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Sides cult brand
rapid expansion
with the **aide of
Knights**



Paris Baguette
springs forward with
three new UK franchise
agreements



XCELERATE GYMS
fitness brand built
around every member of
the family



Gordon Drakes
reflects on the key
developments in UK
franchising case law



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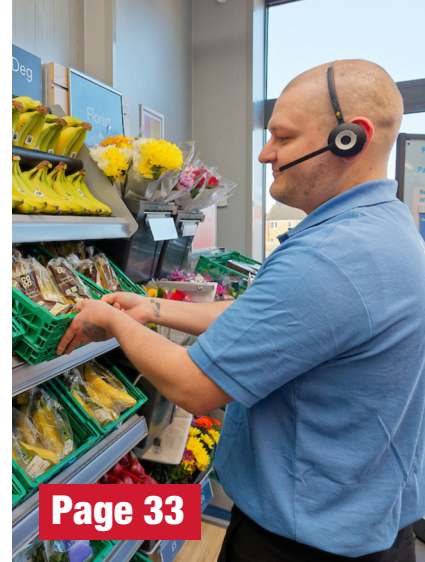
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Franchise World magazine

Britain's longest-established franchise magazine, founded in 1978, covers franchising from the perspective of the two parties – franchisees and franchisors, both prospective and existing.

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XCELERATE GYMS opens latest fitness facility in London

XCELERATE GYMS, the fitness brand that has built its concept around every member of the family, has opened its latest facility in East London.

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Replicating a successful business system: the link between SOPs, operational audits and quality

Franchising's essence is to duplicate a model of success, which hinges fundamentally on transferring the franchisor's accumulated knowledge and operational methodologies. When franchisees are handed anything less than a comprehensive, well-structured operations manual, they are inadvertently set on a path of guesswork.

By Penny Hopkinson, founder, Manual Writers International

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Capture those high-intent "open near me" searches

According to Google, searches for businesses "open now near me" have grown globally by over 400% year-on-year. As a franchise owner, the question isn't whether local searches matter, but how you can ensure your brand dominates the results.

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Replicating a successful business system: the link between SOPs, operational audits and quality

By **Penny Hopkinson**, Founder, Manual Writers International

The cornerstone of franchising success lies in meticulously crafting an operations manual that serves as a navigational beacon for franchisees, guiding them to accurately replicate the franchisor's proven business system.

Without a manual, rich in detail and clarity, franchisees are left to navigate the complexities of the business with mere conjecture, potentially deviating significantly from the franchisor's blueprint.

Franchising's essence is to duplicate a model of success, which hinges fundamentally on transferring the franchisor's accumulated knowledge and operational methodologies. When franchisees are handed anything less than a comprehensive, well-structured operations manual, they are inadvertently set on a path of guesswork.

This not only undermines the franchise's consistency and integrity but also dilutes the value of the investment made by the franchisee in acquiring the franchise and the franchisor in developing a replicable system of success.

Franchisees are likely to be off-brand, leading to confusion among customers if different messages, logos, and non-standard colours are used in marketing and promotion. The repercussions can be catastrophic.

Say, for example, that a franchisee fails to operate according to the laws and regulations covering all food businesses. These laws and regulations protect

consumers in many parts of the world because the food and beverage industry is considered to pose a potential danger to consumers. In this instance, our franchisee operates purely on instinct and what they think they know from cooking at home.

Consequently, a child with a nut allergy dies after eating a cheese and pickle sandwich made with walnut bread – although this type of bread is not on the franchisor's approved list of products that franchisees are allowed to source. The franchisor has provided training, and the manual has a section about preparing, labelling, and selling items with nuts. The local health authorities closed the franchise, and the franchisee/manager was jailed for two years. This is reported in the local, regional, and national press, damaging the brand permanently.

Customers must be 100 per cent confident that the outlet prepares and serves excellent, safe food the first time, every time, in a hygienic and risk-free

environment. Therefore, the franchisor should have operated and fully documented a comprehensive food safety management system across the whole food supply chain – from growers or manufacturers through distribution and preparation – to the customer's plate.

Linking know-how to business system

Understanding that know-how forms the bedrock of a franchise's success, it's crucial to recognise how this know-how translates into an effective business system. This transition is not just about accumulating knowledge but about organising it to become actionable within the franchise model.

