

16 BEST FRANCHISE DEALS

/ BY BEN COLEY

There are always hurdles in the quick-service restaurant franchising industry.

Inflation is impacting customers, restaurants cost more to build, and the permitting process keeps getting delayed. But what separates successful franchisors is an ability to adapt and find solutions in the toughest of environments.

Inflationary and consumer challenges are rampant, but these franchises are forging ahead with special opportunities and the proper infrastructure for operators.

THE 2024
BEST
FRANCHISE
DEALS
COUNCIL:



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CHAPMAN**
CEO
ZORFORUM, LLC



**JONATHAN
HILL**
COFOUNDER
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**TIM
PARMETER**
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FRANCOACH



**ASHLY
LOZA**
COFOUNDER AND INTEGRATOR
BLUE MAVEN FRANCHISE
SOLUTIONS

FranCoach founder and CEO Tim Parmeter asserts that while the restaurant franchise industry is constantly evolving, the fundamental need for food remains unchanged. This perpetual demand provides potential franchise owners with a variety of options to find their best fit. However, staffing remains a perennial challenge. Despite technological advancements, the need for a reliable workforce is irreplaceable. Savvy owners can turn this challenge into an opportunity by fostering a positive workplace culture, which can attract and retain employees while developing future leaders.

“The most important thing in finding the best fit actually has nothing to do with a specific brand. As a potential franchise owner, you must focus on YOU. What do you want to do every day as an owner and who are you around in your business,” Parmeter says. “As a franchisee in the food industry, even as a semi-absentee owner, you have a business that does not operate solely in a 9-5 vacuum. Are you up for that challenge? Do you want a business that will have a team that will constantly be changing or one that has inventory to manage or a retail location to maintain?”

In addition to staffing, technology has become a crucial factor in enhancing both operational efficiency and customer experience. Parmeter emphasizes the importance of leveraging AI and other technological tools to streamline operations and attract new customers. This sentiment is echoed across the industry. Many successful brands adopt innovative solutions to stay ahead.

Michelle Rowan, president and COO of Franchise Business Review, says franchisors who offer robust support in employee recruitment, retention, and development have a significant advantage. She advises potential franchisees prioritize brands with high existing franchisee satisfaction and solid unit profitability. Simplicity in business operations, efficient training programs,

and a supportive corporate culture are also critical factors for success. ZorForum CEO Graham Chapman also underscores the importance of integrating AI and technology to manage inflation and maintain a talented workforce. He suggests that successful franchisors have authentic cultures and are early adopters of technology. They focus on sustainable growth and continuously innovate to stay relevant. For potential franchisees, understanding the financial commitment, ensuring multi-unit ownership viability, and assessing the franchisor’s technology adoption are critical steps.

“Those who are winning are eager to solve the questions/conundrums facing the industry,” Chapman says. “They have built authentic cultures, core values, and operating principles. They were early adopters, and now champions, of AI and robotics. They have always prioritized responsible and sustainable system growth. They are laser-focused on boosting systemwide sales and enhancing unit-level economics. They proactively test and introduce trendy LTOs, modern design upgrades, technology enhancements, etc. that keep the brand moving forward.”

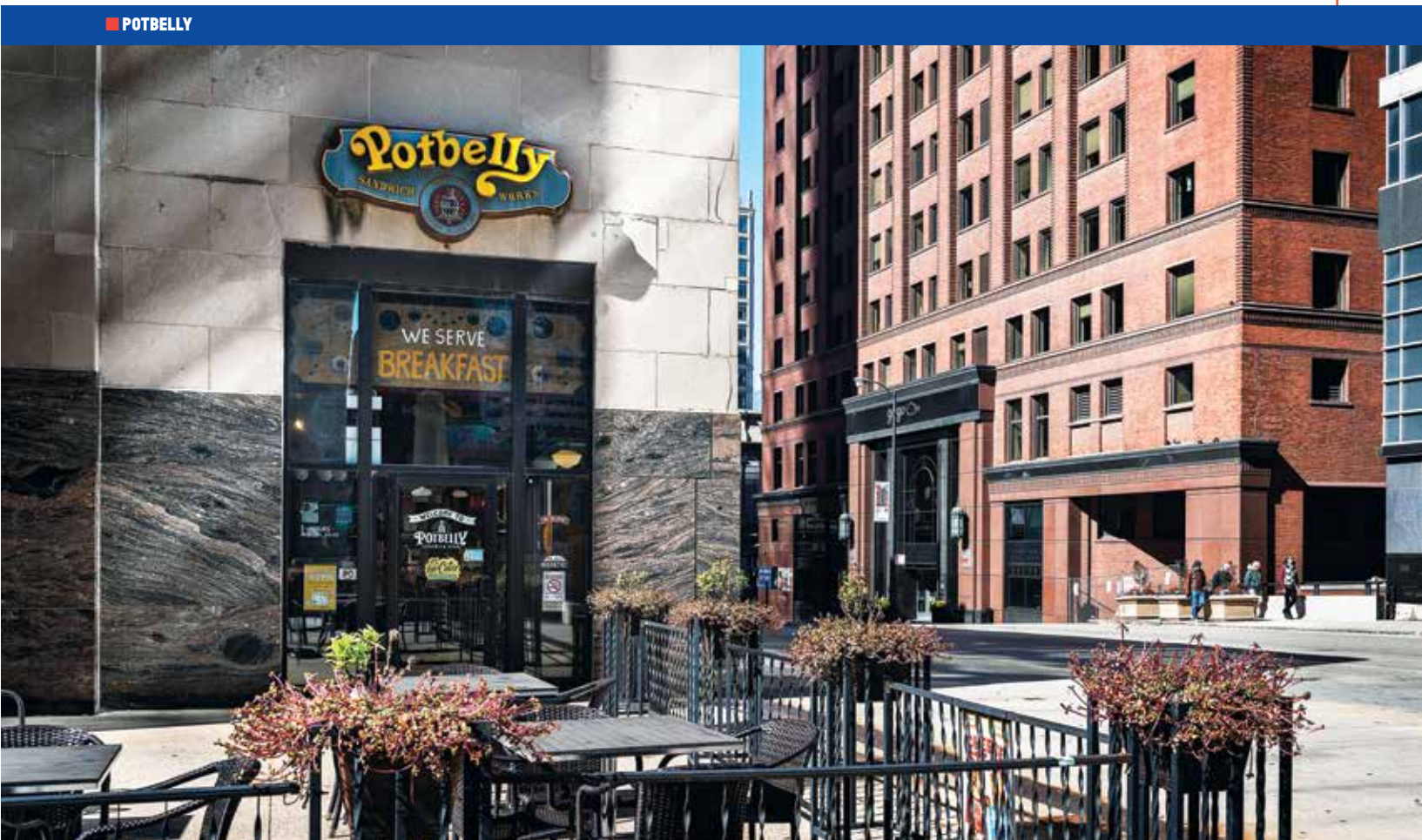
Overall, the quick-service franchising industry offers significant growth potential through strategic innovation, strong leadership, and technological integration. For over 10 years, QSR has showcased fast-food and fast-casual concepts that provide the best opportunities for entrepreneurs to succeed in the restaurant industry. The latest edition highlights 16 companies that exemplify this ideal.

For a second year, we recognized rising franchisors that are on the outside looking in and created a Hall-of-Fame for concepts that have graced the Best Franchise Deals list several times.

This is the 14th Best Franchise Deals in QSR’s history. Once again, we tapped our Franchise Council of experts to share their choices. These brands are in no particular order. ➔

METHODOLOGY:

QSR magazine’s Best Franchise Deals for 2024 were selected from a nomination process that ran from mid-May to mid-June. Finalists were reviewed by the Franchise Council, which selected their top choices from shared information and FDD data. Their top choices comprise the final list. Brands cannot appear for back-to-back years, but can return after a year off.



