

Noteworthy Events

FRANCHISE EXPO SOUTH



February 11-13, 2016
Houston, TX

International Franchise Expo



June 16-18, 2016
New York City

Entrepreneurs' Optimism Shifts into High Gear as Investment Interest in High-End Franchises Doubles

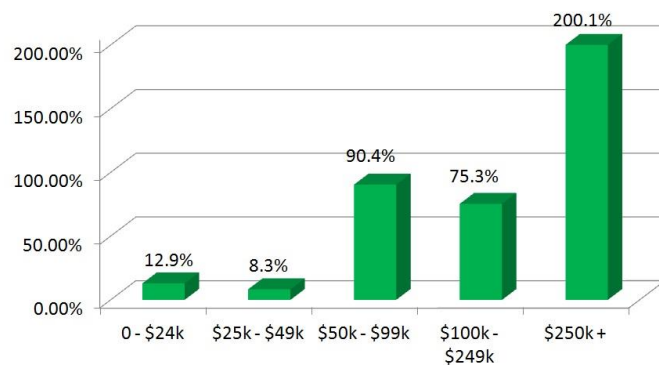
Posted by FranchiseNews.com —

Atlanta, GA – A surge in high-dollar franchise investment inquiries signals growing optimism among entrepreneurs, as small-business owners and prospects look ahead to growth in the U.S. economy.

Interest in franchises requiring more than \$100,000 has nearly doubled over the past two years, and interest in \$250,000+ businesses has tripled, according to the latest research from the largest network of online franchise directories.

High-Value Prospects *Growing Faster*

Increase in Leads by Investment Level, 2013-2015



Source: Landmark Interactive Franchise Sites (Franchise.com, FranchiseAdvantage.com, FranchiseGator.com, FranchiseOpportunities.com, FranchiseSolutions.com)

(A note from our office): We do know that funding is more readily available with SBA lending at an all-time high from previous years. Does a higher investment give you a higher income? Does a higher investment have a higher success rate? There are many factors that determine what is best for “you”! Work with our office to help match the right person to the right franchise!



Pet Care Industry in 2015 at a Glance

Everybody's Best Friend

The pet industry in the United States and many other countries is booming. Americans, for example, own more pets than ever before. Growth in the sector is derived both from increasing pet ownership as well as from increased spending per pet. Pet pampering is becoming the norm, as pet owner spending has moved far beyond simple food and grooming expenses to include innovative and specialized premium products. The bottom line: people increasingly view their pets as part of the family and are willing to spend even during difficult economic times.

According to the American Pet Product Association (APPA), Americans spent approximately \$47.7 billion on pet products and services in 2010, an increase of 4.8% over 2009. Since 1988, pet ownership has expanded from 56% of households to 62%. That's 71.4 million homes! Often one animal just isn't enough: some 46% of all households own more than one pet. Cats slightly outnumber dogs, but one or the other can be found in at least one out of three homes.

Pet franchise options continue to grow. Some questions to ask:

- Do you want a Mobile business?
- Are there home-based pet franchise opportunities?
- A retail operation?
- What is best for you?
- What is your budget?
- What are YOUR goals?

Contact our office to find out more about pet franchise availability and requirements.

6 Communities Small Business Owners Should Join

Make connections and learn the ropes from seasoned entrepreneurs.

Starting and running a small business can be extremely rewarding, but the venture is not without its set of challenges and stressors. There are more than 28 million small businesses in the U.S., according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, which means you are not alone. If you are in the process of [launching an entrepreneurial venture](#) or are facing a few obstacles with an existing business, don't be afraid to reach out for some help from experienced business owners through online support communities and offline networking groups.

Here are six of the most valuable support communities for small business owners.

SBA Small Business Development Centers

The U.S. Small Business Administration maintains several [Small Business Development Centers](#) around the country. These are designed to provide assistance to small business owners and entrepreneurs in the form of free business consulting services, affordable training programs and valuable guidance. SBDC assistance is available in every state, and many centers are located in area community colleges and universities. Business owners can apply for counseling to explore opportunities and access the resources they need to manage their business successfully.

StartupNation

[Launching a startup](#) can be overwhelming. Entrepreneurs who need help making business connections or want to learn the ropes from seasoned professionals can join [StartupNation](#) for insider tips and strategies. The site features comprehensive guides on starting and managing a startup, and members can access private groups and forums to participate in discussions and contribute success stories – or share challenges. This is a growing online community with a wealth of resources for business owners in any industry.

American Express Open Forum

In addition to its library of tips and guides for running and maintaining a business, the [American Express Open Forum](#) hosts a series of webinars and in-person events at various locations throughout the year. The online articles and guides can be especially helpful for small business owners who are looking for expert advice from other small business

owners. Entrepreneurs and small business owners looking for networking opportunities can participate in boot camp sessions promote Small Business Saturday events and get to know other business owners through conferences held in larger cities throughout the year.

Entrepreneur.com

This popular magazine's website is chock full of valuable tips, resource guides and information relevant to entrepreneurs across all industries. From [productivity tips of successful people](#) to how-to guides explaining the ins and outs of online marketing, the site serves as a one-stop shop for any business owner looking for advice from leading experts in the industry. The company also runs an [Entrepreneur Coaching program](#) where business owners can work through a strategy session and learn how to run and grow their business with the help of an experienced coach.

