The franchising industry enters 2016 after a solid year during which member businesses added workers and expanded sales faster than the overall economy. According to the International Franchising Association (IFA), total franchise employment rose 2.9 percent in 2015, compared to a 2.4 growth in private, non-farm employment. Likewise, the gross domestic product of the franchise sector was forecast to increase 5.2 percent to $521 billion, compared to U.S. GDP of 3.3 percent. Individual franchisers anticipate that another good year is coming.

“Looking into 2016, we’ve never been more excited,” says Tom Bissmeyer, co-founder of iTrip Vacations, a Nashville-based franchiser of vacation rental businesses. “We’ve seen double-digit growth this year and project double-digit growth next year.” In 2016, iTrip plans call for adding 20 U.S. and Canada territories to the 100 destinations it already serves.

One reason for Bissmeyer’s optimism is the opportunity’s appeal to former corporate executives looking for second careers that will allow them to leverage their business skills while also living in world-class destination communities. “We continue to see an ample supply of those individuals,” Bissmeyer says.

iTrip franchisees have a national business supporting them in a marketplace dominated by small local businesses. Other big vacation rental firms, such as HomeAway and Airbnb, help vacationers book lodging, Bissmeyer explains, while iTrip helps owners of vacation properties book and manage the homes. Among sophisticated tools iTrip offers owners are mobile apps that can be customized with aides such as video tutorials on using audio-visual remote controls in an individual property.

iTrip also brings to the fray marketing technologies and capabilities that help franchisees manage their workload while competing effectively. For example, all of the company’s properties can be booked online, Bissmeyer says. iTrip markets properties by a variety of means, including creating and distributing customized blog posts tying to events at individual destinations. “We’ve offloaded a lot of the marketing responsibilities both for driving the traffic and getting property owners under management from the local franchisees,” Bissmeyer says.

Since Bojangles’ Restaurants started in 1977, the Charlotte-based chain has expanded to more than 267 corporate locations and more than 379 franchised locations. The eateries continue to rely on Bojangles’ core menu items of specially seasoned chicken, freshly made buttermilk biscuits, and Southern-flavored side dishes.

The centerpiece chicken dishes are built around fresh, never-frozen chicken that is marinated for 12 hours and then hand breaded. Each Bojangles’ restaurant bakes made-from-scratch biscuits, every 20 minutes, all day long. The steeped iced tea appeals to fans of homemade flavor. And the company also offers healthy menu choices including Roasted Chicken Bites, fat-free green beans, grilled chicken sandwiches, wraps, and salads.

Bojangles’ has developed a devoted following of customers who relish its wholesome, high-quality, made-from-scratch fare. And while many of its competitors in the quick-service dining industry are initiating efforts to tap the breakfast dining market, Bojangles’ already has a well-developed breakfast business. Breakfast at some locations may exceed 40 percent of sales, according to the company.

Each Bojangles’ is designed to be a fun, festive restaurant and offer fast, friendly service. Most restaurants are freestanding, but the concept has been adapted to sports venues, convention centers, airports, college campuses, and other spaces. Franchisees benefit from system-wide volume purchasing and get assistance from franchise business consultants supplied by the parent organization.

SealMaster, based in Sandusky, Ohio, is a manufacturing and sales franchise that distributes a comprehensive line of pavement maintenance products and equipment. The
How iTrip is changing the vacation rental industry

According to a 2015 study, entrepreneurship ventures grew in 32 of 50 U.S. states, proving that the American Dream is alive and well. Are you a part of it? If not, meet iTrip Vacations.

It all began in 2008 when iTrip’s President, Steve Presley, left a high-paying position at a Fortune 500 company to pursue something more than long work weeks and an office environment. It was time to lose the suit.

With more than a decade of experience in vacation rental and property management, Steve searched for a vacation property manager that would deliver superior occupancy rates – while also managing the everyday operations – so guests could enjoy a world-class experience. There was one problem: It didn’t exist.

So, Steve assembled a team and they created it: A hands-on opportunity that paired an in-market operator with the latest digital marketing strategies and the efficiencies of online operating processes. “I wanted to be part of the inevitable transformation of the vacation rental industry from its fragmented state to the consolidation of the industry,” Presley said. He transformed an industry he loved and wanted to help others succeed. iTrip became a pioneer in the travel industry, as one of the first to offer dynamic pricing and online bookings, and they revolutionized how people vacation and how they manage their properties.

And the model has worked. iTrip has celebrated rapid growth, reaching $50 million in 2015 with thousands of properties coast to coast.

Vacation property owners switch to iTrip Vacations to gain a competitive advantage that comes with higher levels of online traffic viewing their properties and converting into rentals. Coupled with software automation, a mobile app that enhances the travel experience and the ability to work with a local manager, iTrip offers a unique added-value that makes the move seamless.

As one of the leaders in the North American vacation rental and property management marketplace, iTrip offers a unique opportunity to those looking to own their own business, work from home, and receive support from a trusted industry partner.

“Repositioning out of corporate America to pursue my own business with iTrip Vacations was the best professional decision of my life. Knowing that I am in control of my financial future is priceless.”

- Dan W., Orlando

iTrip franchisees control their business and own an exclusive territory, but they aren’t in it alone. They benefit from using iTrip’s state-of-the-art technology and proven systems.

Time for a change? It’s time to love where you work and live. It’s time to take control of your future with an iTrip Vacations franchise.

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company is a one-stop source for pavement maintenance professionals, serving local, state, and federal transportation agencies as well as private sector customers such as airports, shopping centers, and property managers.

SealMaster has two company-owned and 34 franchised territories. Franchisees’ protected territories can be as large as entire states. “We have about 14 opportunities currently open and some resales as well,” says Franchise Director Rick Simon. “Pavement preservation is key to maintaining sustainability of paved assets, which are very cost-effective to maintain. Pavement preservation is much less expensive than pavement replacement, so the market potential is huge.”

Dale Carnegie Training franchises help other firms using time-tested human relations principles developed by founder Dale Carnegie. “The work that we do through our training and coaching solutions create inspired, confident, and engaged employees,” explains Senior Vice President Jean-Louis Van Doorne. New York-based Dale Carnegie Training has more than 200 locations in more than 90 countries and is targeting China, Africa, Germany, France, and portions of the U.S. for growth.

HomeVestors of America is a Dallas-based real estate investment business franchiser well-known for its “We Buy Ugly Houses” trademark. Franchisees benefit greatly from associating with HomeVestors’ established brand, says Co-President David Hicks. “The toughest part of being a real estate investor is finding a house to invest in,” he says. “And that's where HomeVestors is the best.” The company also provides mentors and other help to its more than 640 franchises in nearly every state and plans to add as many as 150 franchises in 2016.

Franchising employment remained strong through most of 2015 in every key sector, including restaurants, auto parts and dealers, food retailers, business services, accommodations, and real estate, according to ADP’s National Franchise Report. If these franchisers are any indication, 2016 will look much the same.
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