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Interview with WSI Internet – by InfoFranchise.com (European Franchise Website)

InfoFranchise.com caught up with WSI Internet for an interview asking about their Global Franchising Campaign and this is what they had to say. . .



What makes Franchising with WSI Internet special?

The WSI business opportunity is special and unique as it leverages the dynamism and exciting evolution of the Internet. We have remained successful throughout the many growth phases of the Internet, seen the rise and fall of the dotcoms and the explosive growth of e-Commerce. We have always been confident about the potential of the Internet industry and our role within it. The proven system we have developed is viable regardless of economical conditions because e-Business is all about improving efficiencies.

WSI remains committed to innovation and 2006 is set to be a particularly exciting year for us. We're focusing on continued improvements and enhancements to our e-marketing training and solutions, and expanding our franchisees' reach across the global SME market.

Most Executives, Entrepreneurs, Managers and Consultants have one thing in common, and that is the desire to be their own boss and be profitable. In fulfilling this desire, many individuals may not realize that being one's own boss often times also means being your own sales person, project manager, marketing coordinator, book keeper and administrator. The WSI business model is truly a one of a kind "freedom franchise". It allows these individuals to leverage their management experience and expertise in different vertical markets to generate profits for themselves and their customers in a world class consulting environment. This is what makes our business concept so interesting, profitable and a satisfying experience for our franchisees.

What sets WSI apart from your competitors?

With over 2000 internet consultants in 87 countries, WSI offers a suite of affordable Internet related services and technologies tailored to the unique requirements of each client and designed to ensure maximum return on investment. The reason our franchise operations are steadfastly successful and distinct from other web developers around the globe is because we offer our customers "tech speak free" advice. A WSI certified Internet Consultant and / or Internet Marketing Specialist has the expertise and experience to help their customers leverage the Internet for their

business in a language that they can understand. WSI solutions are locally relevant (appropriate languages, regional business approach and cultural sensitivities) as our Internet Consultants live and operate in the same local markets as their customers. Most of all, our consultants deliver a return on their customers' investment (something we know all business people can understand, no matter where they are in the world!)

In the franchise industry, our position as the world's #1 Internet Services and Technology Franchise in Entrepreneur Magazine's Annual Franchise 500 listing is proof of our competitive edge. In 2006, WSI has leaped into the #6 ranking in the Top Ten Global franchises with international opportunities. WSI continues to be one of the most profitable, proven franchise opportunities in the world today.

What are the main advantages of affiliating with WSI?

Each WSI local office is an independent privately owned and operated franchise with access to the infrastructure, training, support and combined success of WSI. WSI franchisees have business opportunities to operate with a local, regional, national or international license. WSI provides continuous infrastructural, training and strategic support from start-up to ongoing business to every single franchisee in our family. The biggest advantage of affiliating with WSI is the opportunity to serve the growing and dynamic SME market the world over equipped with a unique portfolio of Internet solutions that reduce costs, improve efficiencies and enhance profitability of customers and service providers alike.

What can the franchisee expect when opening a new location in their city or country?

WSI provides every new franchisee with a check list to help them set up their business. This covers hardware and software items, office automation (fax, telephone, Internet connection) guidelines on renting office space, insurance and legal guidelines, accounting packages and stationery (WSI branded), marketing materials (WSI branded and made available through an exclusive e-store), etc.

We have several training and ongoing skill upgrade opportunities for our Internet Consultants. Initial training to new franchisees is provided through a six week, intensive online training using our proprietary online learning environment facilitated by a dedicated e-coach. This is followed by a one week classroom training at our corporate headquarters in Toronto, Canada. Once the franchisees get back home and open shop, we assist them through our Quick Start Program (QSP) for a 90 day period of dedicated business coaching.

Ongoing support is provided globally through our 24/7/365 Help Desk. Our quarterly Excellence & Innovation Conference series, Bi Monthly Advanced Training Programs, Monthly Ambassador Coach Seminars, and Webinars (4 times a week) are all aimed at sharing best practices and case studies of success to encourage, teach and inspire everyone in our franchise community. We also work closely with our partners in the

WSI private e-marketplace to continuously upgrade the skills and training that keeps our franchisees on top of the latest industry trends and demands of the SME market.

What brand promotions are used to solicit new franchisees?

Being in the Internet industry ourselves, we focus heavily on sustained and consistent Web promotions through articles that are targeted to individuals searching for a new business opportunity. One commonly used Franchise industry method which we are not using are franchise tradeshows or other promotional events as the Internet is the place to be for those people who are researching opportunities. From the initial screening to the final selection, our process is very detailed, ensuring a high calibre of franchisees with the potential and aptitude required to keep pace with the dynamic nature of the Internet and the SME market space. Another excellent source is word of mouth. Our franchise applicants are often referred to us by existing franchisees and that is truly, one of our biggest rewards. A happy and profitable franchisee community is what we are constantly endeavoring to build and nurture.

What does WSI Internet's "Franchising Formula" offer to the franchisee that others don't?

The WSI formula is simple:

Successful Franchisees + Successful Clients = Successful Franchise Opportunity

Our success is built on the strong foundation of happy and profitable franchisees serving the fastest growing business market – small and medium size business (SMEs). Our franchisees are proud to serve satisfied and profitable customers, the world over. No other franchise offers the distinction of an international opportunity, in the dynamic, fast paced Internet industry, with access to a private virtual e-marketplace serving the business needs of the SME market.

What do you look for specifically in a new franchisee candidate?

At WSI, our selection criteria was developed with a clear understanding of what is required to be a successful Internet Consultant, including a business background. We typically see many different business backgrounds being useful including Marketing and Sales, Corporate Executives, IT experience and entrepreneurs (those who own or owned other businesses). In addition, it requires the ability on the part of the applicant to follow a proven system for success, the willingness to work hard, dedication to fulfilling their customers' needs and most importantly a personal drive to succeed.

At WSI, we carefully select our franchisees based on their experience and entrepreneurial spirit. We then hone those skills to train and empower them to be the partners SMEs need in succeeding at e-business. You cannot afford a mistake as a small business and our franchisees join the WSI family with the shared mission to educate their clients and increase their profitability.

Briefly describe your vice president, Franchise Development and his/her role in the organization.

In 2005, Ross Montagano joined WSI assuming responsibility of the company's Franchise Development activities as vice president. Ross is a proven senior executive with a solid track record of consistently achieving outstanding results coupled with extensive experience in General Management, Sales, Marketing and Field Operations. Having worked for billion dollar organizations like Pitney Bowes, Aramark Corporation and other large corporations such as The Rider Travel Group and Pinnacle Sales & Marketing, Montagano brings to WSI, a diverse portfolio of experiences and accomplishments, all having resulted in enhanced company growth and increased revenues.

A creative strategic thinker and visionary who thrives on challenge and change, Montagano performs his duties at WSI an action oriented team builder and leader with strong motivational and interpersonal abilities focused on growth, productivity and excellent customer service to our franchise applicants. He leads a strong team of Regional Development Directors providing the vision for expansion, the direction to achieve targets, demonstrating quality customer service and ultimately helping WSI to develop and maintain a top calibre, highly successful franchisee network.

As part of the senior management team at WSI, Ross works closely with his peers to steer the organization in the right direction to generate positive results that benefit our franchisees and our customers. Backed by his career experience and his personal qualities as a visionary, thinker-doer, Ross is a key member of the team that drives increased return on investment for our franchisees, their customers and WSI.