



From Consumer to King

5 Smoothie King Franchisee Transformations

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Forward

Smoothie King's mission is simple and direct: Inspire people to live a healthy and active lifestyle. It's a message that resonates with our guests and franchisees alike. More importantly, as a brand we're dedicated to living that mission with every smoothie we serve and every community we reach.

In each store, our franchisees and their dedicated teams build relationships with their guests, helping them achieve their nutrition and wellness goals. We've seen this relationship spawn much more than loyal guests—it inspires them to invest in Smoothie King's mission and bring our products and brand to their communities as well.

With the following stories of guest transformations from five of our hundreds of franchisees, you can see how achieving their business ownership goals with Smoothie King has enabled them to reach their own unique purpose.



Stories from our Franchisees

Smoothie King franchisee: Jamie Joyal

Location: Austin, Texas

Originally a guest in: New York City, New York

Smoothie King franchisee since: July 2015

Favorite smoothie: Gladiator

How did you discover Smoothie King?

When I first discovered the brand, I was running multiple gyms and fitness centers in New York City, New York for a large corporation. I did that very successfully for about 12 years. At the time, Smoothie King had only one or two franchises in New York City, but that's where I discovered and fell in love with the brand.

I continued to run my gym out there. Obviously, a smoothie is the ideal supplement to a healthy and active lifestyle—you want a smoothie either before or after you work out. And for me, it was the perfect complement.



What motivated you to open up a Smoothie King store?

In New York City, I met my wife, who is from Austin, when she was going to graduate school. When she graduated, she wanted to move back to Austin, and that's how we decided to move there. At the same time, I was actually recruited by Gold's Gym to run a number of locations for the brand in Austin. So, in 2012, my wife and I moved back, and I worked at a multi-million dollar fitness facility for around three years.

The time came when I was just tired of working such long, crazy hours, but I wasn't really seeing any financial gains.

So, my wife and I decided to do our own thing. Rather than opening up another gym – especially a “mom ‘n’ pop” type of business – in a saturated market that has a significant number of facilities that are all corporate-run and supported, we decided to do something that would assist in growing health-consciousness and awareness in the area.

How does your background in nutrition and wellness translate into working with Smoothie King?

We wanted something that was in the nutrition and fitness realm and something that was going to help people. I was in nutrition and fitness for 16 years, and people are going to gyms and fitness facilities for specific reasons:

- Rehab and injury
- Build muscle mass
- Become slimmer
- Lose or gain weight
- Increase speed or strength

And with Smoothie King, no matter what, guests are coming in for a purpose, and that's our motto. All your guests are coming for some purpose, whether it's a snack, meal replacement or losing or gaining weight.

At some of the fitness facilities I managed, you've got anywhere from 6,000 to 9,000 members, and you've got to be able to work within their unique needs and their specific demands.



With Smoothie King, the average store footprint is around 1,200 square feet, and with a gym, you've got 45,000 square feet. So, the sheer size of a Smoothie King store tends to reduce the level of operational complexity.

However, the underlying mission is the same for both concepts: providing a product or service that helps people achieve their purpose.

For me, becoming a Smoothie King franchisee has given me the opportunity to look for ways to grow and improve our existing businesses



How have you been able to make connections in your local community?

We have been able to consistently hold events at the local high school, we've catered and held health fairs for large corporations and have done lunch-and-learn seminars. Recently, I catered an event with a local pre-school where I taught the kids how to make a smoothie and what exactly goes into it. We're trying to do fun and exciting things that will help raise brand awareness in the local community.

How has the Smoothie King corporate helped you achieve your goals?

The support has been tremendous. Right from day one, they lay out a blueprint for you. It's your choice as the franchisee whether you want to follow that blueprint. There's some leeway with how everyone operates their location, but there are obviously some brand standards that have to be followed across the board. However, if you follow that blueprint, you're set up for success. Then it's up to you to go out and work hard to fulfill your business goals.



What advice would you give other Smoothie King guests who are thinking about opening a store?

We've found that one of the greatest indicators of success with owning a business like Smoothie King is location. If you choose a bad location, it's an uphill battle. But if you choose a great location, you come out of the gate strong. Looking at gyms, schools and hospitals can be key when looking at a franchise location.

At one of my stores, there's a Starbucks next door, and across the street there's a high school, which has really been our saving grace. I have kids coming in all day long - morning, noon, after school or sports practice in the afternoon and evening - just getting a nutritious alternative. It's been really beneficial for us, and it helped inform our decisions when we were selecting our second store, which is located near three satellite college campuses.

At the other location, there's a Panera on one side and Domino's Pizza on the other. So, both of my locations are in really key places with a lot of retail, other businesses, schools and hospitals in the area. Ultimately, it's important to remember you get assistance all along the way, and if you follow the blueprint that Smoothie King provides, you're in a strong position to succeed.

