

## FRANCHISE PLAYERS

### Why Now Is the Time to Enter the Senior Home Care Industry



Image credit: Jeff Emmer



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JANUARY 03, 2015

*Franchise Players is Entrepreneur's Q&A interview column that puts the spotlight on franchisees. If you're a franchisee with advice and tips to share, email [ktaylor@entrepreneur.com](mailto:ktaylor@entrepreneur.com).*

Jeff Emmer has had his finger on the pulse of the American health care industry for the last 10 years. Working with medical device companies, he saw the emerging need for senior care providers as baby boomers grew older. He believed in this change so strongly, he decided to take action and become part of the growing home care industry. Here are the four biggest reasons why he decided to become a ComForcare Home Care franchisee, plus a whole lot more.

**Name:** Jeff Emmer

**Franchise owned:** ComForcare Home Care in Kalamazoo, Mich.

**How long have you owned a franchise?**

Our office has been open since April 2014.

## **Why franchising?**

Franchising was very appealing for many reasons:

1. It provides the ability to utilize a proven system with marketing resources and a developed brand.
2. It gives access to a network of franchise owners who have experienced the same opportunities and challenges that I expect to encounter.
3. I wanted to operate my own business but really didn't want to start from scratch. The franchise system provides the "start-up plan and the playbook."
4. The initial investment seemed reasonable given the amount of resources and support that is available to owners. I believe it would cost significantly more to start from scratch.

## **What were you doing before you became a franchise owner?**

I spent over 18 years in the corporate world with the last 10 years in medical device companies. My job responsibilities included financial analysis, corporate strategy development, competitive intelligence, and business development.

## **Why did you choose this particular franchise?**

There are several reasons I chose this franchise:

1. I found a passion for the health care/medical device industry during my last 10 years while working for Stryker and Hill-Rom (both leading global medical device companies).
2. The health care industry continues to grow especially as the baby boomers continue to age and will require health care services. Services, such as home care, will become a significant part of the aging process as baby boomers want to "age in place."
3. Demographics are certainly in our favor. The aging "baby boomers" will be a very important demographic in the years to come. Most boomers are active and prefer to age in their own homes, so our services will become very important. Another key trend is our mobile society. Many families live in different geographic areas and are not able to take care of loved ones, meaning they will need to rely on home care services.
4. I was impressed with the level of professionalism within the corporate office and other franchise owners.

## **How much would you estimate you spent before you were officially open for business?**

My start-up costs were approximately \$65,000. The majority of the expense was for the initial franchise fees. The remaining was for training, office lease, office furniture, computers, insurance, marketing and other smaller expenses.

### **Where did you get most of your advice/do most of your research?**

Most of my advice came from my franchise coach and conversations with other franchise owners. I would suggest speaking with as many owners as possible. Make sure you speak to newer franchisees as well as older more established ones. Be sure to speak with successful, as well as struggling locations. I have found all franchisees have different challenges at each stage of growth, so it's important to understand all aspects of the business cycle.

### **What were the most unexpected challenges of opening your franchise?**

Our market is very competitive with numerous home care companies. With lots of competition, staffing is and will always be challenging.

### **What advice do you have for individuals who want to own their own franchise?**

I always tell people to take their time making the decision. There are many factors to consider and prospective franchisees need to understand how this decision will help them achieve their personal and professional goals. Do your research and due diligence – there are no short cuts.

Also, be ready to adapt. As a small business owner and first-time entrepreneur, I have learned that things are always changing. Each day is something new. For me, consistent marketing is the key to business growth, so marketing, networking, and community relations are extremely important.

### **What's next for you and your business?**

I am in the process of hiring additional marketing and administrative support. I have quickly learned that you can't do everything yourself.