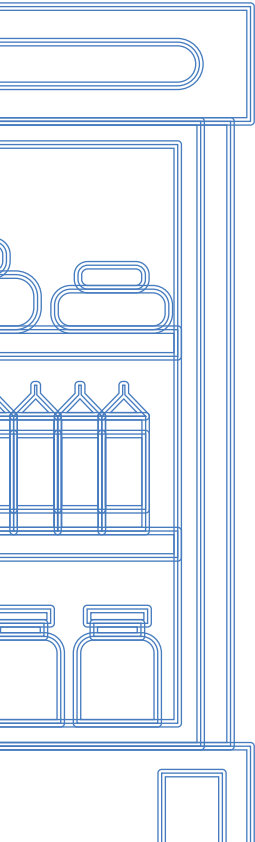


5 Field Operations Secrets from **600** Franchise Brands

Nick Mecozzi
VP of Solution Engineering

Tracey Moon
VP Marketing





As franchise brands grow, getting new franchisees open, profitable, and producing steadily increasing sales is what builds strong unit economics across your system. There is no “one size fits all” for franchise organizations when it comes to field operations, but over the years we have learned a few secrets from our 600-plus customer base that are worth sharing.

We've outlined **5 basic premises** that highly effective field operations teams embrace to make their organizations successful. These five practices apply whether you are a mature brand interested in enhancing the field operations team's effectiveness or you are an emerging brand working to establish strong processes from the beginning. Within each premise, key points of advice are included to evaluate how your organization is doing in each area.

You can easily find framework guides on this subject that are more academic in their approach. This is not that guide. This is meant to serve as a way to **spot check your operational practices** against those that work for the most successful franchise brands in the market today.

Check your email for an accompanying workbook to put your learnings into action today.

Focus on Your Top 3-5 Business Priorities





Like all franchise brands, you are focused on two key initiatives – **unit growth** and **unit economics**. Simply put, as your development team awards more units, your job is to ensure those new franchises get up and running quickly and start making money. The success of each franchise is paramount; in fact, their success feeds back into unit growth, as profitable franchisees offer better validation for the development team. Field operations is the critical function that works to create consistent performance across your network.

The field operations team strategy and resulting tactical approach must align with your top business drivers; otherwise, you will have a lot of activity that either goes nowhere or is underappreciated. A successful strategy starts at the top, takes a holistic approach to evaluation, and then determines how it trickles down through the system. Be honest with yourself and **challenge any preconceived notions** you have. It's important to identify where improvements are required. You will be glad you did.



advice:

know your priorities

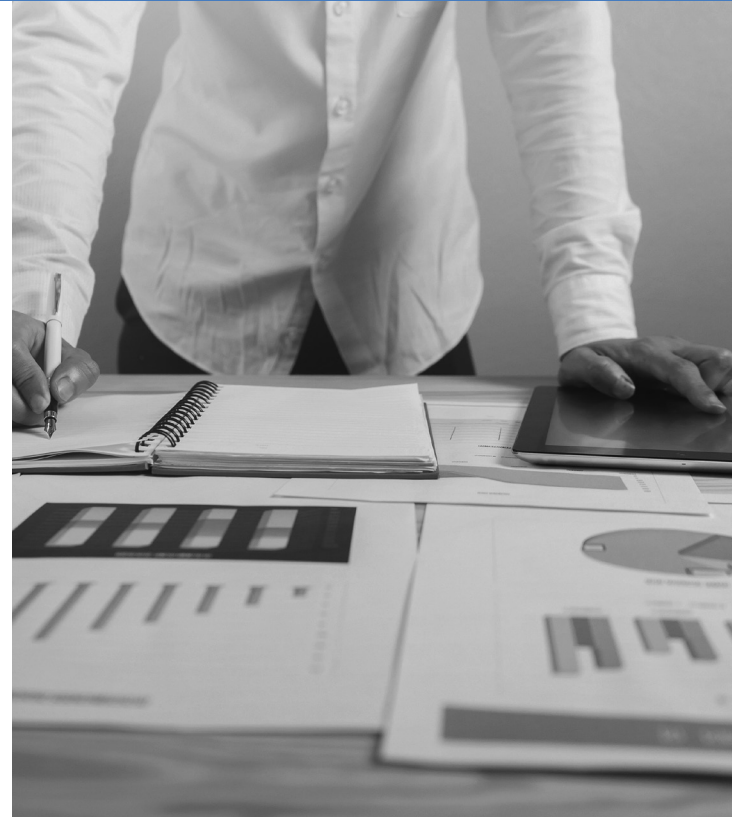
Your CEO and executive team have priorities that are reported on regularly and, often times, reported out to a board of directors. These are the only priorities that matter for your organization. Make sure you understand and have articulated to your field consultants what these priorities are and how they are measured at the corporate level. Your team needs to **embrace these priorities as the guiding mantra for field operations**. Every action must align with a priority even at the field level.