POTBELLY

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 84	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 429	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$559,688,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$837,668	FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: TRADITIONAL: \$2,286,274 (74 shops); NONTRADITIONAL: \$3,947,078 (four shops)	
FRANCHISE FEE: \$40,000	RENEWAL FEE: 10-Year Term, 25 percent of then-current IFF (\$10,000); 5-Year Term, 12.5 percent of then-current IFF (\$5,000)	
ROYALTY: 6 percent		
TOTAL START-UP COSTS: \$643,500-\$1,159,000	MARKETING FEE: Currently 3 percent. With 90 days’ notice, Potbelly may increase up to an additional 1 percent for a total of 4 percent. Total required marketing expenditures, including minimum local marketing spend of 1 percent will not exceed 5 percent of the shop’s gross sales.	

THE SKINNY: Potbelly has over 425 locations nationwide with AUVs of \$1.2M as of the 2023 fiscal year. The company attributes its success to its diverse menu, efficient restaurant designs, and strong franchisee support. The brand’s Franchise Growth Acceleration Initiative, launched in 2022, has spurred significant expansion, attracting

franchisees to add multiple units. The leadership team, led by CEO Bob Wright, brings over 150 years of combined experience from top brands like Burger King and Wendy’s, offering franchisees invaluable industry knowledge. To stand out, the fast casual has developed flexible shop designs suitable for various markets, including drive-thru and digital-centric prototypes. These designs, along with a robust tech stack and the Potbelly Perks loyalty program, enhance customer experience and drive sales. The digital-centric prototype is 500 square feet smaller than traditional locations, which helps with leasing and construction costs. The new design comes fully equipped with the Potbelly Digital Kitchen—a digitized backline for enhanced online ordering capabilities. The app-exclusive “Underground Menu” offers hidden items, further engaging customers. The menu features sandwiches and innovative limited-time offerings like the Chicken Cordon Bleu Sandwich and Cinnamon Churro Milkshake, ensuring strong performance across lunch and dinner. These offerings generate excitement and repeat business and help franchisees boost sales and refine their strategies.

SIZING UP FROM THE SIDELINES:

“Potbelly Sandwich Shop aims to be the go-to “neighborhood sandwich shop” in every community it serves. Its menu features toasty warm sandwiches, salads, soups, fresh-baked cookies, and hand-dipped milkshakes and smoothies, all made with simple ingredients. The company began in the mid-1970s when Peter Hastings converted

a former antique shop in Chicago into the first Potbelly location. The original décor incorporated many items from the antique store, including a potbelly stove that inspired the shop's name. In 1997, Bryant Keil purchased the restaurant and began expanding it into a chain. Potbelly primarily operates during lunch hours, with many locations featuring live music from local musicians. Founded in 1977 and franchising since 2009, Potbelly currently boasts a total of 443 locations, with plenty of upside growth potential."

BEANS & BREWS

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES:
51	80	\$46,576,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:	FRANCHISE FEE:	ROYALTY:
\$696,600	\$30,000	5.5 percent
RENEWAL FEE:	MARKETING FEE:	TOTAL START-UP COSTS:
\$5,000	3 percent	\$455,000-\$766,500
FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:		
Veteran Discount 15 percent off IFF		

THE SKINNY: Established in 1993 and franchising since 2004, Beans & Brews has expanded from its original Salt Lake City location, famous for its High-Altitude Roasting, to a network of 80 locations across four states. This growth is a testament to the achievements of its multi-unit owners and a strong expansion strategy aiming to open over 100 new locations within the next seven years.

Its unique high-altitude roasting process, carried out in the Salt Lake Mountain valley, ensures the coffee is roasted at the lowest possible temperature for the shortest amount of time, resulting in a smoother, more intense flavor with higher caffeine content. This dedication to quality extends beyond coffee to a diverse menu that includes teas, sodas, frozen drinks, and healthy food options such as avocado toast, paninis, Brekky Tacos, and burritos. Beans & Brews measures success



not only by financial performance but also by creating a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere for customers and providing a rewarding business opportunity for franchise owners. Through the Brew Good program, the company gives back to the communities it serves by donating to various local organizations, underscoring its commitment to making a positive impact. Choosing to franchise with Beans & Brews means investing in more than just a business; it means joining a family dedicated to delivering differentiated coffee and fostering a supportive, community-focused environment.

SIZING UP FROM THE SIDELINES:

"If you are looking for a brand with a loyal consumer following, look no further than Beans & Brews. From the high-quality specialty coffees to energy drinks and food options, Beans & Brews has something on the menu for every member of a busy family. Beyond a fun-loving brand, take a look under the hood of Beans & Brews to find a well-seasoned leadership team. The team's franchise experience combined with hands-on experience is impressive and a key component in franchise owners' success."

"Beans & Brews stands out with its commitment to high-quality, sustainably sourced coffee and its welcoming, community-focused atmosphere. This unique blend appeals to a wide range of customers and fosters strong local loyalty. Their strategic real estate choices—targeting high-traffic areas and flexible store formats like drive-thrus—position them for continued growth. As coffee culture thrives, Beans & Brews is poised to expand further, leveraging their robust franchise support to ensure every new location upholds their brand's excellence and community spirit."



BEANS & BREWS

BEANS & BREWS

HUNGRY HOWIE'S

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 491	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 524	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$468,271,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$883,300	FRANCHISE FEE: \$25,000	ROYALTY: 5.5 percent of gross sales but not less than \$360 per reporting period.
RENEWAL FEE: \$1,000	TOTAL START-UP COSTS: \$292,129-\$567,248	MARKETING FEE: 7 percent of gross sales but not less than \$721 per reporting period.

- FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:**
- Hungry Howie's offers a strong business model with significantly less investment per square foot than comparable brands and strong sales to investment ratios. Delivery is a core competency, so the brand is well positioned to take advantage of the seismic shift in demand for delivered food.
 - All Hungry Howie's franchisees are provided comprehensive training and support. The brand's team of experienced operations consultants provide constant support for franchisee growth. Hungry Howie's also offers thorough new franchisee in store and online training programs, as well as online training modules to help franchisees train their employees.
 - There are also plenty of opportunities for both multi-unit and single unit operators. Multi-unit opportunities are available in many major markets and can allow franchisees to supplement their existing business by adding a proven concept to their portfolio. Hungry Howie's can also provide support in selecting an optimal location for the franchise. Franchisees are granted an exclusive territory with a defined radius around their restaurant location, protecting them from direct competition with other Hungry Howie's units. Franchisees also have the option to relocate their restaurant, subject to the franchisor's approval. This allows franchisees to explore better business opportunities within their exclusive territory if needed.
 - Prospective franchisees have the chance to be a part of a \$46 billion industry. There is high ROI potential as a Hungry Howie's franchisee, with many of our franchisees achieving millions in annual gross sales.
 - Additionally, Hungry Howie's has an incredible marketing team that provides strategic planning and execution. The team provides local store marketing initiatives to bond with residents in the area.

THE SKINNY: Hungry Howie's, a veteran in the pizza industry with over 50 years of experience, stands out for its proven track record and adaptability. Known for originating Flavored Crust pizza, the chain



HUNGRY HOWIE'S

offers unique pizza variations at no extra cost, including premium ingredients like 100 percent mozzarella cheese and freshly made dough. Its

diverse menu features various crust options and a range of items like oven-baked subs, salads, and wings. As a family-owned business, Hungry Howie's prioritizes a supportive and collaborative environment for its franchisees and fosters a sense of extended family. The leadership team maintains open communication with franchisees and ensures robust support and connection to the brand. Hungry Howie's has thrived by adapting to economic changes, innovating products, and leveraging technology. In 2023 especially, the brand saw success with new menu items, marketing strategies, and tech advancements. Notably, the Secret Menu campaign for its 50th anniversary in August

2023 generated over \$515,000 in sales. It continued into 2024 due to its popularity. The brand's tech initiatives include a Pizza Party Planner website, a user-friendly mobile app, and the Howie Rewards program, which boasts over one million loyalty members. The app's HowieTrack feature allows real-time order tracking. Additionally, the proprietary Howie's Online Management Exchange (HOME) system offers franchisees performance tracking, store communication, and business reports.

