

# Franchising USA

THE MAGAZINE FOR FRANCHISEES

VOL 02, ISSUE 03, JAN 2014

\$5.95 [www.franchisingusamagazine.com](http://www.franchisingusamagazine.com)

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# SERVICE BRANDS EYE GROWTH AS DEMAND FOR HOME SERVICES INCREASES

Having franchise brands that offer in-demand home services is one significant element of Service Brands' success story, the parent company of Molly Maid, Mr. Handyman and ProTect Painters.

The support system behind each of the brands, however, is the main reason the company has grown to nearly 700 locations throughout the United States.

"Our key differentiators are the marketing systems, software and scheduling, brand recognition, vehicles, uniforms, the trust factor that comes from having employees who are bonded and insured and our commitment to our communities through the Molly Maid Ms. Molly Foundation and the Mr. Handyman National Day of Service," said Dave McKinnon, co-founder of Service Brands.

This year, Molly Maid will celebrate 30 years of providing professional housecleaning in the United States, which led Mr. Handyman and ProTect Painters to join the Service Brands International umbrella of franchises.

## Molly Maid – Wide Open for Business After 30 Years

McKinnon says Molly Maid is an easy business to explain.

"We clean houses. And, everyone wants to have their house cleaned by someone else," he says. "Even in times of a recession, when people's finances are squeezed a bit, they're not going to cut their maid service first."

With a milestone anniversary approaching, the flagship company conducted a full-scale territory analysis in 2012 to identify key markets for future expansion.

"There has been a misconception that Molly Maid is out of good markets to develop, and that is simply not true," Meg Roberts, President of Molly Maid says. "In fact, we have over 200, pre-crafted territories in underserved and high-demand markets such as Boston, Chicago, Madison, WI, Portland, OR, and Buffalo, N.Y."

New and existing franchise owners contributed to 2013's development through new openings, re-sales and expansions. The company's progressive consumer marketing has also led to positive growth, and a priority throughout the company is on continuing to increase customer loyalty.

"The first Molly Maid franchise is in Ann Arbor, MI, less than a mile from our home office," Roberts says. "That business will reach the 30-year mark in July, and they still service their first customer and have their first employee. We're going to share





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great customer retention stories at our annual convention and throughout the year to emphasize the importance of personal relationships in this business.”

Also in the spirit of sharing, Molly Maid has created a new mentoring group called Scale Optimize Apply Rise or SOAR for short, which includes 38 owners who have committed to two years of learning and applying best practices into their businesses. Formal curriculum, accountability calls and visits are guiding participants to apply the best practices used by the top 25 percent of the Molly Maid system, which average \$1.2 million in annual sales.

Molly Maid of Orange Park owners Tom and Terri Rue became members of the Million Dollar Circle late last year, and they won Molly Maid’s Shining Star Award in 2012 for increasing sales by 24 percent.

“Our success has come from building a connection with customers,” Tom Rue says. “We have a team that cleans for a family who has two little boys, and those kids have drawn pictures for their home-service professionals and have even given



them their school photos.”

Tom and Terri Rue both have accounting and finance backgrounds, which have helped them monitor metrics, and their management and sales experience has been the cornerstone of their operation.

“We love that Molly Maid is a repeat-type business and we have no interest in working nights or weekends like those in other franchises have to do,” Rue says.

### Mr. Handyman – Meeting Increased Demand and Expanding Strategic Alliances

Consumer confidence is positive and proven with investments in residential and commercial repair, maintenance, improvement and remodeling projects. Mr. Handyman has 200 locations in North America and finished 2013 more than 13 percent over 2012’s sales results.

“The recent growth of the housing market has increased consumers’ demand for home services and improvements,” Alex Roberts, President of Mr. Handyman says. “We are increasing our franchise expansion efforts to keep up with the demand proven through our year-over-year sales growth.”

The success of current franchise owners nationwide has triggered the need to hire more than 300 professional technicians to keep up with the uptick in demand. Mr. Handyman’s website was quickly enhanced to promote the employment opportunities available.

Roberts’ support team receives high marks for their applicable takeaways from conventions and other meetings, as well as their ability to deliver leads through interactive marketing and strategic alliances from the franchise system. Many Mr. Handyman franchisees are boosting



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“One gentleman wrote to me after visiting and said Service Brands and ProTect Painters was hands down the best he visited,” Chris Ring, President of ProTect Painters says. “He pointed out how the support team made a lasting impression with their positive attitudes, description of support the franchise owners receive, and Service Brands CEO Craig Donaldson’s future vision for the company.”

With \$40 billion spent annually on painting, the team at ProTect Painters truly understands professional service is a necessity. “Look around the room you’re sitting in now and almost everything has a coating on it – from trim, to walls, doors and ceilings,” Ring says.

John Demetriou, owner of ProTect Painters of Ann Arbor, came from the automotive industry in the Detroit area before becoming a franchise owner two years ago. “When prospective owners call and ask me about ProTect Painters, I tell them if you feel confident in your skills, want to open your own business, and have the potential for unlimited income depending on the time and effort you put into it, I believe it would be an exceptional opportunity. It’s not a business where you have to know how to paint; you have to manage people and finances,” he says.

#### Giving Back and Making a Difference

In 2013, each of Service Brands franchises increased their VetFran and MinorityFran incentives to help qualified candidates achieve the American Dream. A \$6,000 discount off the initial fee is now available to military veterans and minorities can receive a \$5,000 discount. With hundreds of territories still available and proven models for success, Service Brands has franchise opportunities in the growing home-services category.

For more information:

Website: [www.servicebrands.com/](http://www.servicebrands.com/)

their bottom lines by working with local businesses including Home Modification Solutions, Title Boxing Club, Cheesecake Factory, Stor-All and many more. Top commercial sales producing owners are now highlighted during quarterly, system-wide President’s Calls, as owners are seeing significant growth through this revenue stream.

Skip Wyatt and Lorenzo Wyatt, owners of Mr. Handyman of Upper Fairfield County, were named Franchisees of the Year for 2012, in addition to other awards for excellent customer loyalty, highest percentage growth, highest sales and earning a spot on the company’s Incentive Trip last April. The Wyatt business has lofty goals for 2014 as well, as they invest in marketing and staff to provide end-to-end remodeling services.

After 30 years with executive-level positions with IBM, Skip Wyatt said his job paid well, but it came to a point where he realized he wouldn’t be the one running that company. He wanted to start a business, get involved with hiring a team, nurture and grow it. The father-and-son team exceeded the \$5 million mark for 2013 while maintaining an 80 percent Net Promoter Score.

John and Laura Van Orden own Mr. Handyman of the Woodlands and they are achieving their goals of steady, profitable

and sustainable growth. They operate their franchise by following the system’s model precisely with quality work and personable service. John takes time every day to visit customers, so they recognize him as a local small business owner, and not just a representative from a large company.

“Customers are impressed that I take time to visit and to make sure the job is running smoothly. I also assure them I am available to communicate with them directly if they are not completely satisfied with the quality of work,” John Van Orden says. “I’m happy to say we’ve had double-digit growth every year since we’ve opened.”

#### ProTect Painters Aims to Double System Size in 2014

The newest brand in the family is a full-service residential and light-commercial painting company with 45 units. Aggressive growth plans include doubling the system’s presence this year as well as improving sales for new franchisees and revenue and profits for existing franchise partners. Repeat business is also achieved through consistently providing quality customer service, and the system averages 9.4 out of 10 using Listen360 feedback surveys.

Candidates attend Meet the Team Day at the home office, and often talk highly about their experience.