advice:

align field operations metrics to each priority

What KPIs are you tracking today for field operations? Do they align with the priorities for the organization's growth? Can the field operations team describe how their day-to-day tasks impact the corporation? Field consultants often feel as though there are too many questions to cover in a single visit and too much reporting and administration – it's overwhelming and time consuming. We are so busy with day-to-day blocking and tackling that we forget to take a step back and be strategic. If you are aligned with the top priorities of the business, then you can go through each site visit question and report to eliminate the fat. The goal is to **streamline and only do what matters to the business priorities**. Reevaluate your visit questions annually to capture only the information vital to the organization's evolving business goals.



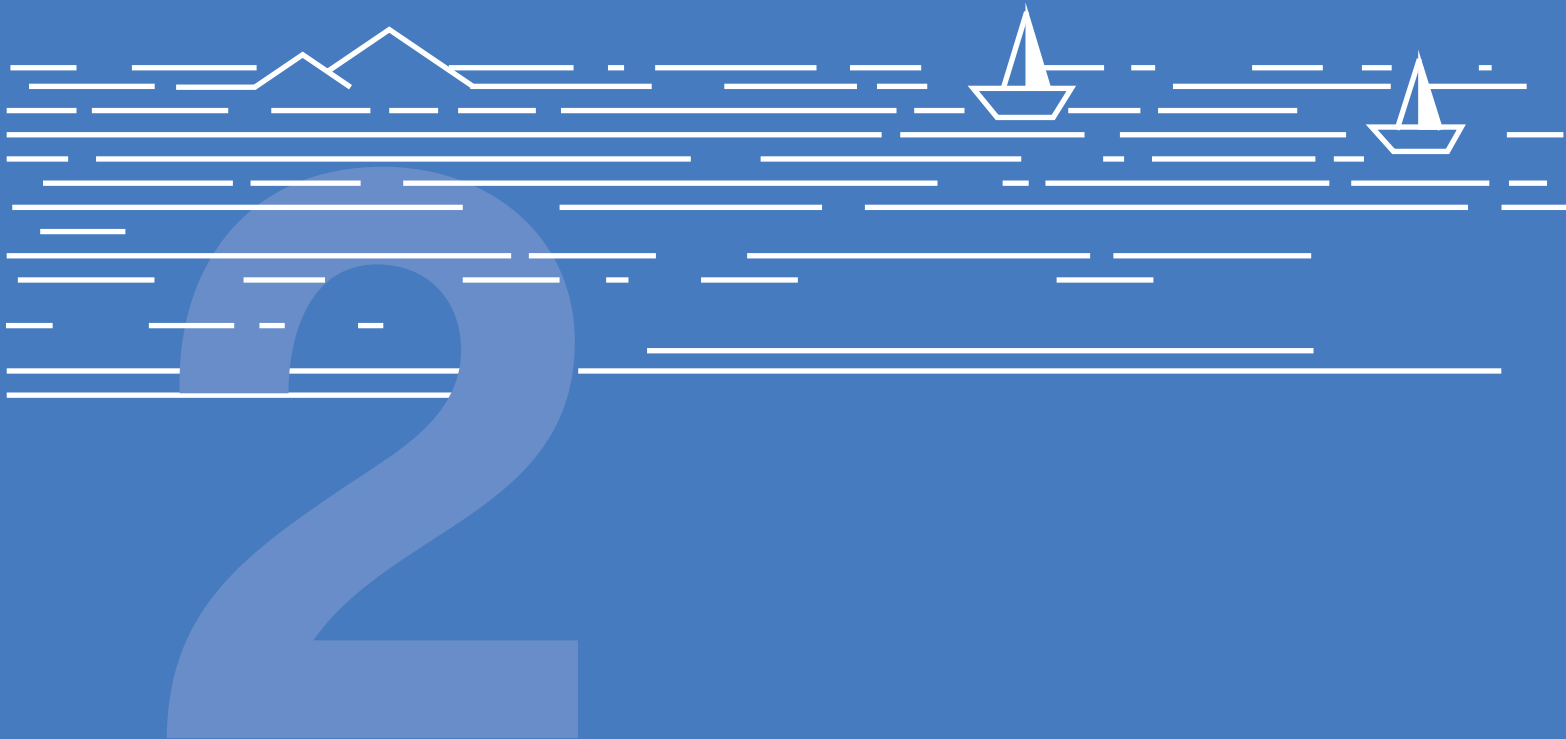
advice:

