



Franchising Dreams: The Lure of Entrepreneurship in America

Peter M. Birkeland

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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.

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