

COLLECTIT

Don't write off the debt ...collectIT

Have you ever dealt with a debt collection company that not only gets results but offers personalised and knowledgeable service as well? It's a bit of an anomaly in the debt collection industry but that's exactly what's happening at CollectIT Ltd.

THEY STARTED OUT with a vision to help the small-medium sized business owner with their debtors. Directors, Catherine Clark and Melanie O'Neill, wrote a system that enabled businesses or individuals to follow the steps and take their debtors through the court system without the need for a lawyer, saving considerable amounts of money. When the demand arose for CollectIT to chase the debts for some of their clients, they started following their own system - with outstanding results.

Toni Snowball runs the WEcollect side of the CollectIT business and is both firm and fair. "Other than a few exceptions, the majority of debtors are paying or organising payment plans within three to five weeks of being contacted by CollectIT" says Toni. "Our service is efficient. When our clients come to us they have already



Catherine Clark and Melanie O'Neill

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been without their money for a period of time and really need their debts settled."

Toni says that very few of the debts they chase end up in court, although there are a few exceptions to this rule. Some debtors test the system thinking that we're calling their bluff about going to court until the court documents are served on them. Once they are served they are very quick to pay because they don't want to end up with a court order against their name.

CollectIT has found that many of their clients are allowing their debtors too long to pay and then the debtor company goes into liquidation leaving the creditor with no real solution. Businesses need to chase their slow payers much

sooner than they are and stick to their terms of trade, whether that is seven days or a particular date in the month.

Denise Ferguson, Managing Director of Office Products Depot in Hamilton, says she asked quite a few business acquaintances if they could recommend a debt collection agency but was met with resounding silence. Not one to be beaten, Denise set about finding one and through networking found CollectIT Ltd. She hasn't stopped recommending their services since!

For more details visit www.collectit.co.nz or call 0508 collectIT (0508 26 55 328).

HABITUAL FIX

The freshest name in franchising

The Fresh Food Revolution is well underway if the increasing number of customers visiting Habitual Fix is anything to go by. With a huge range of fresh salads, sandwiches, sushi, wraps, smoothies and juice, it's hardly surprising.

THE HABITUAL STORY has humble beginnings in 2006 when founder James Tucker became tired of the so-called "fresh" food options being anything but what they claimed to be. He enlisted culinary help in the form of Tim Benest to create good honest food and voila, the 'fresh food addicts' were born.

After thousands of hours of preparation, including developing a menu that brings together the finest ingredients from the freshest growers and producers, Habitual Fix defied the credit crisis and opened their first store in October 2008.

"We opened in perhaps the worst economic climate in recent history and we are very proud of what we have created and achieved in our first year of operation," says James.

"At Habitual Fix you won't find processed stuff - all of our ingredients are on display and everything is made right in front of you! The end result and customer counts speak volumes of our high quality, fresh and tasty products."

There are currently two stores in Auckland Central but Tucker says they are receiving a strong level of franchisee enquiry and expect to open a further five or more in 2010. "No doubt about it, we are the new kids on the block. Our youthfulness and energy are definitely our strong point. There is a huge amount of work required in establishing a brand and business, especially a franchise, but we are experienced and passionate and have set our sights high." These high sights include opening 30 stores in New Zealand within three years before expanding internationally.

Franchisees are expected to be hands on,

dynamic, hard working and committed to the brand and their business. They are required to undertake a minimum of four weeks training at the company owned store. The franchisor assists in all aspects of the design and build of the stores, training the franchisees' key staff prior to opening, and intensive support in the month following the store opening and on-going support. To open a 100m2 standalone store costs around \$300,000 inclusive of the initial franchise fee and there are other opportunities including mall kiosks from around \$125,000 as well as a couple of options in between.

The Habitual fix team has some cool ideas for new products, marketing, operational procedures and improving customers' experience, which can be implemented as the franchise grows.

They've also made large investment in technology to improve productivity and customer convenience.

Earlier this year they also partnered with Huffer as their uniform supplier. "We need our team to enjoy coming to work and part of that is looking funky and fresh. Could you imagine trying to get excited going to work in a typical fast food uniform? Cool is fun."

