FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is *Renaissance* **EXECUTIVE FORUMS**?

Renaissance **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** is an international company that provides business solutions to the top executives of mid-sized businesses.

Renaissance **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** took form when Founders Ed Bastarache (CEO) and Jim Fontanella (President) incorporated in La Jolla, California in April of 1994. The decision was made to build the business utilizing the "franchise business model" and the firm was quickly registered in all 50 states and in Canada. Recruitment of Partners commenced in August of 1994 and the first Partner training class graduated in early 1995. International expansion began in 2000 with the addition of an International Business Partner in Brazil.

Today, **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** has nearly 50 Domestic and International Business Partners in 22 states and in 9 countries. We are not seeking to establish thousands or even hundreds of franchise units in North America – we are in the business of attracting, training and supporting a select group of highly qualified partners and helping them grow their businesses. We operate more like a professional services firm not like a franchise system that measures success by the number of franchise units sold. When fully developed, the system will have 80 to 100 field business partners in North America and an appropriately similar number in other international markets.

EXECUTIVE FORUMS has been an active member of the International Franchise Association since 1994.

2. What do you mean by business solutions?

Simply stated, it is a system of programs, processes and tools designed to help chief executives of mid-sized businesses take their companies from where they are now to where they want them to be.

Top executives in mid-sized businesses can have a difficult time keeping up with all that they need to know to effectively operate and grow their businesses. Day-to-day pressures can keep them from the "important, but not urgent" part of running the operation and planning for the future. They may have the desire to learn more, to get new ideas, to get feedback from trusted advisors – they often don't have the time or the resources.

When the chief executive cannot trust his employees to give him an honest opinion, cannot afford to hire an outside consultant, or cannot take the time for 8-week long management training programs, where can they go for help?

That is where Executive Forums comes in. Our program provides these business leaders with the chance to spend concentrated, focused time in a safe high quality sharing and learning environment. Think of it as an ongoing M.B.A. program taught by experts and street smart executives with real world knowledge and experience.

The cornerstone of our service is a half-day monthly meeting of small (8-12) groups of business leaders that encompasses group learning, in-depth review and planning, and roundtable discussion. This "peer advisory board" concept works by leveraging the experience and expertise of the members of the group to the benefit of the individual. Knowledge and information is exchanged between those who have it and those who need it. This working group, which we call a Forum, serves as the platform for advice, feedback, ideas and accountability.

We've taken the peer advisory board concept and broadened it by adding complimentary services, such as coaching and personal planning. These three elements – monthly Forum meeting, quarterly coaching sessions and an annual two-day personal planning retreat (which we call Strategies for Success) – comprise the basic service that all of our members participate in.

Partners also have the option of offering additional services to their members, including a Management Team Program (focusing on implementation), diagnostic tools (identifying areas for improvement), training programs, seminars, and more. The result is that we offer top level executives a program that is a multi-faceted and powerful business improvement process.

All of our services are designed to develop and prepare the chief executive to effectively meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that are part of running a mid-sized business.

3. What do I do as an **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** Business Partner?

You will be involved in a variety of functions as you build and operate your business, including:

- Trainer, Facilitator, Consultant & Coach
- Business Manager
- Marketer & Salesperson

Once you get your Forum groups up and running you will be working individually and collectively with the members. In this regard, the majority of your time will be leveraged in group sessions, primarily in the monthly half-day Forum meetings.

You will plan, prepare and facilitate this meeting (using the format, templates and tools that we provide). Your main role will be as a facilitator making certain that all of the elements of the meeting receive appropriate focus and that all of the members actively participate.

Quarterly coaching sessions with individual members places you in the role of consultant / coach. Remember, you are not the “answer person” in most instances. Instead, your role in this activity is to ensure that the member is getting full benefit from participation in our process and to help them accelerate meaningful changes in their business and personal lives.

The annual two-day planning retreat, Strategies for Success, brings you into the training role. You will lead your members through a curriculum that encompasses learning through instruction, group and individual exercises. This process has proven to be an extremely powerful element in our program.

Beyond your work with members and prospects, remember that you are running your own business that you have to manage. We provide a lot of time saving tools and support via templates, checklists and processes which are intended to save you time in this area. We want you to focus on your primary role – to create and keep advocate Forum members.