Know-how is defined as confidentially or closely held information. This will include technical data, formulas, standards, technical information, specifications, processes, methods, handbooks, and raw materials – i.e., all information, knowledge, assistance, trade practices, secrets, and improvements.

About the author

Penny Hopkinson is the founder of Manual Writers International and the author of *Manual Magic: Create the Operations Manual Your Franchisees Need to Succeed*. The book is available in Kindle and paperback formats on Amazon.

Hopkinson, in 1989, was invited to join the British Franchise Association (BFA) as an Affiliate Professional Advisor to set an operations manual 'gold' standard for members, and in 2011, she was awarded a Companion of the BFA in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the development of franchising in the UK.

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An established franchisor's know-how will have been accumulated over many years – much of it learned the hard way. Know-how will likely be scattered like confetti in files across a digital network. Even in a mature franchise, much good content may be found as hard copy or, most likely, reside in a team member's head.

Know-how may live purely in the founder's head in a newly established franchise. Teasing it out to create comprehensive content is crucial in replicating a process faithfully.

Transitioning know-how into a business system

The distillation of know-how into a structured, operational form is where the business system comes into play. Through this system, the franchisee is equipped to not only meet but exceed customer expectations consistently, ensuring the brand's integrity and success across various locations.

The business system is how the franchisee will meet customer expectations by systematically analysing, measuring, comparing, and testing all the possibilities of what the customer does or doesn't want. A robust business system, capable of surviving the highs and lows of a business cycle, is at the heart of any high-performing franchise model and should provide the franchisee with a process to fix their operations – e.g. by performing internal and external audits.

A sound business system will help the franchisor and franchisee reduce costs and prevent the erosion of profits. Applying it to safety, hygiene, and quality or getting the job done promptly will give them practical, efficient, and repeatable results. It should also provide a clear plan to develop the business and improve top-line performance.

Business system to SOPs: the critical bridge

The effectiveness of a business system is inherently tied to the clarity and precision of its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

These procedures are the tangible expressions of a franchise's know-how,

distilled into actionable steps. This streamlines operations and ensures uniformity and quality across the franchise network.

Let's explore how SOPs function as the cornerstone of operational excellence.

The franchisor's know-how and business system will be presented in the operations manual as a stand-alone, structured set of SOPs. These procedures capture organisational knowledge for all repeatable core processes. The franchisor's objective is to ensure that the franchisee gets a reliable result the first time, every time. To quote Aristotle: *'We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.'*

In a franchise, SOPs are detailed instructions describing executing routine activities or tasks. They're designed to ensure that every step in a process is explicitly defined, leading to consistency and uniformity of performance, and reducing miscommunication.

Compliance with SOPs is essential for achieving standards and operational excellence, as they describe the 'ideal' way a process should be performed and lead to efficiency, consistency, and compliance.

Operational audits: the lens of improvement

Once SOPs are established, their real-world application and effectiveness must be continuously assessed. This is where operational audits come into play, serving as the critical lens through which the practical application of SOPs is evaluated and refined.

Operational audits ensure the franchise operates and thrives by complying with the highest stated and implied standards and are systematic reviews of effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance with an organisation's policies, regulations, and procedures.

An operational audit evaluates the SOPs in action, measuring whether they are followed and have the desired effect. The goal is to identify operational improvements and increase efficiency. Operational audits often identify areas

for improvement in the SOPs. This continuous loop of evaluation and improvement drives operational excellence by constantly refining processes and procedures to optimise results.

The link between SOPs and operational audits

The symbiotic relationship between SOPs and operational audits cannot be overstated. Together, they form a dynamic ecosystem that fosters continuous improvement, operational excellence, and quality assurance. By systematically reviewing the adherence to and the efficacy of SOPs, operational audits pinpoint areas for refinement and validate the integrity of the business system itself.

Quality: the ultimate goal

The pursuit of quality is at the heart of all these mechanisms – from know-how to SOPs, through operational audits. Quality is not a static benchmark but a dynamic goal that evolves with customer expectations and industry standards. It encapsulates everything from product excellence to customer service, embodying the franchise's commitment to being the best in its field.

Quality is everything that adds up to providing complete customer satisfaction so that the franchisee can build on the franchisor's desire to be the customer's 'No.1 Choice' – e.g. extensive choice of locations, highly trained personnel, and longer opening hours. It is superior in knowledge, selling skills, and all-around professionalism and essential in communicating the franchisor's vision and brand values – it's their DNA. This will lead to more loyal customers who become great brand advocates.

