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FRANWORTH PARTNERS WITH NFL PLAYER DREW BREES

PG. 14

**VIDEO MARKETING:
THE TOOL YOUR
BUSINESS NEEDS
TO SURVIVE**

PG. 28

**TOP MARKETING
TRENDS FOR 2020**

PG. 38



**IFA
2020
CONVENTION**
BROCHURE
PG. 57

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FRANWORTH SCORES BIG WITH NEW PARTNER DREW BREE

By Mary Hanula, IFA



From left: IFA Chair and Franworth Partner, David Barr, with NFL quarterback Drew Brees and Franworth Founder and CEO, John Rotche.



Drew Brees, David Barr and John Rotche talk Franworth, football and franchising.

The franchise industry is full of professionals that have mastered their skills through years of experience in the business sphere. What does it look like when an entrepreneur enters from a different sector of the franchise industry, but has all the criteria needed to fuel a phenomenal partnership, continuous brand management and a successful and trustworthy leadership position?

Franworth is a franchise growth equity firm that partners with brands to create innovative solutions and offer professional franchise services. When NFL quarterback Drew Brees met Franworth Founder and CEO, John Rotche, he had a mentor and future partner that was one for the playbooks. Put fellow Franworth Managing Director and Partner, David Barr into the mix and you have a winning team. Fast forward to five years later and Brees is now a Franworth partner and member of the Executive Board. I spoke with Drew about this powerful play for his business career, as well as David and John to get key insights on knowing when someone is right for your business, how to form successful brand representations and partnerships and what Franworth has in store.

Q: Drew, when did you first get into the idea of franchising? Was there a certain person or franchise that inspired you to follow the same path?

DREW: Jimmy John's was my first franchise and honestly, I reached out to a friend who works in their corporate office to find out how to get the sandwiches I loved from college to New Orleans. He said the New Orleans territory was open and said I could enjoy those sandwiches everyday if I developed the market. Becoming an entrepreneur always interested me and becoming a franchisee in 2011 was a great way to start this journey.

Q: Can you tell me about how you all initially met, as well as how this partnership came about?

DREW: I met John Rotche, founder of Franworth, through the NFL extended education program at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business approximately five years ago. I was so impressed with John's presentation to our group, I approached him about being a mentor to me in the franchising space. At the time, I was a multi-unit franchisee for Jimmy John's and was in the process of evaluating another opportunity to be on the franchisor side for Walk-Ons Bistreaux & Bar. Since then, John, David Barr and I became partners in the ownership group of TITLE Boxing Club, growing it to nearly 200 units, including international expansion. When the opportunity came to join Franworth as a partner alongside John, David and the incredible team and brands assembled within, it was an easy decision for me.

DAVID: I first met Drew while investing together in TITLE Boxing Club in 2016. Upon first meeting Drew, what most stood out to me were his values, intelligence and passion. Drew is a wonderful human being who is also incredibly smart and passionate about the endeavors in which he applies himself. After spending time with Drew, it is easy to recognize that Drew's success is not by chance. I enjoy associating myself and being around smart people with great values — usually good things happen. It is great to have Drew as a partner.

JOHN: During that first franchising event when we met, I was so impressed by Drew. He sat in the front row, took a ton of notes and asked great questions. Drew and I talked about his Jimmy John's franchise and we kept in touch. Our informal mentoring relationship evolved into him partnering




with me and the TITLE Boxing Club team, and then joining the Franworth executive board as a partner earlier this year. His education, interests and business insights coupled with his leadership qualities and a fierce competitive spirit from his years spent as a high-level athlete make him an incredible partner. Drew attacks everything he does with rigor and grit, which makes everyone around him want to perform at their best. Those qualities are exactly what I look for in fellow leaders as it encourages, motivates and holds our partners and team members accountable to perform at the highest level.

Q: Drew, what advice would you give other athletes who are thinking about going into the franchising industry?

DREW: My advice to anyone looking to get into franchising is to first find a brand that you really love. Secondly, make sure the unit economics match up with your goals and timeline. Finally, build your team with motivated individuals that can share in your growth. So, passion, economics and team are the key for entry into any business.

Q: David, what advice do you have for businesses who are looking to partner with a famous figure?

DAVID: The key word for any partnership is alignment. Alignment of values. Alignment of mission and purpose. Alignment of goals. Alignment of wants, needs and desires. With alignment, the other pieces become small. Franworth is fortunate in having Drew as a partner, as he easily aligned with Franworth's values and desire to partner and assist in the growth of emerging franchisor brands.



Q: Drew, as a professional athlete, how do you plan on using your platform to help expand Franworth's mission and message?

DREW: Playing sports at this level has certainly taught me to think strategically, lead others and use my competitive streak to push myself and my team to work hard. Those are the traits I bring to everything I do. However, I believe my experience as a multi-unit, multi-brand franchisee and franchisor will be of more value to Franworth far more than my football platform..

Q: Drew, you've been a multi-unit operator of Jimmy John's, Walk-On's Bistreaux & Bar, and a partner with TITLE Boxing Club. How did your experience and first-hand knowledge of those brands help your transition into your new role with Franworth?

DREW: Over the past eight years, I gained a solid understanding of franchise systems, processes, and sales strategies. Franworth partnered with four new boutique beauty and fitness franchise brands this year, and its rapid growth required a commitment to continuing to build a strong support team. In being part of the ownership group of other franchisors, I recognize the commitment necessary to building a great team with frequent communication to the brands franchisees. Together the franchise system is stronger.

Q: John and David, in your own words, what does Drew bring to Franworth?

DAVID: As noted above, Drew is very smart. Thus, his experience as a franchisee and as a franchisor provides him a perspective from which he can operate as part of the Executive Committee of Franworth. He is highly engaged and brings the same passion to Franworth as he does to other areas of his life.

JOHN: Drew is a multi-unit, multi-brand franchisor and franchisee, which makes him a phenomenal Executive Board member. He brings the perfect balance of franchise experience while also bringing a fresh perspective of someone who hasn't built his whole career in this industry. Admittedly at times, lifetime franchise executives can view the world myopically.



Q: What does the future of Franworth have in store?

DREW: This is my second business partnership with John and David, and I look forward to us continuing to win by growing Franworth's portfolio of brands. Franchising is an awesome way for people to fulfill their dreams of owning their own business by accessing a brand, with support systems and a community of fellow franchise owners.

I also look forward to The Lash Lounge celebrating its 100th location grand opening this month, as that is such an important milestone for a franchise brand. It's also exciting to see the potential of our newest franchise brand and for the team's on-going mentoring support of the NextGen's 2019 Social Winner, Venuste Kubwimana, and his A Water Kiosk at School initiative.

DAVID: Franworth is an exciting platform to partner with emerging franchisors, yet Franworth was just recently founded in 2015. It has been an exciting four years. We believe we have already made a difference in assisting a few brands to success, but are just as excited about the future. Recently, Franworth has partnered with a few new brands that will allow for the continued expansion of the Franworth platform.

JOHN: Franworth was founded by attracting great brands with the industry's best team and bringing Drew onboard has only reinforced the unparalleled strength of our leadership team. I have no doubt that coupled with our ongoing investments in leadership and innovation, our partnership with Drew emphasized to brand founders' and individual franchise owners' that joining Franworth provides unlimited access to the resources they need to accelerate growth.

Ultimately, I believe the true essence of a company is defined more by the people associated with it, not from any amount of marketing and messaging. 🌐



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