FIREHOUSE SUBS

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 1,169	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 1,208	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$1,194,000,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$975,493	FRANCHISE FEE: \$20,000	ROYALTY: 6 percent
RENEWAL FEE: \$10,000	MARKETING FEE: Up to 5 percent	TOTAL START-UP COSTS : \$343,245-\$1,344,200

FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:
Ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 cash per location for qualified franchisees.

THE SKINNY: Firehouse Subs is celebrating its 30th anniversary with significant expansion plans, including over 150 new restaurants in development and a strategy to double its footprint in the coming years. The brand is currently offering up to \$100,000 in cash incentives to qualified new and existing franchisees. Over the past year, Firehouse Subs has tripled the size of its real estate and construction teams and made substantial progress in enhancing franchisee profitability. The Firehouse Public Safety Foundation's fundraising efforts have earned the brand the top spot in supporting local communities for over a decade. The fast casual is also recognized for its quality food, offering hearty portions of flavorful meats and cheeses with heartfelt service. The brand is investing in innovative kitchen layouts, advanced equipment, digital-first ordering systems, and state-of-the-art technology for inventory management and training. Under the leadership of new CMO Dena vonWerssowetz, the brand has partnered with franchisees

to select a new creative agency team, launching the most successful marketing initiatives in the company's history. The support from parent company Restaurant Brands International has resulted in a franchisee profitability increase of over 30 percent year-over-year and an average unit volume of \$1,342,585 for the top 25 percent of traditional units.

SIZING UP FROM THE SIDELINES:
"Firehouse Subs has achieved significant progress in its culture, growth, and performance. The company has fostered a strong, positive culture that emphasizes teamwork, innovation, and employee satisfaction. This cultural foundation has played a crucial role in driving their impressive growth and overall performance. In terms of growth, Firehouse has expanded its market reach by opening 25 new locations in the past year, resulting in a 30 percent increase in revenue. The company has also diversified its product offerings, introducing new services that cater to a broader customer base. Additionally, strategic partnerships and acquisitions have further fueled their expansion, allowing Firehouse to enter new markets and strengthen its competitive position. By prioritizing a collaborative environment and continuously seeking ways to improve, Firehouse has positioned itself as a dynamic and successful organization."



FIREHOUSE SUBS

Best Franchise Deals Hall of Fame

*BRANDS CAN'T MAKE IT BACK-TO-BACK.

Tropical Smoothie Cafe

2015, 2016, 2020, 2021



Newk's Eatery
2012, 2015, 2018, 2019

McAlister's
2014, 2015, 2016, 2022



Wingstop
2011, 2014, 2017, 2019



These brands are officially retired from Best Franchise Deals, but will be highlighted in future editions. As chains reach four appearances, they will be added to the list.

Jersey Mike's
2013, 2019, 2021, 2023



Penn Station
2013, 2016, 2017, 2023



Freddy's
2012, 2013, 2019, 2023



Scooter's Coffee
2019, 2020, 2021, 2023



CHICKEN SALAD CHICK

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 186	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 270	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$352,467,768
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$1,486,807	FRANCHISE FEE: \$50,000	ROYALTY: 5 percent gross sales
RENEWAL FEE: \$5,000	TOTAL START-UP COSTS: \$747,000-\$994,500	MARKETING FEE: \$10,000

FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:

Chicken Salad Chick partners with third-party sources to offer financing options to those who qualify to cover expenses such as the franchise fee, startup costs, equipment, inventory, accounts receivable, and payroll. Chicken Salad Chick also provides a turnkey grand opening program with marketing and media planning for each restaurant, utilizing the \$10,000 fee to support those efforts. Additionally, Chicken Salad Chick franchise owners enjoy work/life balance as all locations are closed on Sundays.

THE SKINNY: Uniquely positioned in the fast-casual sector as the only concept specializing in house-made chicken salad, Chicken Salad Chick offers three revenue streams: dine-in, takeout, and off-premises sales. The brand's simple setup, which requires no vents or fryers, combined with assistance in site selection, construction, training, marketing, and ongoing consulting, makes it appealing to potential investors. Additionally, the brand provides franchisees with comprehensive support, including local and brand-wide marketing team assistance and community marketing training. This support enables franchise owners to participate in off-premises catering and on-site marketing events. Franchisees benefit from a proven business model and a healthy work/life balance, thanks to Sunday closures. The engaged franchise community at Chicken Salad Chick meets multiple times a year, offering invaluable support and guidance from peers also growing their businesses. The brand's industry leadership has been recognized with numerous accolades. Additionally, the chain received best-in-class scores from Service Management Group for guest satisfaction in areas such as friendliness, taste of food, speed of service, accuracy, and overall satisfaction.

SIZING UP FROM THE SIDELINES:

"Chicken Salad Chick offers a unique franchise opportunity as a fast-casual restaurant, as none of its food is grilled or fried. Instead, they specialize in a variety of chicken salads, along with soups, sandwiches, and side dishes. Founded in 2008 by Stacy Brown in Auburn, Alabama, the brand has since moved to Atlanta, and grown rapidly due to its distinctive menu and inviting atmosphere. Franchisees benefit from a proven business model, comprehensive training programs, and ongoing support from an experienced management team. The franchise emphasizes community engagement and a welcoming environment, which has contributed to its strong customer loyalty. With over 200 locations across the United States, Chicken Salad Chick continues to expand, with franchise partners that are passionate about great food and excellent service. The initial investment ranges from \$515,000 to \$683,000, which includes the franchise fee, construction, equipment, and initial inventory. Franchisees can expect strong brand recognition, a dedicated customer base, and the potential for significant financial rewards."

"Chicken Salad Chick has been enjoying strong growth for a good reason; they've created a simple proven business model that offers customers a quick yet healthy and enjoyable experience. They have



efficient cost management strategies to help maintain profitability and they have a unique and positive work environment that attracts and retains employees in a challenging hiring market. If you like chicken, care about health, and love to create great experiences for others, this brand might just be a great investment for you... and now is a good time to hop on this train!”

“If metrics such as 1.7 million loyalty members and \$1.49 million AUV don’t seize your attention, then consider the culture of Chicken Salad Chick. From humble beginnings to 275 locations, the leadership focuses on culture including a need for potential franchisees to jump in the kitchen and make chicken salad as part of their Discovery Day interview. The operations model is simple; however, leadership takes their time to ensure franchise owners understand the investment they are making with this franchise.”

SMOOTHIE KING

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 1,093	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 1,152	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$722,000,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$661,316	FRANCHISE FEE: \$30,000 Unit 1 / \$25,000 Units 2+	ROYALTY: 6 percent
RENEWAL FEE: Half off the current IFF (\$12,500 currently)	MARKETING FEE: 5 percent	
TOTAL START-UP COSTS : ENDCAP/INLINE: \$320,600-\$648,465; FREESTANDING: \$649,400-\$1,266,650		FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES: Veterans and first responders receive a 20 percent discount on IFF per unit developed.

THE SKINNY: Smoothie King offers a compelling investment opportunity with its lower cost model and straightforward operations, ideal for passionate entrepreneurs entering the restaurant industry as franchisees. Operated by over 500 franchisees nationwide, Smoothie King follows a business model refined and perfected over 50 years. This proven approach has earned the brand consistent recognition as a top franchise opportunity in various publications and industry rankings. The chain celebrated a record-breaking 2023. Highlights of the year included an 11.5 percent increase in same-store sales and positive traffic growth. This year, the brand anticipates further expansion, including 100 new store openings. The company attributes its growth to development and market expansion, menu innovation, and a dis-

ruptive marketing approach. In 2023, Smoothie King added 189 new store commitments to its development pipeline, making Q4 its largest signing quarter since 2017, with 39 franchise agreements and 20 area development commitments. The new store commitments included agreements in 47 designated market areas (DMAs) across 29 states, introducing the brand to four new markets: Utah, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Expansion remained robust in the brand’s home market of Dallas-Fort Worth, resulting in 15 new units in 2023. Additionally, new agreements were signed in two terminals of the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, marking the brand’s largest market for new deals that year.