A Passion for Brand Culture

Smoothie King franchisee: Heidi Law

Location: Summit, New Jersey

Originally a guest in: Warren, New Jersey

Smoothie King franchisee since: March 2017

Favorite smoothie: Strawberry Peanut Power Plus, Skinny with Frozen Yogurt

How did you first become a Smoothie King guest?

I got braces at the age of 45. I had been a huge coffee drinker and was worried that the coffee would stain my braces. The plaza where I usually went to get my coffee had a Smoothie King. One day, I decided to try it.

From that point, Smoothie King smoothies became my drink every morning instead of my coffee. My morning smoothie became my new routine. I have a Strawberry Peanut Power Plus for breakfast every day as a meal replacement. More recently, I typically have a small Almond Mocha, Skinny with frozen yogurt for lunch.



What motivated you to become a small-business owner?

I worked in IT in Catastrophe Management at an insurance company for 17 years. It was a large organization but also like a big family. We didn't get the most exorbitant salaries, but you'd be sitting next to your best friend. So you loved to go to work. It was something you looked forward to all the time.

However, it was never really "my dream" to work at an insurance company. Then, my company got bought by another insurance company, and there was a noticeable difference in cultural values between the two companies. This was probably the biggest motivator to pursue a new opportunity.

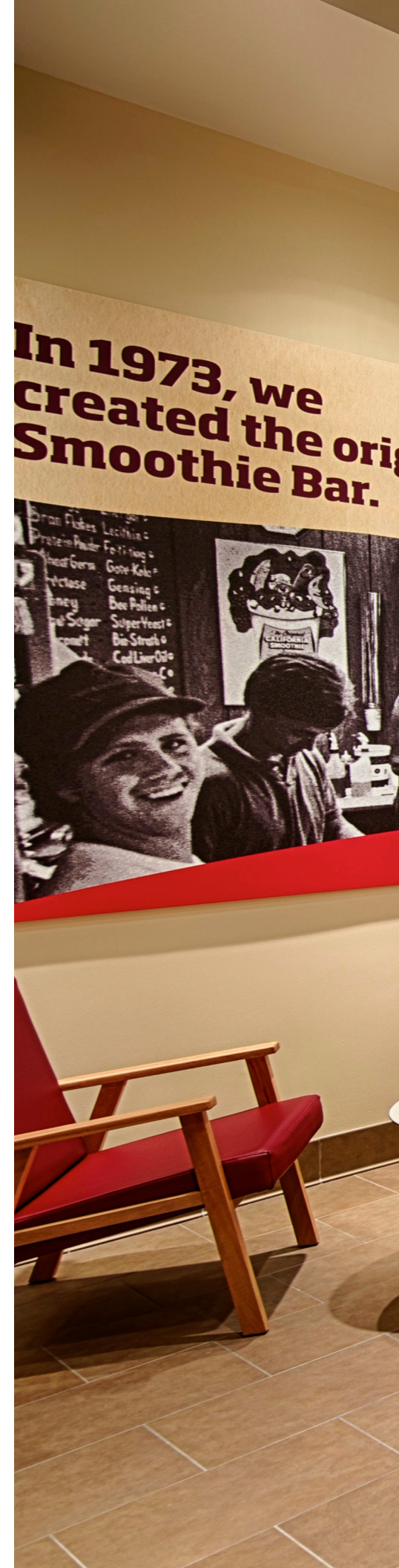
I really started to think, "Is this something I want to do for the rest of my life?" I already knew the answer was no. I wanted to be a business owner, but I was a little hesitant to go off on my own and start from scratch. That's when I started to look at franchises.

How did you choose Smoothie King as the right business opportunity?

I always wanted to work with kids or be involved in the community. I have a 10-year-old and a 2-year-old, so I initially started looking at some daycare franchises. After I started looking into the liability insurance and other aspects of operations, I started to get a little leery of putting myself at risk.

Then, I started chatting with the franchisee at my local Smoothie King store. I also began talking to his brother, who was also a Smoothie King franchisee at a nearby location, and he started giving me information about the investment opportunity. From that point, I did a lot of research, began communicating with Smoothie King's franchise sales team and just decided to go full steam ahead.

I've been extremely impressed with the Smoothie King culture. When I think about my previous employer, I could name at least five of my co-workers who were dying at their desks—because they were overweight, they were unhealthy and had such unrealistic, incredibly stressful expectations put on them. With Smoothie King, it's the complete opposite. People are encouraged to live a healthy and active lifestyle.



What has your experience with the Smoothie King corporate team been like?

Smoothie King's corporate team has been supportive in helping me with real estate. In fact, Wan Kim, Smoothie King's CEO, has personally reached out to the landlord on my behalf to help get the ball rolling more quickly.

