

women in business



Support group

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN CLIVE SAWYER FOUNDED ENCOURAGING WOMEN INTO FRANCHISING IN 2008 AFTER HE REALISED THE NUMBER OF FEMALE FRANCHISE OWNERS WAS EXTREMELY LOW

TELL US ABOUT ENCOURAGING WOMEN INTO FRANCHISING?

I founded EWIF in order to support women who are looking for a route into the franchise industry. Our remit is threefold: to encourage women to consider buying a franchise, to encourage business women to franchise their existing operations and to help franchisors attract more women to their networks.

We are a not-for-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers, providing advice and guidance to

anyone looking at trying to break into the franchise industry. EWIF also partners with other professionals in the franchise industry in order to offer the best guidance and support possible.

Giving expert advice has enabled us to partner many women with suitable franchisors and allowed them to build successful businesses. MPs such as Nicky Morgan, when Minister for Women and Equalities, and Justin Tomlinson, Small Business Ambassador for the Conservative Party, have attended EWIF meetings. We also held regular

meetings in the House of Commons, which allowed us to lobby for changes in areas that affect our members and spread the word about franchising and its benefits even further.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START EWIF?

Working in business and business support, I could see there was a significant difference between the numbers of men and women in business and, in particular, franchising. Franchising can be a great way for women to



Many women are very receptive to following a set business model

regional meetings help women across the country access the advice and support they need. Non-members can come along to one event before signing up to make sure it's right for them.

As another part of our support to women considering franchising, we offer a free 30-minute phone consultation with an experienced EWIF member. The advice could be about any of the three areas we support.

HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

We have a variety of members at EWIF, including franchisors, franchisees and franchise service suppliers. We all work together to improve the numbers of women in franchising and, as well as helping franchisees, also help potential franchisors in finding those with the knowledge to help them launch their franchises and the systems and processes that need to be put in place.

WHY ENCOURAGING WOMEN INTO FRANCHISING AND NOT EVERYBODY?

Through my own business, I noticed the number of women in franchising was shockingly low. The percentage of women actually running a franchise never seems to have risen above 30 per cent.

I can't stress enough how good an opportunity franchising is for women, especially when you have the support and backing of a well known, established brand behind you.

The NatWest/British Franchise Association survey for 2015 revealed that women now account for just 23 per cent of franchisees in the UK. The survey also revealed that over the last two years, only 17 per cent of new franchisees have been women, which means that EWIF is more relevant than ever.

WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE TO WOMEN CONSIDERING BUYING A FRANCHISE?

Think very carefully about the type of opportunity you're looking for. You need to make sure it's something that will fit in with your interests, skill set and lifestyle.



Clive Sawyer: "We're looking to change the face of the franchise sector"

If you have children and a family, think about how the business will fit around them and the times you need to be available for the business. If you need to be available for the school run in the early days of your business, a retail franchise that requires you to be in-store during retail hours may not be the best fit. Or if you're looking for a full-time business or even a business with multiple outlets and a large workforce, franchising can be the answer.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR WOMEN TO GET INTO FRANCHISING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would make sure women had access to impartial information about what franchising is and what it entails. I would also like to see more franchisors becoming involved in trying to get more women to join their networks. This could be in their advertising or just in trying to build more of an awareness of franchising.

That's part of what EWIF does. By building awareness of franchising and letting women know about the opportunities available to them, we can slowly change the face of franchising.

WHY IS FRANCHISING SUCH A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN?

Women make great franchisees because they often find that their organisational and multitasking skills lend themselves extremely well to business ownership. Not only that, but many women are very receptive to following a set business model and work well and thrive in large networks, which is everything that franchising is about. **MM**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ Visit www.facebook.com/EWIF1 or email info@ewif.org. Twitter: twitter.com/EWIF1.

become business owners and it's always surprised me how few women there are in franchising.

I could see there was a lack of support and awareness for women looking to get into franchising and wanted to help spread the word and give more women the chance to get into business ownership.

Through EWIF, we advise women who are looking to get into franchising in a number of ways and we're looking to change the face of the franchise sector, so that women have a much larger presence than they do currently.

WHAT DOES EWIF DO TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN FRANCHISING?

Alongside our three methods of helping women into franchising, we also hold quarterly and annual events across the UK to allow our members to meet and allow new members or non-members to come along, find out more about us and get involved.

Our annual awards and conference celebrate the successes of women in franchising and our