

OPERATION: EXCELLENCE

By Helen Mulley | February 13, 2026

5 Imperatives for High-Performing Franchise Systems

Insight



“Great franchisors are focused on five things first: consistency, sustainability, replication, communications and culture. Get those right, and people will flock to you.”

- Michael Seid



I will never go below what I owe the franchisee and generally speaking, I will exceed it. The best franchisees say the same thing from the other side.”

One point that Michael is especially keen to clarify is that, of the five focuses mentioned earlier, ‘consistency’ is perhaps most often misunderstood. “It’s not about everything being identical,” he explains. “You wouldn’t expect the same customer in London as in Manchester, or Cambridge, or Edinburgh – they need different things. Of course we want the product to be there, and those standards to be the same, but beyond that, people can be too afraid to let their brand breathe. Training doesn’t have to be identical, support doesn’t have to be identical. Fees don’t have to be identical, obligations don’t have to be identical.”

To make all this work in practice, says Michael, it’s important to understand what agility looks like in a franchising context. “We don’t move very quickly in franchising, because we have contracts,” he explains. “That’s both the weakness and the strength of the model, because if we listen, and communicate – if we prioritise that beautiful word, ‘why’ – then we won’t make many mistakes.”

want to buy unit number two,” he points out. “So we have to come to them with knowledge of where they are at – and this is where technology, including AI, can be phenomenal, grabbing those figures and spinning them 46 different ways – and bringing the biggest ears possible, ready to listen to what the franchisee is doing and what they want. Yes, we can bring solutions, but they can’t be based on “because I said so” – and we definitely shouldn’t be waving contracts about like sticks. The franchise agreement is not a management tool; it sets the minimum standards, on both sides.

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1. Franchisee success as the priority

Top systems are unapologetically focused on unit economics. AUV targets, ROI, breakeven timing and customer count are measured and reinforced. But, you can’t just will these things to happen. Rather, success at all levels requires the right infrastructure, including field talent who can coach operators and technology that simplifies scheduling, ordering, reporting and customer acquisition. Human capital and tech tools aren’t window dressing; they are critical factors in driving franchisees toward predictable performance.

2. Support systems that actually support

Just because a franchisor has a strong business model, it doesn’t mean operational excellence is replicable. High-performing brands provide structured support through tested playbooks, field coaching, digital toolkits and integrated PR and marketing programs that improve performance, not just maintain standards.

3. Leadership and franchise accountability

Leadership sets the model; franchisees operate it. This can be a symbiotic relationship when franchise systems make accountability mutual: franchisees are responsible for running the model with discipline, while corporate provides the model and support, along with transparent reporting on franchise performance, so both sides can diagnose variances and intervene early.

4. Data-backed innovation

Improvements are tested, validated and scaled only when they improve the P&L.

5. System agility

Sharp franchisors sense change or create reasonable change with market signals, customer behaviour and operator feedback. Ultimately, this keeps franchise systems adaptive and competitive.”

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