

How Tutor Doctor Owners Strike the Perfect Work-Life Balance



The supplemental education brand affords franchisees a freedom seldom found in the corporate world

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When someone leaves their job to open up a franchise business, one of the most common motivations they're likely to cite for the decision is a desire to regain control of their time. Business ownership allows entrepreneurs to step back from the daily grind and focus instead on high-level operations, providing a less rigid and demanding schedule. Of course, actually building a new business requires tireless work, which is why the pre-fab business model of franchising is such an attractive solution for so many people looking to escape the corporate world.

Still, every franchise model has its own unique requirements of its owners, and some offer a more attractive work-life balance than others, which is why supplemental education franchise [Tutor Doctor](#) has become one of the most popular brands among entrepreneurs looking to take back their time.

“It was something we could do from home, we didn’t have to buy a bunch of inventory and we didn’t have to buy or build a store,” said Rob Kerrison, who left a career in sales and marketing to open a [Tutor Doctor](#) territory with his wife Lynne.

Those minimal infrastructural and operational requirements allow Tutor Doctor owners to scale up fast so they can quickly step back from on-the-ground operations.

“We’ve built a business that can actually run without us, which is an important place for any franchisee to get to,” Kerrison said. “Our job now is to make sure we have the right people working and that they have everything they need to do great work.”

Because most of the actual tutoring done at Tutor Doctor is provided by hired educators, franchise owners aren’t tied up working with clients day in and day out. Instead, Tutor Doctor owners are focused primarily on marketing and recruitment, tasks that do not require inflexible Monday–Friday, nine–five schedules.

“Franchisees are most concerned with finding good tutors and creating a good culture to ensure the tutors are living up to our mission statement,” said Dennis Campbell, Tutor Doctor’s director of franchise development.

Campbell says Tutor Doctor franchisees are well-assisted in those efforts. An expansive resource library gives owners everything they need to manage their internal operations, allowing owners to spend most of their working hours on marketing and community outreach. Plus, franchisees create databases of tutors that they can tap into to find the perfect match for a given student.

“Our owners spend a lot of their time out in the community, building relationships with schools and establishing a presence at events and local hubs. Most everything else is standard back-of-house business management,” he said.

Even those business-management duties are packaged to be easily operational for owners, including those with little business experience. [Lacey Frank and Alison Parker, two former teachers who opened a Tutor Doctor](#) territory together in Florida,

say the franchise's ongoing support has helped them run a thriving operation for three years, despite the fact that neither of them had ever worked in business before.

"Between the two of us, we had more than 25 years of teaching experience, but we knew nothing about running a business, so we didn't know what to expect," Parker said. "The level of support and training — it was amazing. Everything was laid out for us and made manageable. Even three years in, we have the full support of the team at Tutor Doctor, so we are never on our own."

Kerrison says that level of support has been crucial for his operation as well, and it comes not just from the corporate team but also from other Tutor Doctor owners.

"When we started with Tutor Doctor, we had basically nothing. We weren't teachers, we didn't have any tutors, we didn't even have an office," Kerrison said. "But Tutor Doctor trained us on everything we needed to know to get started, and they put us in touch with another franchisee, who I met with and observed. I learned a lot from him, and we became friends. That's one of the best parts about being in this system. You are on a team, part of a bigger ship. I think that's critical. You can always get someone on the phone, and you can always find a solution for any problem you may face. Some of the relationships you form are formalized and official, others are just people you come to know within the system, and all of them are working to support each other."

That level of support combined with Tutor Doctor's operationally streamlined model gives owners the rare opportunity to own a business while actually increasing their personal time away from work. Parker says that's exactly what she and Frank were looking for when they opened their Tutor Doctor, and that's exactly what they found.

"We came into this business with three goals," Parker said. "Replace our teaching salaries, spend more time with our families and find more flexibility with our schedules. We met and exceeded each of those goals. We love teaching, and with Tutor Doctor, we are able to find the fulfillment we get from teaching while maintaining a level of control over our lives we never had working for a school. A bad day working for Tutor Doctor is better than a good day teaching at a school or sitting at a desk. If we have any regret, it's that we didn't make the jump earlier."