

Frank Sutherland, Autosmart Franchisee, Aberdeen

Frank was 45 when he joined us and had been working as a regional Operations Manager for Co-op stores, with 20 stores in his area. Whilst working for the Co-op, he felt stuck in a rut – earning a good salary but with 10 other colleagues at the same level all waiting for their boss to leave in order to get promoted. Frank had reached a position where he couldn't progress any further and was frustrated that he couldn't achieve any more.

Having been made redundant in March 2006, Frank realised this was a great opportunity and started to look around for a business that would give him the autonomy and income he was searching for.

“I wanted to escape the red-tape – I was so frustrated by not being able to make a decision without consulting several different people. I was just looking for my independence”.

Frank considered several franchises before choosing Autosmart. A proven business concept and a great reputation ensured that Autosmart quickly became his number one choice.

“I looked at lots of different franchise concepts, but none came close to Autosmart – I think there was something about it that appealed to me. And the fact that they were prepared to assist me with the funding made me realise how confident they were in their product. The figures all stacked up and I thought, yeah, this is achievable. I spoke with my local HSBC manager and with their support to get funding in place I was all ready to start.”

Frank joined the Autosmart network in October 2006 and hasn't looked back since. He bought a business that was just over break-even and has doubled the sales in 16 months since he started – and he sees no reason why he can't grow by the same amount again.

“I have never worked as hard as I do at the moment, but I have also never been this focused and driven – this is an incredibly exciting period for me. Going to work gives me 100% satisfaction and every day is a challenge. I get home at the end of the day feeling that I have really achieved something. Financially I am in control of my earning potential and knowing that there is no limit is something I find exhilarating.”

Frank claims that the biggest impact on his business - that convinced him he had made the right decision - was the training and support he received whilst getting started and during his first few months on the road.

“The support I have received from Martin (Frank's support manager) has been fantastic - he has a vast pool of knowledge and brings a fresh perspective to the business. I love to bounce ideas off Martin and will often just call him up for a bit of a chat as well. Without Martin I would never have got my sales past £20k a month as every time I have reached a plateau, he has always been there to motivate me”.

This may be a bit modest on Frank's part – we know that his hard work and dedication has been a big driver behind his fantastic business development.

As for his home life, Frank says he probably works longer hours than he did five years ago however he is now in total control of when he will be spending time with his family. In his old job, staff phoning him and asking him to come into work would interrupt his days off and holidays – this doesn't happen now. Although he works long hours in the week he always has weekends off and he can now make more of his time with the family.

“Being in control of my future means I am happier than I have ever been. There's very little else to say – this has been, without a doubt, the best decision I have ever made”.