Members must be recruited before you can provide the above-mentioned services. Therefore, initially, you will spend much of your time in the first year marketing to prospective Forum members. This typically involves a one-on-one meeting with interested prospects where you can assess the needs of the executive and provide relevant information on the value of Forum participation.

4. Who should become an **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** Business Partner?

We are looking for people that possess a combination of experience, skills and interests.

You want an opportunity that provides you with:

- The freedom and flexibility that business ownership entails
- The ability to leverage the experience and expertise you gained in the business world in your new venture
- Control of your own destiny, both from a financial and a calendar aspect
- A respected business environment working with forward-thinking top executives
- An opportunity for continuous learning, a chance to stay on top of the latest trends and innovations in business thinking
- The ability to “make a difference” in the people that you touch and the businesses that they run

You do not want to “reinvent the wheel” to get into business, but prefer operating with systems, processes and procedures that have a proven track record. You want support when you need it but also the flexibility to use your best judgment on how your business should be run.

From a practical standpoint, you need to possess some skills that you will need to successfully operate your business. You will have had experience as a senior level executive or business owner (sales and marketing experience is a plus but not a necessity). You will have good communication skills and the ability to confidently tell our story to top executives. You will have a high integrity level and a strong work ethic.

5. Why should I invest in a business opportunity?

You want to own your business, but you don’t want to build one from scratch. You want to be involved in a system that has proven processes, programs and tools. You appreciate the ongoing support and training that a proven franchise operation can provide. In short, you want to work on your own but not by yourself.

6. Why should I invest in a *Renaissance* **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** Franchise?

You are going to make a significant investment of both time and money in your future and you want to make sure you make the right decision.

You want a business that allows you to build it based on your goals and desires. One that allows you the opportunity to make a comfortable income and yet have time for the things that you really want to do. You want to join an organization with a strong track record of success and an impeccable reputation of quality and ethical standards. You want to be part of an organization that is constantly updating and upgrading its programs and training to equip you for maximum performance. You want to join a group of Partners that have impressive business credentials and a history of collaboration to benefit each other. You want to belong to an organization whose financial performance is directly tied to your individual success. You want a business that has the potential for equity value or passive income sometime in the future.

7. How much do I need to invest up front?

Your initial investment will include a franchise fee (currently $24,500) and a fee for training and support materials (currently $15,000). This will provide everything you need to get your business up and running. You will receive customized stationery (letterhead and envelopes), business cards, brochures and promotional materials. You also receive 7 days of Initial Certification Training at our La Jolla headquarters. During training you will learn how to effectively sell the service, facilitate meetings, tap into support systems, and other information that will prepare you to get started quickly.

Please keep in mind that you will need to have additional funds in reserve for some minor start-up costs and living expenses while you work to get your business going.

8. What do I get for my money?

You get the rights to operate the *Renaissance* **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** business in a protected geographic area. You will get the tools and the training to start building your business immediately. You will get ongoing training and support, both formally through headquarters and informally through other Partners, to share ideas, successes and challenges.

In short – you will get a turn-key system that has been proven and refined through 11 years of experience.

9. What kind of training do I receive?

You will attend an Initial Certification Training session at our headquarters in La Jolla. This is a 7-day training session scheduled over 9 calendar days, typically Tuesday of week 1 through Wednesday of week 2. This comprehensive course is designed to give you all the information and training that you need to get up and running as quickly as possible. Areas covered will include member development, forum operations, business planning, database management, facilitation techniques, internal operations, reporting and more. The goal is to get you comfortable and confident in returning to your local market ready to begin contacting prospective members.

A few weeks after Initial Certification Training you will be visited in your market by an expert from headquarters. They will make prospect calls with you to make certain that you are on course and effective with your presentation. They will also review your office and meeting arrangements and help with any operational issues you might have.

Prior to your first Forum meeting, you will receive additional training from headquarters as a refresher on the content and format of that first meeting.

10. What level of on-going training do I get?

Upon completion of Initial Certification Training you will be placed in a TeleForum with several other Partners. This Teleforum will be moderated by headquarters for the first couple of months, with the intent that it will be continued by the participants as an ongoing support tool.

We offer two ongoing training opportunities a year with our Spring Business Meeting and our Fall Business and Recognition Meeting. Both offer sessions designed to enhance the knowledge and productivity of our Partners.

Training is also available when new programs and processes are introduced. These can take the form of teleforums or additional sessions at the Fall Business and Recognition meeting.