SIZING UP FROM THE SIDELINES:

“We have worked with the Smoothie King team for eight years and they have received several awards based on feedback from the franchisees. In addition to the Overall Top Franchisee Satisfaction Award, they are a Top Food Franchise & a Top Franchise for Women. Franchisees rate the Innovation of the brand 23 percent higher than the quick-service benchmark, and the products & Services rated 13 percent above.”

“As an established brand with a robust operational framework, Smoothie King provides resilience in the face of market challenges like rising costs through efficient supply chain management and the ability to overcome industry labor shortages by attracting workers to a brand that they can connect with and feel good about. It benefits from continued rising consumer demand for health-conscious food options while also offering a quick and easy choice for busy and active lifestyles that many people live today. They have enhanced customer convenience and strengthened repeat business through effective technology rollouts for ordering, delivery and loyalty programs. Smoothie King has a heavy focus on efficiency and profitability while also putting a strong focus on marketing investment and corporate responsibility, giving it a strong one-two punch for ROI and growth potential.”



SMOOTHIE KING (2)



SHIPLEY DO-NUTS

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 355	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 367	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$307,000,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$902,517	FRANCHISE FEE: \$40,000	ROYALTY: 5 percent
RENEWAL FEE: 25 percent of our then-current initial franchise fee.		
TOTAL START-UP COSTS : \$496,400-\$1,029,000	MARKETING FEE: 3 percent (1 percent Regional Co-Op; 2 percent local spend)	

THE SKINNY: Shipley Do-Nuts, one of the nation’s largest doughnut brands, has a loyal following and a strong, proven business model, achieving 18–20 percent EBITDA profitability and \$1.2 million average AUVs in the top 50 percent of shops. The brand has seen quick-service industry-leading same-store sales growth of over 26 percent in the past 24 months. With some of the industry’s lowest start-up investment costs—reduced by 23 percent over the past year to between \$496,400 and \$1,029,000—the brand offers an attractive opportunity for franchisees. The chain has an experienced development team that assists franchisees in progressing from site selection to operational status in under 12 months. The brand provides several store formats, including standalone shops with drive-thrus and inline options, to offer flexibility in a competitive real estate market. With opportunities for growth across a wide geographic territory, Shipley’s diverse and craveable product line—including its famous signature hot glazed donuts, a variety of filled, iced, and cake doughnuts, pastries, kolaches, hot coffee, and cold brew—continues to attract generations of loyal customers.



SHIPLEY DO-NUTS

SHIPLEY DO-NUTS

SIZING UP FROM THE SIDELINES:

“Shipley Do-Nuts has built a strong brand legacy with its freshly made doughnuts and pastries that have delighted customers for over 85 years. Known for their wide variety of flavors and classic recipes, Shipley creates a nostalgic yet vibrant experience that keeps customers coming back. Their dedication to quality and tradition, along with strong franchisee support, ensures Shipley Do-Nuts will continue to grow and capture new markets.”

CHEBA HUT

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES:
63	65	\$122,683,049.76
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:	FRANCHISE FEE:	ROYALTY:
\$2,307,476	\$50,000 for single; \$130,000 for three	5 percent
RENEWAL FEE:	MARKETING FEE:	
50 percent of then current initial franchise fee	2 percent	
TOTAL START-UP COSTS:	FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:	
\$631,150-\$2,171,900	10 percent discount for veterans	

THE SKINNY: Cheba Hut is a company driven by core values, prioritizing decisions that benefit both owners and crew members. With an average store size of 2,450 square feet and a full bar program, the brand’s business model is economically sound. The average ticket price is \$20, and there is a balanced mix between digital and in-shop sales. The absence of flat tops and deep fryers, coupled with the requirement of only a type 2 hood, keeps investment costs reasonable and real estate options flexible. The fast casual has consistently seen positive same-store interaction counts, including in Q1 2024. The brand performs well in various markets, including urban, suburban, and college areas, with many of the highest-grossing stores located in conservative regions. The headquarters staff in Fort Collins, Colorado, is highly regarded, positioning Cheba Hut for growth and strong support.



CHEBA HUT



ELLIANOS COFFEE

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES:
51	51	\$1,024,602
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:	FRANCHISE FEE:	
\$1,024,602	\$30,000 for first store; \$15,000 each consecutive store	
ROYALTY:	MARKETING FEE:	TOTAL START-UP COSTS :
6 percent	1.25 percent	\$634,500-\$946,500

FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:
We work with Vet Fran and offer a 20 percent discount on the first store’s franchise fee for those who are previous military.

THE SKINNY: Experiencing significant growth since 2017, the franchise expanded from 20 stores in early 2022 to 30 by 2023, reaching 50 stores at the start of 2024. It’s projected to hit 100 by the end of 2025. Currently, over 170 stores are either open or in development. Ellianos focuses on growing its presence in the Southeast to build strong brand loyalty. The brand is known for pioneering the double-sided drive-thru layout, enhancing customer convenience and service efficiency. Innovations like walk-up windows and a modular build design further highlight its commitment to efficiency. The chain blends Southern and traditional coffee cultures, offering high-quality ingredients and hospitality. The menu features signature Breakfast Bowls and celebrates Southern culinary traditions. Customer satisfaction is a priority, with 75 percent of stores boasting at least a 4.6-star rating. The franchise emphasizes community involvement, with all stores locally owned and operated. Technological advancements include a new mobile app launched in 2024 for ordering ahead. Ellianos provides comprehensive franchisee support and training, ensuring operational excellence. Financially, the franchise model is designed for profitability. Food accounts for over 20 percent of sales and non-coffee beverages over 15 percent.



ELLIANOS COFFEE / ULESY PIEDRA



PANCHEROS

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES:
47	73	\$111,478,836.17
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:	FRANCHISE FEE:	ROYALTY:
\$1,527,107.34	\$30,000	5 percent
RENEWAL FEE:	MARKETING FEE:	TOTAL START-UP COSTS:
\$0	Up to 3 percent of gross revenue, currently 2 percent	\$680,500-\$1,387,500

FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:
No renewal fee; step-by-step support from day one; dedicated franchise business consultant; support through Burritos With Benefits app; national marketing support; grand opening support.

THE SKINNY: Pancheros attributes its success to a simple approach: using simple ingredients, a straightforward menu, easy cooking techniques, and a streamlined business model. This simplicity results in fresh, delicious food, highlighted by its unique burritos, mixed evenly with Bob The Tool and wrapped in fresh-pressed tortillas. Part of the growing Mexican fast-casual industry, Pancheros has a proven business model developed over 30 years, expanding from the Midwest to over 70 locations nationwide with plans for further growth. The brand offers comprehensive training and ongoing support, including a dedicated franchise business consultant who provides continuous mentorship and assistance. New franchisees benefit from the Burritos with Benefits loyalty program and a user-friendly mobile app, which enables guests to order ahead, get delivery, earn points, and access

exclusive promotions. Pancheros also provides national marketing support to help connect with customers and drive business. Pancheros seeks franchise partners who share its values and passion for food in a welcoming environment and prioritize customer service.

BOJANGLES

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES:
528	813	\$1,781,138,964
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:		
\$2,350,216 for 2023 (franchised-bone-in chicken menu) \$3,237,714 for 2023 (Three company-operated locations with the boneless only chicken menu)		
FRANCHISE FEE:	ROYALTY:	RENEWAL FEE:
\$35,000	4 percent of total monthly gross sales	50 percent of the franchise fee in effect at the time of renewal

MARKETING FEE:
• Local marketing expenditure: 3 percent of total monthly gross sales less amounts spent on cooperative advertising
• Local marketing-Advertising Technology Vendors: currently, \$125 per restaurant
• Cooperative advertising: typically 2 percent of gross sales

TOTAL START-UP COSTS:
\$2,600,320-\$3,779,700 for traditional, freestanding restaurants (does not include real estate acquisition or leasehold costs.); \$720,220-\$1,817,200 for express restaurants

FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES:
• Veteran, Women and Minority Franchise Incentive Programs include 50 percent savings on Bojangles franchise fee for the first two qualifying restaurants and reduced royalty fee for the first three years as a Bojangles franchisee.
• Equipment Reimbursement Incentive: Sign a development agreement for (three) units, receive \$300,000 rebate upon opening of units No. 1 and No. 2 = \$600,000 total! Sign a development agreement for (five) or more units, receive a \$300,000 rebate upon opening of units No. 1, No. 2 and No. 5 = \$900K total!

