When it comes to deciding which franchise is right for you, the choice is yours.

The Australian franchising industry is growing at a rapid pace, and with so many options for potential franchisees it is important to not only thoroughly research the industries, models and brands available, but research your own unique passion, strengths, goals and knowledge.

There are so many things to consider, from product range and support systems to supply contracts and sales projections, but the answers to the most important questions come from within.

1. What’s my passion?
When you make the decision to purchase a franchise, you are more often than not signing a long-term agreement with the brand. You will be living and breathing their values, products, mantras and vision for the future. You will probably be spending more time with this brand than your family, your friends and your partner!

That’s why it’s so important to consider your passions. Do you love the smell and taste of coffee? Coffee franchise operators are around coffee all the time, from unpacking roasted beans to operating the coffee machines and training baristas, and of course talking to customers about the blends, heritage and expertise of each cup served.

Do you enjoy being out on the road, meeting new people and visiting local events? Those who want to break the routine of the daily grind can find solace in the growing mobile franchise market. Mobile coffee van operators have regular customers that they visit every week on a prescribed route, visiting many different businesses and people in one day. They can also attend events and become an integral feature of that local community.

Are you passionate about cooking, with an interest in food, fresh ingredients and unique flavour combinations? The ‘masterchef’ effect has truly changed the Quick Service Restaurant market, with consumers now enjoying ingredients like pulled pork, kimchi and duck from their local pizza store. If you are interested in food and making delicious flavours come to life, then maybe a QSR franchise is for you.
It’s important to identify your passions early on so you can use them to find the franchise that will keep you motivated for years to come.

2. What are my strengths?
Every person has a good idea of their strengths and weaknesses, and you should be aware of both before you embark upon your franchising journey, particularly if you are purchasing a franchise with a partner.

Full training is provided for any new franchisee by the franchisor to help turn any potential weaknesses into strengths.

In fact, at Retail Food Group we have a world-class training academy on the Gold Coast where every new franchisee spends four to eight weeks learning the ropes of their new business. This initial training is where you will learn business, operational, food preparation and customer service skills.

While you will learn all the skills you will need to be successful in your business during the training period, identifying you and your partner’s strengths and weaknesses before you make the final decision might provide new insights.

The best franchise partnerships are those where each person brings something different to the business; both sets of strengths combined make an unstoppable team.

3. What do I want my business to achieve?
Some people exercise to win races; others exercise to enjoy the experience. The same sentiment applies to business. Some people open their first franchise with plans to create a multi-store empire, while others just want to do something they love every day.

It’s important to consider your own personal reasons for looking to open your own business so you can find the system that will help you achieve your goals.

Many people say they want to ‘be their own boss’ but don’t consider what kind of boss they’d like themselves to be.

If you’re the kind of boss that places importance on a strong life/work balance and set goals to spend time with family, a franchise that allows you to earn solid returns for minimal hours worked is a great option. Mobile coffee franchises primarily serve customer in the early hours of the morning, then shut down for the afternoon and weekends.

However, if you are an entrepreneur and want to be your own boss so you can be rewarded for all the hard work and dedication you put into your business, a franchise that allows for high levels of growth and expansion might be better suited to you.

Buying into a franchise is a great opportunity to carve out your own future, from the friendly local café owner to the operator of a cluster of bakeries. With proven business systems, expert advice and structured support systems in place, franchises give you the freedom to achieve your goals, whatever they may be.

4. What do I know about the industry?
Before making a long term investment in a franchise, it’s a good idea to study the industry and build your knowledge base. By finding out if the industry is in growth or decline, and identifying some of the key challenges for businesses operating in the sector, you can determine which franchisor is implementing the best strategies to combat these challenges.

The retail food franchise industry is made up of many different, smaller markets. The coffee and café market is growing rapidly in Australia with further growth projected for the sector over the coming years. It should also be noted however that Australian coffee consumers are becoming more and more sophisticated and demanding as it pertains to the standard of beverage they accept.

Therefore, this type of growth bodes well for coffee franchises who can deliver to the high standards of the Australian consumer’s discerning tastes by serving barista crafted, premium roasted blends.

For example, Michel’s Patisserie has won Roy Morgan’s Coffee Shop of the Year for four consecutive years. The brand’s premium coffee blend is roasted and

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manufactured exclusively for Michel’s Patisserie franchises in a state-of-the-art Australian roasting facility. The beans are ground fresh in each store, and each cup of coffee is made by a trained barista.

There are a wide range of franchise options available to the new franchise buyer, and this is testament to the significant strengths and benefits of the franchise business model.

From the very beginning, franchisees are supported in their business by experts in the field. Strong brand recognition cannot be underestimated in delivering immediate patronage, and access to superior buying power through a major franchisor serves to increase franchisees bottom line.

For the life of the business ongoing training, regular contact and business mentoring from the franchisor and a plethora of shared resources set franchisees up for their best opportunity for success.

It is at this point however relevant to point out that franchising does not guarantee success to a franchisee. It is however a very good starting point where the franchisor has the relevant industry experience and scale to leverage that to the franchisees benefit.

When it comes to making the decision about which franchise to buy, remember to consider your own passion, strengths, goals, and personality. You should likewise consider those very traits in the franchisor to ensure you are both compatible and complementary.

The old franchising saying still rings true; when you go into a franchise you are going into business for yourself, but not by yourself.

Retail Food Group’s Director of Franchise Gary Alford has held a variety of roles in operations, integration and expansion across franchising and coffee across his nineteen year tenure with RFG.

RFG is Australia’s largest owner, developer and manager of retail food franchise systems, with a network of c.2450 outlets spanning 46 global territories. RFG is also a significant roaster and supplier of coffee and affiliated products.

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