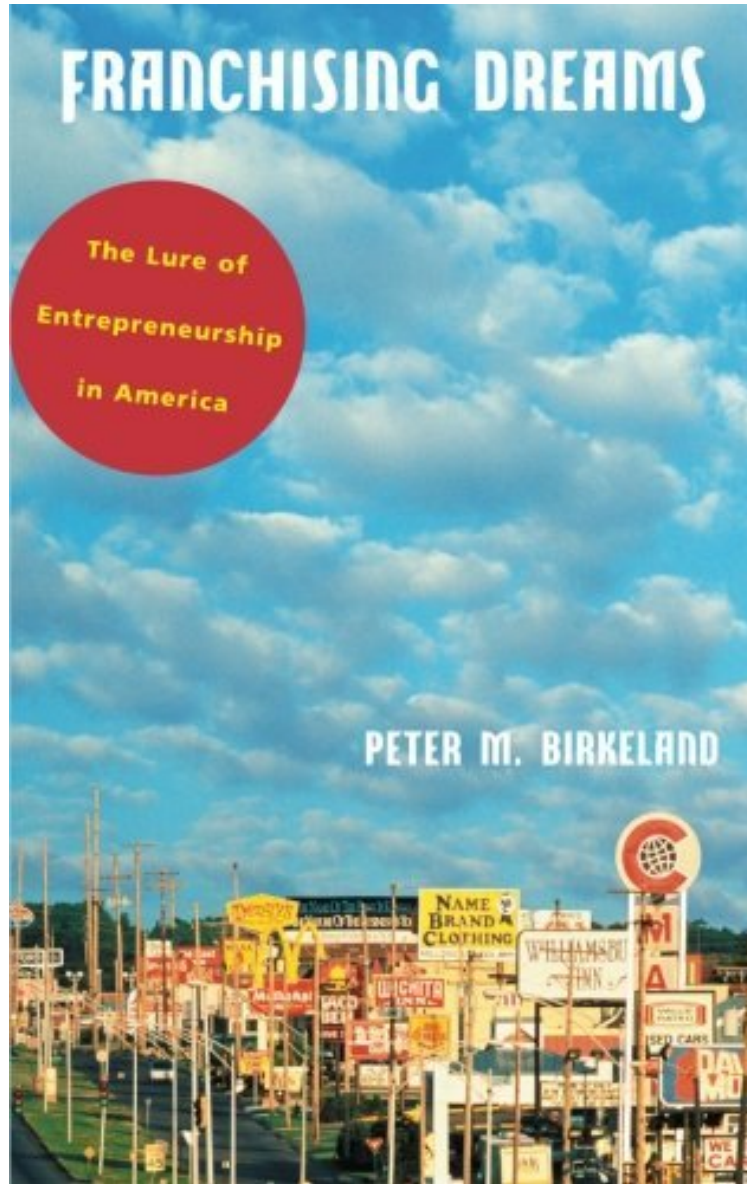


(Download pdf) Franchising Dreams: The Lure of Entrepreneurship in America

## Franchising Dreams: The Lure of Entrepreneurship in America

*Peter M. Birkeland*

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**Peter M. Birkeland : Franchising Dreams: The Lure of Entrepreneurship in America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Franchising Dreams: The Lure of Entrepreneurship in America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. THBOOKS4U, GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICEBy AprilThis rating has nothing to do with the book, I literally could care less about it, I just needed it for a class. The seller is INCREDIBLE! The original order never arrived, however from my communications I can only assume that the

package was stolen from outside of my condo. The seller sent a new copy free of charge to my school address in record time. I couldn't be more pleased!

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. If you're considering a franchise - read this book

By Dom Villari

This book makes a great narrative compliment to some of the more factual books on franchising. You get to see a few real franchises from the eyes of both the franchisers and the franchise owners. The book was so intriguing I literally read it over the course of one 24 hour period. It gives you a real "feel" for the industry.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. For Some, Franchising Nightmares

By Robert Morris...

I am one of countless Americans who are actively involved in franchising almost every day (if only as a consumer) and have become dependent on others to provide various goods and services. In most instances, the emphasis is on speed and convenience. Others do for me and my family either what we cannot do (e.g. dry clean clothes) or would prefer not to do (e.g. install and balance new tires). Almost all of the franchises with which we do business are privately-owned.

Until I read Birkeland's book, I knew almost nothing about franchising except as a consumer. And frankly, I never thought about franchising. I simply assumed that all of those who work for various "quick" whatevers, for example, are employees of the same company. Not true. In the year 2000, in the U.S. alone, more than 2,000 companies in 75 industries will manage approximately 400,000 franchisees. "In turn, these franchisees collectively manage nearly 8 million workers, or approximately 1 out of every 16 employed persons in the U.S. economy." Hmmm. What impact has all this had on the so-called "Mom and Pop" (family-owned) business? According to Birkeland, the retail sales that flow through franchise companies is about \$1 trillion or one-third of the entire (repeat, entire) U.S. gross domestic product. The corporate parents of most major chains (e.g. hotel and motel, fast food, and donuts) own few of the local businesses which bear their "brand" name. So, who owns most of them? Why do they own them? How does it work? What's involved? And also, have these local (or perhaps regional) owners made a shrewd investment? Birkeland answers these and countless other questions, most of which I hadn't even thought to ask. For me, this book was an eye-opener in many ways beyond educating me to the extent and impact of franchising within the national economy. I was also surprised to learn the "nuts and bolts" of franchising as an ever-increasing number of people pursue the American Dream which, in essence, combines both the excitement and the terror of entrepreneurship.

