

returning kiwi ON FAST FORWARD

LATEST TECHNOLOGY HELPS PROVENDER FRANCHISEE MAXIMISE GROWTH

⇒ He might have an English father and Korean mother, but Invercargill-born Eugene Williams has always had a real Kiwi 'can-do' attitude. After studying Japanese at university, he took off to Japan for "just a year". Instead, I got married, opened an English language school with my wife and we stayed for ten years!

When the couple wanted to return home to bring up their family, they decided that buying a franchise probably offered the best opportunity to get established here. 'We'd already started our own business once and we didn't want to do it all again from scratch,' Eugene says. 'Franchising offered the advantages of self-employment but with an established brand, experience and support to tap into if you needed it.'

Eugene was particularly interested in vending opportunities. 'Japan has a big vending machine culture but here in NZ it is a relatively untapped market. We looked at several companies, but I was soon convinced Provender was the right one to go with. From the first call I was impressed – I rang after 5pm but spoke to franchisor Philip Horrocks in person. He was very upfront and it was easy to get answers. It was clear that although Provender is a big company there is a strong element of direct contact between franchisee and franchisor.'

'As an experienced business owner it was important for me to feel my voice would be heard,' continues Eugene. 'Provender seemed to operate on a wholly different level from the other franchises I talked to. They have systems in place to ensure that franchisees are successful and satisfied, and a franchise council to help consult and communicate throughout the system.'

IMPRESSIVE HOURLY INCOMES

Provender is the largest refreshment vending business in New Zealand with over 160 business-to-business franchisees here and in Australia ensuring customers 'stay revived' by providing snacks, drinks, coffee and tea directly to them through a range of vending and machine options. Franchisees restock and service their machines and refreshment centres (snack boxes) from their dedicated vans on a regular basis. 'We enjoy partnerships with some of New Zealand's best known food and beverage brands along with offering our own lines in coffee, health food and cookies,' says the company's franchise manager, Roy Kinnaird. 'It's a combination that has enabled franchisees from all walks of life to earn some very impressive hourly incomes.'

Provender hasn't made many mistakes over the years, but their fresh-from-Japan franchisee says they got one thing wrong. 'I tripled the sales level they originally projected in a very short time,' Eugene chuckles. 'Perhaps they misled me!' 'Or perhaps we underestimated you,' Roy Kinnaird returns. 'It shows just what can be achieved with Provender when you work at it.'

THREE YEARS ON AND IT'S ALL GOOD

One advantage the franchise offers is that you can start small – even part-time or post-retirement – and grow your business at a pace you feel comfortable with. It was just under three years ago that Eugene founded his business with only five vending machines and a few refreshment



ISN'T TECHNOLOGY WONDERFUL? EUGENE WILLIAMS ONLY HAS TO VISIT HIS 200 PROVENDER MACHINES WHEN THEY TELL HIM THAT THEY NEED HIM

centres. 'I quickly decided that I wanted to concentrate on the vending machines as I could see the potential, and kept reinvesting to make the most of the opportunity. Today I have nearly 200 machines spread throughout Auckland. Yes, I've worked at it but that kind of growth would not have been possible without the expertise and financial muscle of Provender.'

200 machines in a city as spread out and grid-locked as Auckland obviously raises some logistics questions, but Provender has the answer. 'All my machines have a wireless modem built-in,' Eugene says. 'I can monitor all my stock levels and see any faults from home. Most people in this kind of business spend a lot of time going round all their machines on a regular basis but I don't need to. I can check each one at any time of day, see which need a top-up and plan my visits. It has saved me a huge amount of time and allowed me to maximise my effort in building a really profitable business.'

Eugene is full of praise for the Provender system. 'I am in touch with Roy Kinnaird on a regular basis, maybe three times a week, and with other members of the team too. I thought after my initial training they might leave me to get on with it, but they have been far more "hands-on" with support. It really helps that they have a team of salespeople and accountants to tap into, help with the budgets and add new sites. I don't believe I could have achieved what I have in so short a time on my own.'

Provender currently offers a combination of vending machines, coffee vending and refreshment centres. Investment starts from as little as \$25,000 for part-time businesses to \$75,000 for full-time opportunities. 'There are no fixed packages,' explains Roy Kinnaird. 'Whether you are seeking a part-time or post-retirement business, or wish to build an empire like Eugene's, we can help you get where you want to go. Talk to us about the options.' ■

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