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May | June 2009
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Display in business

hires stay-at-home moms in the neighbourhood. The job's flexibility allows employees to work around their children's activities, meaning people clamour to work for her.

"I put an ad in the community newsletter and the response was overwhelming. People can work around their family schedule like I do. They also love the creative aspect of putting these together – it's a lot of fun. I've had no problem at all finding and retaining people."

Motivation is definitely an important trait in a prospective franchisee. Says Broad, "You have to be willing to grow it and be motivated to do that. I've always been determined to make it profitable and that's what I've done."

Blatt agrees. "You need to be a self starter and schedule yourself. Working at home you can get stuck between laundry, cleaning and trying to do your business, so you definitely have to schedule hours. You also need to get out and drum up more business."

The challenge in operating a home-based franchise is separating home and work. Laughs Broad, "Sometimes, I've been in my office and I look down and my son has gotten into the ribbon, spools of it all undone everywhere."

In Broad's case, separating her office from her home duties means making sure that her three-year-old bundle of joy doesn't find his way into someone else's basket of goodies. There will be plenty of time to help out Mom when he's older.

The LiceSquad

If you're going to run a LiceSquad franchise, get ready for the bad puns. You're a 'nit-picker' after all. In fact, being detail oriented is one of the traits you need to run this franchise. The other is an ability to deal with people in a time of crisis.

LiceSquad Director and Founder Dawn Mucci-Gooch says franchisees need good people skills. "The qualities I look for in a perspective franchisee are empathy, honesty and a good sense of humour."

Toronto LiceSquad franchisee Karin Kutasewich knows that all too well. "When people call me, they're pretty upset – some are often close to a nervous breakdown. I'm the first person they talk to, so I spend a lot of time trying to calm them down. I hear some pretty interesting and sad stories."

Franchisees are given a full training seminar on how to hire contractors and provide seminars to schools as well as learning how to conduct in-home visits. Following the training, the franchisee must pass a written test, provide a police vulnerable sector screening certificate and pass an in-home service evaluation.

"I don't need to drive to work every day and I can eat healthy lunches. I also have more flexibility with what I wear although you'd never catch me in my pyjamas"

– Karin Kutasewich, The LiceSquad Franchisee

After that they can set up shop at home.

The busiest times of the year are when kids return from camps as well as after March and Christmas breaks. Kutasewich says one bonus is that she never has trouble contacting perspective clients because

they're always trying to reach her. She has three employees conducting home checks and five who go out to schools to search kids' heads for lice.

Kutasewich previously worked as a freelance medical services technician from her home so she had an idea of what working out of her home would be like. She loves the flexibility that comes with a home-based business as well as the tax write-offs. She laughs that it's healthier for the environment as well. "I find it's less of a carbon footprint. I don't need to drive to work every day and I can eat healthy lunches. I also have more flexibility with what I wear although you'd never catch me in my pyjamas."

There are definitely challenges to a home-based franchise. When her kids are home in the summer and don't realize she's working, she has to adapt. "As long as I have my phone and a binder I can conduct my business from anywhere. I can take my kids to Toronto Island and still work."

Another challenge is actually taking time off. "When I close the office down, people's panic is quite high. It's time-sensitive for me to get back to them."

As well, there can be a feeling of isolation that comes with working out of the home. That's when Kutasewich heads into the schools to help out with lice checks.

Sometimes you just need to get back to your 'roots' – or maybe someone else's – to feel connected. Sorry, bad puns come with the territory! 🍀



Dawn Mucci-Gooch, Director and Founder of The LiceSquad