

# franchisees take wing – NOW IT'S YOUR CALL

AS THE RECESSION CONTINUES TO BITE, THIS TELCOINABOX FRANCHISEE IS CONVERTING 95% OF SME PROSPECTS

⇒ As over 20 Kiwis have already found, owning your own telecommunications service provider can be both rewarding and lucrative. Telcoinbox was founded in Australia in 2004 to help open up the telecoms industry following deregulation there, and launched in New Zealand in 2009. There are now over 140 Telcoinbox (pronounced Telco-in-a-box) franchisees on both sides of the Tasman 'with room for many more,' says Shannon Fisher, the company's New Zealand CEO. 'Why has it proved such a hit? Talk to one of our franchisees and some of their clients, and find out for yourself.'



BRUCE AND COLLEEN GRAY: 'I CAN'T RECALL ONE POTENTIAL CLIENT WHO HAS NOT BEEN AMAZED AT THE SAVINGS WE CAN ACHIEVE FOR THEM'

## TELCOINABOX FRANCHISEE: KINGFISHER CONNEXIONS

Six months into their Telcoinbox franchise, following a learning curve they describe as 'a vertical straight line,' Colleen and Bruce Gray say one of their biggest eye-openers has been the savings they have been able to offer their customers. The Auckland couple trade as Kingfisher Connexions (all Telcoinbox franchisees develop their own brand names) and one of the techniques they have learned is how to analyse the telecommunications invoices of potential clients to show the cost savings they can make.

'With assistance from the Telcoinbox support team, we've uncovered some very clever ways major telecommunications providers hide costs from business customers,' says Colleen. 'Another common trap for businesses is being upsold services they don't really need. We've yet to be handed an invoice where we can't deliver appreciable savings, and as a result we have a very receptive audience. The biggest interest is in our rates and the savings we can provide. We explain that, in addition to providing a personal service, we have direct access to Telecom's Business-to-Business support centres and Telcoinbox has an operations centre with over 60 people employed to ensure we match the best the big boys can offer. Offering billing transparency and no restrictive contracts pretty much closes the deal – currently we're tracking at a 95% conversion rate and have a client base ahead of projections.'

Colleen and Bruce bought their Telcoinbox franchise after a year searching for a business which would allow them to work together from home and put their complementary skills to good use. Reading about the opportunity in *Franchise New Zealand* magazine suggested that it would be a good fit, and the idea of creating a recurring, semi-passive income had particular appeal. The couple had no telecommunications experience but felt that this would be more than offset by Telcoinbox's comprehensive training and their own extensive network of potential customers built up during previous careers – Colleen had been a primary school principal, while Bruce had been a consultant after a career in logistics that included 26 years with Freightways.

Initially, Colleen and Bruce's business plan focussed on residential customers, but the continuing downturn saw the target market shift to small and medium size enterprises. 'The recession has been good to

us,' Bruce admits with a wry smile. 'Every dollar of expenditure has come under scrutiny and I can't recall one potential client who has *not* been amazed at the savings we can achieve for them. I suspect that the value of these businesses to the big telecommunications companies means it's not worth their time trying to keep the customer and, let's be honest, they simply don't have the empathy with SME's that we do ourselves.'

### CLIENT No.1: FCI-VISA GLOBAL LOGISTICS

With \$25 million turnover, this freight forwarding company operating on both sides of the Tasman is at the upper end of Bruce and Colleen's client portfolio. 'Kingfisher Connexions are saving us \$600 to \$800 a month on mobile phone costs alone,' reveals an obviously happy FCI-VISA managing director Benno Roehrig. 'As other contracts expire we will be moving all our telecommunications across to them. I know there are business owners who like to boast that their big name telecommunications provider is doing wonderful things for them and won't entertain making a change to a Telcoinbox franchisee. But the reality is that these are the people who most need Bruce and Colleen to analyse their telecommunications invoices and see for themselves the dollars they're wasting.'

### CLIENT No.2: PROCESS PLUS

Mt Maunganui-based Process Plus specialises in making sausage seasonings and cures for ham. A small business actively pursuing expansion into the South Island, the cost and reliability of its telecommunications are pivotal to the success of the business. 'That's why it's a big plus knowing that should I have a problem I can call the owners of Kingfisher Connexions themselves – not an employee in an offshore call centre,' comments owner Roger Webb. 'I've also got to say how impressed I am with the invoicing which clearly sets out what I'm getting and what I'm paying. Except for a couple of mobile phones tied in to contracts, Kingfisher Connexions has all our telecommunications.'

### PUTTING YOU THROUGH

'If you can empathise with the experiences of those two clients and believe you could match the success of Bruce and Colleen Gray, put through a call to my colleague Guy Alexander,' invites Shannon Fisher. 'The start-up cost for a Telcoinbox franchise is just \$65,000, and the business can earn over \$300,000 a year if you run it well. There are opportunities throughout New Zealand, so why not find out more? It's your call.' ■

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