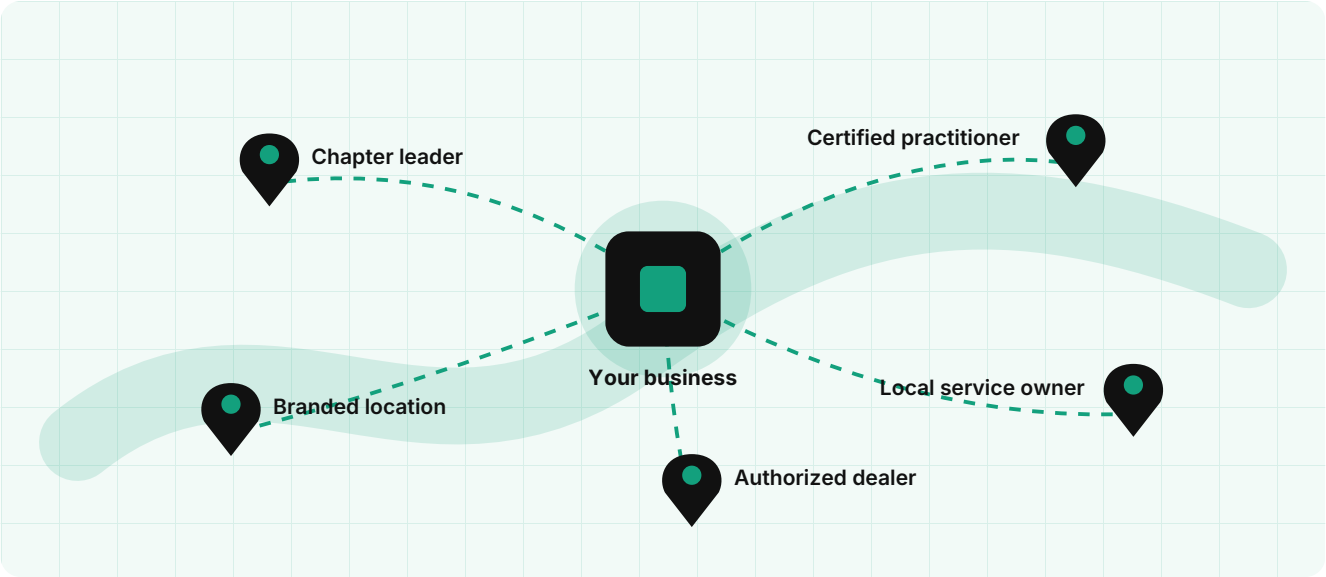
Forum180



Your Next Market Doesn't Have to Be Yours to Run.

How to grow your business through independent operators

A practical guide to bringing your brand, services, or programs to more markets through other business owners.



INTRODUCTION

You've built something customers pay for. What if another business owner could bring it to their market?

A local owner delivering your services. A practitioner offering your program. A business running a branded location. A community leader building your next chapter.

Growth that doesn't depend on you being there

Instead of opening and managing every operation yourself, you build the model that allows others to operate, and you define how your business earns revenue, supports them, and protects what makes the offering valuable.

That is growth through independent operators.

It takes design. What works today often depends on the founder's judgment, relationships, and presence, and those do not travel on their own. The model has to make it possible for someone else to deliver well.

> **This guide will help you sketch what that could look like for your business and identify the pieces needed to bring the first operator on board.**

THE APPROACH

What growth through operators can look like

An operator is a person or business that takes on agreed responsibilities for delivering under your brand, model, methodology, or system.

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS…	AN OPERATOR MIGHT BE…	WHAT EXPANSION COULD LOOK LIKE
Membership or chapter community	A local director or chapter leader	Local business owners build and run chapters using your membership model
Coaching, training, or methodology	A certified practitioner	Independent practitioners deliver your program to their own customers
Repeatable service business	A local owner in a defined territory	Local owners operate in additional territories using your brand and service model
Foodservice or specialty retail	A host business running a branded location	An independent business operates an additional branded location
Dealer or distribution business	An authorized dealer	Authorized businesses expand local sales and service coverage for your products

These are illustrative possibilities. The actual responsibilities and structure are designed for each business.

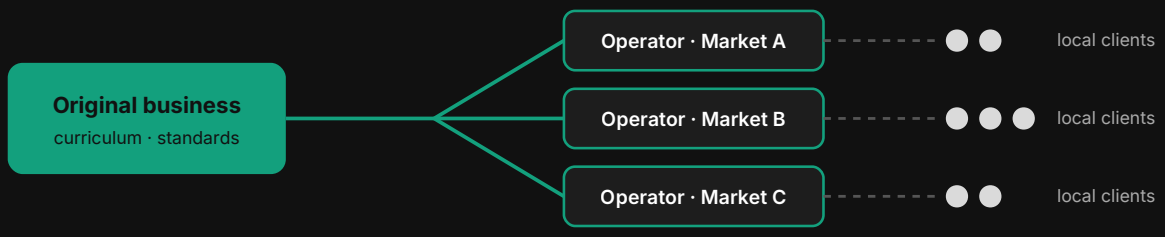
What each side controls, pays for, and receives is set by the arrangement. The label does not settle the legal question: calling someone an operator, licensee, or partner does not determine how the relationship is classified under franchise, employment, or other laws. That depends on the actual arrangement and should be reviewed by qualified counsel.

