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Franchising in Italy

In Italy, franchising is one of the main modernising levers to recover efficiency and competitiveness in the distribution system and to transform retail trade. It safeguards the position of individual retail and traditional businessmen, but also obtains the most from working with trade organisations.



In the last ten years the growth of franchising in Italy has been robust and continuous: the average annual increase in three indicators from 1998 to the present day are very significant: an average 8% increase in turnover; an 8% increase in the number of franchisees; a increase of 6% in the number of brand names. As far as the distribution of franchisors in macro-areas in Italy is concerned, according to the findings of Assofranchising and its partners, the data updated at September 2008 shows the following figures: North 59%, Centre 23%, South 18%. In detail, the Lombardia region (the region which has Milan as its capital) has 25.7% of the brand names, while the Lazio region (the region which comprises Rome) has 12.3%, and the Veneto region (the region which comprises Venice) has 10.9%.

THE FUTURE OF TRADE IS AFFILIATION

Last spring, during a first semester which has turned out to be difficult for Italian trade, as well as generally for the entire economy, the three main indicators showed the following weighted forecast for year end: turnover will show an increase between +2% and +5%; the number of franchisors will show an increase between +1% and +2%; and the number of affiliates will show an increase between +3% and +6%.

In a situation in which there is a “acute downturn in consumer spending” and trade which has worsened in the second half of the year, the updating of the overall trends for franchising shows that the three main indicators for franchising (turnover, brand names operating in the market, number of sales outlets) will substantially show a situation of stability compared to 2007, maintaining turnover and probably showing an increase, even if only a small one, of the sales networks.

More specifically, the forecast for 2008 is a variation in the turnover of the networks between 0% and 1.5%, with a variation in the number of brand names operating in the market of between 0% and + 2%, and a variation in the number of sales outlets in franchising between 0% e + 2%.

Therefore, franchising is holding its own in a manner which is unsurprising, considering the proven effectiveness of organisation through commercial affiliation.: in fact, alliances between individual businessmen and trade organisations is a winning combination for business development, as well as “holding firm” in times of difficulty.

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EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Therefore, franchising continues to perform well even in Italy. This is also what Mail Boxes Etc and Invitalia, the National agency for the attraction of investment and business development have stated. Invitalia works on behalf of the Government in managing some of the subsidies invested in companies. In the last 5 years it has received 2,530 applications for financing franchising activities, supported 567 investment projects for a value of over 47 million Euros, and created 1,134 new jobs. Mail Boxes Etc., which has the biggest network of franchising shops in Italy and the world, working in the field of postal services, communication and support for the business activities of companies and private individuals, created over 100 jobs in 2008 alone, with the opening of new sales outlets. Before 2010 it plans to open over 50 new sales outlets and the their affiliates will benefit from financing managed by Invitalia, thereby contributing in creating circa 150 new jobs.

FRANCHISING & TRADE: THE RELEVANT ITALIAN FAIR

In Italy the leading magazine for this sector is Franchising&Trade, which is an absolute reference point for Italian operators. F&T combines business and training, job opportunities and a deeper knowledge of this sector through conventions and seminars. Among the most innovative aspects for Italian franchising currently and among the issues which have created the most interest among operators are environmental compatibility and specialised training. The next edition will take place at the same time as Host, the most important Fair in the world dedicated to professional hospitality. Therefore, we invite international operators to visit Franchising & Trade in fieramilano from 23 to 26 October 2009.

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