11. What level of support do I get?

We provide billing and collection services to members for our Partners as a complimentary service. We also find and arrange for Resource Speakers for your meetings, with appropriate lead time, is also free to Franchisees. We provide public relations services and an electronic newsletter Stay in Touch program for prospective members, all no cost services provided by us. We maintain an active Partner Intranet that allows access to a complete library of documents, tools and presentations as well as hosting a Partner Chat Board to share best practices and discuss issues and opportunities. Our administrative staff helps create and produce presentations and materials that will introduce new members to your Forum groups. Finally, a team of professional assistants provides marketing services in the form of scheduling prospect meetings for you.

12. How do I make money as an Executive Forums Partner?

Your main revenue stream will be through dues paid by your Forum Members, either quarterly or annually in advance. Remember that we do the billing and collection for you. You also have the option of providing other services to your members for additional fees and dues, including advanced membership levels, diagnostic tools, key executive groups, training programs, planning sessions and more.

13. Do I need a consulting or coaching background?

No. A good knowledge of business and business principles as evidence by experience at a senior level management position is a requirement for our system, but a coaching or consulting background is not. We will train you on how to effectively coach your members to receive maximum benefit from their participation in our service.

14. Who will be my target clients?

We know from experience that any business in any category can benefit from participation in our program. We also know that many of these businesses are not top prospects for our service due to limited resources of both time and money. Therefore we focus on businesses of the appropriate size, as measured both by number of employees and annual revenue, in the most likely business categories.

We do this by qualifying the database through a series of filters. The result is that the database we provide you to get started will likely represent about 8% of the businesses in the area. This 8%, however, are those businesses that are the most likely to be receptive and able to take advantage of the service that you offer.

15. How will I get leads and sales?

Very few people like to make cold sales calls, and we find that our Partners are no different. That's why we developed a unique marketing process to assist our Partners in new Member recruitment.

Here's how it works. We provide a database of businesses in your geographic territory (see above) that have been screened on the basis of annual revenue, number of employees, and business classification. You then take this database, build a prioritized list based on whatever you feel you want to target (bigger companies, geographically concentrated, etc.), and then that list is sent to our Marketing Support Center in La Jolla. Our full-time professional staff makes telephone calls to these top executives with the goal of setting up a one-on-one meeting between that top executive and you. You never have to make a cold call unless you wish to.

During that one-on-one meeting you provide an overview of our service, ask questions to learn more about the needs and goals of the top executive’s business, and position membership in a Forum group as a possible solution to get their business to where they would like it to be. The next step is to set-up an enrollment meeting so that you can position them in the most appropriate Forum group for them. Once they begin attending the Forum meetings we will initiate the billing process for you.

16. Why will top executives enroll in the service?

Peer advisory groups have been part of the business process for decades. Such American business icons as Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and William Wrigley all participated in peer groups in their day. They understood that collaboration toward a common purpose is a powerful force in moving business forward.

Our Forum groups offer top executives a safe harbor to open themselves up to a learning and problem solving experience. They come to get objective feedback and direction from a group of trusted advisors, their peers. They come to tap into the experience and expertise of a group of street smart professionals whose knowledge is born of experience rather than academic theory. They come to stay current and knowledgeable on business topics that are important to their business. They use the group as a sounding board to test new ideas and direction for their business. They come to escape the feeling that they have no one that they can turn to and trust to provide truly objective feedback and support.

17. Is there any competition?

There are some organizations that are similar to us that are active in some of the markets we serve. We believe that competition is a positive in that it helps raise the awareness of the peer advisory board process and the benefits of participation. Our prospects rarely are in a position to choose one of us over the other, as very few are aware that peer advisory boards exist.

Our true competition is lack of awareness and understanding of what our service is and how it can benefit top executives. That is where you make the difference. By meeting with potential members, you have the opportunity to describe our process and to point to specific benefits of participation. This important step solves the awareness and understanding issues and positions the Forum process as a ready answer to the issues and challenges facing top executives.

18. What are the keys to my success as a Partner?

You need to have the appropriate experience as a senior level executive or as a business owner. Beyond that, you need a professional demeanor and excellent communication skills. You need to be comfortable presenting to and working with people who run businesses. You need to be able to sell yourself and effectively position member services. You should have a strong interest in mentoring and coaching other people. You must possess a strong work ethic and a willingness to take responsibility for your own success. You must be able to facilitate a group of people without dominating the discussion.

