



## Don't Sign without the Sign .....as it pertains to FCA members

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The FCA is comprised of Franchisors, Franchisees and Suppliers, and we have heard for a few years now about “Don't Sign without the Sign”.

Whilst the effort has been directed to potential franchisees and the systems they join and the consultants they use, I ask the question: Do we practice what we preach?

Supplier meetings were conducted late last year under the guidance of the FCA Supplier Forum, chaired by FCA director Jason Gehrke, with some interesting points coming out.

Suppliers represent about one third of the FCA membership, and I would guess that the subscriptions contributed by this group are one of the larger amounts in the FCA's revenue stream. I was also happy to see a Supplier, Stephen Giles (Norton Rose), inducted into the Hall of Fame, showing what level of contribution he has made and that suppliers are valued by the sector.

Suppliers offer service and loyalty to Franchisors, and it pains me to ask if the Franchisors actually think about who they engage in some of the work they undertake? If there is no supplier member competent or capable to undertake a task, then by all means look outside. However if there is a supplier member in the field of expertise, surely they should be at least given an opportunity to quote for the project?

If a non member is deemed to be the best alternative, then surely they should be suggested to become a member of the FCA as well. At least they will then contribute, and maybe bring a new skill-set into the fold, which will give others new options to take?

Some suggestions have come out of the Supplier Forum to make it simpler to engage other FCA members, and it will rest with the group to make this happen. From a personal view (and one who attended the meeting held at the FCA national conference in Perth last year), some simple ideas are:

- Have Supplier Members identified on the FCA website;
- Encourage Supplier members to embrace the FCA's CPD (certified professional development) program, which provides individual recognition up to Fellow.
- Consider an accreditation system for Supplier firms
- Revisit the FCA Member Standards, which are published on the FCA website, and recognise that an even higher standard of conduct applies to supplier members than franchisors.
- Encourage a relationship between the FCA and the Institute of Management Consultants.

In these tight times, picking your suppliers and consultants is extremely important, and they are continually striving to provide services you can rely on.

Please practice what you preach in terms of wanting potential franchisees to consider your system as one with integrity, because you are a member of the FCA. When you engage a consultant, lawyer or other supplier, ask whether they are supporting the franchise sector by being a member of the FCA, and if not, maybe you can reconsider their engagement, or suggest they join and expand the FCA membership. **TFR**

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