The brand understands my ambition to open up my store in this location, which has a big "wow factor" – it's on the corner of two cross streets that have strong foot traffic. It also has a lot of glass, so it's easily seen from the street. Once we're in there, I know we'll be able to demonstrate the value the brand has for other businesses in the building and the community as well.

What are you most looking forward to with your new Smoothie King store?

I'm incredibly excited and enthusiastic to open right now and start getting involved in the community. I have to force myself to be patient because I know how important it is to have everything arranged correctly from the start. It's absolutely critical to have the right location.

I'm looking forward to getting my family involved and bringing my daughter in with her class to teach them how to run a business. My friend and I always do the AVON 39 The Walk to End Breast Cancer fundraiser in different cities each year, and I'm hoping to leverage my Smoothie King store with that this year.



A Passion for Franchising

Smoothie King franchisee: Todd Pater

Location: Orlando, Florida

Originally a guest in: Atlanta, Georgia

Smoothie King franchisee since: 2015

Favorite smoothie: Gladiator Chocolate with Peanut Butter and Banana

How did you discover Smoothie King as a guest?

In 2001, I first started going to Smoothie King consistently. The big draw for me was having a smoothie as a quick meal replacement, a high-protein drink.

Today, I still use smoothies as a meal replacement for whichever meal that I'm on the go for, whether that's breakfast, lunch or dinner.



How did you first learn about the Smoothie King franchise opportunity?

I have a buddy in Houston, Texas, who owns more than 30 Smoothie Kings. We lived in the same neighborhood for about five years. So, I learned about the business model through him. Afterward, I connected with the Smoothie King corporate team.

I was attracted to the scale of it and being able to develop a market. Since my wife is involved as well, it was a really good partnership with the brand because she is a big fan of Smoothie King. She's been a long-time guest using the smoothies as meal replacements and really using the products to inspire people to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

Did you have any business-ownership experience to fall back on?

Absolutely, I've always been a small-business owner. I ran an office equipment company and a residential trash company, which I'm still involved with today. This is the first business that I've gone into with my wife, Lorraine.

I've always enjoyed having multiple managers and developing leaders - managing, motivating and building a team. That doesn't change from business to business.

However, this is the first business where I've been really passionate about the product, and it's been fun going on the adventure with my wife, who's equally as passionate about the brand.

Have you been able to get involved in your local community?

Sure, we've been involved in a couple of different community events, some local 5K and 10K races. We've also been active in a lot of the schools by all of our stores, partnering with different sports teams and organizations. For example, one of the local high schools went to the state championship, and we brought free smoothies to all of the team members and coaching staff during their final practice.

When we opened up my second store, it was the 800th Smoothie King location, and we handed out 800 free smoothies to the local community during the grand opening. We also took a food truck around and handed out free smoothies to all the first responders within the Orlando market. That was a great way for us to show our appreciation for everything they do for the community.



What has your experience been like developing a multi-unit Smoothie King portfolio?

It was my first franchise model, and it's been great. We got development rights for Orlando at the end of 2015 and opened up our first store in July 2016. We have since opened up two more. So, we've opened a total of three stores in a span of about five months, with plans to open up 10 total.

The support infrastructure that you get from the system has been very good. That's obviously the biggest difference between this and my other businesses, where I had to do a lot on my own. With Smoothie King, there's a well-defined playbook that is really a tool to help franchisees live the brand culture, providing new operators with local marketing assets and providing ideas to get involved in the community.

It's obvious the infrastructure they've put in place has been a huge contributing factor for how quickly the brand has been able to grow. Just as an example, when I opened my first location, the corporate team sent a trainer to my store and taught the team members how to make smoothies within two days. It was amazing to see one person take a team of 10 people and teach them the business that quickly.

A Passion for Community

Smoothie King franchisee:

Quamisha Nelson

Location: Jacksonville, North Carolina

Originally a guest in: Jacksonville, North Carolina

Smoothie King franchisee since: 2014

Favorite smoothie: Light & Fluffy

What initially drew you to the brand as a guest?

I have always loved smoothies, and would regularly order them from wherever I could. When I had my first smoothie from Smoothie King – the Light and Fluffy – it was by far the best smoothie I had ever tried.

That was back in 2004 as a high school freshman, and I have been a fan of the brand ever since.



What was your motivation for becoming a franchise partner?

As a graduate of East Carolina University, I was a teacher before opening a Smoothie King. When I lost my husband in Afghanistan in 2012, I wanted to use his veterans benefit settlement in such a way that family members around me could be rewarded for his sacrifice. He loved the Smoothie King brand as much as I did, and we regularly enjoyed it together.

I know if he was still here he would be just as happy operating a Smoothie King as I am, and I knew in my heart it was a great way to honor his legacy.



What is the most fulfilling aspect of being a franchisee?

