



IN-DEPTH //
FRANCHISING

Husband and wife Todd Ferguson and Chinsuk Kim operate five 7-11 stores in the Las Vegas area.

One, Then **Many**

Operating multiple stores gave these successful franchisees a shot at the American dream, a way out of a stressful career and a lifelong partnership. *By Jonathan Maze*

Dog Lover's Dream Job

Kelly Strowd, Fetch! Pet Care

Kelly Strowd never imagined she would operate a franchise. As a police detective investigating sexual assaults and domestic violence in Carrboro County, North Carolina, she enjoyed good benefits, but the pay wasn't enough that she could envision herself owning a business.

Still, the stress of her job was wearing on her. "I was getting burned out," she says. So when she saw a newspaper ad for a new pet sitting franchise called Fetch, she was intrigued. An animal lover, she had been involved in dachshund rescue services and had cared for five dachshunds herself.



North Carolina detective Kelly Strowd left behind her stressful job to run Fetch! Pet Care franchises.

The \$6,000 startup cost of the Fetch franchise was particularly appealing. The California-based business uses contractors who watch pets in customers' homes or in their own homes. It requires no storefront (franchisees control pet sitting in specific local territories) and thus little additional overhead. That makes it a low-cost, easy business to get into, but one that takes some time to generate income.

So when Strowd began operating her first Fetch franchise in Chapel Hill in 2006, she continued to work full time as a detective for the first year-and-a-half. On weekends when she wasn't on call, she would travel to trade shows and dog shows, hoping to generate customers and connect with other companies who serve pet owners.

Fortunately for Strowd, Chapel Hill, home to the University of North Carolina, is filled with pet owners who like to take good care of their animals, so her business took off. She eventually opened other territories in Raleigh and in Wake Forest, and she took over a fourth territory from an existing franchisee in Cary, North Carolina.

Today, these successful businesses are her



Some franchisors are assisting franchisees with financing by offering financial support in the form of pooled and partial loan guarantees, direct financing of assets like equipment, and repurchase and remarketing agreements with lenders.

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—Kelly Strowd, Fetch franchisee



full-time job. It is a good position to be in and a welcome life change for the former cop. Still, Strowd says she doubts she would be the successful business owner she is if she hadn't bought into a franchise.

"I didn't have a business background. I had no knowledge of how to run a business," she says. "I would not have been successful as quickly if I hadn't gone through a national franchise."

Jonathan Maze is a Minneapolis-based writer who covers restaurants and franchises for Franchise Times Magazine. //