pick an opportunity

In business strategy, it is often best to identify and start with one or two areas of potential big impact. The same is true here with a need to identify and evaluate one or two key field consultant touchpoints where, in referring to the current business priorities, you have the opportunity to experiment and generate a difference. Test for success, learn, and then **look for ways to expand impact throughout the team.**



Don't Boil the Ocean



When a brand is doing an internal audit or improvement exercise of field operations, they tend to feel a sense of urgency and take the view of “everything is broken.” More often than not, that is not the case. There is always a lot going right, and you need to first identify those areas. Some things may be slightly off course, and **you need an objective assessment** of those areas as well. For example, how many reports do you really need? Has someone ever walked in one day and said the infamous phrase “we need a checklist for...” or “we need to be able to track...” and instead of seeing how it is currently being accounted for or tracked, created a new report, spreadsheet, or list? Over the years, these instances pile up and the result is a disjointed, manual process that lacks consistency and clear accountability. Furthermore, the ability to report on the impact field operations has on the organization becomes a daunting task.

Sound familiar? Then it's time to take ten deep breaths and evaluate each and every activity that a field consultant does and why. Every question on an assessment should be valuable to both the brand and the franchisee. It should prompt a collaborative discussion about the business and performance, and it should **identify immediate actions that can be taken for improvement** and build a process for follow-up. Any question or review item that does not meet this criteria needs to go. Any action that does not roll up into a report that subsequently rolls up into corporate metrics needs to go.

advice:

know your priorities

Doing an objective audit of your field operations processes requires commitment and stamina. It will not happen overnight. But you have to start somewhere so **start with a realistic priority list** for execution. Be sure to consider the maturity of your field operations, the number of resources you have today, the capacity those resources have to adopt change, and the timeline under which the change needs to happen. After taking into consideration your specific situation and business maturity, you can then begin your improvement project.



advice:

know your culture

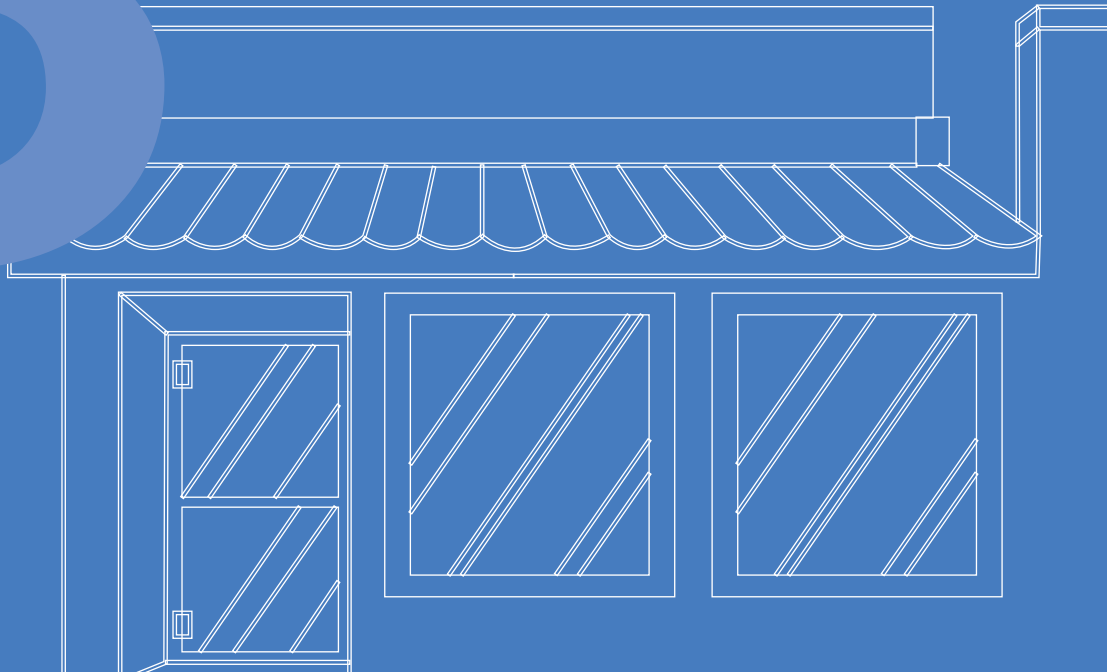
People don't work in a vacuum. They work within the rules and boundaries set by your brand's culture. Your field consultants interact with franchisees in the way that has been defined by your culture – whether designed intentionally or by default. Understand what this culture is, define it, and align all processes, behaviors, and language with it. Once you have clarity, stay true to your definition.

