Why not take my own advice?" pondered Vehrs. "I was ready to invest in myself and set in motion a plan to make that happen."



Vehrs, 60, grew up in Manassas, Va., and served four years in the Army and ultimately earned the rank of Captain in the Army Reserve. Following the military, he spent 17 years with Mobil Oil Corporation in marketing, operations and facilities management. As the company looked to reorganize, Vehrs took advantage of a severance package buyout from the organization.

In 1996, Vehrs joined the Virginia Department of Business Assistance (VDBA) to launch an arm of the agency focused on economic development. Vehrs worked with entrepreneurs across the commonwealth, including inmates, to assist their start-up aspirations. Then in 2003, in what Vehrs calls perhaps his "proudest professional moment," he founded another agency under VDBA, the Virginia Business Information Center, a sort of one-stop shop businesses could go to find pertinent information to aid their company's growth.

"Before the Virginia Business Information Center launched, businesses would have to go to several state agencies to find key information they needed," said Vehrs. "We brought all that under one roof. I started the Center with one phone and an 800 line. Today, the Center handles about 20,000 calls per year. It was incredible to see it come to fruition."

As Vehrs saw other businesses start, he began to contemplate his own future. Through educational outreach the Center offered, he met Heather Rosen, a franchise consulting expert and owner of FranNet of Washington, DC, and Northern Virginia. FranNet works with budding entrepreneurs to match them with franchise businesses.

Rosen invited Vehrs to attend one of her seminars as a speaker to talk about entrepreneurial opportunities. He spoke at the meeting, but was so moved by the opportunities he heard at the seminar, he decided to establish a small business of his own.

"The more I heard about franchising opportunities, the more excited I became," recalled Vehrs of his initial interest. "I felt like a franchise could jumpstart me a little quicker (than starting a business on his own)."



Through their research, one of the businesses that surfaced to the top was Express Employment Professionals, a full-service staffing and recruiting firm. Vehrs liked the quick break-even model, the support from the headquarters office, as well as the company's local focus on helping communities.

"I'm the local owner-operator, so when my clients have opportunities or issues, they call me," explained Vehrs. "They're not calling some far away headquarters office; they're calling me. I feel that's very important to know and understand the community, and that helps to know and understand my clients' businesses. And with that local focus, I bring the assets and resources of a major national company."

Vehrs' business offers a full range of employment solutions, including evaluation hire, temporary staffing, professional search and human resources. The core of Vehrs' business enables companies to reduce their human resources overhead while managing workflow.

And Vehrs is not alone in following his business-owning aspirations. According to the International Franchising Association, the governing body for all franchises, nearly 14,000 franchise outlets were added last year across the country. That number marked a two percent increase over 2011 and pumped an additional \$37 billion into the nation's economy.

"I wanted to find an opportunity that was a great fit for me," said Vehrs. "With Heather's help, I was able to focus my search into a smooth and seamless process. And I couldn't be happier with Express Employment. I've become part of the family."

For information on Vehrs' Express Employment Professionals business, visit their website at www. expresspros.com and search for the Midlothian, Va., location. He can also be reached at 804-446-6100.

About FranNet