FREE CHECKLISTS AND WORKSHEETS

# The Restoration Franchise Buyer's Kit

Everything you need to compare restoration and cleaning franchises on facts: what to read, who to call, what to ask and how to plan the money.

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From the franchise development team at Voda Cleaning & Restoration · myvodafranchise.com
General information for anyone comparing franchises, not just Voda. Not legal, tax or financial advice.

# The 10 steps to buying a franchise

Most franchise purchases follow the same path. Tick each step off as you go.

1. **Know your numbers and your role.** Write down how much cash you can invest, your net worth, and how hands-on you want to be. Item 15 of each FDD says whether the owner must run the business personally. ☐

2. **Shortlist two or three brands.** Compare the same kind of business side by side; use the scorecard on page 6. ☐

3. **Take the intro calls.** Expect a short first call and an application so both sides can see whether it's a fit. ☐

4. **Get the Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD).** Under the FTC Franchise Rule, you must receive it at least 14 calendar days before you sign a binding agreement or pay any money. ☐

5. **Read the key Items first.** Items 5, 6 and 7 (fees and investment), 11 (training and support), 12 (territory), 17 (term and transfer), 19, 20 and 21. See page 3. ☐

6. **Call current and former owners.** Item 20 lists them with contact details. Use the questions on page 4. ☐

7. **Plan the money.** Build your budget from Item 7, check Item 10 for any franchisor financing, and talk to lenders. Use page 5. ☐

8. **Get professional advice.** Have a franchise attorney review the FDD and agreements, and an accountant review your budget and funding. ☐

9. **Meet the leadership.** A Discovery Day or leadership calls let you see the team and ask your hardest questions in person. ☐

10. **Decide, then sign and train.** Only sign once every question is answered. Then comes initial training and the opening plan. ☐

> **The step most buyers skip:** calling *former* owners. Item 20 lists those who left the system in the last fiscal year. Ask them why they left and how the exit was handled.

# The 23 Items, on one page

Every FDD has the same 23 Items in the same order, set by the FTC Franchise Rule (16 CFR Part 436). ★ = read these first.

| Item | What it covers | What to look for |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | The franchisor, its parents and affiliates | The business, industry rules, required licenses or certifications |
| 2 | Business experience | Who runs the company and their background |
| 3 | Litigation | Lawsuits involving the franchisor and its leaders |
| 4 | Bankruptcy | Any bankruptcy history required to be disclosed |
| ★5 | Initial fees | The franchise fee and anything else paid before opening |
| ★6 | Other fees | Royalty, minimums, brand fund, technology, renewal and transfer fees |
| ★7 | Estimated initial investment | Every opening cost, low and high, plus funds for the first months |
| 8 | Restrictions on products and services | Required or approved suppliers |
| 9 | Franchisee's obligations | A cross-reference of your main duties |
| 10 | Financing | Whether the franchisor offers financing, and on what terms |
| ★11 | Assistance, advertising, systems and training | Training hours, opening help, marketing, required technology |
| ★12 | Territory | How it's defined, its protections and exceptions, any minimums |
| 13 | Trademarks | The brand you license and any disputes |
| 14 | Patents, copyrights and proprietary information | Manuals and confidential material |
| 15 | Participation in the business | Whether you must run it personally |
| 16 | What you may sell | Limits on products and services |
| ★17 | Renewal, termination, transfer, disputes | Term length, renewal conditions, selling the business |
| 18 | Public figures | Any celebrity endorsements |
| ★19 | Financial performance representations | Optional. If provided: which outlets, what period, and the notes |
| ★20 | Outlets and franchisee information | Openings, closures, transfers; contacts for current and former owners |
| ★21 | Financial statements | The franchisor's own finances, usually audited |
| 22 | Contracts | The agreements you would sign |
| 23 | Receipts | Pages you sign to confirm when you received the FDD |

# Questions to ask owners and the franchisor

Ask every owner the same questions so you can compare answers. Take notes on page 6.

## Current and former owners (Item 20)

- [ ] What did your first year actually look like, week to week?
- [ ] How did training compare with what you were told before signing?
- [ ] When you call the franchisor with a problem, who answers and how fast?
- [ ] Which costs were bigger or smaller than Item 7 suggested?
- [ ] How long did it take to hire and train your team?
- [ ] How do customer calls and leads reach you?
- [ ] What does the franchisor do well, and where does it fall short?
- [ ] What do you wish you'd asked before signing?
- [ ] Would you do it again?
- [ ] Former owners: why did you leave, and how was the exit handled?

## The franchisor

- [ ] Who will support me day to day after I open?
- [ ] What exactly happens in initial training, and who teaches it (Item 11)?
- [ ] Which certifications or licenses do I need, and by when (Item 1)?
- [ ] How is my territory defined, and what are the exceptions (Item 12)?
- [ ] What changed in the system in the last year, and why?
- [ ] How are ongoing fees used, and how can they change (Item 6)?
- [ ] What would make you say no to a candidate like me?
- [ ] Is there financial performance information in Item 19, and what do its notes say?

> **Red flag:** anyone offering you sales or income figures outside Item 19. Under the FTC Franchise Rule, financial performance information belongs in Item 19.

# Your cost and funding worksheet

Copy the low and high from each brand's Item 7, then write your own estimate. Plan around the high end.

| Opening cost (from Item 7) | Low | High | My estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Initial franchise fee (Item 5) | | | |
| Vehicle(s), tools and equipment | | | |
| Office or space: rent, deposits, furniture | | | |
| Software, technology and services | | | |
| Launch marketing and grand opening | | | |
| Training travel, licenses, certifications, insurance, professional fees | | | |
| Additional funds for the first months | | | |
| **Total estimated initial investment** | | | |

## How I'll fund it

| Source | Amount | Notes and questions |
|---|---|---|
| Cash and savings | | |
| SBA-backed loan (check the brand is on the SBA Franchise Directory) | | |
| 401(k) rollover (ROBS): use a qualified provider and your own tax adviser | | |
| Home equity or partners | | |
| **Total funding** (minus total investment = **gap**) | | |

> Also read Item 6 for the ongoing fees, and Item 10 to see whether the franchisor offers any financing. For one real example: Voda's estimated initial investment for one territory is $209,394 to $379,608 (2026 FDD, Item 7, as amended November 10, 2026). More: myvodafranchise.com/how-to-pay-for-a-franchise

# Your brand scorecard

Fill in one column per brand from its FDD and your calls. Every FDD uses the same 23 Items, so the rows line up.

| What to compare | Brand A | Brand B | Brand C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Services: water, fire, mold, reconstruction, cleaning (Item 1) | | | |
| Certifications and training hours (Items 1, 11) | | | |
| How customer calls and leads reach you (Item 11) | | | |
| Territory definition and exceptions (Item 12) | | | |
| Total initial investment (Item 7) | | | |
| Royalty, minimums and brand fund (Item 6) | | | |
| Term and renewal (Item 17) | | | |
| Openings vs. closures and transfers (Item 20) | | | |
| Franchisor's financial statements (Item 21) | | | |
| Item 19 provided? What do the notes say? | | | |
| What owners told me | | | |

**Comparing restoration franchises?** We'd be glad to be one of your columns. Check whether a Voda territory is open near you at **myvodafranchise.com/check-territory**, or book a 15-minute intro call at **myvodafranchise.com/contact-us**.

This kit is general information, not legal, tax or financial advice. Talk to a franchise attorney and an accountant before you invest. This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or the solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for information purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of franchises: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. If you are a resident of or want to locate a franchise in one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your state.