

## IMS Blog Article # 2

# *“Avoid Opening Launch & Grand Opening Disappointments”*

Prepared for  
International Franchise Association

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**Growing Your Brand in Local Markets**  
32 years with 6,000+ franchisees



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*“The Opening Launch & Grand Opening is the most important promotion in the life of the a store.”*

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## Key Steps – How to Ensure a Successful Opening Launch and Avoid Grand Opening Disappointments

One of the Greatest Fears of a Franchisor is for a New Location to Struggle and get off to a slow start.

A struggling new location is a major concern for the franchisee and the corporate team for many reasons:

- They require an extraordinary amount of corporate resources and training
- Poor validation to prospective franchisees could slow the growth of the network
- May have a negative impact on customer service, the quality of the product or service offered and produce poor morale

Opening Launch & Grand Opening Program is considered the most important promotional campaign in the life of a new location. The primary goal of an Opening Launch & Grand Opening Marketing Program is to ensure a strong customer base and achieve break-even quickly. Nothing speaks louder of a successful launch than a store full of customers and a line out the door on opening day and during the Grand Opening.



**“Enter to Win FREE Poke Bowls for a Year” opt-in campaign...  
Generated 1,013 entries before Opening Day!**



Results of the “Enter to Win FREE Poke Bowls for a Year” Campaign during the Pre-Opening Phase...128 customers waiting in line on Opening Day.



**Best marketing practices and tips for a successful launch –**

- ✓ The marketing planning process should begin as soon as the lease is signed for the space and the franchisee has the keys to the door.
- ✓ It is essential to develop a complete written marketing plan that is a living breathing plan reflecting the unique marketplace characteristics with Opening Launch measurable goals.
- ✓ Establish relevant goals and expectations for the new location relative to the network’s other new locations’ opening performances.

✓ **Engagement Marketing Enter to Win....** should begin during the pre-opening several weeks *before opening*. Unfortunately, too many franchisees wait until the location is open to initiate the marketing activities. This can be a costly mistake. Engagement Marketing “**Enter to Win FREE Pizza for a Year**” opt-in campaign generates names, email addresses and cell phone numbers of *potential customers* as well as generating customer traffic on opening day and throughout the opening launch.



✓ The **Opening Launch & Grand Opening Marketing Program** is a “*living breathing*” four-month written marketing program that includes many moving parts and initiatives and includes:

- **Pre-Opening Phase** – marketing initiatives begin as soon as the lease is signed. Engagement Marketing “Enter to Win....” Includes a special offer to *potential customers*. Digital marketing announces the opening day and charity fundraising activities. Post photos on social media of the buildout and menu items or services that will be offered.
- **Soft Opening Phase** – continue the Engagement Marketing “Enter to Win...” drawing initiative. Use digital marketing and direct response to announce the opening and invite the list of potential customers and general public, bloggers, and media. Post menu of items or services and special offers.
- **Grand Opening Phase** – continue the Engagement Marketing “Enter to Win...” with social media, digital marketing and direct response marketing initiatives announcing the 3-4 day event activities and including community ribbon cutting.
- **Post Launch Phase** – announcement of the “Enter to Win....” drawing winner(s) and send special offers to all entrants.

✓ Social Media, Digital Marketing and Direct Response Marketing are key elements in the success of each phase of the program and must be initiated on a timely basis.

✓ Make the Opening Launch a success story with continued growth after the Grand Opening

✓ Change the incentives for the Engagement Marketing “Enter to Win....” every eight weeks and continue to build the database of potential customers. The database of potential customers will continue to grow with the social media, digital marketing and direct response marketing vehicles.

## Growing Brands in Local Markets for 30 Years with 6,000+ Franchisees



### Four-Month Marketing Program

➤ **Pre-Opening Phase** – recommend planning to begin 6-8 weeks prior to opening.

Goal - to begin building the *potential* customer base *before opening*; build awareness and anticipation for the location, menu and opening date *before opening day*.

IMS develops – Opening Launch Marketing Plan, Media Summary & Options, Field Marketing Guidelines, Marketing & Advertising Calendar and Catering Marketing Plan.