Centralized coordination. Distributed execution.

The center holds what must stay consistent. Operators execute locally.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

One training business. Several independently operated markets.



Today, the founder's team delivers a workshop directly to customers. **In the expansion model,** qualified training businesses could offer that workshop to their own clients. The original company supplies the curriculum, instructor preparation, materials, and agreed support. Each operator handles its local customer relationships and delivery responsibilities.

The original business could earn agreed program fees. **Each operator** needs enough revenue after fees and local costs to make participation worthwhile.

THE ORIGINAL BUSINESS PROVIDES

- Curriculum and materials
- Instructor preparation
- Brand and quality standards
- Agreed ongoing support

THE OPERATOR HANDLES

- Local client relationships
- Scheduling and delivery
- Meeting the delivery standard
- Its own local costs

HOW MONEY COULD FLOW

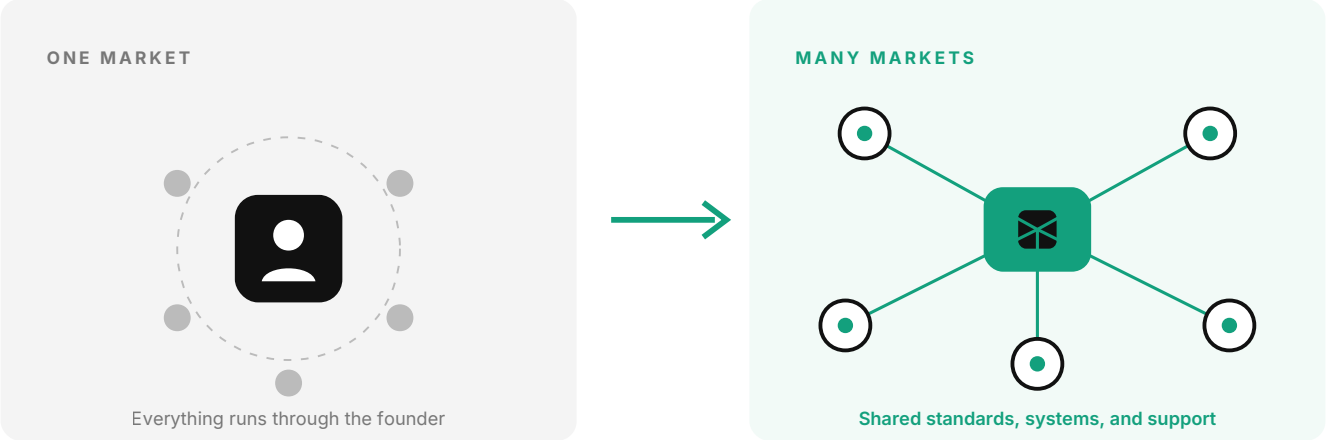
- Clients pay for the workshop
- The operator pays agreed program fees
- Both sides need margin that works

A hypothetical example, not a client. The fee structure, responsibilities, and how the arrangement is treated under law would be designed for the specific business and reviewed by counsel.

An operator model has two sets of numbers. Both have to work.

THE GAP

A business that works is the starting point



Delivering well in one market and delivering consistently across many are different capabilities. The second requires things the first rarely needs.

IN ONE MARKET, IT OFTEN WORKS BECAUSE…		ACROSS MARKETS, IT NEEDS…
The founder knows what "good" looks like	→	**Standards someone else can learn and meet**
Problems get solved in conversation	→	**Clear responsibilities and escalation**
The numbers work for one owner	→	**Economics that work for the center and for each operator**
Tools and records live in a few heads and inboxes	→	**Shared systems and visible performance**
Customers trust the founder	→	**A customer experience that holds up without the founder present**

None of this is a reason to wait. It is the design work, and the five questions that follow are where it starts.

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5

THE FIVE QUESTIONS

Work through these with your leadership team

01	What must another operator reproduce?
02	Who will handle each responsibility?
03	Do the economics work on both sides?
04	Who are the right operators, and what will they need?
05	What needs to be built before the first launch?

01 What must another operator reproduce?

Describe what customers actually pay for: the product, service, program, or experience. Then separate what must be consistent everywhere from what can reasonably vary by market. Much of what makes a business work is undocumented: how the founder handles a difficult client, how a meeting is run, which details customers notice. Those habits need to become something another person can learn.

DISCUSS

- What would a customer say makes your business worth paying for?
- Which decisions still depend on your personal judgment?
- What would be hardest to explain to a capable new operator?

02 Who will handle each responsibility?

Walk through a normal customer journey and an ordinary operating month. For each step, decide who attracts customers, who delivers, who handles money, who resolves problems, and who supports the operator. Real situations settle this better than job titles: a customer asks for an exception, a delivery goes wrong. Who acts, who decides, who pays, and when does the center get involved?

