

# How the Navy Prepared Me for Franchising

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by Kate Taylor • Sept. 3, 2015 • 3 min read • [original](#)

*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).*

What's the next after being a nuclear naval submarine officer? For Curt M. Maier, becoming a franchisee for Murphy Business Northwest, a business brokerage franchise. Maier wanted to be sure that his business brokerage office accommodated fellow veterans and specializes in assisting vets. Here's what he has learned.



Image credit: Curt M. Maier

**Name:** Curt M. Maier

**Franchise owned:** Murphy Business Northwest, Inc.  
based in Bellevue, Wash.

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

I've been a Murphy franchisee for three and a half years. Prior to that, I also owned a SarahCare franchise for six years.

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### **Why franchising?**

Given my background as a nuclear naval submarine officer, I have always been more of an executer than an innovator. Once I am comfortable with the business model, I follow directions well. I developed a discipline in following an established process through the military. The commitment of those processes and adherence to strict guidelines has maximized my success as a franchisee. For example, I always send follow-up emails to clients on an ongoing basis and I prepare valuations in a uniform manner.

It is also critical in the military to understand and respect the various roles of your team and that has been carried forth to understanding where I rely upon others in the franchise organization for support. I had to rely on team members at various levels in my military organization; in the same way I rely on the expertise of regional and corporate franchise resources.

My favorite aspect of being a franchisee is my interaction with other franchisees. I find that I get good, realistic market-based information from them and that there is a free-flow of information that is very useful. I can have very frank and open discussion with folks on a wide variety of information, such as benefits, how they pay their employees, etc.

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

I spent twenty years with a Fortune 300 chemical company in a variety of business management roles. The last of which was running the North American Healthcare Business for Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. as general manager, where I purchased smaller health care companies to expand the company's position.

I've also held a variety of positions in the corporate world in sales, marketing, business management and some M&A activity with my larger corporation purchasing smaller companies. This directly translates with the skills I use every day. I'm able to act as a

business broker in a corporate manner and in an independent manner. This was a smooth transition, and the Murphy home office allows me to take advantage of the tools and legal listings I need – before, I had to rely on attorneys and other resources from the corporate office to provide this information.

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

I loved the variety of clients and the fact that I represent both sellers and buyers. Each opportunity comes from a different industry with different circumstances, which is both interesting and challenging from a business standpoint.

I like that I'm not micromanaged. I don't have to spend unproductive time creating reports for the franchisor. While other franchises might be heavy on the report requirements, I'm very pleased with the fact that there is no daily or weekly monitoring at Murphy Business – just a monthly report that summarizes the done deals. This allows me to focus on revenue-generating activities. I feel like more of a scorer than a score-keeper.

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

Approximately \$60,000. \$35,000 was for the franchise fee, \$15,000 was for my initial marketing package (website, direct mail campaign followed up by telemarketing, marketing brochures, etc.) and about \$10,000 for office equipment, computer, etc. I received a 10 percent veteran discount off the franchise fee from Murphy Business.

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

I have a friend that became a Murphy broker and his experience was very favorable. When I made the decision to become a broker, I decided to evaluate local, regional and national players. Because of my background, I was more interested in joining a national player. I wanted to leverage my network, which is nationwide, and with a firm like Murphy, I can co-broker with 275 brokers across the country.

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

Certainly the most unexpected challenge is the fact that it may be difficult to generate enough revenue to pay your bills starting out, as the sales cycle time is long. You have to ensure that you are capitalized well enough for working//living expenses. This is one of the primary reasons I selected a business brokerage franchise – there are multiple ways of generating revenue other than buying and selling, like valuation, equipment and machinery appraisals and business consulting services. These generate immediate income.

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

Be sure to take the time to do your due diligence. Talk to as many existing franchisees as you can, both those who have been in the system a long time and those who are just starting up. Get that good feeling that the franchisees see the value they receive from the

franchisor and would definitely make the same decision again. And, thoroughly check out the other competitors in that market.

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

I will continue to grow and may possibly add agents to my business where I am the mentor to them and grow my overall presence in the market.

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