



WE'RE WITH YOU....

The importance of Franchise Manuals

The question that all potential franchisors ask is 'how can I control what the franchisees do with my brand?' The concern that franchisees can use the brand and operate the business without any regard for the franchisor's wishes can be answered by ensuring that all franchisees are properly equipped with clear franchise agreements and carefully constructed franchise and operations manuals that explain and amplify the terms of the agreement in detail.

Manuals are therefore the most important document that the franchisor or master franchisee requires to train, control and, if necessary, rein in the franchisees if they go astray.

The manuals will:

- Safeguard the franchisor's intellectual property. Ideas, know-how and trade secrets will be protected by copyright.
- Satisfy the franchisor's obligation to provide a copy of the manual, on loan, for the duration of the franchise.
- Strengthen the terms of the franchise agreement.
- Be the basis for the franchisee training course.
- Define quality standards.
- Provide consistency of standards across the network.
- Be the point of reference in case of legal dispute.
- Set the way in which KPI.s and targets will be monitored.
- Allow the Franchisor to update systems.

To be fit for purpose, manuals must be:

Up to date – although the franchise agreement cannot be changed, the manuals are a constant work in progress, developing as the franchise network develops.

Detailed – the agreement talks about contractual obligations, the manual spells out in detail the actual way in which the obligations are to be met.

Specific – written for the franchise, not a generic one-size-fits-all handbook.

Readable – franchisees will use the manual as a training and reference work, therefore the lay-out needs to be in an easy-to-read format.

Clear – the franchisee needs to be in no doubt as to the requirements. Jargon should be kept to a minimum or explained, sections should be clearly labelled, and easy to find.

What are the benefits of manuals?

Well-constructed manuals will help to achieve benefits for both franchisor and master franchisee, providing a stronger link between the franchisor, master franchisee and the franchisees. They will ensure the franchisee's complete understanding not only of the business, and the obligations in the franchise agreement, but also the statutory requirements of running any business. This is as much for the protection of the franchisee as for the franchisor who needs to protect his reputation and brand credibility.

Manuals will also be the basis of the training course, and the franchisees go-to for all queries on procedure and systems, substantially reducing calls to the master franchisee or head office.

Why use a professional manuals writer

Simply because gathering all the necessary information, writing it down in an easy-to-read format, and ensuring that all statutory requirements are included is a time-consuming business, and often best looked at from the outside to get an objective underpinning of the franchise agreement as well as a guide to replicating the franchisor's business.

Professional manual writers have franchise consultancy experience as well as authoring, editing and publishing skills. They have the software that turns a lot of words into an interesting reference guide, and the expertise to ensure that the manuals are consistent with all the other documents that define the franchisor's business.

For more information on our manual writing service or advice on any franchising matters call 01603 703254 or visit www.ashtonsfranchise.com