Perception of quality: meeting and exceeding expectations

The journey towards quality is perpetual, driven by the understanding that customer satisfaction is paramount. The franchise's commitment to quality in every aspect of its operations ensures that it meets and exceeds customer expectations, securing its position as a leader in the marketplace.

Quality is critical, no matter where we are and what the product or service may

be. Yet, quality is in the eye of the beholder. Our perception of quality varies and may change many times during a lifetime.

Remember the thin, synthetic shirt made with nylon or polyester that crackled with static when you took it off? It was easy to wash, drip-dry, non-iron, practical, cheap – and uncomfortable to wear, especially in hot weather. It suited a lifestyle and a budget.

Next came the more expensive cotton shirt that was gentle on the skin, comfortable, and kept us fresh longer, whatever the season.

Finally, the elegance and sophistication of a silk shirt moulding softly to the body, conveying a pleasant sensation of freshness, smoothness, and softness to the touch – the epitome, to some, of exceptional quality.

Whatever their perception of quality, the franchise team must understand that franchise quality must conform to the customer's needs and expectations. This is not necessarily their own perception.

The franchisor's task is to communicate the customer's perception of 'quality' through the operations manual. Descriptions such as 'best, highest, exceptional' and 'good' are inadequate. They don't convey anything to the reader, so this description must be qualified to avoid confusion.

The essence of quality in the franchise business extends beyond mere product or service offerings; it embodies the totality of the customer experience. From the moment a customer interacts with the franchise, every touchpoint, whether service, product, or environment, contributes to their perception of quality. This holistic approach to quality distinguishes a successful franchise and fosters brand loyalty.

Conclusion: the interconnected path to success

The journey from capturing and codifying know-how through the meticulous application of SOPs to the rigorous scrutiny of operational audits culminates in achieving unparalleled quality. This progression illustrates a



series of steps and a cohesive, interconnected path towards replicating a successful business system.

The link between SOPs, operational audits, and quality is not linear but cyclical, each element reinforcing and enhancing the others. This dynamic interplay is at the heart of operational excellence, ensuring that a franchise can consistently meet and exceed both its own standards and those of its customers.

By prioritising these components, a franchise establishes a robust framework that supports sustainable growth, brand integrity, and customer satisfaction. Through this dedication to continuous improvement and a relentless focus on quality, a franchise can truly thrive, setting a benchmark for success in its sector or industry.

Summary

In summary, replicating a successful business system within the franchising model hinges on the seamless integration of SOPs, operational audits, and a steadfast commitment to quality.

SOPs are the foundation, providing clear, actionable guidelines derived from the franchisor's accumulated know-how. Operational audits act as the mechanism for continual improvement, ensuring SOPs are followed and optimised for efficiency, compliance, and effectiveness.

Ultimately, the pursuit of quality, influenced by the franchisor's standards and customer expectations, binds these elements together, driving the franchise towards excellence. This interconnected approach safeguards the brand's reputation and enhances customer satisfaction, laying the groundwork for sustained success and growth. ■

Visiting Angels wellbeing workplace award

VISITING Angels, the home care provider who puts their caregivers at the heart of its business, has been awarded Support Network of the Year in the *Great British Workplace Wellbeing Awards 2024*.

Honoured for their exceptional support systems and dedication to employee welfare, [Visiting Angels](#) stands as a model for organisational empathy and support, spearheading the drive for a healthier workplace.



Dan Archer, chief executive officer of Visiting Angels, said: "This award is a powerful endorsement of our vision for a workplace where wellbeing is woven into every aspect. Our team's passion for providing unparalleled support to each other is the heartbeat of Visiting Angels."

"Happy, valued and properly rewarded carers deliver exceptional care. We don't just believe this statement; we have concrete evidence to support it. We believe our dedication to enhancing the wellbeing of our team set us apart and makes Visiting Angels truly deserving of the award."

"Our carer-centric ethos means that we put our caregivers at the heart of our business – the only way we can deliver exceptional care to our clients is through our caregivers feeling like their wellbeing is our priority."

The awards highlight the efforts of employers, individuals and service providers who are dedicated to improving the work-life balance and health of Britain's workforce, in response to the global wellbeing crisis.

In a further cause for celebration, Visiting Angels said that Bella Hallam, head of franchising, has been recognised as a finalist in the *Leading Women in Care Awards*. ■