

improving the BOTTOM LINE



EXPENSE REDUCTION ANALYSTS COMBINE YOUR INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE WITH GLOBALLY-PROVEN TECHNIQUES TO HELP CLIENTS MAKE SAVINGS

➔ After 20 years in the corporate world, Denis Stevens made the big leap to self-employment nearly 14 years ago. 'It was a life-changing experience,' he admits. 'I loved the independence of working for myself and the fact that I was paid for what I achieved rather than what someone else decided I was worth.'

'Of course, the single most difficult decision you face when going out on your own for the first time is where to leap to. When you have corporate skills and experience, you might want to work independently but it's good to be part of an established and successful team. That's why I chose Expense Reduction Analysts (ERA). It offered me a professional career, a good income and a constant variety of projects to work on. I enjoyed it so much that after three years I bought the master franchise for ERA in New Zealand.'

And it's not just Denis who was impressed. 'Expense Reduction Analysts is a global business that is represented in 33 countries. Here in New Zealand, we have 22 franchisees. Some of our more established franchisees are earning over \$250,000 per annum or even more, and the average income is \$125,000. That's not a bad return on an initial investment of under \$80,000.'

THE CORPORATE DENTISTS

So what do ERA franchisees – called 'associates' – actually do? 'Our role is to improve the profitability of our clients by reducing the amount they spend on business overheads,' Denis explains. 'Our associates investigate areas such as printing, office supplies, telecommunications, energy, freight and couriers, insurance, travel, fleet leasing and dozens more. Most companies don't have the resources or expertise to review these costs themselves, so they have to hope they are getting the best value from their suppliers. Even when they get competitive quotes, they may not know who to ask or how to get the best results. But because we do this day in, day out, we have intimate knowledge of the supplier markets, the benchmarks and the cost drivers in just about any industry you care to name. Our associates often bring specialist knowledge from their own previous careers and can work as a team, each concentrating on their own area of expertise to deliver real results and real savings.'

'Just think of us as the corporate dentists. Our experience over nearly 20 years is that we are able to drill down very quickly and extract savings that most of our clients didn't think possible. Unlike dentists, though, our process is completely painless because our fees are paid on a contingency basis. Simply put, where we find savings we share them with the client on a 50/50 basis for the first 18 months. If we don't find any savings, there's no fee.'

By way of example, Denis describes a recent project that two associates worked on as a joint venture for a sizeable client. 'We managed to save them just over \$90,000 in one single category,' he says proudly. 'In that company, they were achieving a return on funds employed of 7%. This means that to have achieved the same bottom line result through sales, they would have had to generate additional revenue of around \$1.3 million! Their CEO freely admitted that they couldn't have achieved that in today's market without getting into a price war with their competition so he was astounded and delighted by what we'd achieved in a very short time.'

A CHANCE TO USE YOUR EXPERTISE

Denis says that there are still plenty of opportunities for good people who can combine experience and energy with the motivation to get out and make things happen. 'Perhaps you're a sales specialist who loves nothing more than gaining new clients and managing new projects? Or you have inside knowledge in a specific industry, such as packaging, office products, waste management or merchant card fees. Whatever your skill set, if you have good interpersonal skills and like to work with a team of other professionals, you should consider the ERA opportunity.'

Although industry knowledge is valuable, cost reduction experience is not required. ERA provides comprehensive training, starting with an intensive two-week residential programme at its global training facility in San Diego, California. 'That's where you learn the secrets that have made ERA *Entrepreneur Magazine's* top-ranked Financial Services franchise and placed us at number 35 on Franchise Direct's list of the Top 100 Global Franchises.,' he explains. 'On your return to New Zealand, you are then assigned a local experienced mentor to lead you through building your customer base and your first few projects. I'm also on hand to help coach new associates and co-ordinate the larger joint venture approaches.'

'The business really can be what you make it. If you're a sales specialist, you're not likely to want to look at a 15-page Excel spreadsheet on telecommunications. On the other hand, if you love digging down into information but aren't so comfortable on the sales side, ERA can work for you too. It's about sharing complementary skills. If the idea excites you, give me a call and let's discuss how you might fit in.' ■

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