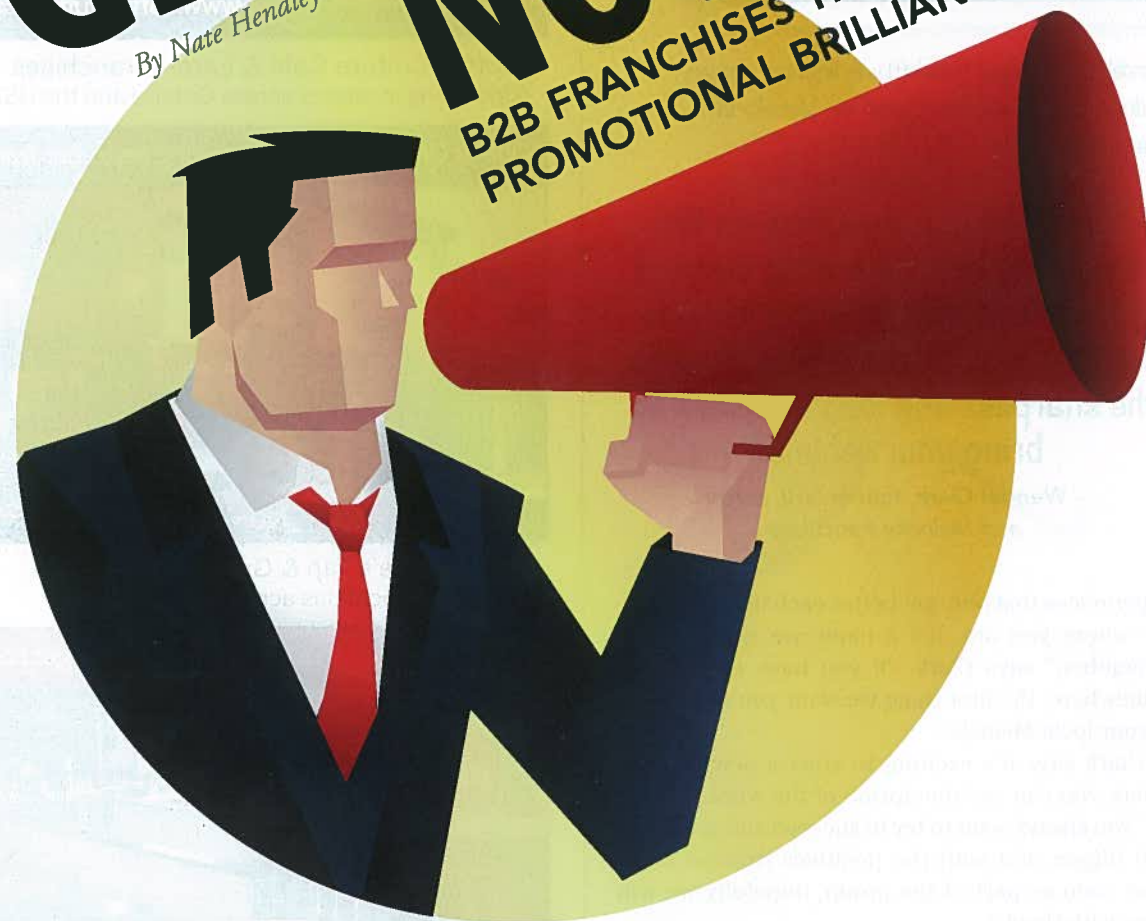


# GETTING NOTICED

By Nate Hendley

## B2B FRANCHISES THAT SHINE WITH PROMOTIONAL BRILLIANCE



When businesses want to give their brand a promotional polish, many turn to franchises that specialize in providing just that.

Here's a look at three franchises built around B2B branding:

## getting noticed



Instant Imprints works with clients to provide solutions to all their B2B branding needs, including custom apparel, signs and banners.

### INSTANT IMPRINTS

Instant Imprints of Burlington, Ontario offers a 'one-stop-shop' of B2B branding services, including custom apparel, embroidery, t-shirts and other customized clothing, signage, banners, promotional products and digital printing.

"Most of our customers already buy this stuff. They just tend to have to go to three or four other suppliers, however, because most of our competitors offer only one product. We have competitors that just do signs, just do clothing, just do paper. We're the only ones who really do all of it," says COO Christian Collucci.

The company originated in 1992 as a father-and-son business with a single outlet in San Diego, California. Ralph Askar, CEO, and some fellow entrepreneurs acquired the master license for Canada in 2008. Four years later, they bought the U.S. parent company. Instant Imprints is now a Canadian-owned business, with 46 franchises across North America (18 in Canada and 28 in the U.S.).

Collucci looks for franchisees with solid sales and people skills and a creative bent. Franchisees "have to like solving problems, because every job we do is custom," he says. "You also can't be afraid to market and network."

Total franchise investment, including the franchise fee and equipment, ranges from \$165,000 to \$220,000, with a six per cent royalty.

Training lasts six weeks. New franchisees spend three weeks in an Instant Imprints store, work in a centre where they cover all aspects of production and operations and travel to San Diego (where the company retains a strong presence) for a two-week classroom component focused on business development and management. Once training ends, the franchisee holds a "soft opening" of their new franchise outlet.

Instant Imprints locations "tend to be in strip mall plazas. We usually try to locate near areas with good commercial density," says Collucci.

Post-training support is extensive. Instant Imprints offers a six-month peer mentoring program in which new franchisees meet weekly with company veterans. The chain also hosts an annual convention, networking events for franchisees, webinars, and other forms of communication.

Collucci is eyeing rapid expansion. He envisions 500 new franchises open worldwide over the next five years, with 75 to 80 in Canada and 325 in the United States.

"We help companies make it easy to manage their brand. If you can go to one place that can handle everything you need for your brand and make it look outstanding, why would you want to manage three or four different relationships when you could go to one place that knows and understands your brand?" he asks.



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— Christian Collucci,  
COO