Kristen Lundgren: A Working Mom on a Mission



There's a lot to admire about Kristen Lundgren. In 2014, Lundgren, a single mom, left a six-figure sales job because she wanted to work from home to be there for her son, Gabe, who is now 18 years old and a college student.

"I was missing soccer and basketball games and leaving him home alone for long stretches of time. He'd get home at 3, and I might get home at 7 or 8, depending on traffic," Lundgren says.

It's easy to imagine some parents shrugging and figuring that's just how it is. And, of course, plenty of parents in the same situation simply *can't* change their situation without going into financial turmoil. But, in any case, Lundgren is definitely not the type of parent to shrug, so she started looking for a way that she could work from home and still make a good living – while being there for her son.Kri

That's how, in the course of her research, she became the franchise owner of Our Town America in Eden Prairie, a suburb of Minneapolis. We caught up with her recently. Here are a few highlights from our conversation.

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Best thing about being your own boss. “Having my own free time,” Lundgren says. “For instance, last summer, before Gabe went to college, I spent a lot of time with him. I chose my own hours and took him to San Diego for a week.”

She sounds sheepish for a moment before saying, “I really didn’t work much that summer. Luckily, I had built up the business, so I could do that, although, yes, it probably hurt my bottom line in the long run. But it was so nice to have that time with him. That’s one of the really nice things about owning an Our Town America franchise: the freedom and flexibility you have. You do have to put the hours in and work hard, but when you do, it pays off.”

Most surprising challenge Lundgren faces as a business owner. “Working at home when you’re an extrovert is really hard,” she says. “But the positive is you get to interact with so many fantastic local business owners.”

Least surprising challenge Lundgren faces as a business owner. Landing clients. Of course, sometimes it’s easy, but sometimes it isn’t. And sometimes it’s surprising who is hard to keep as a client.

“So, dentists seem like such a great category, where they would want to market to people moving into a neighborhood for the first time, but it’s sometimes difficult to connect with them because they often keep their distance behind gatekeepers,” Lundgren says.



Kristen Lundgren Our Town America Franchise Owner and son, Gabe

But that said, one of Lundgren's very first clients *was* a dentist – and who must have had a pretty good response rate from new movers because she has kept that dentist on as a client since she started her franchise in 2014.

"I called their marketing agency, which is sort of a gatekeeper for them, and they said right away, 'We're not interested,'" Lundgren recalls. "And I said, 'But you don't know what you aren't interested in.' And I got the reply, 'No offense, but I'm sure the dentist won't be interested.' And I said, 'How do you know?'"

Ultimately, Lundgren kept working at it and was finally allowed to make her pitch to the dentist, who ultimately signed up.

Lundgren's advice for her fellow franchise owners. She recently utilized a Sales Training and consulting firm that does a lot of work with Our Town America.

"They had a Sales Trainer speak at our last convention, and offered a discounted rate if we signed up following convention. My last session was last Friday, and the trainer was just phenomenal," Lundgren says, adding that the training includes strategies for cold calling that she found invaluable, or as she put it, "golden."

And Lundgren's advice for somebody considering buying a franchise. "You need to ask all of the right questions, and if you do become a franchise owner, you need to be prepared that it isn't going to always be easy. You're going to have days where clients cancel if they don't get the response they were looking for, and that's going to be frustrating. But you have to be able to go back out there and be creative and

resourceful," Lundgren says.

In other words, if you get discouraged easily, this isn't the business for you. If you enjoy selling and running a business and all the perks and pitfalls that come with it, and you enjoy creating your own schedule and carving out time to hang out with your kids, then this just may be your thing!

For more information about opening an Our Town America franchise, please visit https://www.ourtownamerica.com/franchise-us/ or call 1-800-497-8360, or if you're a business interested in partnering with Kristen – give her a call at 612-709-3859 or email klundgren@ourtown.net.