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Bakery Concept The French Workshop Ready To Scale With Franchising

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The French Workshop, a bakery concept based in New York, has launched its franchise system as part of its growth plan.

For nearly a decade, The French Workshop has brought the taste of Paris to New York City, with several cafes open.



Now, the bakery brand is ready to expand beyond the Big Apple, and will use franchising to do so. Last month, The French Workshop announced the launch of its franchise system, which has long been part of the company's plan.

"It made sense to us because we're able to partner with business owners, entrepreneurs and operators in other markets that we don't have experience in," said Vice President Theodora Christophorou. "We can grow with the people that are specialized in those markets, which helps us grow faster."

The brand, founded in 2015, has four locations, with a fifth opening soon. Christophorou said once the brand established itself in the New York market and fine-tuned operations, it started developing its franchise plan in 2019.

"That's when we felt ready to make a plan and start perfecting the concept so we could enter the franchise world as best we can," Christophorou said. "We think we're at the point now where we can get the ball rolling because we have the resources in place to help franchisees succeed. We can help them with real estate, construction and operations."

Graham Buckley, vice president of franchising, said proving the concept in New York gave The French Workshop the potential for solid growth.



“We’ve already scaled this in one of the toughest markets,” Buckley said. “We feel like we have something really special here, and now we’re well positioned to really emerge as one of the leaders in this space.”

The French Workshop Vice President Theodora Christophorou

Ideally, the brand wants experienced restaurant operators as franchisees, Buckley said.

“That’s preferred, and we’re really trying not to waiver from that,” Buckley said. “It’s really important for us to partner with folks that kind of have that hospitality restaurant gene in their DNA. Of course, we’re providing training, but having that background already is pretty important.”

But The French Workshop will still consider candidates without that experience.

“In those cases, we’re going to ask those investors, if they don’t already, to bring in an operating partner to ensure that skin is in the game there,” Buckley said.

The initial investment to open a French Workshop is between \$1.48 million and \$2.15 million, with an average square footage range of 3,800 to 5,000.

To support its operators, Christophorou said the brand is leaning into improving its technology, with a dedicated buildup over the last year.

“Of course, we’ve been expanding our team, hiring the proper people and putting them in place,” said Christophorou. “But I would say we’ve been making a big push in technology. We’ve been developing our learning management system for our franchisees. That’s the biggest thing



right now, being able to teach what we know and having our manual ready that's been proven for our stores."

As it grows through franchising, Christophorou said the brand will also increase its advertising efforts to become more well known.

"The French Workshop has been kind of the best-kept secret and early on, we really didn't do a lot of marketing," Christophorou said. "We were known more from word of mouth. But now that we're building up our presence, we've started investing in marketing and have put a team in place."

Geographically, Buckley said the French Workshop will start its expansion in the Northeast, in New York and nearby states including New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Delaware. However, he said there is opportunity in the southern United States.

"I think Florida is going to be a market of interest and we've already had a few inquiries," Buckley said. "There are a lot of snowbirds from New York and we're well known here so we see Florida as a big opportunity. But we want to stick to the area where we are able to support our franchisees. From that and a supply chain standpoint, it doesn't make sense to go to, say, California or Texas at this juncture."



The French Workshop Vice President of Franchising
Graham Buckley