DISCUSS

- Which responsibilities should the center keep: customer relationships, billing, brand, data, technology?
- Which decisions can an operator make alone?
- Where is ownership unclear today?

03 Do the economics work on both sides?

An operator model has two sets of numbers. The center needs revenue that funds the support, brand, and systems it provides. Each operator needs a business that covers its own costs and is worth the effort. A fee that looks reasonable centrally can strain an operator locally, and support that looks simple on paper can take more of the center's time than expected.

DISCUSS

- What would an operator earn, spend, and need to invest before the first customer?
- What does the center spend to support one operator?
- Which assumption, if wrong, would change the picture most?

04 Who are the right operators, and what will they need?

The operator profile should follow from the job. Someone building local relationships needs different strengths from someone managing a daily service operation. Support is real work (onboarding, answering questions, reviewing quality), and each task needs an owner. Shared systems for scheduling, customer records, billing, and reporting determine how much support can be shared rather than handled one call at a time.

DISCUSS

- What experience, resources, and commitment should an operator bring?
- What will an operator need in their first week, first month, and first year?
- How will you know whether an operator is meeting the standard?

05 What needs to be built before the first launch?

You do not need every process a national network might eventually require. You need the pieces your first operator depends on, in a sensible order. Separate what must exist before launch from what can be tested and improved during a pilot, assign an owner to each, and decide what evidence leadership will review before adding the next market.

DISCUSS

- What are the first three things to build?
- Who owns each one?
- What would you need to see before expanding further?

> **You don't need every process a national network might require. You need the pieces your first operator depends on.**

WHAT TO AVOID

Common expansion mistakes

01

Expanding before defining what must be repeated

Recruiting operators before the core experience is clear leaves each one to invent their own version.

02

Relying on individuals instead of systems

One exceptional operator can make a model look stronger than it is. The test is whether a capable, ordinary operator can succeed with the support provided.

03

Ignoring operator economics

If the arrangement only works for the center, good operators leave and weaker ones stay.

04

Treating a label as a legal answer

"Licensee," "partner," and "operator" are business descriptions. Classification depends on the arrangement and the law.

05

Building technology before the model

Software can support a model. It cannot decide who does what, or how the money flows.

> **The test of a model is whether a capable, ordinary operator can succeed with the support provided.**

YOUR WORKSHEET

Sketch your first operator model

Type directly into this page, or print it and fill it in with your leadership team. A rough answer is better than a blank one. You'll finish with a first sketch of your opportunity to share with a co-founder or partner, and something specific to discuss with us.

1	**Another owner could deliver** the product, service, program, or location	
2	**The customer would be** who buys from the operator	
3	**Our business would provide** brand, training, systems, support	
4	**The operator would handle** local customers, delivery, staff	
5	**Our business could earn revenue through** fees, product sales, shared revenue	
6	**The operator's major costs would be** startup and monthly	
7	**Before launching, we need to build** the first three things	

Then sort what you wrote:

What we know	What we are assuming	What we still need to find out

An unanswered question is something to resolve, not a reason to stop.

ABOUT FORUM180

We build the blueprint

Forum180 builds the blueprint that turns a business into one that grows through independent operators: operator responsibilities, economics, standards, onboarding, support, and systems. We also help organizations with existing operator networks make their model work better. We start with how your business runs today, not with a template. Learn more at forum180.com.

01

Research and Analysis

We study how your business operates: customer value, delivery, economics, markets, team, and systems. We identify what already works and what needs to be built first.

02

Operator Model Design

We design how the model should work: markets, operator profile, responsibilities, economics, standards, onboarding, and support.

03

Expansion Blueprint

We deliver the design as an interactive expansion model through your own web dashboard, and walk your leadership team through the recommendations, tradeoffs, and decisions in a guided strategic review.

OUR FOUNDERS

Denika Seymour and Ileana Ruperti bring experience as a former CEO and VP of Technology of a national membership organization that grew through local chapter leaders. That experience shapes the questions we ask. Each client's model is built from its own customers, economics, markets, and constraints.

Curious what this could look like for your business?

Bring your first sketch, or simply the idea you have in mind. We can talk through what another owner could operate, what your business would provide, and what would need to be built.

Start a conversation → forum180.com/apply

Tell us briefly about your business and the growth you have in mind. We review each request and reply to schedule a conversation.

Important information. This guide provides general business planning information. It is not legal, tax, or financial advice. Whether an arrangement is a franchise, an employment relationship, or another regulated relationship depends on its actual terms and on applicable law; franchise and other laws may apply. Consult qualified legal counsel regarding agreements, compliance matters, and legal structures. Examples are illustrative and do not represent clients or guaranteed results. ScoreRaiser, Inc. is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice. Forum180 is a ScoreRaiser brand. © 2026 ScoreRaiser, Inc. Forum180 is a trademark of ScoreRaiser, Inc.

NEXT STEP

Your business works. Let's build the model that lets others run it.

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