

Franchise Opportunities with Scooped Success

Written by Sohini Sarkar

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Pabrai's Fresh & Naturelle is a Kolkata based, premium, 100% natural ice cream company which was started in October 2008 by brothers Kunal Pabrai and Nishant Pabrai.

Their father- Mr. Anuvrat Pabrai, who is chief mentor and advisor to the company, has been in the ice cream manufacturing business for the last 28 years with Tulika, the first ice cream parlour at Russel Street, Kolkatta. The second generation of Pabrai's came into the business to steer it to a new direction with the USP 'no artificial essences and no artificial flavours' and 'best ingredients sourced from all four corners of the world'.

Pabrai's Fresh and Naturelle Ice creams operate through franchise model where the franchisees can choose to have either Standalone shops or Kiosks. It also has tie-ups with some of the top hotels and restaurant chains in the country. "Presently a zero debt company and with a reasonably strong internal accruals, Pabrai is ploughing back more than what we receive as franchise fees to upgrade the franchise system and to constantly give back something to benefit our franchisees" says Kunal Pabrai, Founder.

Expansion Plans

Pabrai's Fresh & Naturelle Ice creams are now available in 18 outlets spread across 8 cities in India. We are presently available in Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Siliguri, Surat, & Jaipur. The upcoming expansion plans include opening in at least 6 more cities. Mumbai, Bhubaneshwar & Mysore will see their first outlets. The company has already finalized

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one outlet each in Mumbai and Delhi and both are under fitment and scheduled to open within July. Additional outlets are under process of being opened in Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Kolkata. The long term goal is targeted at building strength by adding another 30 stores up from 18 at present by the end of this financial year.

“Along with increasing our store count, we are also working to upgrade our production facilities by investing around Rs 3 crores to upgrade our production to 12000 litres per day. Other back end facilities are being upgraded as well to enable us to handle the increased volumes” says Kunal.

Franchise Advantages

“Our franchise model basically involves replicating a successful running business by providing all the processes, systems, controls, designs and training to a franchisee to easily and successfully run his unit. The total 360 degree running of the business must be clearly explained to the franchisee” says Kunal.

Speaking about the advantages, he says that there are dual advantages– Firstly, the franchisee gets a proven fully designed new business with a much lower risk of failure. Secondly, the franchisor will be able to expand his business without involving himself in the running of multiple outlets by sharing his proven expertise in a business which he has successfully run himself.

“At Pabrai’s, we have worked relentlessly to create a sound Franchise system – both in terms of the Operations Manual and the Training Manual which is constantly being updated and improved as we mature as a franchisor. While we presently do not consider ourselves as a mature franchise entity, we are fully committed to invest the time and energy required in to the franchising effort” says Kunal.

Requisites and Challenges

Franchising is fairly new in India and a lot of brands are entering franchising without being fully prepared for it or without investing the time and effort required to create the system and platform

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for the franchisees to operate. This itself is a challenge. We are slightly more expensive than other natural ice creams but we offer a better experience in terms of the product.

Pabrai has two models – the kiosk model and the standalone parlour model. For kiosk model the initial investment required is around 8 lakhs and for standalone parlour the investment is about 12-15 lakhs. They work with the franchisee from inception to provide help an guidance in site selection & due diligence of site, finalisation of lease agreement, interior design and décor, training, marketing and key performance monitoring.

Sandalwood Ice-cream, Nalen Gur ice-cream, paan ice cream, the unique names that may keep you wondering came from Parbai's. "Our taste sets us apart from other players in the natural market. Constant introduction of newer flavours keeps getting people to come back again and again" concludes Kunal speaking about their brand advantage.

The ice cream market in India is flooded with both domestic and international players. National market itself is divided into branded players as well as grey markets consisting of cottage industries. A clever plan and dedicated approach can reap success in any business, and a franchise model already provides you an extra edge of the brand.