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## Getting Serious About Franchising

[American Family Care](#) was founded 36 years ago in Hoover, Alabama by Dr. Bruce Irwin. What Dr. Irwin saw was an opportunity to provide urgent care outside of an emergency room setting and a group of patients who desperately needed an alternative solution. That being said, the first three decades of the company’s growth was not via franchising.

It wasn’t until 2013, with AFC’s acquisition of the Doctors Express franchise system, that a nationwide franchise growth plan emerged. And after a few years focused on both corporate and franchise units, the latter has taken over as the predominant engine for driving AFC’s future. As the franchise model has taken over in prominence (with now over 200 clinics open across the U.S.), the team has had to quickly adapt to meeting and exceeding the increasing goals.



**Sean Hart**  
CFE

VP of Strategic  
Development  
& Sales

AFC Since 2016

“There were processes in place that were not optimal for our team to go out and sell franchises...And one thing I’ve tried to do is find them tools that make it easier for them to sell...My only job is to make their jobs easier. I have figured out everything I can to make it quicker, easier, faster.”

“Neither our marketing automation platform nor our CRM are the best at communicating with potential franchisees...FranFunnel is just a simple, straightforward, in your face way to make immediate contact with folks. And **it’s much, much easier for a lead to respond to a text than pick up the phone** and talk to somebody.”

“You cannot close a franchise in the first five minutes, but you can definitely lose a deal that quickly....texting allows us to deliver a serious message on a casual channel that people are receptive to.”



**Russell Smith**  
CFE

Director of  
Franchise  
Development

AFC Since 2013

“Texting allows you to cut through all the e-mails back and forth. It’s the quickest way to get to a candidate”

“I would say that **95% of the people who take time to send a text back set up a call.**”

“FranFunnel is a direct link to your candidates who are motivated. These are not people who just clicked “Yes, I’m interested” on a website. These people follow it up. And those are the ones we want to talk to.”

“We always talk about how the lead, certainly, would prefer a text message. But we are increasingly finding that us salespeople prefer text as well. Texting has become the quickest way to get to me as well!”



**Paige Robinson**  
CFE

Director of  
Franchise  
Development

AFC Since 2015

“Speed to lead is very important...and when FranFunnel was introduced, I saw an immediate uptick in calls that I was able to schedule in a really quick timeframe. Sometimes I get the text response from the candidate before I even get the email letting me know I have a new lead, so that’s really great”

“**I don’t think anybody really feels like texting is work.** It’s just intuitive and easy to keep the prospect engaged so they don’t move to the next concept.”

“It’s great to be able to peruse through all of your engaged leads without having to go through your entire email inbox. I can see my entire deal funnel and ask myself who I haven’t spoken to that week.”