

# one out of THE BOX



## TELCOINABOX FRANCHISEES ARE PUTTING PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE

⇒ Since crossing the Tasman at the beginning of the year, Shannon Fisher has discovered something about New Zealanders. It seems a lot of us want to 'be a local hero,' and more than a few are keen to 'turn phone rage into a phone wage.'

The two phrases are part of the development campaign for Telcoinbox, a franchise that makes it possible for anyone with a phone and computer to set themselves up as a fully-fledged phone company and internet provider. Such is the interest that the company has already established four new telcos in New Zealand this year with another six due to open in the next two months.

Shannon views these as just the beginning for Telcoinbox (pronounced *Telco-in-a-box*). 'For some franchisees, just 50 to 80 customers is enough to bring in a desirable 'phone wage' while others who aim for 250 to 350 can reasonably expect annual earnings of \$70,000 to \$80,000. Our experience in Australia has shown it's not out of the question for a small town of a few thousand population to support three or more franchisees – not that they are limited by territory. In fact, a franchisee operating out of somewhere like Cromwell in Central Otago, could have hundreds of customers with 90% of them in the North Island. That's not bad for a start-up investment of \$65,000.

'Remember, too, that once a customer base has been established the reward is recurring, mostly passive, income. Franchisees aren't bogged down with administration work such as invoicing as all that is done for them by Telcoinbox, so they can focus on client sales and service.'

### PERSONAL YET PROFESSIONAL

It's that personal touch that makes Telcoinbox companies stand out from the big boys. 'A lot of people are fed up with everything from incomprehensible and inflexible call plans to having to wait half an hour on hold before they can talk to someone. That's what we mean by "phone rage". Telcoinbox can deliver way higher standards of product, technical and customer services. We provide franchisees with everything they need to

SHANNON FISHER: 'A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE FED UP WITH EVERYTHING FROM INCOMPREHENSIBLE CALL PLANS TO HAVING TO WAIT ON HOLD FOR HALF AN HOUR. BY OFFERING PERSONAL LOCAL SERVICE, TELCOINABOX FRANCHISEES CAN DELIVER MUCH HIGHER STANDARDS ACROSS A RANGE OF SERVICES.'



operate from a home office or even their car. Bulk deals on services mean they can compete for residential and smaller to medium-size business customers across a range of phone and internet services. These include tolls, 0800 and 0508 free phone services, broadband and web and email hosting. And now that landline and mobile customers can keep their numbers when switching phone companies, individuals and businesses are more than willing to look at the advantages a small phone company and internet provider can give.

Shannon says that most franchisees start by approaching their friends, friends of friends, relatives, neighbours, business colleagues, local clubs and organisations. Communities and customers develop a real sense of ownership about their phone company and the franchisee literally does become a local hero.

The Telcoinbox package includes all set-up costs including implementation of the billing platform for clients, five days' orientation in Wellington and online training. The package also includes all sorts of other services and benefits: step-by-step support material; marketing and advertising material, and online and direct access to technical and business support services. A specially-designed software program helps franchisees analyse telephone and internet accounts to show just where and by how much they can save clients. And because franchisees are encouraged to create their own company identity in line with their target market, Telcoinbox even provides help with brand development and website design.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

Shannon says he rarely has to explain to potential franchisees how telecommunications is a recession-proof industry. 'Most are already aware that phone and internet costs are not discretionary spending; the first to be cut. I know of a lot of businesses that have pulled sales teams off the road to trim back fuel, vehicle and accommodation costs in favour of making sales calls over the phone, sending emails and using internet systems such as Skype for face-to-face meetings or presentations. If they can do all that for a lower price with better service, why wouldn't they use a Telcoinbox franchisee?

'Another thing enquirers are quick to pick up on is that unlike a retail business, franchisees aren't reliant on marketing and passing traffic. They can go out customer prospecting and because there are no territories, the whole of New Zealand is their marketplace.'

While many Telcoinbox franchisees have a sales or telecommunications background, Shannon says neither is essential providing they have people skills and appreciate the importance of customer service. 'In Australia, it's not uncommon for people to start part-time while they build their Telcoinbox business either as a second income or with the aim of stepping out of paid employment.

It's also attractive to anyone reaching retirement age who still wants to work two or three days a week as they can use their old business contacts as the basis for building a customer base. After all, this really is a business opportunity out of the box – everyone could be a potential customer. Everyone could be a franchisee too, so call me and find out which you are.' ■

### ADVERTISER INFO

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