THE SKINNY: Bojangles is recognized thanks to its proven history since 1977 and strong commitment to franchisee success. The chain has an AUV of \$2.35 million, with breakfast sales making up nearly 37



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percent of revenue, indicating strong performance and growth potential. The optimized all-boneless menu platform further enhances performance, achieving an impressive AUV of \$3.23 million. The concept offers six flexible prototype options to meet diverse market needs. Additionally, with nearly 35 percent of its 813 restaurants company-owned, Bojangles underscores its dedication to the success of both the brand and its franchisees. In 2023, Bojangles achieved significant development success by adding 270 units to its growth pipeline and opening 40 new restaurants, including 10 in new markets. The brand's expansion strategy includes an updated restaurant design, a new staffing model, and a streamlined boneless chicken menu across three dayparts. CEO Jose Armario emphasized the importance of franchisees in this growth and noted strong reinvestment and new, experienced franchisees joining the brand. The expansion includes the Genesis building prototype with digital menu boards, dual drive-thru lanes, and an ergonomic design aimed at simplifying operations and enhancing the guest experience.

HAWAIIAN BROS

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 20	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 48	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$119,507,332.23
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$3,094,855	FRANCHISE FEE: \$50,000 and \$25,000 for each additional restaurant	
RENEWAL FEE: 50 percent of the then current franchise fee (or \$25,000)		ROYALTY: 6 percent
TOTAL START-UP COSTS : \$1,539,160-\$4,818,991		MARKETING FEE: 4 percent (3 percent ad fund; 1 percent local)
FRANCHISEE INCENTIVES: 5 percent royalty fees for first five years for early adopters (the first 50 restaurants systemwide that are developed and opened under our standard form development agreement).		



HAWAIIAN BROS (2)

THE SKINNY: Hawaiian Bros, an island-inspired plate lunch concept, offers a variety of chicken glazed with sweet, savory, or spicy sauces, slow-roasted pork, macaroni salad, steamed white rice or vegetables, and tropical Dole Soft Serve. From 2020 to 2023, the company has experienced significant growth due to its unique market positioning and attractive franchise opportunities. With a simple menu of only 84 SKUs, the brand keeps supply chain efficiency and a 30-second drive-thru service standard. This operational simplicity attracts multi-unit franchisees seeking higher sales and efficient operations compared to

legacy quick-service brands. The expansion strategy targets medium to large-sized multi-unit franchisees with over 10 years of experience in local market operations, aligned with the brand's 'ohana culture and Aloha Spirit. Since March 2023, Hawaiian Bros has signed eight development agreements with multi-unit franchisees to open over 150 restaurants across more than 20 markets in nine states. The brand's unique positioning between quick-service and fast-casual restaurants caters to various customer preferences through personal guides and self-service kiosks, ensuring fast and accurate service. With an average unit volume of \$3 million for established restaurants, Hawaiian Bros offers a compelling franchise opportunity. Currently owning and franchising 55 restaurants in nine states, the brand is expanding into select midwestern, central, mountain, and southeast markets in 2024. Hawaiian Bros' commitment to its values and the success of its franchisees has fueled its rapid nationwide expansion and positions the brand for continued growth.



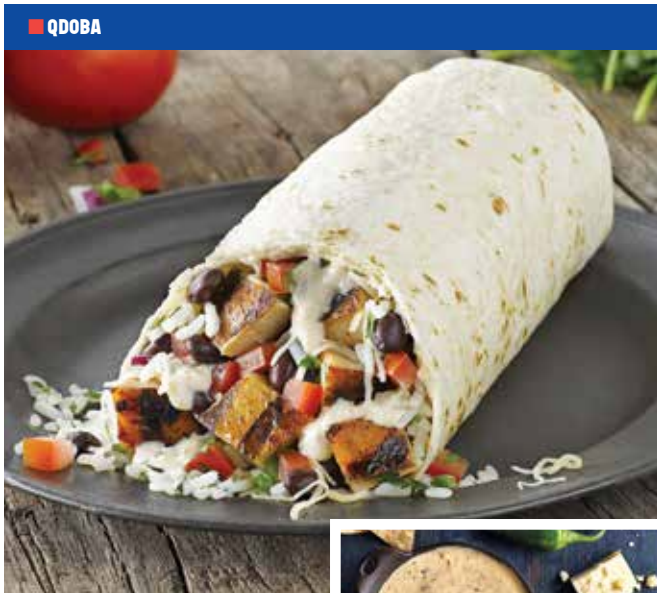
HAWAIIAN BROS



HAWAIIAN BROS (2)

QDOBA

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 558	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 747	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$346,480,000
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$1.6 million	FRANCHISE FEE: \$30,000	ROYALTY: 5 percent of gross sales
RENEWAL FEE: Greater of 15 percent of the then-current franchise fee or \$5,000		
MARKETING FEE: Currently two and one-quarter percent (2.25 percent) of gross sales for franchisees and one and three-quarters percent (1.75 percent) of gross sales for licensees.		
TOTAL START-UP COSTS: \$489,200-\$1,307,000	FRANCHISEE INCENTIVE: \$100,000 cash incentive	



THE SKINNY: QDOBA stands out as a premier franchise opportunity for several reasons. The brand has strong recognition, consistently ranking in top franchise lists like Entrepreneur Franchise 500 and USA Today's Best Fast-Casual Restaurants, attracting seasoned franchisees and ensuring steady business growth. The menu, known for its freshly prepped and grilled-in-house ingredients, appeals to a wide customer base with fresh, customizable options. This focus on quality, combined with a diverse menu, helps maintain customer interest and satisfaction. Financially, the chain is attractive with an impressive top quartile AUV of over \$2.3 million. This high revenue potential is supported by multiple revenue streams and strong performance across various dayparts, enhancing overall profitability for



QDOBA (2)

franchisees. The brand offers flexible buildout options and accommodates spaces from 500 to 2,500 square feet, allowing franchisees to tailor their investment to different market conditions and locations. This adaptability can lower initial costs, speed up the building process, and make it easier to start generating revenue. QDOBA also provides robust franchisee support and leverages over 25 years of industry experience.

POKEWORKS



POKEWORKS

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS: 60	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 67	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: NA
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$910,124	FRANCHISE FEE: \$35,000	ROYALTY: 6 percent
RENEWAL FEE: \$12,500	MARKETING FEE: 1.5 percent	TOTAL START-UP COSTS: \$308,455- \$602,878
FRANCHISEE INCENTIVE: Fees are reduced with a multi-unit commitment.		

THE SKINNY: Pokeworks is the leading and fastest-growing fast-casual poke brand globally and has some of the highest store counts and AUVs in the category. As the brand continues its franchise expansion, it seeks franchisees who align with its commitment to guests and core values: Spreading Aloha, Positivity, Innovation, Attention to Detail, Sustainability, and Integrity. With stores achieving \$2.2 million in sales systemwide, Pokeworks presents a unique and attractive opportunity for franchisees aiming to introduce poke to new communities. Over the years, the fast casual has streamlined internal systems and operations to ensure a seamless experience for franchisees. This includes multiple revenue streams through catering options, a modern technology stack featuring a user-friendly app and online ordering, loyalty programs, advanced digital customer marketing, acquisition strategies, targeted local marketing capabilities, and proven success in social media and digital platforms. The total investment for a Pokeworks location, including the franchise fee, starts at a low \$308,000, making it an accessible opportunity for potential franchisees.

