ACCESS
FRANCHISE CONSULTING

THE NEXT CHAPTER

SEPTEMBER 2026 • FRANCHISE INSIGHTS FOR PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT WHAT COMES NEXT

A NOTE FROM DEB

If August felt like everyone was trying to squeeze one more thing out of summer, September feels different. People are back at their desks, calendars are filling up, and the questions about 2027 are getting louder.

I'm hearing the same theme in a lot of my conversations: people aren't necessarily looking for the flashiest business. They're looking for something durable—something that fits their skills, finances, family, and the life they actually want to build.

That is exactly where franchising can be powerful. A good franchise gives you a framework. But the framework still has to fit the person. My job is not to find you the 'hottest' brand. It's to help you understand what ownership would really look like and whether a particular business deserves a place in your next chapter.

This month, I'm watching service businesses, efficient health and wellness concepts, and brands that create repeat customer relationships without unnecessary complexity. More on those below.

— Deb

SAGE DEB ADVICE

"A great business can still be the wrong business for you."

Before you fall in love with a brand, get clear on the owner role:

- How will you spend your time?
- Who manages the people?
- Where does revenue repeat?
- How is the business marketed locally?
- Can the model support the life you want?

The goal is not to eliminate risk. It is to understand it well enough to make a confident decision.

WHAT I'M WATCHING IN FRANCHISING

Durable demand. Efficient models. Responsible growth.

1 Essential services are still earning attention.

IFA/FRANdata expects commercial and residential services to be among the fastest-growing franchise categories in 2026. Repairs, maintenance, pest control, moving and other needs-based services benefit from demand that does not disappear just because consumers become more selective.

2 "Efficient" wellness is more interesting than wellness for wellness's sake.

Health and wellness remains a major franchise category, but the stronger story is shifting toward results, value and smaller-format concepts with lower fixed costs—not simply expensive buildouts and trendy experiences.

3 Multi-unit thinking is showing up earlier.

More successful operators are reinvesting into additional units. For a new buyer, that does not mean "buy three on day one." It means asking whether the first business has systems, economics and leadership depth that could support scale later.

THE DEB FILTER

When a concept crosses my desk, I care about more than the industry headline. I want to know:

- Is demand durable—or are we chasing a fad?
- What does the owner actually do every week?
- How many employees does the model really require?
- Does revenue recur, repeat, or start at zero every month?
- What has to go right for the economics to work?
- Is the franchisor building infrastructure as fast as it is selling franchises?
- Would I feel good putting someone I care about into this system?

That last question matters more than people think.

845K	$921.4B	8.9M	3.2%
projected U.S. franchise establishments in 2026	projected franchise economic output	projected franchise jobs	projected growth in child services and commercial/residential services

BRANDS ON MY RADAR

Not “best franchises.” Brands with business-model characteristics worth a closer look.

PURE PHYSIQUE

BOUTIQUE STRENGTH TRAINING

A 30-minute, trainer-led strength model with a smaller studio footprint, recurring memberships and a strong culture built around “We Build People Up.” I like the focus on time-efficient, results-oriented fitness—and I especially like founders who are thinking seriously about infrastructure and responsible growth.

CLEAR PEST PROS

RECURRING HOME SERVICES

Pest control sits squarely in the essential-services thesis: route density, repeat customers and a service people generally cannot postpone forever. Clear Pest Pros is also expanding, with new 2026 openings reported in Florida, Iowa, Michigan and Kentucky.

TRUBLUE HOME SERVICE ALLY

HOME SERVICES + AGING IN PLACE

This model sits at an interesting intersection: handyman work, senior home-safety solutions and recurring maintenance plans. I’m watching businesses that serve the growing aging-in-place market without becoming labor-heavy medical or home-care operations.

HELPFUL HEROES

TRUST-BASED ON-DEMAND HOME SERVICES

Helpful Heroes connects homeowners with off-duty firefighters and EMTs for home projects, with other vetted technicians used when needed. The brand is early, distinctive and built around trust—an increasingly valuable differentiator in fragmented home-service categories.

A WORD ABOUT “BRANDS TO WATCH”

A brand making my radar is an invitation to investigate—not a recommendation to buy. Territory, capitalization, local demand, owner role, Item 19 data, franchisee validation, support infrastructure and personal fit all matter. The right answer is different for every candidate.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

A practical note for anyone considering ownership

DON'T CONFUSE MORE RESEARCH WITH MORE CLARITY

Due diligence matters. Read the FDD. Talk to franchisees. Understand the numbers. Study the territory. Ask difficult questions. Involve your attorney and financial advisors.

But there is a point where gathering more information stops changing the decision. Sometimes it simply delays it.

I tell candidates to pay attention to the difference between an unanswered question and an uncomfortable answer. An unanswered question deserves more work. An uncomfortable answer may simply be part of the risk of owning a business.

The goal is not to reach 100% certainty. Business ownership does not offer that. The goal is to understand the opportunity, the risks and yourself well enough to make a decision you can stand behind.

And yes—sometimes that decision should be no.

A thoughtful no is infinitely better than an expensive yes.

5 QUESTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER

- What am I trying to change about my current life?
- How much capital can I invest without creating unnecessary stress?
- What owner role would energize me—and what would drain me?
- What does "semi-absentee" actually mean in this specific model?
- If I say no to this opportunity, what exactly am I waiting for instead?

FREE GUIDE FOR MY EMAIL COMMUNITY

Join my email list to get a free copy of my "10 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Investing in a Franchise" guide.

A thoughtful decision starts with understanding what you want the business to do for your life—not simply finding a business that looks good on paper.

Thinking about business ownership?

Let's talk about where you are, what you're considering, and what you want your next chapter to look like.

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Thoughtful Guidance. Your Next Chapter.

Sources & notes: IFA/FRANdata 2026 Franchising Economic Outlook; IFA Industry Spotlights on Home Services and Health & Wellness; current public franchise information from PURE PHYSIQUE, TruBlue Home Service Ally, Helpful Heroes, and Clear Pest Pros. Brand descriptions are informational only and are not earnings claims or investment recommendations. Review the current FDD and conduct independent due diligence before investing.