Not only am I keeping my husband's memory alive through a brand we were both so passionate about, but I can use it to reinvest in my community. Jacksonville is my home, so I'm not here just to do business; I want to help my community thrive. We pour back thousands of dollars annually into the community through various initiatives such as fundraisers and food drives, and have become known around Jacksonville as the business that gives back. I'm very proud of that.

I've also learned so much and met so many great people since opening my first location, and I feel like I'm really coming into my own as an entrepreneur. I now feel empowered in reaching the next level of the business world.



How has your background influenced the way you operate your Smoothie King location within the community?

As a former educator, helping set children up for success is important to me. During our very first fundraiser, Summer Fest in 2014, we gave away backpacks filled with school supplies for the back-to-school season. One year we gave away uniforms, and another we hosted a cereal drive for the local food pantry when they were running low. So far, we've been able to provide over 10,000 backpacks full of supplies to children. Our first year, Smoothie King corporate was so eager to be involved that they even donated money to help buy additional backpacks.

Do you have any advice for other brand enthusiasts who want to invest in the brand?

I first became a franchisee at the age of 23, with no prior business experience. Smoothie King is a great brand for first-time owners because the business model is simple to follow, and you are provided all the support you need. This business model also allows a lot of flexibility, which is a great fit for individuals who may want to continue working their regular jobs in the beginning, or pursue another venture on the side.

The corporate team makes you feel like you are part of the family, which is empowering. At Smoothie King, you don't ever feel like a tiny fish in a big sea – you are part of the team.

A Passion for Consistency

Smoothie King franchisee: Chris Sgroi

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

Originally a guest in: Columbus, Ohio

Smoothie King franchisee since: 2014

Favorite smoothie: Almond Mocha High Protein with Peanut Butter

How did you discover Smoothie King?

Oddly enough, I became a guest right before signing a franchise agreement. I had seen Smoothie Kings in airports and other places, but the first time I visited one was in Columbus, Ohio, in 2014.

The staff was very nice and knowledgeable, taking time explaining the differences between the variety of smoothies to me, and the service was quick. About three months later, I signed on in the Indianapolis market.



What motivated you to open a Smoothie King store?

The consistency of the product. No matter what kind of smoothie is introduced, the quality is unfailing, and all smoothies are consistent across the Smoothie King system. The dependability of service and operations motivated me to open another location in Carmel, Indiana.

The training provided by Smoothie King, through manuals and videos, lends a great deal to the consistency of operations. The videos are especially helpful because sometimes it's hard to tell if you're doing something right unless you see someone else doing it the right way. That's where the videos come in. That consistency translates to a happy guest base; it's the same service system-wide.

I also liked the meal replacement concept. I thought that was very unique. I had been to other smoothie chain locations, but their products felt more like a snack. I appreciated that it was a nutritious alternative to a meal, too. I couldn't believe there wasn't something like this already in Indianapolis.

What was the transition like from guest to owner?

Well, I wasn't a guest for very long before signing on to be an owner – about three months. But the transition was good. I wanted to make sure I was getting what I expected, and I did. Smoothie King was dependable, providing great instructions for first-time business owners like myself, ranging from real estate assistance to employee training. After opening my first location in Fishers, Indiana, in 2014, I experienced consistent growth. I opened my second Smoothie King in Carmel, Indiana, in August 2016. All those things I wanted to have happen happened.

How has your experience with Smoothie King been consistent thus far?

Smoothie King never leaves you hanging after you've paid the franchise fee. I've been pleased. They do good market research and a good job assisting franchisees. Smoothie King is involved, and I like that. Plus, Smoothie King is growing!

Being a Smoothie King franchisee has made me grow as a person. For example, when I was working as an HR manager, I had a staff that just did what they were supposed to do; but, now I interact with younger people, high school students, and I've had to adjust how I communicate—and I've had to teach work ethic. But it's been good.



Do you have any pearls of wisdom to pass on to other brand enthusiasts about owning their own Smoothie King?

It's important to be in the store consistently and be involved when starting out. Fortunately, I've hired good managers and general managers, so I don't have to be present all the time now.

But, success can happen when the owner is involved.



Growing with a Purpose

We created the original Smoothie Bar in 1973, with founder Steve Kuhnau experimenting with different blends of real fruit and nutrients to create smoothies that would combat his food allergies and nutritional deficiencies. From that point, we've created dozens of unique smoothie recipes specifically designed to help people achieve their wellness goals.

One Smoothie at a time, our quest has spanned 43 years, to more than 800 locations across 33 states, three countries and counting. As we embark on the next generation of growth, our tactics have evolved, our approach has matured, our guests have become more sophisticated.

Our “purpose” has never wavered. We were, are and always will be here to inspire people to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Our future depends on our ability to always stay true to our purpose, deliver our promise and continue to positively impact the lives of each and every guest we connect with around the globe, one Smoothie at a time.



How to Get Started

**For more information,
Contact our Franchise Development Team
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