

Red and white Fish Window Cleaning logo

Franchisee Q&A

Tell Us A Little About You

Tim Weissman sitting in a room with a lamp and tree in the background.

Tim Weissman

Houston, TX – 2008

Tim Weissman: My name's Tim Weissman. I'm from Houston, TX, and I opened in 2008. My wife and I had been looking for an opportunity, something to do, because in my previous life I was a clinical psychologist and I really just got burned out and wanted to do something else outside of psychology. Not being a business person I wasn't sure what to do cause I'd spent a long time in college you know. My area of specialty was trauma so I worked with war veterans. In Houston they have a very large veterans hospital. It's actually the second largest building in the country, federal building behind the Pentagon. It's the Houston VA Medical Center and I worked there helping most of the Iraqi and Afghanistan war vets and it was tough work and I was getting really burned out.

How Did You Find FISH?

Tim: Being a clinical psychologist looking for another business opportunity I wasn't sure where to start and I was up late one night researching business opportunities and found entrepreneur.com and discovered franchising as a concept. I didn't even know about it really. You hear about franchises exist but I didn't really understand what it meant and so I started going down and researching all these different opportunities and came across a franchise consultant company. And I thought well you know I'm gonna give them a call and so I did and after several interviews where they got to know me, got to know what I was interested in, they told me about different concepts that they thought fit what I was looking for. You know the things I wanted were family friendly, low cost to enter, resilient, strong business model that had a proven track record, those types of things.

How Did You Feel About A Window Cleaning Franchise?

Tim: When the franchise consultant said here's this window cleaning company me being Dr. Weissman and then thinking I'm gonna be cleaning windows on the street? What's going on here? And so it was a little bit, I wasn't sure what to make out of it. But I really thought it through and realize that the model was really strong and it had it checked off all the boxes I was looking for. I wanted to spend more time with my family so I wanted holidays off, I wanted weekends off, those types of things. I didn't want to be working 12-15 hour days and FISH had all of that and so I thought well, you know, I'm gonna consider this.

Why Did You Choose FISH?

Tim: What really sealed the deal for my wife and I was since we did not have a business background, we weren't sure what to make of all of the claims of you know this model's going to work or not. And so we thought well if don't really have the experience to analyze the business from a business perspective how am I gonna analyze it? So I analyzed it from what I knew which was a psychological perspective. Do I feel these individuals these people that are telling me about this model have integrity, are honest, are

genuine? And if I believe those things, based on how I'm interacting with them then I don't really need to check out all the little things they're telling me. If I believe this person has integrity well then I'm just gonna take the leap. And so that was the way we did it and from literally the beginning we knew instantly when we met Mike Merrick that this was an individual who had integrity, was honest, and who genuinely wanted to help us build a business. It was true then and we knew it and it's been true ever since. That's really what sold us on FISH.

What Was Your Start-Up Like?

Tim: Our start-up was probably unique. I get calls from people who are interested in getting into FISH and they frequently ask you know what it was like early on and where we're at now and I always tell them to take it a little bit with a grain of salt because I was extremely motivated when I started and precisely because my background was being a clinical psychologist. When I left the hospital I had to tell all my friends and family and colleagues that I was turning away from a very secure federal job where I had a whole career path laid out in front of me and benefits, and retirement, and all that good stuff, prestige of being Dr. Weissman in a hospital setting and now I'm gonna go clean windows. And so for me failure really was not an option. I was not going to go back to everybody and say yeah remember that idea I had a couple years ago about the window cleaning thing? Well yeah now I need to be a psychologist again. So that wasn't gonna happen. I was going to succeed and there was nothing that was going to stop it so from literally the first day I just I went out every single day and just made it happen. I had a very very large fire in my belly to make sure that we succeeded and so I think because of that, the failure is not an option mentality we just went out off like a rocket you know and we did some really high production numbers in our first full year.

How Is Your Business Today?

Tim: We've got three territories today and they're all contiguous and so we're able to run it out of one office. And we're doing about 300-500 jobs per week. We print out tickets every week and they average somewhere in that range.

Tell Us About Your Structure

Tim: We've got about 20 employees. Probably 4 of them are staff in the office. We have an office manager, we've got 2 admins, my wife who does a lot of accounting, and then myself. And then we've got about 14 or so technicians. So our business is 81% commercial and 19% residential. We have made the decision to really focus on the commercial side. Primarily because that's where our bread and butter is. That is the consistent work that our guys are able to count on, all of our technicians. The residential side is wonderful, it's great, but it's the commercial side that really supports the business and keeps it going. And so that's where we put most of our focus.

