

Exclusive! 1,035 Franchises Listed & Ranked

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UPDATES

CHARTING BUSINESS TRENDS

By Kevin McLaughlin



Photo Courtesy: Asquith Motor Carriage Company Ltd.

Ooga! Ooga! If the distinctive blare of the Asquith Motor Carriage's horn doesn't capture clients' attention, what will? This vintage reproduction is a classic marketing tool.

GOGGLES OPTIONAL

Don your coonskin coat, driving gloves, silk scarf and 1920s winter motoring attire. Or next summer, sport a striped blazer, bow tie and straw hat. The occasion? Tooling down the road in your Asquith Motor Carriage, a vintage reproduction motorcoach. If you want to make a distinguished, yet bold, marketing statement, here's your chance.

For a cool \$100,000, Great Yeldham, England-based Asquith Motor Carriage Company Ltd. offers a roaring-'20s-style motorcoach, complete with your company logo and authentic 1920s accessories including a Klaxon horn and mahogany battery box. But it's built on a modern Ford chassis with 1990s luxuries such as an optional carphone and a stereo cassette player with a concealed antenna.

"The astute buyer recognizes that the Asquith is a sophisticated promotional tool," says marketing di-

rector Crispin Reed. Such astute buyers include international divisions of McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Johnnie Walker whiskey. The first U.S. Asquith was recently delivered to Baileys Irish Cream in Los Angeles.

COFFEE, TEA AND PC

Mention the term "computer conferencing," and people envision computer buffs discussing technotopics, zapping messages back and forth on their computers. Not so on SF Net, a computer network that links patrons at 10 San Francisco Bay Area coffeehouses. Coffee lovers of all backgrounds sit down at sleek tables with built-in computer keyboards and monitors to "talk" to each other about current events.

"This network provides an outlet for any individual who walks into a coffeehouse," says Wayne Gregori, 34, founder of SF Net. "Other on-line computer networks have a distinct lack of diversity."

According to Gregori, coffeehouse customers—who range from ultra-conservatives in the downtown business community to poetry-writing liberals—participate in "lively" electronic discussions. "People can discuss the most controversial topics in a sane manner," he says. "The network has become an extension of many people's social lives."

Owners love the network because it draws customers and perks up the crowd. All the cafe owner provides is a phone line; Gregori installs the computerized coffee table. Customers pay cafe owners \$1 for each 15-minute chat session. In addition, more than 250 home users pay a flat \$5 monthly fee to access the espresso crowd. Gregori's next markets include Seattle, Chicago and New York City.

DUNKIN' DRIVERS

Restaurateurs and convenience store owners who need to pull in morning foot traffic can now offer customers a baker's dozen, thanks to Dunkin' Donuts. The company is opening "satellite" locations without kitchens for a franchise fee of \$10,000.

The units, placed within gas stations and fast-food chains, are one-third less expensive to operate and can be twice as profitable as free-standing Dunkin' Donut stores, according to the franchise company. Baked goods are typically delivered from stores to satellites twice a day.

Dunkin' Donuts satellites should appear at 400 fast-food restaurants and mini-marts this year.

MALL TOGETHER NOW

Having sales problems on weekdays? Weekends? Evenings? Kim Fraser, author of *Marketing Small Shopping Centers: How to Increase Retail Traffic and Sales* (International Council of Shopping Centers), suggests asking your shopping center manager to help create a good marketing program.

Your shopping center manage-