

strong reputation is THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

CUSTOMERS AND FRANCHISEES THROUGHOUT NEW ZEALAND RATE THE COFFEE GUY AS THE BEST



JUSTINE HUGHES HAS BEEN THE COFFEE GUY IN NEW PLYMOUTH FOR ALMOST FIVE YEARS. 'WHY GIVE UP SOMETHING I ENJOY SO MUCH?' SHE ASKS

➔ In six short years, The Coffee Guy has become one of the best-known coffee brands in New Zealand. The company's stand-out vans are a welcome sight at workplaces and events around the country, with franchisees serving fresh coffee from their mobile espresso units, as well as hot chocolate, cold drinks and snacks including biscuits and muffins. And with EFTPOS and pre-paid cards available, no-one ever has to go without their daily treat.

'That great reputation is a major benefit for anyone who buys into The Coffee Guy,' says franchisor Richard Karam. 'But an equally important measure of our success is what our existing franchisees think of us. We're proud to say that over a quarter of our franchisees have already been with us for more than four years – and we've only been franchising for six. That speaks volumes for their success and satisfaction with the business.'

Justine Hughes is coming up to her fifth anniversary as The Coffee Guy in New Plymouth, and doesn't plan on stopping any time soon. 'Why give up something I enjoy so much?' she asks. 'I don't know what else I could do that would give me this much money, allow me to be home for the kids after school and let me enjoy contact with so many people during the day.'

'Everyone knows The Coffee Guy – I even get invited to companies' Christmas parties. People say to me, "We look out of the window and see you driving up at the same time every day and there's always a big smile on your face." I think that's part of my job, to help people smile and take a little time out in a busy day.'

GET UP AND RUNNING FAST

Founded in New Zealand in 2006, The Coffee Guy has helped over 50 franchisees set up their own businesses. 'We like to think we have a pretty good understanding of what Kiwis like and what works for franchisees, too,' says Richard.

'Many of our franchisees are going into business for the first time, so we offer a range of finance options to make it easy for them to get their van up and running – the overall investment is just \$89,950 +gst. We provide full training, so franchisees can be confident of both their coffee-making skills and their ability to manage their businesses. Then, when they first start, one of our operations team goes out on the road with them to secure their core customer base, devise the plan for growth and ease them into the business.'

It's a process Justine Hughes remembers well. 'When I started, my target was to sell 90 cups of coffee a day, which seemed like a lot. The first day I sold 50, then we returned home to fine-tune my sales approach and coffee-making skills. The second day, I sold 70, with many of the

same people buying coffees again – I was building up regular customers already. The third day I sold 90 and, unbelievably, I'd got there! It all happened so fast...'

Today, Justine achieves between 100 and 160 coffees on an average day, with an extra staff member three mornings a week. 'I took her on at the start of the so-called recession. There's been no decline for me – many of those customers from the first week are still with me and my business has just gone on growing!'

THERE WHEN YOU NEED THEM

Justine has also grown the business through attending events. 'I didn't work weekends at first, but then I thought, "This is silly, I enjoy what I do so why not make the extra money?" So now I'm a regular at the rugby and I do other events, too.'

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Events represent a big opportunity for franchisees and The Coffee Guy is well known to event organisers. As a result, Justine has attended Rugby World Cup and Tri NZ triathlon events, while the company's other successes include the All Blacks Road Show, the State Ocean Swim Series and Classic Hits music tours. 'We even service corporate events, such as the launch of the iPhone,' says Richard. 'We're the only company reaching throughout the country and event organisers know they can rely on us to turn up

and produce great coffee. Of course, we also help franchisees do a very long list of local events including sports, farmers' markets, school galas and festivals.

'And we like to be there for our franchisees. Justine doesn't need us looking over her shoulder but when she was affected by the tornado that hit New Plymouth in June, we were there. It was the same in Christchurch; we worked with everyone to make sure they were OK and other franchisees from around the country helped out and donated what they could, too. That's the Kiwi spirit.'

Justine sums up her experience of The Coffee Guy in her typical forthright style. 'They got me going fast, they're there when I need them, and they're a bloody good bunch of people. What more could you want?'

The Coffee Guy has opportunities available all over the country with finance packages available for the right people. ■

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