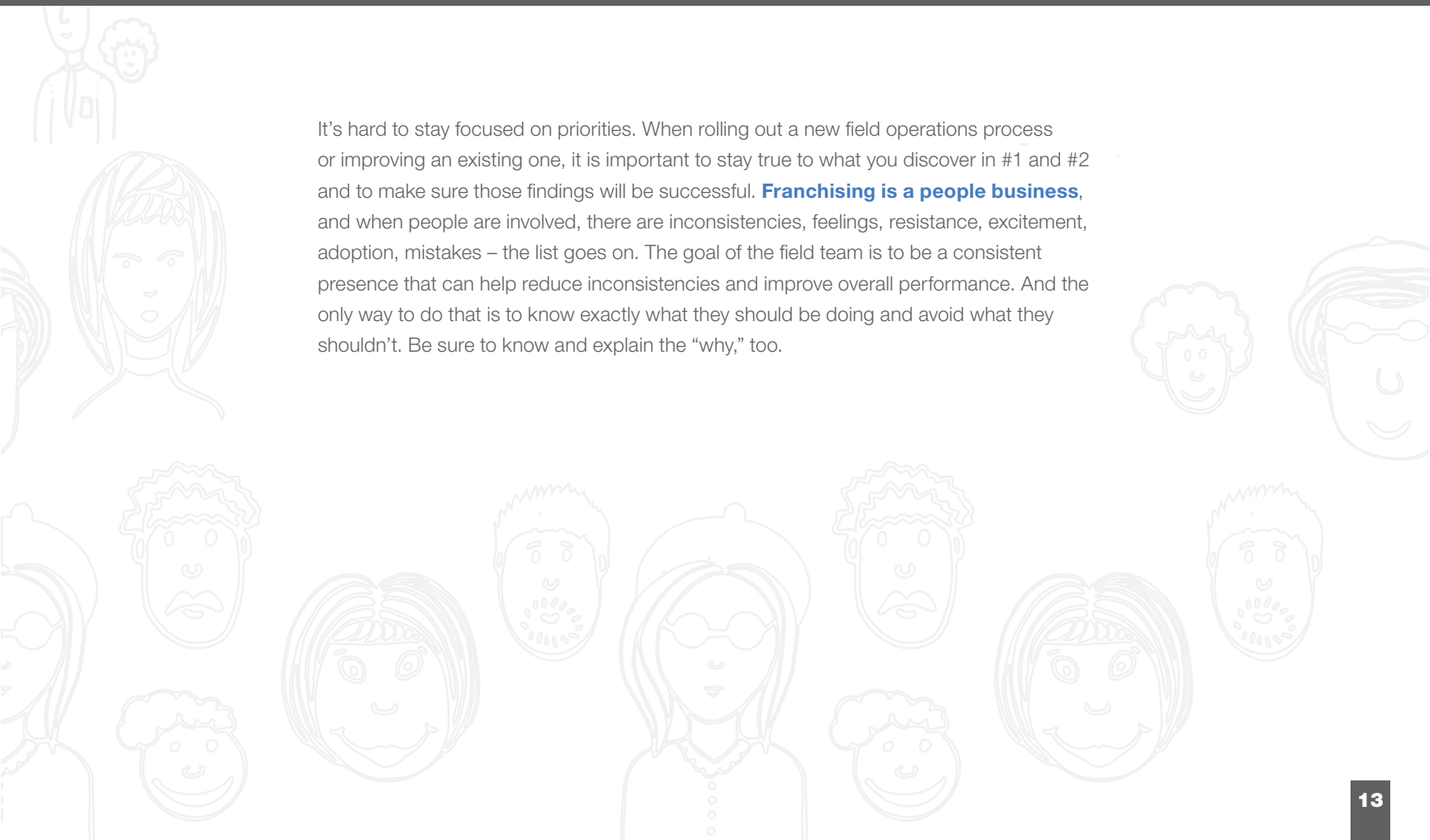
This is your community. Every visit or interaction is defining your culture or detracting from your culture. You need to know what, how, and why at all times.



