

Franchiser Sees Potential In Dusty Corners

Alex Roberts, Vice President of Franchise Development Co., Molly Maid

Yesterday

Q&A talks with Alex Roberts, vice president of franchise development for Molly Maid, which has just announced plans for a major push into Greater Hartford.

Q: Your company, Molly Maid, has announced plans to add three locations in Greater Hartford by the end of 2010. What does Molly Maid do and how many locations will you have when the new locations are added?

A: Our development plans for Hartford is three additional businesses. We have three there currently, and have opportunity for six locations total.

Q: Why the big push to Greater Hartford? Is this a metropolitan area in need of household cleaning?

A: Hartford's demographics match that of other markets where Molly Maid is successful. Having a population of households with dual-income families and aging baby boomers looking for their time back are key indicators of demand for our service. Molly Maid cleaning service allows our customers to have more free time to work, play and enjoy time with family and friends.

When our businesses come to town, we bring both office employees and cleaning jobs to the area. And, because we live and work in the towns where we do business, we give back to our communities by supporting our Ms. Molly Foundation. This foundation is committed to supporting victims of domestic violence since 1996. To date, we've raised nearly \$800,000 in support for domestic violence shelters.



Alex Roberts

Q: Is now a good time for franchising? Is there money in this economy? Can people get the credit to open franchises?

A: Now is a good time for franchising. Unemployment is high so franchising is a great alternative to re-entering the job market. Take control of your destiny and shape your own future. Molly Maid has done very well through this recession and previous recession as we have been around for 25 years. We actually added more customers in 2009 than we lost and our sales for 2010 are even stronger than 2009.

The thing our franchisees enjoy most is the flexible lifestyle to work Monday to Friday, during business hours. Our model offers a lot of opportunity to catch your kid's sporting and school events while providing a nice income because of our repeat customers. In fact, 25 percent of the Molly Maid system had over \$1.1 million in revenue, as outlined in our franchise disclosure document.

Time is a commodity that people are willing to pay for services to give them time to work and do other things. People are not cutting cleaning out when times are tough. They are not going out to eat as much or not going to movies or entertainment, etc., but people are not giving up their maid service quite as easily as other discretionary spending. Credit is still tight but we are a low-cost franchise and it does not take much capital to get started. We do have third-party resources that can help with financing, but we do need well-qualified candidates to get funded.

Q: What is your typical franchisee like? Do you typically attract people starting and working in their own business or do people buy your franchises and then hire others to work for them?

A: Our franchise system is made up mostly of former corporate refugees. Our business model is ideal for executives who run the business and hire employees to do the cleaning. Some key characteristics our most successful franchise owners share are:

They have the resources and energy to start a business.

They bring proven management skills.

They are committed to providing the highest standard of service.

They are driven to results through a success-oriented attitude.

They understand the value of sales and customer relationships.

They have exceptional communication and interpersonal skills.

They have vision and perseverance to achieve their goals.

We also have successful military veterans in our franchise system and offer a \$2,500 VetFran discount to those who qualify.

Q: What are your company's future growth plans? What are your targets in five years?

A: We currently have 425 units in the U.S. and plan to open another 125 units over the next five years. For more information visit www.mollymaidfranchise.com