

What do you want to **BE**?

Daryl wanted to

BE *closer to home.*

From Software Consultant to Restaurateur, Entrepreneur Serves Up Soups, Salads and Sandwiches

Daryl Hunter becomes first Zoup! Fresh Soup Company franchisee in Canada



Daryl Hunter enjoyed his career as a software consultant, but the constant travel demands eventually wore out their welcome. In 2011, Hunter realized his business ownership aspirations, becoming the first Zoup! Fresh Soup Company franchisee in Canada with the opening of his uptown Waterloo, Ontario location. But his dream didn't stop there. Just four years later, Hunter is now the owner of three locations throughout Southwestern Ontario, including one in downtown Kitchener and the other in London, Ontario.

"I loved my previous career as a software consultant, but I hated the travel," said Hunter. "My wife and I always had that entrepreneurial spirit and we knew it was time to look for something a little closer to home. That's when we started the process."

The "process" began when Hunter attended a franchise show in London, Ontario. He recalls being completely overwhelmed after walking into the convention and seeing the number of different franchise concepts to choose from. Also exhibiting at this show was Dave Broughton, FranNet franchise consultant of FranNet Southwestern Ontario. Broughton works with individuals considering business ownership to match them with a franchise business.

"Dave's booth was the last one I visited that day," said Hunter. "And it was a nice change from the typical 'sales' approach I had been experiencing."

Hunter was particularly interested in franchising because of the added security a franchise is able to provide by way of established systems and procedures. He saw a parallel between his previous career of installing systems in different places to now taking a proven franchise system and establishing it in a new market. He decided to meet with Broughton to learn more about the different franchise options available to him.

Meeting with Broughton, Hunter took a Personal Franchise Assessment (PFA), a sort of personality test of a person's business acumen. The assessment looks at an individual from many facets, including his behaviour profile, risk tolerance and financial background. Hunter's PFA was then used to help identify franchises that would align best with his attributes.

"Dave was an impartial resource," said Hunter. "We talked about my skillsets, wants and needs and how those fit in the franchising game."

Working together, Broughton introduced a few franchise concepts that aligned with Hunter's goals and skillsets. One of these concepts was Zoup! Fresh Soup Company, and Hunter was drawn to the concept right away.

He liked the idea of entering the fast-casual industry, and felt that the business' operational hours were in line with what he was looking for. He also enjoyed the corporate culture and the story behind the award-winning



soups, salads and sandwiches the restaurant served. But Hunter was also looking for a unique opportunity, one with growth potential, and he was able to find that in Zoup! Fresh Soup Company.

The franchise had yet to come to Canada from the U.S. So when Hunter opened his first location in Waterloo, Ontario in June 2011, he was the franchise's first franchisee in Canada. And that wasn't the only exciting event occurring at that time. Just eight days after opening, Hunter and his wife welcomed triplets.

Two years later, Hunter opened his second location and his third earlier this year. Although he and his wife had hopes of multi-unit ownership from the start, they knew that those plans would be determined by the success of their first location.

"Our product is fantastic," said Hunter. "One of my favourite places I've ever visited was New Orleans. I took a cooking class while I was there and the roux we made tastes exactly like the crawfish étouffée that we offer at Zoup!"

Since opening, Hunter was honoured by the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce with the Small Business of the Year award in 2015. He has also received honours from the franchisor and currently serves as an official training location for corporate's Canadian operations.

"Where we really thrive is helping customers who are looking for a quicker, healthier option out there. Especially for lunch," said Hunter. "I think the intangible of Zoup! is so appealing. Just the thought of soup conjures feelings of warmth, comfort and wellbeing."

For more information or to visit one of Hunter's three Zoup! Fresh Soup Company locations, visit www.zoup.com or call 519-747-9687 for Waterloo, Ontario; 619-747-9687 for Kitchener, Ontario; or 519-685-9687 for London, Ontario.

For those interested in business ownership opportunities in Southwestern Ontario, contact Dave Broughton at 519-858-1614 or visit www.frannet.ca.

About Zoup! Fresh Soup Company

Zoup! Fresh Soup Company is a leading fast-casual soup restaurant concept offering award-winning soups, salads and sandwiches. Soup varieties rotate daily and include low-fat, vegetarian, dairy-free, gluten-free and spicy options. Zoup! Fresh Soup Company has received numerous accolades from publications like *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Fast Casual Magazine* and *Nation's Restaurant News* to name a few. For more information, visit www.zoup.com.

About FranNet

FranNet is North America's most respected leader in matching individuals with franchise ownership opportunities. Founded in 1987, FranNet has more than 100 experienced consultants across the United States, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom. FranNet uses a proprietary profiling and consultative process to determine a business model unique to each client's goals, skill sets and interests, and has matched thousands of prospective business owners to rewarding small business franchise opportunities. Based in Louisville, Kentucky, FranNet has been recognized by *Inc.* magazine as one of the fastest growing private companies in America for the last five years.