



Lightbridge Academy's Chief Development Officer Shares What Makes the Brand Tick

Lightbridge Academy
11/09/16 12:17:24

Ask Phil Harvey how he'd characterize [Lightbridge Academy's](#) evolution over the past year, and he'll give you one word: accelerating.

As the brand's Chief Development Officer since January 2016, Harvey has watched Lightbridge Academy grow into the leading early childhood education child care and development center that it is today. As the Chief Development Officer, he's responsible for inspiring and leading a talented team of development and service professionals to push for system growth and new openings.

Since [Lightbridge Academy](#) launched a franchise opportunity in 2011, the brand has matured from a single location in Iselin, New Jersey, to over 80 child care centers that are either open or in development. Now, with plans to grow to nearly 100 locations across the northeast region, Harvey is confident that Lightbridge Academy will make that goal a reality.

As 2016 comes to an end, 1851 Magazine spoke with Harvey to learn more about Lightbridge Academy's most important milestones and hear what exciting plans are on the horizon in 2017.

How would you describe Lightbridge Academy's growth during 2016? What were some of the

most important milestones that the brand celebrated?

Our growth is accelerating on many fronts—from the number of locations we’re opening and the number of new markets we’re entering, to the number of development partners who want to work with us and the increasing size of our pipeline for future openings.

One of the biggest milestones that comes to mind from this year, is the fact that Lightbridge Academy has now entered into new territories. As a brand that got its start in New Jersey, we’re proud to see development in untapped markets like Pennsylvania, Virginia, Long Island and the five boroughs in New York City. It tells us that child care is in high demand in these communities, and we’re excited to help meet that growing demand.

What has been fueling Lightbridge’s growth?

The success of our existing operations shows that we’re growing in a very strategic and sustainable way. Our franchisees tell us time and time again about the incredibly positive experience they’ve had working with Lightbridge Academy, which also tells us that we’re building off of a very strong foundation with a concept that simply works.

Identifying prime locations is a key to a franchise’s success but it is also a challenge for many franchise systems. We have worked very hard to create strong partnerships with developers and brokers to secure quality sites. The prototype we created is well conceived and functionally effective. But we’re also quite flexible in the different types of sites that we consider and approach each market differently. That being said, a parent could enter a center in Long Island and then visit one in Pennsylvania, and upon entering the building, they would immediately recognize that they’re in a Lightbridge Academy. Even though the two sites could be dramatically different in location and size. One could be a new prototype that exists as a standalone in a suburban market, while the other might be in a more dense urban setting. We adapt ourselves efficiently and cost-effectively to markets so we can best meet the needs of the community and the owners.

What makes franchising with Lightbridge so unique?

It all starts with the fact that we make every business decision based on our core values—and consider all those within our *Circle of Care* when making any major business decision. This culture of care permeates every facet of our company—from how we look at a market to how we support our existing franchisees and select new ones, it is the thread that binds us together and fuels our continued growth.

We firmly believe that our experience and passion for this industry, and all of the families that we serve, is something that is shared. So when we have the opportunity to partner with people seeking an entrepreneurial opportunity, we know they will also share our passion for supporting the lives of working parents and also for the education and care of children. When a franchisee embodies this, we have the beginnings of a successful long-term relationship.

We also value transparency and clarity on all sides. Whether we’re talking with franchisees, developers, municipal planning boards or community organizations, it always results in very sincere and genuine outcomes. We make ourselves as easy to understand as possible.

How do you see the company expanding in 2017?

At Lightbridge Franchise Company, we look forward to continued, healthy growth and center openings. We want to increase our density in the markets we have already entered, while at the same time expanding our presence into new markets where the need for our services are in great demand.

What role do you see Lightbridge Academy playing in the child care industry in the years to come?

Lightbridge Academy will continue to be innovators in educational child care. You can expect us to change how consumers view child care by providing working families with the services and solutions they need to balance work and life which will enable them to thrive! With every new franchise that opens, the bar will continue to be raised in the child care industry.