Remember What the Field
Needs To Do and Not Do

3





It's hard to stay focused on priorities. When rolling out a new field operations process or improving an existing one, it is important to stay true to what you discover in #1 and #2 and to make sure those findings will be successful. **Franchising is a people business**, and when people are involved, there are inconsistencies, feelings, resistance, excitement, adoption, mistakes – the list goes on. The goal of the field team is to be a consistent presence that can help reduce inconsistencies and improve overall performance. And the only way to do that is to know exactly what they should be doing and avoid what they shouldn't. Be sure to know and explain the “why,” too.

advice:

involve your top field consultants in the process

Building a team or improving an existing team is going to require a degree in change management and not many of us have one of those. Therefore, making the team part of the process not only gives you insight into ideas and processes you hadn't thought of but also gives you a head start on the road to adoption.

Involve your top field consultants in the process from analyzing what is being done today through assessment design, action planning, evaluation, and follow-up. Have them help to **create a continuous feedback loop** within the organization. Keep them engaged throughout the life of the project.



advice:

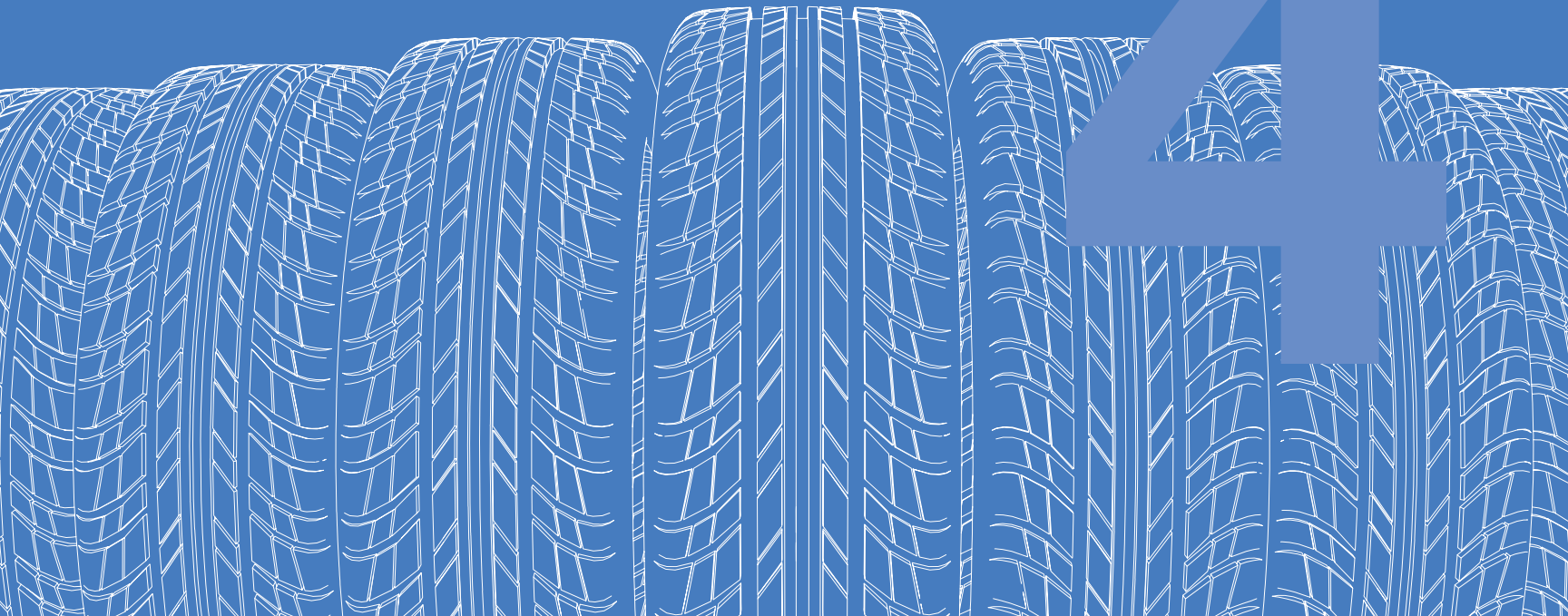
don't be afraid to slash and burn


The process of improvement is difficult, especially when there are many people involved. If you keep your brand's business priorities at the center of your evaluation, your field operations team will uncover a myriad of opportunities to effect change in the organization's performance. Some of that change will be to eliminate certain reports, checklists, and questions for assessments. Don't be afraid to cut the fat.

Undoubtedly, you will be given innumerable opinions from others who will not have gone through the same thoughtful process as your team. Pick your battles carefully and **be brave enough to make a bet** on what is most strategically important and not important.



Kick the Tires All the Time