Here in a single volume, Birkeland provides a wealth of information about franchise fundamentals, examines three chains (King Cleaners, Sign Masters, and Star Muffler), presents a "social profile" of franchisees, explains correlations between networks and alliances with survival, notes various franchisor "uncertainties, analyzes the nature and extent of control from various perspectives, and concludes with an Epilogue in which he observes, "The critical problem of controlling geographically dispersed workers is tractable for those franchisors who establish high levels of trust with franchisees. For those who cannot achieve that, the problem of control is a never-ending battle." Those who lose that battle experience what is, in various forms, the American Nightmare.

I rate this book so highly for two reasons. (Were I thinking about becoming a franchisee, I would have a third reason.) First, I learned a great deal about a segment of society in which I continue to be actively involved as a consumer. The information and insights Birkeland provides enable me to appreciate how important that segment is to the national economy. Second, while reading his book, I also gained a better understanding of the sociological, indeed anthropological implications of that segment, just as I did when reading Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* and Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. I highly recommend all three, especially to those who are now considering an investment in a fast food franchise.

McDonald's. Blockbuster Video. Jiffy Lube. Subway. Franchising has become an ever-present feature of the American landscape. One-third of the U.S. gross domestic product flows through franchises, and one out of every sixteen workers is employed by one. But how did franchising come to play such a dominant role in the American economy? What are the day-to-day experiences of franchisees and franchisers in the workplace? What challenges and pitfalls await them as they stake their claim to prosperity? These are just a few of the questions explored in *Franchising Dreams*, a documentary-like look into the frustrations and uncertainties that entrepreneurs face in their pursuit of the American dream.

Peter M. Birkeland worked for three years in the front-line operations of franchise units for three companies, met with CEOs and executives, and attended countless trade shows, seminars, and expositions. All this firsthand experience gave him unprecedented access to the hopes and aspirations of franchisees. His book closely traces different franchisees and follows them as their dreams of wealth and independence buckle beneath the weight of frustrating logistics and contractual technicalities. Through extensive interviews and research, Birkeland not only discovers what makes franchisees succeed or fail, he uncovers the difficulties in running a business according to someone else's system and values. Bearing witness to a market flooded with fierce competitors and dependent on the inscrutable whims of consumers, he uncovers the numerous challenges that franchisees face in making their businesses succeed.

From *Library Journal*

Birkeland, who is the CEO of his own institute as well as a professor and lecturer (at the Universities of Minnesota and Chicago, respectively), tells the story of franchising by engaging us through dialog. Though he uses pseudonyms for company names, his book is based on extensive research culled from interviews,

attendance at seminars, and participation in the day-to-day operations of three different franchises. After a brief history of the franchise system, he gets down to the nitty-gritty of this entrepreneurial endeavor. Birkeland offers a balanced perspective as he teaches us about the risks, pitfalls, and challenges for both franchisee and franchiser. In addition, the reader gets an overview of the different types of franchise systems, the components of franchise fundamentals (royalties, trademarks, and long-term contracts), social profiles of franchisees, and, for the franchiser, consideration of the question, "Who controls?" This is a useful, readable book, especially for those considering the idea of entering the franchise system for the first time. Recommended for marketing and business collections in both academic and public libraries. Bellinda Wise, Nassau Community Coll. Lib., Garden City, NY Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. "Franchising Dreams illuminates the complexity and diversity of this rapidly growing segment of small business. As this highly readable account reveals, franchises are neither a transitory phenomenon nor the death knell of the familyowned business. Instead, they represent a form of industry that is essential to our understanding of the new economy." - Robert D. Manning, author of Credit Card Nation From the Inside Flap McDonald's. Blockbuster Video. Jiffy Lube. Subway. Franchising has become an ever-present feature of the American landscape. One-third of the U.S. gross domestic product flows through franchises, and one out of every sixteen workers is employed by one. But how did franchising come to play such a dominant role in the American economy? What are the day-to-day experiences of franchisees and franchisers in the workplace? What challenges and pitfalls await them as they stake their claim to prosperity? These are just a few of the questions explored in "Franchising Dreams," a documentary-like look into the frustrations and uncertainties that entrepreneurs face in their pursuit of the American dream. Peter M. Birkeland worked for three years in the front-line operations of franchise units for three companies, met with CEOs and executives, and attended countless trade shows, seminars, and expositions. All this firsthand experience gave him unprecedented access to the hopes and aspirations of franchisees. His book closely traces different franchisees and follows them as their dreams of wealth and independence buckle beneath the weight of frustrating logistics and contractual technicalities. Through extensive interviews and research, Birkeland not only discovers what makes franchisees succeed or fail, he uncovers the difficulties in running a business according to someone else's system and values. Bearing witness to a market flooded with fierce competitors and dependent on the inscrutable whims of consumers, he uncovers the numerous challenges that franchisees face in making their businesses succeed.