CINNABON

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:		TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES:		FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:	
959		\$286,475,604		\$720,264	
NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:		FRANCHISE FEE:			
981		\$30,500 for a full bakery; \$8,000 for an express bakery; \$5,500 for a concession bakery; \$66,000 for an Auntie Anne's co-branded bakery (\$30,500 of which will be paid to Cinnabon); \$8,000 for express bakery; and \$61,000 for a Carvel co-branded (\$30,500 of which will be paid to Cinnabon).			
ROYALTY:					
6 percent of net sales for all bakeries, except: then-current product price per case for express bakeries in a Schlotzsky's. Royalties on net sales attributable to the co-branded franchisor may vary.					
Renewal fee: 20 percent of the then-current initial franchise fee for the type of bakery you will operate.					
MARKETING FEE:					
Currently, 2.5 percent of net sales for bakeries in other locations. Currently 3 percent of net sales for bakeries in streetside locations and for Swirl bakeries in any location. Advertising contributions on net sales attributable to the co-branded franchisor may vary.					
TOTAL START-UP COSTS:					
\$254,750-\$674,400 (full bakery in a traditional location)					



THE SKINNY: In the quick-service industry, Cinnabon distinguishes itself from competitors with its signature cinnamon rolls. The franchise offers a robust business model backed by strong consumer brand awareness (over 90 percent) and comprehensive corporate support. Established in 1985, Cinnabon has expanded to 981 locations in the U.S. and 952 internationally, growing its presence in malls, airports, travel centers, and streetside locations. Many of these are co-branded with GoTo Foods sister brands, and all 300-plus Schlotzsky's locations feature a Cinnabon Express Bakery, further increasing its domestic footprint. Cinnabon prioritizes innovation and consumer insights, regularly enhancing its menu with new snacks and beverages to attract and retain customers. Popular additions include Cookie Bon-Bites, Chillattas, and Center of the Roll. The brand has also expanded through GoTo Foods' licensing business, offering over 100 Cinnabon SKUs in mass-market retailers like Walmart, Kroger, and Target. This focus on innovation enables franchisees to cater to a diverse consumer base. Cinnabon stands out as a winning franchise for entrepreneurs seeking to expand their portfolio, thanks to its irresistible products, desirable partnerships, strong unit-level economics, effective marketing, creative menu offerings, and efficient operations.



FAZOLI'S

NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL FRANCHISED UNITS: 152	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS: 207	TOTAL SYSTEMWIDE SALES: \$287,709,839
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$1,436,474	FRANCHISE FEE: \$50,000	ROYALTY: 5 percent
RENEWAL FEE: 50 percent of then-current initial franchise fee		MARKETING FEE: 4 percent
TOTAL START-UP COSTS: \$472,500-\$2,399,500		

THE SKINNY: Fazoli's continued its growth over the past year, expanding into several markets, including two new units in Tampa, as well as openings in Mesa, Arizona; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Orlando, Florida. The chain also secured deals to enter new territories, such as the chain's first international agreement in Canada with a veteran franchisee of its sister brand, Fatburger. This deal promises 25 units over the next decade, marking the beginning of global expansion for the brand. As the country's largest fast-casual Italian brand, Fazoli's has remained a leader in providing value amid inflationary challenges. Recently, the brand has focused on value-driven indulgent limited-time offers (LTOs), such as giant Stuffed Shells with premium toppings like shrimp. Despite these economic pressures, Fazoli's remains dedicated to cooked-to-order experiences and upscale service approaches, serving food on real plateware with real flatware, grating Parmesan tableside, and delivering fresh unlimited breadsticks directly to guests' tables.

Ben Coley is the editor of QSR. He can be reached at bcoley@wtwhmedia.com.

9 FRANCHISORS TO WATCH

These chains have never appeared on Best Franchise Deals, but are carrying plenty of momentum into the future.

NAF NAF GRILL



NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	38	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	38
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$800,000			

ANGRY CHICKZ

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	1	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	25
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$1,840,708.79			

WING IT ON!



NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	9	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	11
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$1,200,000			

SMALLS SLIDERS



NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	12	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	14
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$2.1 million			

SIP FRESH

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	1	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	4
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$700,000			

MASON'S LOBSTER FRANCHISING



NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	27	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	26
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$850,000			

WING SNOB

NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	49	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	50
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$951,000			

DISTRICT TACO



NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	Four currently open and 70 more in development	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	17
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FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME:	\$2.5 million (top third); \$1.93 million (total system)
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AROMA JOE'S



NUMBER OF U.S. FRANCHISE UNITS:	115	NUMBER OF U.S. TOTAL UNITS:	115
FRANCHISE AVERAGE UNIT VOLUME: \$965,410			



As Bojangles taps new markets, staying true to its Southern roots is key.

modernized tech innovations—all while staying true to its roots.

With so many chicken chains vying for market share, Bojangles focuses on key differentiators: its status as an iconic Southern chicken and biscuit franchise, the historical strength of breakfast sales, embracing technological advancements, and franchise development strategies.

“Bojangles is an authentic restaurant chain with incredible food and a wonderful team,” says Jim Cannon, chief development officer at Bojangles. “We focus on understanding what our guests want. The pandemic accelerated drive-thru convenience, digital ordering, and other tech-driven interactions. As these needs evolved, we listened closely and adapted.”

Expanding into new markets is a balancing act that entails embracing modern operations while finding unique ways to introduce Bojangles’ signature Southern experience to new audiences. Ensuring new customers experience the same charm that has drawn fans to Bojangles for decades is essential.

Along with its signature Southern flair, a key part of Bojangles’ appeal is its breakfast offerings—a segment that has proven particularly resilient over time.

“When we think about our North Carolina roots and how they translate to other markets, especially Western states like California and Colorado, it often comes down to great breakfast,” Cannon says. “Our loyal customers come multiple times a week for breakfast biscuits and sides like Bo-Tato Rounds, and we make sure our locations are convenient for breakfast commuters, which is core to our brand.”

Breakfast fans are particularly drawn to menu staples like the Bo-Berry Biscuit, a fan favorite. Now, guests can order the Sausage Bo-Berry Biscuit, which has icing on the inside of the biscuit to make it easier to eat on the go. They’ve also introduced a Bo-Berry shake in some new markets.

A SOUTHERN ICON HEADS WEST

KNOWN FOR ITS SOUTHERN-STYLE MENU featuring items like hand-breaded chicken, scratch-made biscuits, sweet tea, dirty rice, and seasoned fries, Bojangles is an institution on the Southeast quick-serve restaurant scene. And with its rustic charm and friendly service, warm hospitality is as much a part of the brand as the food.

Founded in 1977 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bojangles has a loyal fanbase across the Southeast and Maryland, Kentucky, and Virginia. Now, the brand is taking its signature style out west. As it expands into Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and California, it is amplifying both its operational efficiency and franchisee support with

In tandem with product innovations, the company also prioritizes technology upgrades to enhance customer convenience and streamline service.

“Bo-Linda,” its AI drive-thru ordering system, addresses the critical need for speed and reliability in today’s quick-serve restaurant market by increasing order accuracy and freeing up employees’ time to focus on customer service.

To further modernize the guest experience, Bojangles integrates digital menuboards into its drive-thrus, allowing customers to view promotions and LTOs without the need for traditional signage.

The brand also developed “Bo Food” and “Bo Labors,” tools that help operators manage labor and food costs. It allows managers to dedicate more time to customer interaction and team support, which improves both employee satisfaction and customer service. This attention to technology-driven convenience supports franchisees with more efficient operational models.

“There’s an expectation now for digital experiences, not only from guests but from employees,” Cannon says. “Younger employees value these streamlined, tech-assisted workflows, and we’re seeing improved satisfaction and retention with tools like Bo-Linda.”