- ✓ Establish relationships with businesses, Chamber of Commerce and Community Groups
- ✓ Initiate Digital Marketing and Social Media “Enter to Win....” drawing to generate names, email addresses and cell phone numbers of potential customers and begin initiating messaging for opening day events and specials
- ✓ Identify strategic marketing partners
- ✓ Initiate Weekly Marketing Coaching Calls with franchisee

➤ **Soft Opening Phase** – first 30 days. Begin to dramatically build the customer base.

- ✓ Initiate Friends, Family & Fans Open House Fundraiser - food bloggers invited
- ✓ Continue Digital Marketing & Social Media as well as targeted traditional advertising initiatives leading up to the Community Grand Opening

- ✓ Initiate the Field Marketing Plan to focus on community events and businesses
- ✓ Connect with employees of businesses with 20+ employees in a 2-mile radius
- ✓ Advertising initiatives may include - radio, television, cable television, targeted neighborhood direct mail in addition to digital and social messaging
- ✓ Initiate community group marketing to organizations

➤ **Grand Opening Phase** – eight weeks after store is open – 4-Day Event Thursday - Sunday

- ✓ Send SMS Text and Email messages to database w/ “Countdown” to Grand Opening Day
- ✓ Continue Digital Marketing & Social Media as well as targeted traditional advertising initiatives leading up to the Community Grand Opening
- ✓ Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting & Fundraising Event for local charity Thursday afternoon to kick off the GO
- ✓ “FREE Pizza 11:00-1:00 Fri., Sat. & Sun.” and local charity fundraiser
- ✓ Advertising initiatives direct mail and field marketing initiatives
- ✓ Entertainment & Activities – kids tattoos, balloon animal sculptures and more
- ✓ “Live stream” the event on Social Media





Grand Opening jumbo postcards 11" x 6" front & back

### ➤ Post Grand Opening Analysis & Extended Marketing Plan

- ✓ Post winners of the events and the "Enter to Win..." drawing
- ✓ Follow-up social media messaging with event video and photos
- ✓ IMS develops and implements the Extended Marketing Plan

### Program Value & Benefits

- ✓ New franchisees will build a strong customer base faster and achieve financial break-even quicker
- ✓ Will provide positive validation to prospective franchisees resulting in more new location openings and will be encouraging to the network
- ✓ Costly advertising mistakes by franchisees will be avoided and franchisee's resources of time, energy and funds will be invested wisely for maximum results.

**Request our FREE Marketing Guides & Podcasts**  
**"Avoid Opening Launch Disappointments" Marketing Guide,**  
**"Marketing Road Maps to Growth" Marketing Guide**  
**3-part Podcast series -**  
**"Avoid Opening Launch & Grand Opening Disappointments"**



### Episodes

#### Part One: Grand Opening Success...

Tuesday Apr 19, 2022

Part one (of three) of our Grand Opening Success Series, John Lee with Impact...

#### Part Two: Grand Opening Success...

Wednesday Apr 20, 2022

On part two of our Grand Opening Success Series John Lee dives further into how...

#### Part Three: Grand Opening Success...

Thursday Apr 21, 2022

In part three of our series, John Lee dives more into grand opening strategies for...



**John W. Lee**

**Founder & CEO Impact Marketing Services, LLC**

As a nationally recognized franchise growth specialist and advocate for franchisee success, John has spent many years in the advertising agency environment and as marketing director for two multi-regional franchise organization. He felt compelled to establish IMS to reach out to work *exclusively* with emerging franchise brands and work *directly* with their franchisees to help them accelerate their growth and exceed expectations.

**Everyone benefits...**

- **No cost to corporate**
- **No need to hire additional marketing staff** as your network expands
- **Minimize wasted advertising**
- **Requires minimal time** of the franchisor's team or by the franchisee
- **Generate royalty revenue and ROI faster"**

## Let's Talk

Click below to set up a call with John

[Schedule a call with John Lee](#)

Call or text John at 602.318-3008 or send an email to:  
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