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# WHY WE LEFT WALL STREET FOR FRANCHISING

*By Rob Cannon, Thrillz*

Our story of leaving the corporate world and finding lifelong careers in franchising.

Change slows time. Both the discomfort and the excitement of transition means that we grapple with adjustments and newness. These are the moments in our lives that seem to last forever until we regain normalcy and find routine.

I fully understand that change can be scary, but without an acceptance and appreciation for it, there is no way that I, or anybody, could enjoy

their journey in life. Moreover, all of us in franchising benefit from having a positive disposition toward change. The franchising odyssey is filled with change and transition. It is a factor of our industry that is all around us.

## Skills Development

Like many who venture into franchising, I enjoyed a rewarding corporate career before transitioning into franchising. My wife, Lisa, and I both spent more than 15 years on Wall Street. The decision to make a change came from our desire to find more balance in life and to exercise our entrepreneurial ambitions.

Although new to business ownership when we became franchisees of an indoor trampoline park, we leveraged our career experiences and the proven business model that we had invested in as foundational elements of building a winning business. From the build



Rob and Lisa Cannon.

out to the start-up phase and then the immediate months that followed, we learned, grew as owners and developed the processes and systems that allowed us to create strong connections in our community.

Along the way, in those first nerve-racking months and the first year as a whole, Lisa and I would lean heavily on one another, taking advantage of each of our professional strengths. The professional respect we had for each other and the emotional connection



shared both fostered a platform for us to hone our entrepreneurial skillset and enjoy the ride of a lifetime.

Further, franchising enabled the opportunity for us to refine the talents that we each individually brought to the business — a factor that we both sought out when we decided to make our career move. The skills we brought to the table were very different. We have found that in a professional partnership, much like a personal one, it is key to find a partner who complements your skillset. I typically handle the behind-the-scenes work, such as park innovation and design, finance, technology and legal. Lisa, on the other hand, leads all things marketing, while also running and managing operations.

The high performing partnership we formed as business owners took us to another milestone moment in life. Having seen the benefits of the franchise model as franchisees, we pursued a new mission in our journey. We set out to

become a franchisor — a pursuit that invigorated each of us to strive for new personal and professional goals.

## Franchisees to Franchisors

Moving into this new realm of franchising, we were able to carry with us a collection of skills and business ownership success that gave us a solid amount of confidence. We set out together to create a concept that we knew would become the pinnacle of our careers — Thrillz.

As a couple, we dug deep into investigating and then developing the business model. We sought out to fill

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We went from analyzing businesses to running a business.”

voids in the family entertainment center sector. Something that became quickly apparent to us when we visited other family entertainment centers was the lack of activities for adults. Plus, the absence of a seamless organizational process for big events like birthday parties was clear. With this knowledge, we set out to create a concept that offered fun for people of all ages, went above and beyond in terms of cleanliness and was well equipped to handle parties, corporate outings and other big events. Overall, integrating both our professional and personal knowledge allowed Lisa and I to develop a brand that was highly distinguished and full of opportunity to be franchised.

In transitioning from franchisees to franchisors, Lisa and I also knew

we had to lead by example. From our perspective, this means we own, operate and innovate within our first location, running all facets of the business day-to-day. From management and hiring to higher-level operations, we have to understand the Thrillz business from the eyes of a franchisee. Not only has this process allowed us the opportunity to fine-tune our own operations, but it has also given us a greater understanding and empathic stance for the journeys our franchisees will take.

We are keenly aware of what franchisees both need and what they seek, so we have designed a support infrastructure built around this unique perspective. The support systems we have implemented are cemented in a proven set of simplified processes and systems that could be replicated in any market to provide a profitable small



Thrillz locations provide a fun environment for children and families alike.

business. We have spent considerable time developing, testing and updating these systems to establish a thorough guidebook that now serves as the core of our training for franchise owners. Their success is our success, and our goal is to ensure that they have clearly outlined guidance every step of the way.

## Benefits of Franchising Family Entertainment Centers

Leaving our corporate careers to become franchisees was certainly a big change. We went from analyzing businesses to running a business. However, we've found that it's extremely rewarding to work in such a hands-on environment in the family entertainment center space. We are in an environment filled with kids and families all day and



Rob Cannon helps manage the Thrillz franchise.

we get to make people happy. It doesn't get much better than that for us.

No path to success is linear — ours certainly has not been. But, our journey to launching Thrillz has been extremely rewarding and the knowledge and experiences we've gained along the way have been immeasurable. Lisa and I look forward to expanding the business by welcoming entrepreneurs

into the Thrillz family who share this same passion of enjoying and welcoming the transformative moments in life that shape us all. 🌍



Rob Cannon is the co-founder of Thrillz, the high-flying family entertainment center franchise based out of Danbury, Connecticut.

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