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## With Franchising, The Glass Ceiling Shatters For Women Entrepreneurs

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Where can a woman who has been out of the workforce raising children start her own business with minimal financial investment and have a higher likelihood of success because she is working with a proven business model?

Franchising may be the answer, says Udo Schlenrich, director of The William Rosenberg Center of International Franchising at the University of New Hampshire. "Women who were in a career may have faced layoffs, outsourcing or taken a hiatus to raise a family. Many have very solid skills and they are saying 'What do I want to do now?' They do not want to be an employee again. They want to control their own destiny and franchising is perfect for them."

Women-founded franchise companies are an impressive group: Anne Beiler (Auntie Anne's), JoAnne Shaw (The Coffee Beanery), Ann Rosenberg (RoseVine Winery), Debbi Fields (Mrs. Fields Cookies), and Mary Ellen Sheets (Two Men and a Truck). The number of women who operate a franchised business is even higher.

According to Schlenrich, franchising is attractive to women for a number of reasons. Franchising allows women to be their own boss on terms that can fit well within their family and social structure. Many franchises require a minimum initial capital investment, but even if a loan is required, having a proven business model is a huge benefit when trying to obtain financing.

"If you start a business, the bank wants a proven business model before it will loan money. By purchasing a franchise, women gain an existing marketing concept, and development and operational assistance from the franchisor," he says.

Franchising offers a wide range of business opportunities. With more than 75 different business segments, from hospitality to retail services, women can find a franchise that fits well with their wants and needs. "Women are very creative. They have wonderful people skills and know how to run a business, but they don't need to reinvent the model," Schlenrich says.

Ann Rosenberg agrees. Her late husband Bill Rosenberg founded Dunkin' Donuts and the International Franchise Association, and she became a franchisor in 2004 when she started RoseWine Vinery. Franchisees offer customers the opportunity to make and private label their own wine, as well as purchase bottled wine with customized labels. The Rosenberg Center will present a case study on Rosenberg's business to franchising industry professionals later this year.

"For women, being a franchisor or franchisee is a great opportunity because there is no glass

ceiling,” Rosenberg says. “If people want to work for themselves but are nervous about starting something brand new without support, buying a franchise is a good idea. Business format franchising offers an opportunity to be in business for yourself but not by yourself, and there is a huge selection of successful concepts and a wide range of cost of entry.”

According to Rosenberg, she knew the franchising model was the best way to quickly grow RoseVine Winery. “When Bill founded Dunkin' Donuts, he wanted to expand rapidly but didn't have the funds to do so. Observing how Howard Johnson's had thrived via franchising, he decided to try the same approach to growth. So it only made sense to me that if I wanted my concept to become a household word quickly, franchising was the way to go,” she says.

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