



# How Lightbridge Academy Founder and CEO, Guy Falzarano, Tapped into His Experience as a Franchisee to Create an Unrivaled Support System

Lightbridge Academy

07/19/17 10:58:41

There's a lot that goes into getting a business off the ground and ensuring its success in the long run. From financial investments and construction to marketing and creating a relationship with consumers, opening a child care center is not child's play. That's why aspiring business owners turn to franchise concepts like [Lightbridge Academy](#)—by working alongside an established brand with a proven model, entrepreneurs are granted strong competitive advantages. However, when it comes to franchisee support, not all brands are created equal.

[Lightbridge Academy](#) founder and CEO, Guy Falzarano, learned the hard way when he became a franchisee himself. Before he decided to raise the bar in the child care industry, Falzarano was a local owner with another brand in a different industry. But as soon as he signed his franchise agreement, he realized that his expectations weren't being met.

Instead of receiving hands-on support and guidance, Falzarano was handed a sheet of paper with a contact list of the brand's vendors. He was instructed to call them to start building his business. Things didn't get

any easier when it came time to select a location—Falzarano had a hard time getting in touch with the brand's real estate team and was often told that his locations were infringing on someone else's territory. And even when he was two days away from opening, Falzarano was told by the franchise operations team that he needed to change his pricing and overall business model in order to turn a profit.

Even as an experienced business person, it was extremely frustrating and he knew that a lot of the obstacles he faced could be avoided with more guidance and a stronger support system. However, it was this experience that fueled his motivation to create a franchise system in which franchisees could thrive. So when he franchised his company, Lightbridge Academy, he knew from day one, the training and guidance programs needed to be in place.

"I made a decision to treat my franchisees differently. Franchise prospects spend the day our leadership team when they come in for Discovery Day to learn about the franchise opportunity. In turn, we get to interact with them and determine if they will be a fit within our culture and be capable of creating a Circle of Care within their own local franchise. We want to be there for our franchisees every step of the way and that means providing an unmatched level of support," said Falzarano. "I know first-hand how difficult it can be to get a business off the ground. But by guiding our franchisees through the process, we help to ensure they're positioned for success from the very beginning. Ultimately the same customer service that we provide to them is the same supportive environment they will need to create in their child care centers every day."

Today, 20 years after Lightbridge Academy first opened its doors as a family business, the brand is just as committed to providing strong support to their entire franchise family. The first thing that happens when a franchisee signs their agreement they're connected with the vice president of area development. Candidates are in direct communication with Lightbridge Academy's leadership team from the time they sign to the time they open—the brand covers everything from real estate and marketing and education training to construction and general operations support.

But Lightbridge Academy's strong support system doesn't end when a franchisee officially launches their location. The brand's highly experienced business coaches are responsible for delivering continued support and guidance throughout the lifespan of the franchise.

"What makes Lightbridge Academy so unique is our Circle of Care philosophy. By placing equal weight on the needs of everyone in a child's life, from their parents and families to teachers and center owners, we're going above and beyond to ensure that our standards for excellence are consistently upheld. And that absolutely extends to all of our franchisees," said Brenda Febbo, Lightbridge Academy's chief marketing officer. "We know that our success as a franchisor depends on their success. It's not a responsibility that we take lightly."

With 27 centers currently operational and dozens more in different stages of development, it's clear that Lightbridge Academy's strong support system is resonating with its franchisees. As the brand continues to expand, Falzarano says that its commitment to franchisee support will remain top of mind.

"We make it our mission to live out our core values and lead by example," said Falzarano. "I'm here for the long haul. I want Lightbridge Academy to be a business spanning generations. And there's no doubt in my mind that treating people with respect and giving our franchisees the best possible support along the way is a key to making that happen."