Being a great option for business lunches and meetings business, off-site activities or for staff dinners when working late, delivery orders are becoming an increasing part of the sales mix at Habitual Fix. "We are catering for some of New Zealand's largest and most respected companies on a daily basis. The fact that we are delivering healthy, tasty food at a great price certainly helps and the feedback from our customers is telling us we are doing a good job."

"This really is an exciting opportunity - a young fresh brand, great product and a company that is going places. We are definitely one to keep an eye on."

For details call (09) 965 1300 or 021 428 970 or visit www.habitualfix.co.nz

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V.I.P. HOME SERVICES

V.I.P. + franchising = success

With 14 years of franchising experience under her belt, Estelle Logan from V.I.P. Home Services offers tips for anyone planning to get into the industry.

ESTELLE AND JOHN LOGAN are national franchisors for V.I.P. Home Services, an award winning system that has won multiple Franchise Association awards. Their business operates at two levels - selling master franchises where buyers purchase a territory into which they sell franchises, and selling individual franchises for their multi-service V.I.P. business.

Franchising success for Estelle is about the 'three As' - attitude, aptitude and appearance. Aptitude is the ability to respond to any situation, be service oriented and follow someone else's system. You also need the right attitude, take pride in personal appearance and be organised.

Estelle offers sound advice for anyone planning to turn a good business or idea into a franchise. "It must be a proven business system with a track record that can be duplicated. Plus it should be structured to fit a franchise format. Be prepared to do the research and the development, and make an investment to ensure proper systems, programmes and procedures are put

into place by specialists experienced in franchising."

There are many good publications and resources available for both franchisors and franchisees looking for guidance. "No matter what else you do, seek professional advice from a reputable franchising advisor." Understanding the complex relationship between the franchisor and franchisee is another essential ingredient. It is imperative for franchisors to maintain a friendly but professional relationship with their franchisees.

One area often neglected when choosing a franchise is the profitability and success of the franchisees. "If franchisees are not profitable and successful, then the system may not survive economic cycles and competition. I judge the success of a franchising system by how their franchisees are faring and not the franchisor," says Estelle.

So what makes a successful franchisor? "Honesty, integrity and professionalism, with an open door policy for communication," she responds.

"People think that owning your own business is a breeze and you can have time off when you want, but remember it requires tremendous



John and Estelle Logan

amount of self discipline since you're accountable only to yourself."

Franchisee selection is the probably the most important component of being a franchisor, and selecting the right one can often be a challenge. VIP has a proper system of evaluation to select franchisees. "It takes away the guess work and emotions from the equation and helps to ensure franchisees are successful, while safeguarding us from a wrong selection," says Estelle.

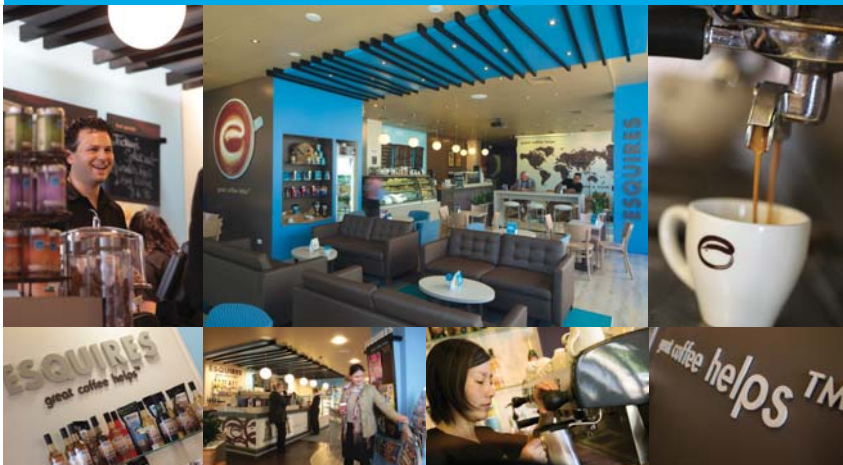
She also recommends that aspiring franchisors and franchisees have sufficient money to both buy and develop their business. "Don't put undue pressure on yourselves by being undercapitalised."

V.I.P. is itself seeking both regional master franchisees and owner operators in Lawns & Gardens and Home Cleaning to meet increasing demand.

For details visit www.viphomeservices.co.nz or contact Estelle on 0800 84 74 96.

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Contact Estelle for more info



It's a matter of pride.