To resonate with younger consumers, Bojangles has embraced a digital-first marketing strategy that leverages social media and

influencers. By focusing on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, Bojangles reaches a broader audience and allows customers to share authentic experiences. Influencer partnerships have also proven effective, especially in new markets where customers may not be familiar with the menu. The brand is also exploring other ways to cater to younger, convenience-oriented customers.

“One shift for us has been the increased demand for boneless chicken, especially among younger consumers and in new markets,” Cannon says. “We’re known for our bone-in chicken, particularly in the Southeast, and will continue to serve that market. However, as we expand west, we’re leaning into boneless options, which simplify operations and offer the convenience these guests are seeking.”

Bojangles’ growth strategy focuses strongly on contiguous market growth, expanding from the Southeast into nearby regions like Texas, Oklahoma, and the Midwest. This approach allows the brand to establish a stronger foothold and build brand recognition incrementally. The goal is to reach 1,000 units by 2026 by targeting large, high-potential markets like Las Vegas, Phoenix, and various parts of Southern California. These markets provide Bojangles with access to large, diverse populations and established quick-serve customer bases, which the brand is confident will embrace its unique menu and Southern authenticity.

“We’re working with franchisees who have the infrastructure, experience, and understanding of market dynamics to succeed in these high-growth areas,” Cannon says.

The expansion doesn’t stop at traditional locations—Bojangles is exploring a mix of freestanding units, end caps in multi-tenant buildings, and nontraditional formats such as travel stops and airport locations.

One aspect that makes Bojangles stand out in the quick-service restaurant landscape is its corporate ownership of more than 280 locations. This ownership structure helps Bojangles better support franchisees by providing real-world insights into operational challenges, from commodity prices to land development. Operating these corporate locations means Bojangles maintains a closer connection to franchisee experiences and can quickly respond to evolving market needs.

“We live the same life our franchisees do, facing the same commodity pressures, land prices, and industry headwinds,” Cannon says. “This allows us to make operational adjustments that benefit everyone.”

As Bojangles pushes westward, it remains true to its roots, blending Southern charm with modern quick-serve restaurant efficiency.

“There’s still plenty of white space left in the U.S. for franchising,” Cannon says. “Bojangles is a great brand to work with.”

By Davina van Buren



BOJANGLES

For more information on Bojangles journey and how to franchise with them, visit bojanglesfranchising.com.



\$3.23M*
AUV



\$1.78B**
SYSTEMWIDE SALES



34%***
STRONG
BREAKFAST SALES



- Optimized Boneless Chicken Menu
- **813+ Total Locations**
- ~ 285 Corporate Locations
| 70+ IN DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING | 30+ CORPORATE LOCATIONS
- **Development Incentives Available**
- **Authentic Southern Flavor**
- **3 Strong Dayparts**
- **Recently Signed Deals**

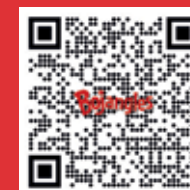
| LA COUNTY - 30 UNITS | LAS VEGAS - 20 UNITS | PHOENIX - 20 UNITS

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*The average gross sales of three company-operated full-size restaurants with the boneless chicken only menu for fiscal year 2023.

**The systemwide Gross Sales of all franchised and company-operated Restaurants for Fiscal Year 2023.

***The percentage of sales for the breakfast daypart for the three company-operated full-size restaurants serving the Boneless Chicken Only menu for Fiscal Year 2023. See the April 22, 2024 Bojangles Franchise Disclosure Document for more information.



SOUTHERN FLAVOR ON THE MOVE

Menu innovation and consumer demand are pillars of the brand's expansion.

AS BOJANGLES EXPANDS further outside the Southeast, menu innovation and consumer demand are a critical part of its recipe for success. Known for its bold, Southern-inspired flavors, the brand is leaning into a more efficient and simplified menu to drive expansion and enhance back-of-house operations.

Offering a streamlined menu is designed to appeal to younger consumers while maintaining its core Southern flavor profile. The decision to focus on a boneless menu in new markets such as Texas, Colorado, and California helps Bojangles cater to current consumer trends, especially among younger demographics.

"Boneless chicken and big flavors continue to trend with younger audiences," says Marshall Scarborough, vice president of menu and culinary innovation at Bojangles. "Streamlining the menu makes it easier for us to deliver a high-quality experience that reflects our Southern heritage and cooking techniques."

This simplified, boneless approach is not just about efficiency; it's also about staying true to the brand's commitment to freshness and bold flavors.

"We cook our food fresh in our kitchens—dirty rice made from scratch every hour, buttermilk biscuits rolled out every 20 minutes, hand-breaded chicken every 30," Scarborough says. "Focus on quality and our unique flavor profile set us apart."

In new markets, Bojangles is competing against established players in the fried and boneless chicken space by offering distinctive flavors in items like their signature Bo-Berry Biscuit. A blueberry-infused, iced biscuit with a loyal following, this beloved menu item has sparked creative "menu hacks" that the brand wholeheartedly embraces.

"For instance, the Sausage Bo-Berry Biscuit was something we observed from our fans, so we leaned into the tasty mash-up as an LTO," Scarborough says.

This openness to customer-driven ideas reflects Bojangles' approach to capturing younger consumers who value unique, customizable options. As part of its expansion, the brand is also catering to a "Southern road trip" flavor experience as a point of differentiation.



"Our menu captures the Southern experience, from French fries to dirty rice, sweet tea, chicken, and even the Bo-Berries," Scarborough says.

Bojangles maintains its Southern culinary identity while adapting to regional tastes. California locations will offer fresh, hearty salads like the crisp House Salad with cucumbers, tomatoes, leafy greens, customizable dressings, and protein, and the vibrant Garden Salad featuring two lettuce varieties, Monterey cheddar, cucumbers, and juicy grape tomatoes. These Southern-inspired updates reflect Bojangles' commitment to quality and value nationwide.

"Our strategy focused on delivering flavorful, fresh, and filling food, offering generous portions and a unique experience over a low price," Scarborough says.

Bojangles has expanded the "Bo-Berry platform" with Bo-Berry milkshakes and cookies. Offering new items to loyal customers while drawing in fresh interest in new markets allows the brand to continue building on the cult favorite.

"We want people to taste the love we put into our food in every bite," Scarborough says.

By prioritizing quality, authenticity, and trend-driven innovation, Bojangles is well-positioned for success as it scales nationally. Furthermore,

