

The West Coast Becomes Franchise Learning Central in November

From franchise opportunities to the latest educational seminars on government regulation, it's all here.

By Monica Feid

Like any enterprise, franchising can be a tough business. Initiative, drive and motivation will get franchisors only so far. Successful franchisors and franchisees must also make financial and personal commitments to their businesses and make sure that they are in full compliance with industry guidelines.

But what if the rules change? What should people know about the industry and how to make the most of their opportunities?

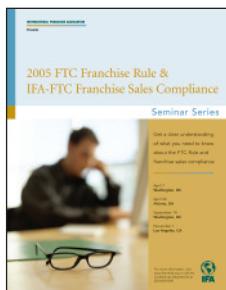


The West Coast Franchise Expo in Los Angeles this November is the place to find out.

The learning begins early, when the International Franchise Association hosts two educational meetings prior to the expo, Nov. 1-3, at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles.

Learning opportunities multiplied

"We're actually producing two different conferences over three days prior to the Expo" said Anne Poodiack, IFA's director of meetings. "We will conduct a one-day program on Nov. 1 about franchise sales compliance and the proposed changes to the Federal Trade Commission's Franchise Rule. This will be followed by a Franchise Development Super Session Nov. 2-3 that focuses on the latest trends and strategies for building franchises."



The FTC's proposed changes to the current Franchise Rule are the first in nearly 25 years and one of the hottest topics facing franchise systems today. Since the current compliance program is the only one that many people in the industry have known, this specially-designed program was produced to aid anyone involved in the sales and marketing of franchise systems, from top executives and franchise attorneys to directors and managers.

Led by experts in the Franchise & Distribution Group of the law firm DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary US, the FTC Franchise Rule seminar will answer important questions, including:

- What are the most significant changes contained in the proposed FTC Franchise Rule?
- How will the proposed changes impact your business?

- When will these changes become effective?
- What will stay the same? And what other changes may result from the proposed revisions to the FTC's Franchise Rule?
- What do franchise sales teams need to know to be in compliance?
- How can franchisors create an in-house compliance team?

"It was challenging enough to maintain an effective franchise sales compliance program before these proposed changes were released," said Joel Goldstein, director of marketing for Expo. "These seminars provide a clear understanding of what franchisors need to know about franchise sales compliance."



The Franchise Development Super Session Series, titled "The Nuts and Bolts for Building Your Brand," will equip participants to expand an existing brand or build a new one. Franchise leaders will share best practices to help attendees to enhance development leads, sales, international development and multi-unit or multi-concept strategies. The program will provide learning opportunities in a variety of venues, including concurrent sessions, roundtable discussions and networking forums.

Experts in franchising will help answer such questions as:

- What resources should be used to generate the most qualified leads?
- What legal issues should be considered when developing a franchise development program?
- Are there advantages to partnering with an outside firm to expand a franchise?
- What new or existing technology can enhance a franchise development program?
- Is the brand ready for international expansion?
- What are other franchisors doing to generate leads, qualify prospects and close sales?

All of this learning then sets the stage for the thousands of prospects and exhibitors who will flock to the Los Angeles Convention Center, Nov. 4-6, at the WCFE.

(Continued on page 71)

High School Scholars Capture International Franchising's Prize

While many students were giving serious consideration to their spring break plans, some high school scholars were realizing the benefits of a different type of strategic planning.

By John Reynolds

Three high school students were recognized recently for producing the best paper on "Franchising and Entrepreneurship" at DECA's 2005 International Career Development Conference held in Anaheim, Calif. this spring. The annual contest is conducted annually by the International Franchise Association Educational Foundation and DECA, with sponsorship from 7-Eleven. Since 1995, the foundation has sponsored an annual student franchising competition with more than 5,000 DECA high school chapters throughout the United States.

The students received scholarships and trophies in recognition of their accomplishments. Quimby received a \$1,000 scholarship, Ware got \$500 and Wescott was awarded \$250.

More than 7,000 DECA students and advisors participated in the annual conference in 38 separate competitive events.



Winners Honored

The winners of the international competition are:

First Place

Douglas Quimby of Walt Whitman High School, Huntington Station, N.Y.

Second Place

Tierra Ware of Reynoldsburg High School, Reynoldsburg, Ohio

Third Place

Robert Wescott of Inglemoor High School, Redmond, Wash.

The competition provides a "franchise business theme" poster and educational materials to DECA chapters in high schools and vocational schools. The students participate in a contest which requires them to prepare a nine-page prospectus on a franchise business

concept, a business plan and request for financing, plus a 20-minute oral presentation. The student projects are judged at the local and state levels, and the winners compete at the international level.

DECA is an international association of marketing students with 185,000 members across the United States, Canada, Germany and the U.S. Territories. Its co-curricular programs are integrated into local high school marketing education programs to teach young people about business skills and standards. ■

For information about the DECA program and how franchise companies can participate as a sponsor at the local, state or international level, contact IFA Educational Foundation President John Reynolds at 202-662-0764 or johnr@franchise.org.

(Continued from page 70)

Building on the success of last year's event, WCFE will host its popular symposia "Buying a Franchise," "Franchising Your Business" and "Master Franchising" as part of the event.

"It will be the most comprehensive learning environment out west for anyone in the industry," Goldstein said. "Whether someone is interested in turning a business idea into a franchise success, taking their franchise opportunity overseas, or even getting into the business at the ground level, this is the place to be."

But education is just one positive aspect of the show. The event's networking opportunities, innovations

and camaraderie make it a repeat destination for attendees, according to Richard Del Giorno, the show's manager.

"This event is over 90 percent sold out," Del Giorno said. "We've already had to add exhibition space to accommodate the growing interest from our West Coast exhibitors."

First time exhibitors making their debut at the WCFE include Spicy Pickle, Lady of America, and My Girl Friday. Add to that list some of the most recognizable franchisors in the industry, and the WCFE is sure to draw a crowd.

From flower shops to restaurants, sign makers to pet groomers, and computer "geeks" to lawn care professionals, the Expo has become a "must attend" for

companies on the move.

And several participating exhibitors are also members of the popular IFA-endorsed VetFran program, which offers financial incentives to veterans interested in owning their own business.

"The marketing opportunities for a franchisor to present the American Dream are limitless," Del Giorno said. "And a little bit of California dreaming can turn into a lot of reality for people at this show." ■



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