

FRANCHISE CHATTER

Sharing Real Stories from Real People Living the Franchise Life

Exclusive Interview with Amit Kleinberger, CEO of Menchie's, One of the Fastest Growing Frozen Yogurt Franchises in the World

by AMBROSIO on MAY 23, 2011

(Ambrosio's note: Based on my blog statistics, I know that a lot of my readers first discovered Franchise Chatter through my frozen yogurt franchise reviews. That's why I know first-hand that there is a huge amount of interest in this fast-growing segment of the food industry. This exclusive interview with Menchie's CEO Amit Kleinberger is one that I really pursued because I know how many of you are looking for information on the company. I hope this interview helps you decide if Menchie's is the right franchise opportunity for you. Thank you, Mr. Kleinberger, for sharing your insider's perspective on Menchie's.)

Prior to becoming the CEO of Menchie's, Mr. Amit Kleinberger was a serial entrepreneur with successful ventures in diverse industries such as retail, glass and window distribution, senior care specializing in Alzheimer's and dementia care, and assisted living facilities, among others.



Amit Kleinberger, CEO of Menchie's

1.) What made you decide to join Menchie's as CEO?

I partnered with [Menchie's](#) shortly after the first store opened and have been steering the growth of the franchise organization since its inception in 2008.

I saw the potential of Menchie's to become a major player in an industry that appeals to me. I'm most interested in creating consumer experiences that forge a special bond with customers. What we aim to do at Menchie's every day is to make people smile. As soon I saw the potential of Menchie's to provide a happy experience for the consumer, I knew that I wanted to help build this franchise company.

2.) Why should someone interested in owning his or her own business consider a frozen yogurt franchise?

A frozen yogurt franchise is part of a growing billion-dollar industry. It's a concept that appeals to the entire family.

But frankly, I wouldn't invest in a frozen yogurt company just because it sells frozen yogurt. [Menchie's](#) is not in the business of frozen yogurt. We are in the business of making people smile. And that's what prospective franchisees need to understand before they choose a frozen yogurt franchise. It's not just about the product; it's about the entire experience – including the environment, service, and atmosphere.

3.) What sets Menchie's apart from your competitors in the frozen yogurt franchise industry?

I like to say that we at [Menchie's](#) "sell smiles" via frozen yogurt. We offer such a unique environment that when people come by, they don't just get a delicious product, they get a full 360 degree experience. It's a multi-layered formula that provides our customers with friendly service, a fantastic product, a family-friendly environment, and a memorable experience.

While our competitors focus solely on the food, we focus on the experience – which, of course, also means having great food and service. But it's really the complete experience that sets us apart.



4.) What qualities are you looking for in a prospective franchisee?

We are looking for franchisees who are willing to be involved in the community and able to weave themselves into the very heart of the community. The financial resources and business acumen of the franchisees are secondary.

Our top franchisees are not necessarily those who have the most capital, but they have the ability to connect with people in the neighborhood. In fact, our top franchisees are so well loved by the community that customers come in just because they want to see and support the franchisees.

5.) Can you describe the ideal location for a Menchie's franchise?

The ideal location would be in a busy strip shopping mall in the heart of the community, anchored by a top supermarket or grocery store. A Menchie's location should have easy access, easy parking, and good visibility in a high profile neighborhood.

6.) Based on your observations, what concrete steps do your most successful franchisees take in order to build and grow their businesses?

Our most [successful franchisees](#) tend to hire Marketing Coordinators, or what I call Directors of Buzz. These are people who are marketing savvy — people who can go to schools, organize fundraising events, and create buzz within the community. Franchisees who hire good Directors of Buzz are usually very successful.

Also, successful franchisees really understand the importance of creating a family-friendly atmosphere and a positive experience for their customers.



7.) What kind of ongoing support do you extend to your franchisees to help them become more successful?

Today, with 80 Menchie's locations open, we have almost 60 employees at the corporate level serving these 80 stores. You won't find this level of [support](#) in most franchise companies. We assist our franchisees from Day 1 with proper real estate selection, project management, and build-out support.

Each franchisee has a dedicated point of contact in the company throughout the life of the franchise. This point of contact is there to provide day-to-day support, including assistance with marketing campaigns and collateral materials.

8.) What would you tell prospective franchisees who want to know about the profit potential of a Menchie's franchise?

I would tell them to read our Franchise Disclosure Statement. We make a positive earnings claim in our Item 19. We tell our prospective franchisees to talk to current owners to see how happy they are with the results and the system.

I can tell them that with Menchie's, it's very simple: if they read Item 19 and talk to our franchisees, they will buy in because the numbers show that the formula works.

9.) Can you describe your typical day as CEO of Menchie's? What do you enjoy most about your job?

You can usually find me in my office seven days a week, about 15-16 hours a day.

A typical day for me would start with a status check to see what's happening with our franchisees and to make sure they are doing well.

Then I focus on business development to see how we can create better systems and better infrastructure. I typically spend about 4 hours in meetings with our department heads to refine our internal systems, fix what's not working and encourage further development of what's working.

Then I focus my attention on investigating and researching the industry to find more strategic ways to differentiate ourselves from our competitors in the category.

What do I like most about my job? Our franchisees. Our franchisees are like family. I get to meet people that are simply inspiring.

menchie's in the news



10.) Is there anything else that you'd like to share with us about Menchie's?

Menchie's has grown significantly since we started franchising in 2008. We will be the largest self-service frozen yogurt company in the world by the end of this year. The reason we got here is because we did the right thing at the right time with the right customer in the right environment. Customers keep coming back because we work hard to offer them the most innovative product and create an experience they will not get anywhere else.

We are about to launch our new platform of toys. With every visit, our customers will receive a giveaway that's really going to distinguish us in the marketplace.

The secret to our rapid growth is how we drive our customer experience and how we treat our franchisees. These are the two reasons to join [Menchie's](#).

I welcome and embrace any new franchisees who want to join us and as long as they are willing to make people smile, I'll be smiling as we receive them into our system.

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