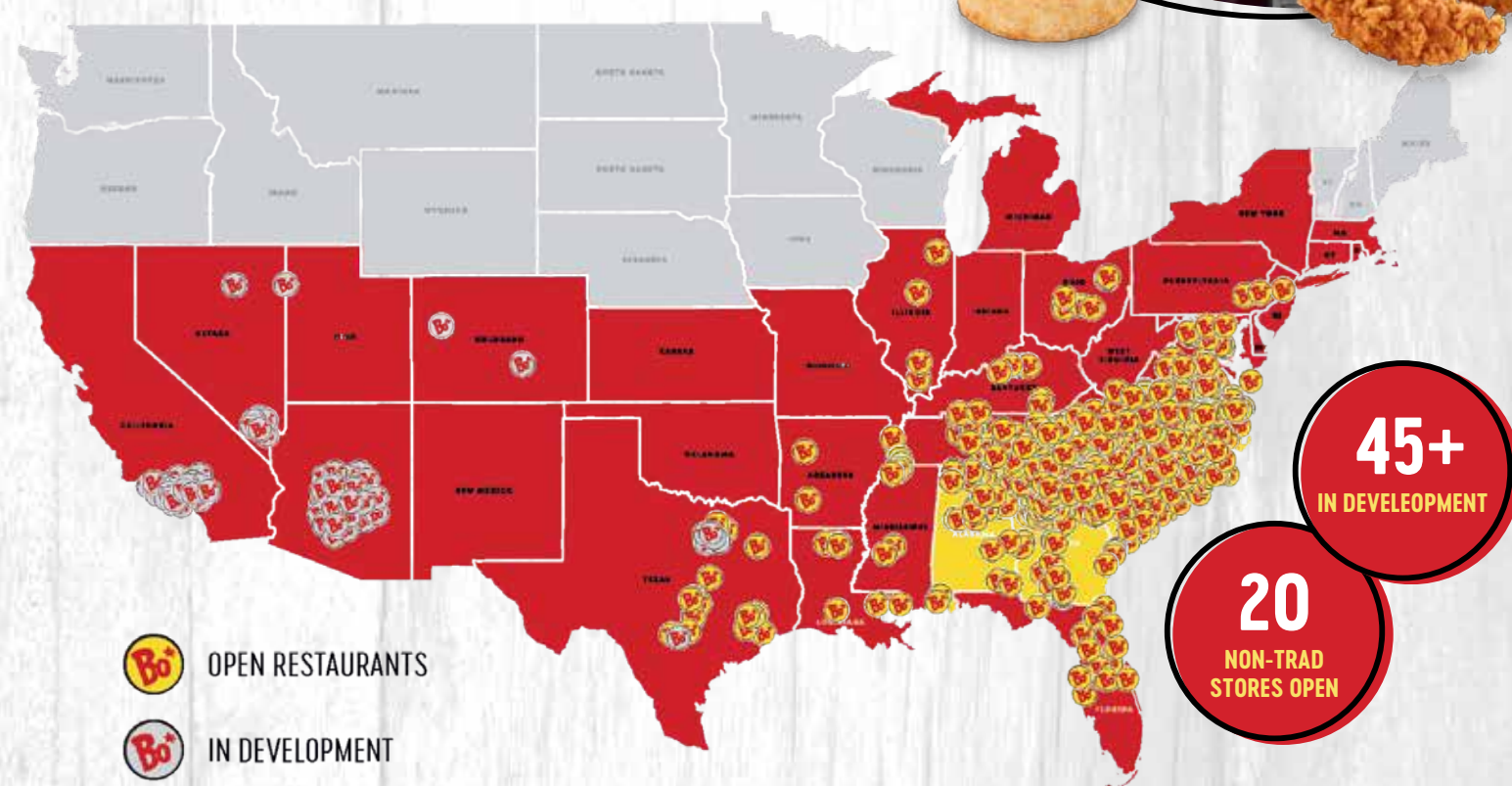
the company seeks franchisees and leaders who share their vision.

"We're looking for people who understand people—great leaders who will uphold the quality we're committed to," Scarborough says.

By Davina van Buren

GROW WITH Bo

Since our inception in 1977, we've expanded into multiple markets, introduced an innovative boneless menu and optimized our kitchen operations. We're a growing chicken franchise seeking experienced business owners and restaurant operators to grow with. **Let's bring Bojangles to your community!**



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BOJANGLES CEO SHARES INSIGHTS ON WHERE THE BRAND IS GOING

CEO Jose Armario talks new prototypes, brand innovations, and franchisee support.

FOUNDED IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, in the late 1970s, Bojangles has a long and proud history in the franchise world. With a focus on delivering a unique blend of Southern hospitality, made-from-scratch cooking, and bold flavors, the brand was designed to grow through the strength of its franchisee relationships from its founding. Now, Bojangles has its sights set on new territories.

“Over the decades, we’ve expanded steadily throughout the Southeast, and in recent years, we’ve ramped up our efforts to expand beyond our core region, including markets in Texas, Ohio, Las Vegas, and Phoenix,” says Jose Armario, CEO of Bojangles. “Today, Bojangles is recognized as a leader in the quick-service restaurant industry, and we have a network of highly engaged franchisees driving our growth.”

Bojangles has taken deliberate steps to create a franchise model that supports both seasoned operators and newcomers to the brand, and its ambitious goal of reaching 1,000 units by 2026 is backed by a clear franchise development strategy. One of the brand’s primary tactics is expanding into previously untapped markets, particularly outside its historic Southeast footprint.

“We’ve seen tremendous interest from potential franchisees in regions like Arizona, California, and Nevada,” Armario says.

Bojangles’ growth strategy also includes technological innovation and streamlining operations. They’ve invested heavily in digital integration, from mobile ordering and delivery to advanced point-of-sale systems that help franchisees manage operations more efficiently.

One of the brand’s most impactful innovations is its Genesis prototype, which includes dual drive-thru lanes, digital menu boards, and outside order-takers to streamline service. The dual drive-



JOSE ARMARIO

thru system allows franchisees to serve customers quicker and manage higher volumes during peak times.

On the menu side, additions like the Sausage Bo-Berry Biscuit—which originated from fan “hacks” on social media—have been a sweeping success. Bojangles is also expanding its signature Bo-Berry biscuit line to include more Bo-Berry products, such as milkshakes and cookies.

Another brand innovation is Bojangles’ streamlined boneless chicken platform.

“Our boneless chicken platform in new markets has simplified kitchen workflows while delivering a modern menu that resonates with today’s customers,” Armario says.

The boneless model in new markets has contributed to the success of franchisees like Jeff Rigsby, a long-time Bojangles operator who has been with Bojangles for decades. Rigsby

recently expanded into Ohio, opening two of 15 planned locations in Columbus.

Another success story is Bojangles’ relationship with LVP Restaurant Group, who is spearheading the brand’s expansion into Las Vegas and Phoenix. Their expertise in both traditional and non-traditional unit formats, including relationships with TravelCenters of America, has been a huge asset in helping Bojangles begin to establish a foothold in the West.

Bojangles understands that franchisees’ needs are evolving, particularly in the wake of the pandemic and shifts in the labor market. The brand has implemented several initiatives to support franchisees through these challenges, including simplified kitchen workflows and enhanced digital tools like mobile ordering and delivery.

All of these tools are designed to enhance the guest experi-



FRANCHISE INCENTIVES AVAILABLE

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ence while helping franchisees operate more efficiently and profitably, ensuring that Bojangles remains a leader in the QSR space. It's all about maintaining the brand's high standards while adapting to meet the demands of new markets and customer expectations.

"We're constantly innovating to meet evolving market demands, and we ensure our franchisees are right there with us, fully supported," Armario says. "The success of our franchisees is directly tied to the success of our brand."

Franchisee support goes beyond technology and operations. The company offers extensive resources for new franchisees, from site selection and market analysis to hands-on training in Bojangles' unique cooking methods. Its signature "Biscuit Theatre" program, for example, reinforces quality standards with a detailed, 49-step process that teaches franchisees and their teams the art of biscuit-making.

"This program and other training resources ensure that wherever a guest visits a Bojangles, they experience the same bold Southern

flavors and high-quality food," Armario says.

Beyond initial onboarding, field operations teams work closely with franchisees to navigate challenges and capitalize on growth opportunities. Franchisees can also expect regular training refreshers for their teams, especially as the brand introduces new products, technologies, or operational improvements.

"Our brand standards are non-negotiable, but we recognize the importance of giving franchisees flexibility in local marketing and community engagement," Armario says.

As Bojangles expands, selecting the right franchisees is critical to maintaining the brand's integrity. Potential franchisees are evaluated not only on their financial qualifications but also on their commitment to Bojangles' values of customer service, community involvement, and operational excellence. They prioritize candidates who have a proven track record in the restaurant industry or other relevant fields.

"Financial capability is, of course, important, but beyond that, we want to work with franchisees who are passionate about the Bojangles brand and who are committed to long-term success," Armario says. "It's a collaborative relationship—we want to work with franchisees who are as invested in our mission as we are."

With new franchisees lined up to bring Bojangles to areas like California and Colorado, the combination of operational innovations, comprehensive franchisee support, and a commitment to expansion outside the Southeast positions Bojangles as a leader in the QSR industry. And if history is any indication, customers will respond enthusiastically to its iconic Southern flavors and warm hospitality.

As Bojangles continues its journey westward, it's clear that the beloved brand is poised to become a nationwide name, fueled by the dedication of its franchisees, reverence for its Southern roots, and a flexible approach to new markets. *By Davina van Buren*



BOJANGLES

Visit **bojanglesfranchising.com**. To learn more about how you can grow with Bojangles.