



WHY THE 30-YEAR STARTUP FRANCHISE SALADWORKS IS EXPANDING WITH A MOBILE PRESENCE

October 28, 2016 in [Industry News](#)



Saladworks President & CEO Patrick Sugrue

What would make a 3-decade old restaurant franchise decide to get a food truck? In today's featured Q/A interview, we had the opportunity to email with with President & CEO Patrick Sugrue and Vice President of Operations and Development C.W. Bruton of [Saladworks](#) to share the many ways their business is planning to leverage their new mobile presence.

FTE: Tell us a little bit about Saladworks and the mission of the franchise.

Patrick: Saladworks is the original and largest center of the plate salad chain in America. Being 30 years old, we consider ourselves a 30-year start-up with 100 stores in 14 states and 3 countries. While it was very cool to be healthy 30 years ago, this is a brand that has found its time and is well positioned for success.

The mission for our company is to serve the soul with vegetables that are served and chopped daily. Good food nourishes the soul, and you feel good that the food is chopped fresh every day. It really does feel like you went out to your backyard and picked the produce for your salad.

FTE: What opportunities does Saladworks feel having a mobile presence with a food truck will provide to franchisees?

Patrick: I think there's really four key roles that we see for the food truck:

First, and it was the genesis for us to get our first food truck- as we have to close down stores for significant remodels, rather than disappoint the 20% of our customers that come 17 times a month and be closed for two weeks, this food truck fills that void while we are remodeling stores. We will keep it outside, show pictures on the truck of what is happening inside and keep employees and customers engaged during the remodel.

Second, we are leveraging our social media capability and loyalty club members, by knowing where they are to create routes and communicate with consumers that our food truck will be at office parks.

Third, as we look to enter new markets, it's an opportunity to put a food truck on the ground instead of waiting a year to build the brand once a franchisee signs. We can start missionary work to start building a relationship with consumers in that market.

Fourth, the overall franchise economic model is that we want franchisees who want to own a market – the strategy is to put three or four stores in a market, and they may have to do those sequentially. But if they have a food truck, they may have multiple stores and the food truck operating to give the proper distribution of our brand.



Saladworks Food Truck Mock-up.

FTE: Anything else you feel would be interesting worth noting in this article?

Patrick: While we're doing this to serve utilitarian purposes for franchisees and expanding our brand, I think there is a level of street credibility and level of cool for someone who is able to market on a truck. It's becoming increasingly pervasive in our society to have a food truck, so it's very cool. Sometimes as a 30 year old brand, you want to be fresh literally and this tool also helps reinforce our freshness.

FTE: Executing menu items on a food truck can be difficult with a smaller space. Will Saladworks be adapting or simplifying the menu on the food truck?

C.W. Bruton: I believe so. I think that the idea is it is a smaller footprint, so often times when a food truck will be there is while the store is being remodeled. We can do all the major prep in the existing store and take the products out to the food truck and serve them there.

If at office buildings or festivals, we will need more production capability, in which case we'll make some decisions around which salads, soups, or sandwiches will be available. We'll make those decisions depending on the event or market we're going into. What's central to our brand is freshness, choice, and variety so you'll be able to get all the delicious options of the 60 toppings.



The Grand Opening for Saladworks in Irving, Texas.

FTE: Has any special training for employees or franchise's been put in place to serve customers efficiently on a food truck versus brick and mortar?

C.W. Bruton: There are some differences because of the nature of the remoteness and use of generators, so there will be some changes. Our operation procedures are well documented, but we'll be putting the same standards and operating procedures in place from inside the restaurant.

FTE: How will franchisees be able to use this truck during store renovations?

C.W. Bruton: First, franchisees can use the truck while the store is undergoing renovations so they do not need to close for days or weeks at a time. Secondly, the food truck will allow for more flexibility when a new multi-unit franchisee enters a market by allowing them to expand reach while working to open their multiple brick and mortar locations.