Small Biz Nation on LinkedIn

Jump over to LinkedIn for small business advice from business owners around the globe. This group is comprised of industry experts and technology leaders from HP and Intel – participants can get advice from business marketing strategists, operations managers, consultants and CEOs. With more than 20,500 members, this is one of the more active [LinkedIn online networking groups](#) and offers a wealth of opportunities for small business owners to [make connections and gain valuable insights](#) from leading experts.

Small Business Forum

One of the larger online business forums dedicated to small business owners, [Small Business Forum](#) features a range of topics related to business opportunities, franchises, sales and marketing and business law, among others. Even though it can be challenging to find answers to specific topics, it's fairly easy to get a response from active users and participate in discussions. Visitors can introduce themselves in a dedicated section to get to know other community members, get advice about writing a business plan and take advantage of low-cost services available to the community at large. From online discussion forums to in-person networking events, there is a wealth of [resources available to small business owners](#) and entrepreneurs who need some extra help, motivation and support. You don't have to go at it alone, no matter what type of industry you work in or what type of venture you are running. Turn to some of these resources available free of charge.



The Boys of Baton Rouge: 1 Year Later

You may remember our email last year discussing two of the youngest franchisees ever to join AdvantaClean, Bradley Lynch and Steven Sanders- two long-time friends with very different backgrounds and limited experience.

Bradley graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in Civil Engineering. Immediately, he hit the ground running and volunteered as a geographic information system analyst for the United Nations during Cyclone Nagis in 2008. This project gave him essential experience in disaster-relief and a taste for the light environmental business that AdvantaClean specializes in. Bradley also spent time as a designer and technician for several engineering firms and quickly worked his way up to project management. His Co-owner Steven, also attended LSU and carries with him business efficiency—from the newsstand, to the United States Post Office, then to FEDEX as a courier— until joining Bradley in opening AdvantaClean of Metro Baton Rouge.

In June 2014, Bradley Lynch and Steven Sanders opened their AdvantaClean business in Baton Rouge, LA. In their 3rd month in business, they topped over \$60,000 in sales. The Boys of Baton Rouge possess an unparalleled drive to continually build and grow their business. With the help from our training, coaching and marketing efforts they have done just that.

Where Are They Now?

Fast forward to 2015, and Bradley and Steven have experienced a tremendous amount of growth in their new business.

- **Largest Month- \$73,000 in July (more than their first three months combined!) 2015 Gross YTD: \$335,000**
- **Jobs booked for November? \$45,000**
- **Gross for 2015? North of \$400,000 after only 18 months of opening the business.**

Every year franchisees are invited to participate in a strategic growth planning process provided through the home office to set goals and key initiatives for continuing to grow their businesses in the upcoming year. The Boys of Baton Rouge have set their goals high and plan to hit the **\$1,000,000** mark in 2016.



Nutella Stuffed Sugar Cookies

Servings: 24 Cookies / Prep: 25 Minutes / Cook: 9 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter (*softened*)
- 2 cup granulated sugar (*divided*)
- 1 egg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup Nutella

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Set bowl aside.
2. Using a stand mixer (or a hand mixer + large bowl), add in butter and 1 and 1/2 cup sugar. Beat on medium speed until fluffy, about 2-3 minutes.
3. Keeping speed on medium, add vanilla and egg to bowl, mixing for another 1-2 minutes.
4. Remove mixer from bowl. Using a spatula or a large spoon, slowly add the dry ingredients in with the wet ingredients. If needed, knead the dough with your hands to make sure all the dry ingredients are absorbed.
5. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and chill dough for 1 hour.
6. While dough chills, line a large baking sheet (that can fit in your freezer) with parchment paper. Spoon out 1-2 tsp of Nutella (about the size of a dime) and place it on the parchment paper. If possible, try to keep Nutella in ball or oval shapes.
7. Place tray of Nutella in the freezer while dough chills.
8. When dough is set, preheat oven to 350 degrees F. To prep for cookies: Line another 1-2 baking sheets with parchment paper, fill a small bowl with 1/2 cup sugar, place, bring sugar cookie dough and Nutella over to your workspace, and have a few wet and dry paper towels handy.
9. To assemble the cookies: Scoop 1-2 tsp of sugar cookie dough into your hand and flatten it into a pancake about 1 inch wide. Repeat this step with another piece of dough. Place a ball of frozen Nutella on the top of the first sugar cookie patty, then place the second sugar cookie patty on top of the Nutella. Gently pinch the two dough pieces around the sides so that the cookie is sealed. Loosely roll the cookie between the palm your hands, forming an oblong ball, then roll cookie in sugar. Place finished cookie on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat these steps with the rest of the dough and Nutella, spacing cookies 2 inches apart. Use the wet and dry paper towels to remove excess Nutella from your hands. If you need to bake the cookies in batches, place the unused dough and Nutella back in the refrigerator/freezer until ready for next batch.
10. Bake cookies for 9-11 minutes, or until the very edges and bottoms of the sugar cookies begin to turn golden brown. Cookies may be puffy - this is okay, they will deflate as they cool.
11. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
12. Store cookies in an airtight container for up to 5 days. Cookies are best after "resting" for one day after baking.