

# Shopfront

## A HEALTHY BUSINESS THE SUMOSALAD STORY



*Two young Aussie twenty-somethings, James Miller and Luke Baylis, returned home after working in America for several years where they had been surrounded by an endless array of fatty fast-foods. They soon realised that Australia was not much better in the way of nutritious choices and so decided to create a healthier alternative.*

**ACCORDING** to Miller, who now co-runs a company with well over 400 staff, raising sufficient capital in order to not only bring their initial idea to fruition, but to set up the franchise system and ensure ongoing growth of the brand, were the hardest parts of the business set-up, adding: "When running your own business nothing is ever easy, that's what makes it so challenging and at the same time gratifying"

In terms of technology, Miller says: "We use various online systems in many areas of the business to boost growth and efficiency, such as a sophisticated IT infrastructure to collect maximum enquiries from potential franchisees. In a marketing sense we have also used technology in the form of several viral email campaigns which we have found to be an inexpensive and effective way of promoting the brand. By far the most effective IT tool we have

though is our online management system to assist franchisees to manage their own business."

In terms of promotions and marketing, SumoSalad's most successful tactic in this area has been guerrilla marketing. "We don't have the advertising budgets of large international chains," says Miller, adding, "so therefore have had to be more creative in our marketing strategies, often using an approach which rides off the back of these fast-food giants. Some examples of this are our 'Big Muck' bus campaign and a health protest at the opening of a doughnut chain."

In terms of loyalty programs, he says that "when purchasing a salad, customers can pick up a card to keep and use upon return visits to the store. After 10 salads they receive a loyalty card which then entitles them to 10 per cent off each purchase at any SumoSalad store. We decided to set up the loyalty program to

reward customers who chose to look after their wellbeing and appreciated our fresh, tasty and nutritious meals."

Earlier this year, the company expanded into the UK market and New Zealand won't be far off and there are also rumours of US plans. "We want as many people as possible worldwide to have the option to eat well by having access to

SumoSalad's nutritious choices," says Miller.

When asked where he wants to be in five years' time, Miller says that "we want to have vastly increased the number of SumoSalad outlets within Australia and numerous international markets. We also want to have strengthened and developed the brand significantly in order to deliver an even more superior offering to our customers."