

Eco-friendly repair franchise plans to double store growth


Honest-1 Auto Care incorporates environmental awareness into the repair experience.

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At a time when most businesses are seeing flat to no growth, one repair shop franchise has its sights set on doubling its 19 stores and increasing its estimated \$11 million in sales.



Cleanliness of the customer waiting area is one of many of Honest-1 Auto's selling points.

Honest-1 Auto Care, a full-service repair chain that recently established its national headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz., puts its stores through rigorous certification to ensure that each location proudly carries the company's eco-friendly flag.

"We call ourselves eco-friendly, not green," says President and CEO Jack Keilt, who's quick to correct anyone who may think Honest-1 is selling business purely on green marketing claims.

Along with participating in the proper disposal of motor oil and other volatile automotive fluids, Honest-1 offers an "ECO Oil Change" and "ECO TuneUp," along with certifying franchisees with a 90-point program called Environmentally Sustainable Actions (ESA). Everything from using water-based parts cleaning products and biodegradable soap, practicing oil-water separation maintenance and buying recycled products to conserving utilities is covered in this certification process, among dozens of other activities.

"We have certified all of our units to be eco-friendly," Keilt adds. "We have relaunched (the franchise) based on solid principles of the company because the time is right."

Keilt hails from non-automotive industries, along with many other company executives, which he says offers a unique perspective into the auto repair industry. Keilt is the former president and CEO of the Fantastic Sam's chain, as well as serving franchise development roles with Jack in the Box and Burger King.

Other company officials have experience in such industries as payday loans, UPS, Nordic Track, auto financing and other food chains.

This storied background helps the chain focus on the customer and his or her needs.

For one, the inside of the stores are kept immaculately clean (especially the bathrooms). The shops also have a children's play area, an Internet café, leather couches and a large flat-screen TV.

"You learn along the way an awful lot of things, regardless of what kind of business you're in," says Keilt. "If you can serve the consumer well, you will have a great business."

Keilt hopes to have 38 locations in place by this time next year. "We're poised for growth."

For more information, visit www.honest-1.com.



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