

Achieving an Iconic Milestone

Explore brands who reached 100 franchise locations
in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

BY JORDAN WHITEHOUSE

Many franchise brands never hit 100 locations, so when it does happen — especially during a pandemic — it's something to celebrate. Here, you'll meet three brands that recently achieved that milestone who share how they did it and what's next for their franchises.





Fraser Clarke



Kurtis MacDonald

Massage Addict

Fraser Clarke acquired the Massage Addict franchise on August 1, 2014, and from day one, the goal was to hit 100 Canadian locations. It was a bold objective, given that there were just under 20 locations when he took over. But, on October 21st, they did exactly that and opened the 100th location in St. John's, Newfoundland.

"It's obviously been a crazy year, so I'm just extremely proud of my head office team and all of the franchise owners across the country," says Clarke. "It certainly wouldn't have been possible without having a group of very committed and positive franchise owners who execute the business model on a daily basis."

It also might not have been possible if the franchise hadn't spent the past several years surveying and trying to better understand its clients, adds Clarke. That research made it clear that instead of positioning itself as a day spa, Massage Addict needed to position itself in a more clinical light, where it was helping its clients resolve specific symptoms and conditions, such as pain and stress. As a result, the company added reflexology to its suite of treatments in 2018, acupuncture in 2019, and chiropractic care in September.

Kurtis MacDonald became the franchisee of two Edmonton locations in 2019 and five more in Ottawa in 2020. It was a "pretty scary" time to be a new business owner, he admits, especially during the first lockdown, but government relief and the support of the franchise was huge. He points to Massage Addict's western Canada franchise business consultant, Trish MacDonald [no familial relation], in particular.

"She has probably been my therapist through this, and non-pandemic as well," says MacDonald. "She's there to help with day-to-day operations and other issues, but

honestly I think the franchise's superpower is just listening to us while we vent our thoughts and whatnot."

When that first lockdown was lifted, MacDonald says his locations were busier than before the pandemic. The same was true in general across the network, says Clarke. November, in fact, was a record month.

Now the franchise is eyeing even faster growth. It recently identified about 50 Canadian regions for expansion — mainly in B.C., Alberta, and Quebec, though across the country as well — and it has about 20 franchise partners who are currently under agreement to expand. The franchise is also aiming to open its first U.S. location by early 2022.

Clarke says Massage Addict has seen much higher demand from prospective franchisees in recent months compared to pre-pandemic. "It validates our business model and the positive benefits we have with clients managing their pain, stress, and anxiety, so we're going to continue to grow."

MASSAGE ADDICT STATS

Franchise units in Canada: 97

Corporate units in Canada: 3

Franchise fee: \$39K

Start-up capital required: \$100K

Investment required: \$200K-\$275K

Training: Weekly calls leading up to the opening, two weeks in person (pre- and post-opening), ongoing support after opening

Available territories: AB, BC, MB, ON, NL, QC, SK

In business since: 2008

Franchising since: 2008

CFA member since: 2010

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