

## Q&A with Ken McAllister

*Our team at Franchising USA had a chance to sit down with Ken McAllister, president of Suite Management Franchising, the parent company of MY SALON Suite and Salon Plaza franchises, to learn more about the growth and success of the company. Our questions are in bold. Hope you enjoy reading.*



### **What were you doing before you became involved with Suite Management Franchising?**

My background is in engineering. However, for the past 20 years, I served in key executive-level management positions for companies in the oil and gas industry. Throughout my career, my focus has been to drive business expansion and create jobs. I have had the unique opportunity to help hundreds of small businesses and corporations meet and achieve their nationwide growth goals.

Most recently, my family and I relocated to Houma, LA. When my daughter entered high school, my wife expressed an interest in returning to work. However, she wasn't interested in working a traditional 9-to-5. In 2010, we built our first MY SALON Suite, which offered my wife an opportunity to own and operate her own business, while maintaining her current lifestyle. The success of the first location compelled us to add a secondary location six miles down the road and we haven't looked back since!

### **How are you leveraging your professional background in your current role with Suite Management Franchising?**

Engineers are natural problem-solvers. Throughout my life, I have been committed to finding solutions to problems that I have identified in my

community. With Suite Management Franchising, I wanted to help salon professionals achieve their dreams of business ownership, which has always been a challenge for those in the beauty industry. In the process, we designed a co-working environment that offers salon professionals privacy, independence and the opportunity to own and operate their own business.

My background as an engineer has also been essential in building-out our salon suites. I have used my expertise as an engineer to create spacious, functional, high-end salon complexes for our franchise partners and their members. My in-law's background in the hair care industry has been equally important in helping us build attractive and efficient salon suites.

### **Why is MY SALON Suite's strategic alliance with Ratner Companies/Salon Plaza a significant development for the brand?**

Ratner Companies is the largest family-owned and operated chain of hair salons in the country, operating nearly 1,000 salons in 16 states. Its diverse brands include Hair Cuttery, BUBBLES, Salon Cielo and Spa, ColorWorks and Salon Plaza.

Our strategic alliance with Ratner Companies/Salon Plaza is beneficial for several reasons. For one, Ratner Companies' four decades of experience in the salon industry deepens our understanding of the sector to better serve our members and our franchise partners. In addition, through our partnership with Ratner Companies, we were able to secure an alternative in-house financing program for qualified franchise partners.

The Ratner Companies see our background in franchising and business development as a way to drive the expansion of their Salon Plaza brand. As the established franchising subsidiary of MY SALON Suite and Salon Plaza, Suite Management Franchising's calculated growth strategy calls for adding more than 200 franchise partners, 300 salons and 7,500 members in the next five years.

### **How has the companies' new alternative financing program become a major differentiator for the brand?**

In 2014 the Small Business Administration (SBA) stopped lending to Salon Suite concepts because of the real estate nature of our business. This change had a significant impact on our entire industry. By establishing an alternative financing program, our brand and franchise partners are able to continue to grow their MY SALON Suite and Salon Plaza franchise locations. The program has

already helped reignite franchise sales and drive the opening of new locations. Since the partnership formed, one third of existing franchise partners are securing real estate and opening their second locations.

**Can you discuss the support that Suite Management Franchising offers its franchise partners?**

Suite Management Franchising is committed to giving our franchise partners the best people, processes and product on the market. From our proven processes and systems to our upscale suites and knowledgeable support staff in the areas of marketing, operations, real estate and sales, we guarantee these three elements go hand-in-hand to build a bigger, better stronger franchise system.

In addition to focusing on our people, processes and product, we are equally committed to our members and their customers. We give our members the tools they need to succeed in business ownership including high-end equipment and ongoing training and support.

***About Suite Management Franchising***

*Founded in 2012, Suite Management Franchising, LLC, is the established franchising subsidiary of MY SALON Suite and Salon Plaza. Suite Management Franchising looks to add 200 franchise partners and 300 salons within the next five years. Offering ongoing training and support, as well as an alternative financing program, Suite Management Franchising seeks to award franchise opportunities to individuals looking for a lifestyle business that is scalable, requires a minimum number of employees and offers owners the opportunity to keep their day job while building a business.*

***For more information about Suite Management Franchising, visit <http://www.suitemanagementfranchising.com/>. To learn more about MY SALON Suite and Salon Plaza, visit <http://www.mysalonsuite.com/> and <http://salonplaza.com/>.***