

First and foremost; she wasn't born an Entrepreneur, she was blessed with common sense and a desire to help people and see them succeed...

It was winter, 1988 when Michelle Lea learned the importance of health and physical well-being. While stopped at a traffic light waiting for it to turn green; an out-of-control pickup truck driven by a drunk driver ran head-on into the car she was riding in. With her parents in the front seat and Michelle in the back, she was thrown around like a rag doll. The cars back then weren't required to have full chest seatbelts in the back so wearing them (the lap type) was an option and not the law. As you can imagine, the accident was dreadful but through the grace of God everyone walked away from it. Her parents suffered only a few contusions. Fortunately for Michelle she experienced only whip-lash, a head and a knee injury. Looking at the totaled car would make anyone go to church.

Michelle tried various forms of therapy for almost a year after when she decided to get her first massage. She knew she needed something natural and get away from the pain medications and other treatments that were "masking" the problem but not addressing the issue.

Her first massage was very nerve-wracking because back then it didn't have the positive reinforcements it has today. She was afraid of what to expect, but when she walked into her future mentor's office, her fears were erased. She explains that within the first 5 minutes she was sold. She knew this treatment was for her and this was the medicine of the future. She thought "Why don't more people do this and why are folks spinning their wheels in conventional therapy when this is here?" After that day she decided to learn as much as she could about the alternative healthcare industry and began taking classes in herbalism and massage. She studied, interviewed people, read books and lectures and began dedicating her career to the industry.

Michelle had a 12 year back-ground with the Department of Defense and walked away from it knowing as she says "It's not what I want to be when I grow up". She jokingly remarks about how working for a terrible boss was the best thing that ever happened to her. It gave her the confidence to pursue her dream because she knew she needed to help people. When she went to work for the government she often wondered "How am I making a difference?" When she goes to work at her clinic, she *knows* she is making a difference. Her clients appreciate her efforts and she gets a charge out of helping people. She knows when folks come to her office she's helping them. She knows they appreciate, enjoy and look forward to the experience.

Michelle decided to take her office to the next level and bring on more therapists in 2001. She couldn't keep up with demand; it was if the dam broke and she didn't have enough hours in the day to help people. She put a "Help Wanted" ad out and picked up more staff. Soon the staff out grew the office and needed more space. Shortly after moving to a new office and much soul searching she decided to kick it up a notch and go nation-wide with her business pursuits.

“I decided to franchise my office because many of our clients would travel good distances to see us and would always comment on how they wished we were closer to them. I thought; how can we do that economically? Through more intensive research and self-examination, my husband/Vice President, Dave Collins and I decided to franchise the business. Some people think we are commercializing the industry but those are the folks that have never expanded their visions or perhaps don’t understand about investing in a meaningful life pursuit.”

Michelle explains to folks who question why they should buy into her franchise with common statements like:

- We don’t need another spa in the neighborhood...
- I can do what you’ve done for ½ the cost...
- Anyone can hire therapists, put some tables in a room and open...

“These comments explain why 95% of new businesses fail within the first 5 years. First and foremost, we’re not a “spa” we are alternative healthcare and the keyword is **healthcare**. When a person buys into our franchise, they are buying into a proven system or business operation. We have done all the research and learned from experience.

The costs involved in buying into a franchise are primarily that of construction, furnishings, computers, software, advertising slicks and the official manual on how to run the company. These are the essential building blocks that I didn’t have when I started out and had to create through direct experience as the business demanded. My initial costs were most likely well above the franchise costs of today as I worked through misguided efforts and expenses toward unnecessary equipment. My experience will guide my franchisees around such obstacles. A business owner can either pay through the school of trial and error or pay for a proven system.

When you buy into a proven system, you are also getting ongoing support, training, field representation and corporate management assistance on a regular basis. This support is there when you open your doors and for the entire term of the agreement.

People should take careful consideration before buying into a franchise. I want these individuals to be sure this is a suitable pursuit for their lifestyle and long-term goals. It could be the difference of investing or wasting valuable time and money. I personally came from financial hardships as a single parent and have lived paycheck to paycheck. I know the importance of not wasting money or gambling upon what may seem to be a risky venture. I take this company seriously and personally. I am passionate about helping people and want to see them succeed.”