

Fresh start delivers

Claire Heaney

LIKE many people over a certain age, Graham Adams remembers having milk delivered by the milkman.

But it wasn't until he was working in the milk industry and the Australian company was overtaken by a multi-national that he started thinking about how the humble milkman could be the basis for a new business.

"I remember the days when the milkman was around but I thought I could update it for the 21st century," he said.

While he had no plans to resurrect the horse and cart he wanted to return to good old-fashioned service.

But a key also was providing 100 per cent Australian produced and owned goods.

Mr Adams said after he left his job he put his mind to launching Aussie Farmers Direct.

He carried out market research that

indicated while people had busier lifestyles they were keen to get good, well-priced fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs and bread.

He launched in the Cranbourne and Narre Warren areas to service the many young families in the neighbourhood.

He said he was able to source goods through contacts.

Over the past 22 months the business has developed and now has nearly 30 franchises. It has also just expanded to Sydney.

The delivery is free and Mr Adams said the cost of goods was competitive and often cheaper than supermarket prices.

"We are cutting out the middleman and are very competitive and the food is a lot fresher," he said.

He hopes to expand to Melbourne's north-east and then western suburbs.

His franchises cost around \$100,000 and were generally appealing to young families keen to own their own small business.

Franchisees load up goods from midnight and start delivering until 7am.

Three afternoons a week fresh fruit and vegetables are delivered.

"We have had absolutely sensational feedback, people are thanking us for giving them the ability to buy Australian products," he said.

He said he anticipated there could be 300 franchises along the east coast of Australia.

□ Net link: www.aussiefarmers.com.au



Milk shake-up: home delivered groceries are making a comeback.

'I REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN THE MILKMAN WAS AROUND BUT I THOUGHT I COULD UPDATE IT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.'

Homework vital in franchises

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BUYING an existing business or franchise is an attractive option for many people looking to strike out on their own and run their own business.

You only have to walk along a busy shopping strip or visit a shopping centre to see the proliferation of franchises.

Hardly a week goes by that some new franchise concept is not floated.

According to the Franchise Council of Australia, the industry is worth in excess of \$80 billion a year and employs more than 600,000 people.

The idea is to buy a proven business model, with a recognisable brand, systems and a network of established suppliers.

Think McDonalds, Baker's Delight, Brumbys, Gloria Jeans, Subway, 7-11 and KFC, for instance.

If you are the creative type who likes to run your own race, the idea of adhering to a franchise system might not appeal to you.

From time to time franchising gets some bad press, namely because, like all businesses, not all of them work all the time and some people do lose money.

There have been ongoing concerns about disclosure to potential franchisees and where they stand should the franchisor fail.

Franchises can cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000 plus ongoing fees, but a smaller one-man gardening business, requiring little skill, has an entry level much lower than that.

Naturally, when it comes to franchises, the same common sense lessons apply for any business. Do your homework and before you sign, find out if you have a territory so you won't be competing with a fellow franchisee around the corner.

Talk to existing franchisees to gauge their level of satisfaction.

If the franchisor is reticent to put you in contact with existing franchisees that is not a good sign.

Ensure there is plenty of training available.

□ This is an edited extract from *101 Ways To Kickstart Your Business* by *Business Owner* editor Claire Heaney, Wilkinson Publishing, rrp. \$29.95. ISBN9781921332050

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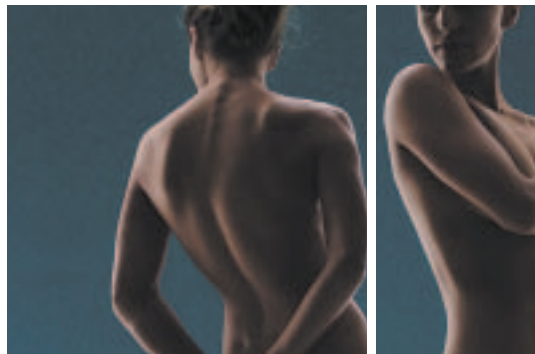
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