The only way to build a successful field organization is to **test, adjust, fix, and repeat**. This is not a one time activity. It's a long-term commitment. We interact with companies that are overwhelmed by the field operations process. We see two scenarios. The first is a brand that has been around for a long time and has let the field operation get out of hand. There are too many spreadsheets to count, reports galore with no analysis, and drastic differences between high-performing franchisees and underperformers. The second scenario is when we work with an emerging brand that is ready to implement a field operations tool, but they haven't given due consideration to what their field consultants should be doing regularly and consistently. In both scenarios, we find the issue is that a process was set up in the beginning but not regularly evaluated.

advice:

make on-the-spot corrections

Refer to everything on the previous pages – know your business priorities and how they are measured. Know what your field consultants should be doing and make sure it is happening. Never forget: alignment, alignment, alignment. Keep testing and evaluating that expectations are being met, and when they aren't, fix it. Don't wait. Fix it right then and there. In the words of Anne Dunwoody, America's first female four-star general and author of *A Higher Standard*, **“Never walk by a mistake.”** Make an on-the-spot correction otherwise you just set a new lower standard.”



advice:

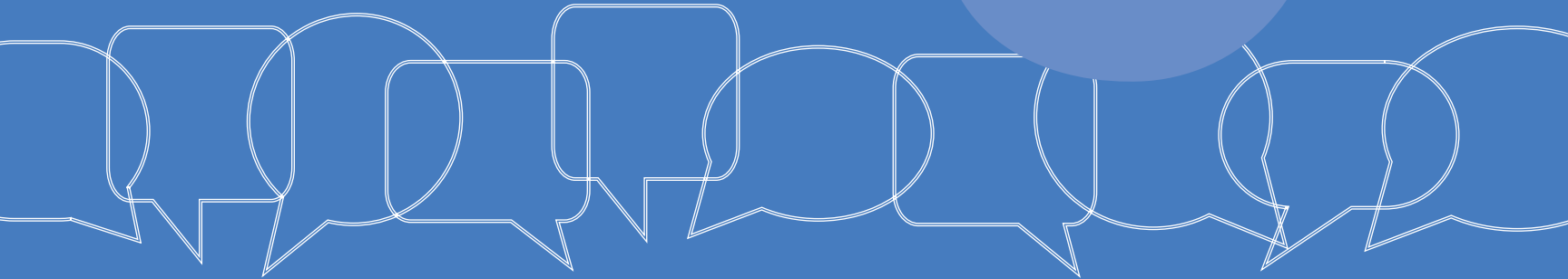
create insights with data

Access to data is critical for kicking the tires. Reporting on KPIs that are working is one step forward. But being able to predict when a franchisee is going to underperform is utopia. Even getting somewhere in between would be great. The importance of data and analytics can't be understated. Developing the ability to identify issues and rectify them on a daily basis will dramatically improve your business. Your next initiative should be to identify what information you need in real time and working with a trusted resource to **create dashboards and analysis that put critical information at your fingertips** so you can make those on-the-spot corrections.



