

seeing the BIG PICTURE

THE XPRESS ART FRANCHISE TURNS FAVOURITE PHOTOS INTO WORKS OF ART

➔ When you notice a crowd gathering in a busy mall, it's hard to resist finding out what they're looking at. When you see them watching beautiful photographs over a metre wide and three metres long appear on canvas before their very eyes, it's easy to see the attraction. From there, it's a short step to wondering which of your own family photographs might benefit from the same treatment – or wondering how you might get involved in such a business.



WHATEVER THE IMAGE, XPRESSART CAN TURN IT INTO A BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK ON CANVAS OVER A METRE WIDE. FRANCHISEES CAN SELL THE SERVICE IN-STORE AND ALSO TO SCHOOL, CLUBS AND BUSINESSES

That's the opportunity that has just been launched in New Zealand by Xpress Art, a UK-based franchise that has been developed in association with Xerox. The brand has been brought to New Zealand (and soon to Australia) by Alan Marriott.

'The moment I saw Xpress Art operating I loved the product, and the more I found out about the business the more I liked the concept,' Alan says. 'Digital cameras have transformed the family photo and artwork printing has become a \$95 million business in the UK. Xpress Art franchisees can take any image in any format and transfer it on to canvas, posters, acrylic and photographic papers. We produce a very high quality product with rapid turn-around, yet the specialised software and printers make it easy to operate. Profit margins are excellent and the market is surprisingly large, with phenomenal repeat business. And, apart from turning precious photographs into artworks and gifts, we can also rapidly produce posters and point of sale material for businesses. In fact, other retail outlets are one of Xpress Art's key markets.'

But mall sales are only a part of the picture, says Alan. 'One of the aspects I particularly like about Xpress Art is that franchisees are not dependent on foot traffic. The business model encourages franchisees to get out and drive sales through schools, sports clubs and community groups. This is not a "stand around and wait" type operation – it will suit people with entrepreneurial drive and good, sound business sense.'

Alan has held management roles in corporates and in smaller businesses. He also has considerable franchising knowledge, having managed franchises and helped devise the excellence criteria for the New Zealand Franchise Awards a few years ago. His business partner (who cannot be named here as he is still contracted elsewhere at the time of writing) brings considerable retail management and start-up experience to the mix. 'And of course, franchisees also have the advantage of going into business alongside the biggest global brand in digital printing – Xerox,' Alan points out.

HIGH QUALITY IMAGES MADE SIMPLE

The first two Xpress Art outlets in New Zealand are opening in Milford (July) and Botany (August), one as a mall kiosk and one as a stand-alone

shop. 'Photo printing on canvas and other surfaces is not new, but Xpress Art offers some unique advantages,' Alan says. 'We offer a high visibility, fast turnaround service. Our association with Xerox ensures the highest possible quality from state-of-the-art equipment, while the special software has taken a complex process and made it very simple. Franchisees can be quickly trained to get the best possible results from customers' photographs while

ensuring that work is produced in the most cost-effective manner possible. You can even pre-check the cost of the ink on a job before quoting it.'

OPPORTUNITIES IN ALL MAIN CENTRES

Xpress Art is now looking for franchisees throughout New Zealand, with prime territories available in all the main centres. Alan says that an investment of around \$75,000 +gst will include 'pretty much everything – equipment, site selection and training. Each Xpress Art franchise is ready to go with a comprehensive sales and marketing campaign and a follow-up strategy developed with us. You will also be supplied with all marketing materials, a database, website listings and operations manuals. On an ongoing basis, the emphasis is on revenue generation, not paperwork, so there is considerable support to help you achieve maximum profits.'

'It's usually hard to get into retail for well under \$100,000 but remember, it's not just about retail – that's why we will be very selective about who we appoint as franchisees. You don't need a graphics background but you do need to be outgoing, have excellent communication skills and not be afraid to go out selling. At the same time, you need to be able to manage a small team. Most outlets will operate seven days a week and will employ at least a couple of retail staff.'

Alan has just returned from the UK where he spent several weeks training and then working in Xpress Art outlets. 'It is a hugely impressive operation – one franchisee is so pleased that he has already opened three outlets, and the same opportunity for multiple outlets will exist here. I can also see potential for satellite kiosks, perhaps around supermarkets or other destinations, which will act as sales and delivery outlets while the production is done in the main store.'

'This is a superbly profitable business and franchisees who can build throughput will enjoy an excellent return on investment. Come and visit an Xpress Art outlet and see the potential for yourself!' ■

ADVERTISER INFO

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