What Makes A Good Franchisee?

Tim: Well I think that what really makes a FISH franchisee successful is having that fire in the belly. I know that's really been the case for me. I'm very organized but I'm really motivated. What's great about being a small business owner that every single day, all the effort that I put forth I'm getting back. When you work for a corporation, you don't really get that back. In some ways it's almost addicting to put forth all that effort and see the growth and understand that every day that the business is growing you and your family are gonna have the direct benefit. And so it's almost like a self perpetuating deal where you

put forth the effort, you see the result, you get it back so wow I'm gonna put forth more effort. And so you really have to have that motivation to build it because if you start off that way and then you see the results of it getting built, that keeps you motivated. Certainly if you start being very motivated, that's wonderful, but you also have to have a really great model behind you and with FISH, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. The folks at FISH have spent decades refining a really great business model and if you just do the things you need to do each day and stay consistent, you're gonna build a strong business. You're going to build a business that's going to start growing almost sometimes in spite of the owners you know. When they're not doing as much as they should be doing but they continue to grow because the model is just so resilient and it spreads the net so wide. If you have a customer that goes out of business the windows don't go away. The windows are still there and so when the next customer comes in, the next business owner comes in, they're gonna need service too. And also from a perspective of if a sector of the economy starts to you know dip there are other sectors that are doing just fine. And so the fact that FISH is very, you know, a wide net is really helpful.

What Is Your Favorite Aspect Of The Business?

Tim: So my favorite part of the FISH business is sales. And I never in a million years would've thought that that might be the case 10 years ago before I got into FISH. I was not a salesperson. I was not a business person. I was a psychologist and what I found with sales is that it's really not much different than sitting down and talking to a client. Not that you're trying to analyze someone but that it's just being with another person and talking to them and understanding where they might have a need and where you might be able to help them and that's it. If you see it from that perspective sales becomes really really easy and fun. So I enjoy that a lot.

What Has This Franchise Personally Given You?

Tim: What FISH has allowed my wife and I to do is live a lifestyle that we were not able to live when you know I was working as you know a psychologist for the federal government. You make a decent living, don't get me wrong, it's fine, but FISH, you know, being a small business owner and building it up to the point where we've built it has really allowed us to put money away, to buy a new home, to start our kids in college. All those types of things that everybody wants to be able to do and we're all struggling all the time to be able to do, we actually have the resources to do it and so I really love that.

Knowing What You Know Now, Would You Do It Again?

Tim: If we were faced with opening a new business again and we found FISH we absolutely would do it again. It was definitely the right choice for us then and it's the right choice for us now and we're excited about being FISH lifers. I mean I joke about that with folks but really there's no exit strategy. I know a lot of people get into businesses and they think well what's my exit strategy and what I'm told is that you should always have an exit strategy when you go into business but I don't really see the need with FISH. I mean, we love it, we love the FISH family. Something I haven't really talked about is we went through Hurricane Harvey. Our home was flooded. We had to be rescued by speed boats and within a week, people we knew around the country in FISH had all donated money to help us. We didn't ask for that. It just people found out this had happened and they did that. And that's the type of community that you sign up for. It's touching and it's really wonderful.

Anything Else To Add?

Tim: Well, I'll give you one fun story about the model. When we went through FISH training school part of the sales is business-to-business, you know, and going out and going down the street and just going in from one business to the next to let them know we exist and offer them a free estimate, those types of things. And when we were trained in FISH it was very insistent, you don't skip any place. You go to every single place on that street. And so I came back to Houston and we some salespeople and we trained salespeople that way and this one young sales guy, about year 2, and we told him do not skip any place. So anyways he took it to heart and one day he's going down this one road and the next building that he comes to happens to be the Federal Reserve. And now the Federal Reserve is not some place that you just go and knock on the door at The Federal Reserve has huge I think they're called bollards, those big things that come out of the road so vehicles can't come on site. There's security, all sorts of stuff. So he goes and he drives up to it and he's like hey I'm here to give a free window cleaning estimate. And the security's like what? He's like yeah I was gonna give you a free window cleaning estimate. The security guard is kind of confused so he calls up and he's like yeah so there's some guy here about window cleaning? Back and forth and then they're like okay let him in. So they let him in. He goes in there. And he goes inside and somebody comes down from I guess the facility's maintenance and they're like I don't understand. What are you? What's going on? I was gonna give you free window cleaning. Did anybody call you? Ask you to come out here? He's like no I was just doing it. So the guy talks to one of his boss and okay I guess, sure, give us a free estimate. We ended up cleaning the Federal Reserve bank. And so, it's true, don't skip any place.

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