Having said that, our most successful Partners are not necessarily those with the most impressive business backgrounds or educational credentials. Our successful franchisees share common elements that are a powerful formula for achievement – a strong work ethic, the assumption of full responsibility for results, a passion for the business and the ability to convey enthusiasm. If you have those traits you are well on your way to succeeding as an **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** Partner.

19. Will this business work in my area?

Yes. Our process is not geographic nor is it industry dependent. We will develop your protected geographic territory so that you have a prospect base large enough to build as big a business as you desire.

20. How many hours will I work … and should I employ anyone?

With a *Renaissance* **EXECUTIVE FORUMS** you have the freedom to choose the lifestyle that you wish while engaging in a stimulating professional environment running your own business. That means you can work the hours that you wish, when you wish. If you wish to get a quick start and build a large business with several Forum groups you are going to put in the hours necessary to do so. If you wish to establish a couple of groups and time is not of the essence, you can take a more leisurely tact. The point is that the decision is up to you.

In terms of employees, most of our Partners run their business by themselves with no sales, facilitation or administrative assistance. We make that as easy as possible by providing you with a powerful contact management program that integrates with Microsoft Office. We also provide virtually all of the letter templates, meeting templates, checklists and other tools you will need to efficiently run your business. If you have a moderate degree of business literacy these tools will be simple to use and great time-savers.

Some of our Partners have built their business beyond their physical capability to provide the member services by themselves. They have resolved this issue (and still continued to grow) through the use of part-time administrative aids and facilitators, all on a contract (1099) basis.

21. Can I work at home?

Yes. In fact, most of our Partners work out of a home office. It is important that you have a separate area of your home for use specifically as a business office, with the requisite quiet and solitude. We require that you do have a business address other than your home address. This is often accommodated by an “identity” or virtual office arrangement with an executive suite. The virtual office program provides a business address, a rollover phone number for when your home business line is busy or unattended, and conference room facilities for your Forum meetings. Some Partners chose to work from an office outside their home. The decision is yours to make.

22. What is my territory?

Your territory will be precisely defined by zip codes in your business agreement. You have exclusive rights to market and acquire members whose businesses are located in those zip codes.

23. What are the on-going fees and royalties?

Wouldn’t you want to be part of a business whose goals match your goals? Whose success is dependent on your success?

That’s our philosophy as well. Our business model and revenue stream is totally dependent on your success. In other words, we make money when you make money.

We receive a royalty of 20% of all fees collected from your members. The majority of this revenue will be member dues which we will bill and collect for you quarterly or annually in advance. There may also be revenue generated by you for diagnostic tools, seminars and training, additional coaching and consulting – these are also subject to the royalty arrangement. Any income or revenue produced outside of the member base that does not involve tools and resources provided by us will not be subject to royalty.

There are fees for some of the curriculums and services that we provide, but these are all on a per use basis. If you do not avail yourself of these you do not pay. You will undoubtedly wish to take advantage of the Strategies for Success two-day planning seminar, for which there is a small annual charge and fees for participant materials and leaders' guides.

24. What contracts do I have to sign?

In the United States and Canada the binding legal document is called the Franchise Agreement. You can preview this as well as learn more about franchisor and Franchisee obligations in a document known as the "UFOC", which stands for the Uniform Franchise Offering Circular. International Business Partners (IBP) will be required to sign a similar document call an International Business Agreement.

25. What is the Term of the Contract?

The term of the Franchise Agreement is 10 years. You have the right to renew the agreement provided that you have conducted your business in compliance with the terms of the original agreement and you are willing to sign the Franchise Agreement in effect at the time of renewal. There is a small renewal fee (currently $3,000).

26. Are There Guarantees?

No. We are providing you with a proven business model and the tools and training to start your business. As with any business, your success is up to you. We will train, prepare and support you, but you are the one that has to make it happen. This can be a great business for people who have a strong desire to build a business based on a framework and template that has proven successful for many people in the past. But your success will really depend upon you.

27. How Do I Express Interest?

Contact Shawna Nolan at (858) 551-6600 or via e-mail at Shawna@ExecutiveForums.com. She will schedule a one-on-one phone interview with you to discuss your qualifications and to answer any questions you might have. The next step is for you to complete a Confidential Qualification and Application form that will be provided to you. You will then be contacted by us to discuss next steps in the process.