

Our Town America Franchise Celebrates 45 Years, New Look, & New Headquarters



Franchising USA Magazine (February 2017) – A Florida franchise that specializes in helping people get settled into new communities is going to be moving into a new community itself soon.

Our Town America celebrates its 45th anniversary this year and it's just about to close a deal on a new 44,000 sqft space for its headquarters in Pinellas Park just outside of Tampa. The pending move and the milestone anniversary are just two elements of what promises to be a busy year for the franchise. Our Town America connects people who have just moved into a neighborhood with local businesses in that neighborhood by direct mailing the new resident a **welcoming envelope** filled with gift certificates from the local businesses.

"We make relationships, essentially," CEO Michael Plummer Jr. said during a recent interview from the franchise's headquarters in Pinellas Park.

But the good fortune goes both ways. Not only do new community residents get great deals and a reason to go explore their new area, the local businesses get a chance to bring in new customers.

All New Look

The franchise has recently undergone a complete overhaul of its brand, with a newly designed Welcome Package envelope and gift certificate look. Deciding on the new look of the brand was a huge undertaking for the company, Plummer said.

While Our Town America is now in its 45th year of business, however, they started franchising in 2005. Today, it has 50 individual franchisees, with some of them running multi-unit franchises. Most of those franchises are home-based.

Plummer said people who have a sales background would be a good fit for an Our Town America franchisee, but a sales background isn't necessary, as the business' focus is on building relationships.

"Someone who is willing to go out and build those relationships would do well," the CEO noted. "So, we're looking for a good community organizer, maybe somebody who is involved with a Parent-Teacher Association or a real estate agent, for example, somebody who has the ability to go out and talk to people."

Plummer pointed to his own sister-in-law, who has been an Our Town America franchisee for less than a year, as a good example. Having worked behind the scenes in the insurance field for 25 years, she has zero sales background. However, because she's so good at connecting with people, she's doing particularly well with the company.

Our Town America has a goal of having a franchise in all major metropolitan areas, Plummer noted, but it also works well in smaller towns. Any markets that have a lot of people moving into the area are ripe for an Our Town America franchise.

He specified Texas, North Carolina, Utah, New Jersey, the greater New York metropolitan area and Boston as growing markets that Our Town America wants to get into right now.

Real Connection

Even though people have what Plummer described as a plethora of options online to check for recommendations for restaurants and other businesses in their new neighborhoods, there is still room for a direct mail service that delivers free housewarming gifts and draws those businesses out from the crowd like Our Town America.

Many of the online resources, he noted, are full of reviews that can become overwhelming and unhelpful when trying to decide where to go. The direct mail gift certificates, on the other hand, offer a more personalized connection to local businesses.

“In a more social age where people feel like they’re connected because they’re online all the time, people aren’t really connecting,” Plummer mused. “People aren’t really making those personal connections.”

Often, he pointed out, when people move into a new city, it can be an overwhelming experience because they’ve moved for a new job or because of a life-changing experience like a divorce or a death in the family.

People are uprooting their lives and it can be difficult for them to get settled into a new neighborhood because they don’t really know anyone. Our Town America offers that personal connection to them at a tumultuous time.

On the other side of the equation, it helps to replenish the customer bases of local businesses. In any given year, a business will lose about 18 percent of its customer base because of people moving away from the neighborhood, he noted.

The Our Town America Difference

While there are other direct mail options that try to replicate what Our Town America does, Plummer mentioned, no other company gets it quite right and that’s partly because they don’t have the 45 years of experience and expertise that Our Town America boasts.

Having been doing this so long, the company knows how to do welcoming packages better than anyone else in the industry.

“We’re the leaders and we’re the ones people try to imitate and emulate because we have forged this innovative path for a long time in our niche,” Plummer stated.

To get trained in the art of connecting neighborhood newcomers and local businesses, the company offers their three-week Coming to Town training program. This program entails twice weekly phone calls with new franchisees to coach them on sales scripts and to ensure they’re getting their businesses set up properly.

After that, they get a solid week of sales-focused training in Pinellas Park followed by a week of in-field training in their markets with a top Our Town America franchisee. The franchise also helps new recruits with appointments, growing their client list, development of marketing materials and more.

With their rebranding efforts, their new headquarters and their milestone anniversary, Our Town America has positioned itself for success for the next 45 years.

Interested in exploring the Our Town America franchise opportunity? Please visit www.ourtownamerica.com/franchise-us or call 1-800-497-8360 ext. 232.

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Source: Franchising USA Magazine