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BITE SIZED FRANCHISING

Post pandemic, the snack trend is growing

By Christina D. McAmis

The franchise industry is returning to prepandemic levels. As it continues to outpace even the projections, service-based franchises as well as QSR (Quick Service Restaurant) concepts are leading the way. While inflation and other factors create headwinds for businesses across the United States and even globally, the franchise model with its bulk buying power and cooperative growth style is truly showing its strengths.

If you are looking for a franchise opportunity, love food, but aren't sure a full-blown restaurant concept is right for you, consider a bite sized franchise! With snacking becoming more and more trendy, brands that offer interesting drink or snack menus are on

the rise. The bonus is less equipment and a more simplified business model in many cases.

During the pandemic, everyone wondered what was going to happen to the restaurant industry, with so many sit-down or QSR

restaurants shutting their dining rooms to consumers in an attempt to slow the spread of Covid-19. People turned to take-out and delivery options. Brands with robust mobile apps and/or presence on delivery platforms such as Door Dash, Uber Eats, or Grubhub



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Franchise industry rebounds with bite sized concepts, blending tech and snacks for a balanced customer experience.

were ahead of the competition. Many brands that were dine-in only struggled to shift to a take-out model. Now as things settle into the new normal and people have largely gone back to old routines, it doesn't appear that the restaurant industry will permanently have a whole new look. Although there were fears that eat-in restaurant experiences were a thing of the past, crowds again pack local dining establishments. However, the pandemic left its mark in the food and drink industry. More and more establishments have implemented a hybrid approach to food and drink services offering sit-down, delivery, and takeout experiences. Technology and mobile apps have assisted restaurants in providing seamless experiences to guests regardless of what dining option they choose.

As we bring 2023 to a close and we look to 2024, there are some trends in the food and drink industry to observe. One is more technology, but also more integration with the existing business structure and a more polished experience for the consumer whether it is ordering through an app, driving up to pick-up, or ordering through a kiosk at the table, technology appears to be here to stay. As Americans express record levels of feelings of isolation, we seem to isolate ourselves more and more by removing the people in our communities we tend to chat with. I certainly have had my favorite barista or waiter. As we move into the future it appears that although tech is here to stay the food and drink industries are listening and working hard to strike a balance between efficiency and the cost of staffing and labor shortages and customer experience. Consumers are likely to be drawn to those brands that strike the right balance with their customer base.

Another trend that has been emerging and that continues to grow is the snack trend. Consumers are more frequently choosing brands that offer interesting snacks, or specialty drinks. One of our growing franchisors, Teapioca Lounge is striking this balance between technology and personal interaction and is serving up smiles with a



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diverse yet approachable drink menu and comfortable atmosphere. Teapioca Lounge locations invite consumers to "Come for the confections and stay for the Connections." Franchisees and staff are trained in assisting the consumer in choosing a drink that might be adventurous for them but still match their preferences and tastes, giving the customer an experience they will want to repeat.

Confections have always been popular, and they are here to stay. Another growing bite sized brand that has been featured on QVC and has recently launched into the franchise space is Chocolate Moonshine, featuring chocolate that is illegally good. Chocolate Moonshine focuses on the consumer experience, specifically training franchisees and employees to help customers pick chocolates with flavors that match their palates, offering a wide variety of flavors including fudge, truffle bars, and even sipping chocolates.

If you have been considering a food franchise but have been worried about the complexity of the business model and the vast amount of equipment and regulations, consider a bite sized franchise and look at the snack and drink verticals. Now, as an

attorney I couldn't possibly skip the legal disclaimers, can I? Nope. Even though bite sized franchising may have smaller investments or upfront costs, they are still a long-term agreement that should be entered into with due diligence, good legal advice, and the assistance of a franchise broker and financial planner. Don't skip the important part just because the investment looks tasty! Happy snacking! ▶



Christina D. McAmis is a franchise attorney and CFE candidate. She is proud to be part of the Shelton Law & Associates (SLA) franchise team. As part of the team, she offers clients guidance and support as they achieve their franchise goals.

SLA attorneys have 50+ years' business consulting, franchise, and trademark experience. Their knowledge facilitates an understanding of a large variety of businesses, services, site selection, and technologies. They help businesses protect their brands through trademark, copyright, and business contractual transactions. These services allow SLA to "Expand their Brand®" through franchising. For franchisors, SLA provides full outsourced in-house counsel services for a flat monthly fee.

SLA additionally works with entrepreneurs buying franchises by assisting with business creation, industry evaluations, franchise disclosure document review, fairness factors, site selection, opinion letters, and negotiations. For more information or to schedule a customized consultation for your business, you can write to franchising@SLA.Law or call (866) 99-FRANCHISE.