



Paper Plus Group: case study

Understanding the common characteristics of success

Paper Plus Group is New Zealand's largest book and stationery retailer, with more than 160 stores nationwide. Established in 1983, it operates as a co-operative and its stores are owner-operated.

The Challenge

Paper Plus is rapidly evolving as consumer expectations increase and retailing becomes more complex – it looks markedly different from even three years ago.

To meet those changes, Paper Plus looks for franchisees who bring modern business skills and can add value to the brand. It wants long-term relationships with franchisees who fit the brand and understand the 'bigger picture'.

"The future of Paper Plus is in the hands of store owners so it is essential we recruit the right people," says Group Franchise Manager Ian Robertson. "We also recognise that buying a franchise is a significant investment and want prospective store owners to be comfortable that Paper Plus is the right business for them."

As part of a strategic review Paper Plus set out to learn more about its most successful franchisees and profile some of its top operators. In particular, why might some franchisees do better than others, despite everyone receiving similar training and support?

"We needed more objective benchmarks that we could use to confirm we are achieving the right fit and culture across the Group."



Ian Robertson (left) together with Grant Amos (right)

"We had our own perspective about what makes a great franchisee," says Ian. "We know they are passionate about selling books, love reading and have commercial nous. But we needed more objective benchmarks that we could use to confirm we are achieving the right fit and culture across the Group."

Profiling the ideal Franchisee

- abilities
- personal style
- preferred working environment

So Ian sought the advice of Grant Amos, consultant psychologist at Selector Limited, to help understand the common characteristics of successful Paper Plus franchisees.

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selectorTM franchise

make better people decisions

Understanding the common characteristics of success continued

“In franchising, every success or failure not only affects the individual but has the potential to affect the entire brand”

Working with Selector

Selector studied a group of the top-performing franchisees, using its Selector Insight psychometric test and evaluation service. As a result, Paper Plus has developed a profile of its ideal franchisee, based on abilities, personal style and preferred working environment. For example, Selector Insight has revealed top Paper Plus franchisees have an owner-operator, rather than a hands-off, managerial focus and are more than willing to roll up their sleeves to get the job done.

“We are no longer relying on just an interview to make recruitment decisions,” says Ian. “The tests are done before interviews, and Grant’s analysis acts as a prompt for some of the questions we ask, making for a richer, more informative discussion.”

“Some people are wary when they hear the term ‘psychometric testing’,” says Grant. “But all it does is measure how people relate to others – what they pay attention to, what they pay less attention to, what motivates them – and apply that to the demands of a particular role. It’s about ensuring the right fit between the person, the role and the business culture.”

Results & Future Plans

Paper Plus quickly realised how testing strengthened the quality of new franchisees. “In franchising, every success or failure not only affects the individual but has the potential to affect the entire brand,” says Ian. “The testing also means we can provide more informed feedback to prospective franchisees.”

With testing now an established part of franchisee recruitment, Paper Plus may also offer it to store owners when hiring key staff.

“I believe testing will lead to a stronger relationship between our franchisees,” says Ian, “because we are selecting people who not only share a passion for books, but who also share a passion for our business.”

About Selector Insight

Selector Insight is an on-line assessment that provides a detailed picture of an individual’s strengths, weaknesses, motivations, working style and preferred work environment, so revealing whether people are likely to fit the brand and the system. Selector’s advice continues once the results are known. For psychometric-based recommendations to be reliable results have to be thoroughly interpreted based on a true understanding of the work environment, Grant says.

To learn more go to www.selectorfranchise.co.nz