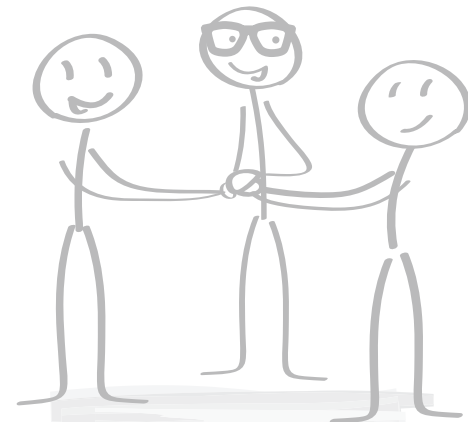
Communicate, or Your
Franchisees Will Do It For You

5



We are all familiar with the saying “perception is reality.” This is true for a franchise community. Your brand has a reputation not just with your consumers but with your franchisees. They talk to each other about how you’re doing, how you treat them, and how you support them. They share successes. At the end of the day, if you don’t effectively communicate with them, they will do it for you.

We are not talking about regular emails; we are talking about **meaningful communication between your field consultant and an individual owner** that leaves the owner feeling valued, supported, and positive. Each of the practices described here have emphasized alignment, and a holistic approach for how you communicate – verbally, in writing, through assessments – must be designed to support your corporate objectives and the culture of your brand.



advice:

watch your tone

We've all been scolded by our parents at some point to "watch our tone" when addressing them. Well, the same is true for business interactions. How we say things and how we interact with colleagues, franchisees, and customers sets the tone for everything that follows. As franchisors, your success depends on the success of each franchisee. Their willingness to help you succeed is a direct result of how you interact with them and how you make them feel. Find a way to streamline the rote parts of a visit so your field team can **spend more time acting as business advisors** to your franchisees. Evaluate every piece of communication, training class, and instruction that is provided to your field teams to see if it aligns with your intent, desired outcome, and culture. Wherever you find misalignment, fix it. And fix it now.



advice:

focus on opportunities, not mistakes

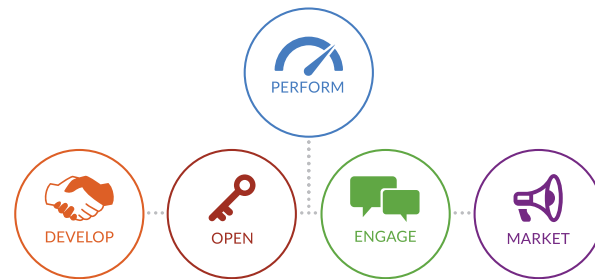
When evaluating progress, especially at the franchisee level, it is easy to list the infractions, mistakes, and non-compliance issues. These are important and must be addressed, but take a look at how you discuss them. Is this a recurring issue or a one-time mistake? Is there a systemic problem that needs to be discussed? Regardless of the root cause, **view everything as an opportunity to teach.** When you look at a problem and turn it on its head to ask, “what is the opportunity for improvement in this scenario,” you can always craft a more productive discussion. Remember, franchisees’ success is your success.



Every franchise company has to manage and optimize key functional areas to be successful: development, operations, franchisee engagement, and marketing. And, during each stage, you need to drive performance and measurement across the business.

Our team at FranConnect, the leading provider of franchise management software, created this diagram to illustrate exactly how our software fits into each and every stage of the franchise life cycle. Whether your development team needs to attract more candidates, your field operations team needs a collaborative method to engage with franchisees, or you need an easier way to track royalties, we have a software tool designed just for you. And, what's more, they are all integrated so you can easily track and move information from one stage to the next.

The Franchise Lifecycle



In this ebook, we are focused on field operations, which falls under the Perform function of the franchise lifecycle. With FranConnect Sky Field Ops, you can ensure franchisee success by managing the conversation between you and your franchisees in a way that fosters openness and collaboration. Intrigued? Request a demo at www.franconnect.com

About FranConnect

FranConnect provides proven franchise management software to more than 600 brands and 110,000 franchisees including multi-unit operators and area developers. The company's customers rely on FranConnect to grow the number of units and make them more successful. Only FranConnect comes with Franchising Built-In™ – exclusive functionality and best practices for the entire franchise lifecycle – so franchisors can more effectively manage, track, and run their business.

For more information about FranConnect, visit www.franconnect.com