



President Natalie Barnes (center) networks at IFA 2018 with Gina Johnson, director of operations, and Brian Felderstein, director of consultant development.

A Winning Team

Business Alliance helps franchisors and prospective franchisees find the perfect opportunities. BY JIM HARRIS

Business Alliance, a Tacoma, Wash.-based franchise brokerage firm, receives several inquiries every day from franchisors hoping to work with the company.

"People want to be in our inventory because we have high-quality consultants," says Natalie Barnes, president of Business Alliance.

The company's operation includes more than 250 Registered Franchise Consultants® located throughout the United States. Business Alliance's consultants help more than 300 franchise organizations in the United States qualify and select prospective new franchisees. These consultants are trained to assist pro-

spective franchisees in choosing the right franchise concept.

"We get to know our clients' likes and dislikes and what they're looking for in a business," she adds. "We take an unbiased approach and provide a systematic method to help our clients determine which franchise is best for them."

CHOOSING WISELY

Business Alliance's inventory of franchisors includes companies in a wide range of concepts and industries including food and beverage, retail, direct marketing, employment and personnel, home services and technology.

The company closely vets and se-

lects the franchisor organizations it works with. This selection process typically takes three to six months. "The assumption is that more is better, but that's not actually the case," Barnes says. "We believe that quality is better than quantity, and we want to make sure we have a diverse inventory of franchisors in different categories, price points and territories."

Each October, Business Alliance looks closely at the categories it represents in order to capitalize on market trends, noting additional pet care and fitness franchises as examples of franchisors the company added the past year.

"We take the selection process very seriously, because we want to make sure we have quality franchises at different times," she adds. "We are known for our diverse portfolio."

The franchisors and prospective franchisee clients that work with Business Alliance's consultants do not pay annual or extra fees for the company's services. "We are performance based, and are paid when the franchise agreement is signed," Barnes says. "The client pays exactly the same whether they work with one of our franchise consultants or directly with the franchisor."

"This is a win for the franchise company because they are only paying when they bring on a franchisee, a win for the client because they're not being sold just one franchise company, and a win for our consultants, because they can be as busy as they want and get a nice commission when the franchise agreement is signed," she adds.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Business Alliance's Registered Franchise Consultants® are typically existing franchise consultants licensed to work on the company's behalf.

“If you look at our consultants as a whole, we have many who are high performers who work with many clients and place a number of franchises, while others are complementing another business or are semi-retired,” Barnes says. “We want consultants who are accomplished business people, strong communicators and have a business background.”

Registered Franchise Consultants® have access to Business Alliance’s franchisor inventory as well as its intranet site. “Our intranet site is a living, fluid back office where our consultants have the relevant information needed to effectively run their business and communicate with our office staff,” she adds.

The company’s intranet site includes online training programs as well as access to webinars, which Business Alliance produces several times a week.

New consultants go through a four-phase training program that includes one-on-one training in Tacoma or at the consultant’s location, web-based training, working with a mentor and six months of small group roundtable sessions.

The company offers franchisors document reviews and other support for our franchisors. “We look at how our franchisors are doing and how we can improve our relationship,” Barnes says.

Business Alliance also offers twice-yearly business development days for franchisors and consultants. The most recent event in June brought 60 consultants to New York City to meet with many of the company’s franchisors. The next event will take place in Los Angeles in the fall.

“Much of our success is due to the team that we have,” Barnes says. “Our franchise development office brings



Heath Turner of corporate helps Business Alliance consultants qualify and select new franchisees for franchisors.

in new franchises that have the best ability to be sold in the future based on their successes, financials or visions.

“Our consultant-recruiting department brings in the highest quality consultants to work with Business Alliance,” she adds. “These consultants have years of life experience and credibility so that their clients are served and comfortable. Our corporate trainers and mentors work with the new affiliates to ensure professionalism and success.”

POSITIVE GROWTH

Founded in 1991, Business Alliance today is one of the largest and most experienced franchise opportunity brokerage companies in the United States.

Barnes started with the company as a consultant in 2005 and joined its corporate office in 2008 as a trainer.

Her success in both roles led to her promotion in 2013 to company president and owner.

“I am able to see our business through the lens of a consultant as well as through the lens of someone who has owned her own business,” she says.

During her time as Business Alliance president, Barnes has examined the company’s infrastructure, corporate team and policies as well as franchise partners. “We’ve taken a multifaceted approach that has created strong positive growth,” she says.

Barnes believes the future success of Business Alliance lies with the company’s ability to capitalize on past successes. “In the next five years, we want to continue on our path to being the dominant franchise brokerage in the industry,” she says. 🌐