



IN GOOD HANDS

If you ask Gigi Harding, one of the best parts about her job is being able to relax with a nice massage at the end of a hard day. Of course, as the CEO of Hand & Stone Massage & Facial Spa, she's long been a fan of the services her franchise offers, including registered massage therapy, facials, and waxing. Harding notes that she and the rest of the brand's more than 75,000 clients appreciate the availability of the spas, which are open 7 days a week with extended hours. She looks forward to introducing even more Canadians to the benefits of visiting a Hand & Stone location as the company gets ready to branch out to markets outside Ontario.

Harding recently finished sentences for *FranchiseCanada* about finding your passion, kayaking at dawn, and how her life compares to that of an 80-year-old.

Feel Great

with

HAND & STONE
MASSAGE AND FACIAL SPA

The most interesting thing I've done recently is...

plan for my 50th birthday. I have a lot of travel plans left in my bucket list. First up: Venice – provided it's not under water!

In its best form, work is... exhilarating. Whether it is working with vendors to develop new services or product offerings, developing staff and encouraging them to learn new things, and working with franchisees to improve their process and bottom line – there is nothing better than seeing people succeed.

A good franchisee... has a great brand strategy and is built upon a shared vision between the franchisees and franchisor.

A good franchisor... offers a strong system, provides excellent support, listens to the end consumer and franchisee feedback, and is always being innovative in bringing new initiatives to grow the business.

My top advice for prospective franchisees is...

building a business is not a job; it should be a passion. When you are spending most of your waking hours at your office with your staff and customers, you need to love what you are doing so find something you are passionate about.

My top advice for new franchisors is... seek out people with experience in franchising. Don't be afraid to call other franchisors or advisors and ask their opinion. My best ideas came from mentors who helped me get the creative juices flowing.

The most important thing in life...

is family, friends, and sharing good times.

One of the most enjoyable things to do... is kayaking at the cottage, at dawn when the lake is calm and no one is up and the only sounds you hear are those of the loons.

The hardest thing for me to do is... get up early enough to go kayaking!

My favourite drink is... at 5:00pm on the dock at the cottage, watching the sun go down, with good friends enjoying a nice, cold Sangria.

If I could change one thing... it would be to make each day 2 hours longer. There is never enough time to do everything I want to do. Only then could I fit in laundry!

If I could meet anyone... I would.

The person who has had the most positive influence on me as a businessperson is... there are too many to count. After over 25 years in business, I have had the opportunity to hear or meet so many interesting, driven

individuals. My theory is that everyone has a story, and everyone has ideas. They may not fit into what I am doing that that very moment but I file them in the databank (my brain) and it is amazing how often I have plagiarized their material!

Canadian franchising is... a great opportunity to be entrepreneurial but not having to come up with everything new on your own.

My franchise system began because... my brother and I love massage but could never find a Registered Massage Therapist when we needed one. We looked around for many years and fell in love with the concept because it met our needs. Clearly, we are on the right track because our customers seem to have had the same challenge and love coming to our locations.

The most positive influence on my life as a person is...

really two people, my father and my brother. My father was a successful entrepreneur all his life. At three years old, I sat in his office chair, with my legs swinging over the edge and told him, "I'm going to be just like you." And my brother because he is one of the funniest people who makes everyone laugh with his quick wit even when the going gets tough.

The key to success is... always put your hand up – even if you don't know anything about what you are signing up for. Many opportunities have arisen for me because I was willing to get involved, put in extra time, and learn some new things.

I'd like my friends to describe me as... fun-loving, good sense of humour, having solid character, and sometimes too blunt!

The accomplishment I look forward to the most is...

watching my daughters get older, rejoicing in the small stuff, being able to say I helped people achieve their dream and, at the end of the day, to relax with a good massage.

My personal motto is... I don't know if this is a motto, but I've been known to say, "If I die today, I've lived the life of an 80 year old and had a great time."

One necessary item on my life's "to do" list is... get home in time for dinner! 🍷

HAND & STONE STATS

Franchise Fee: \$39K

Investment Required: \$359K-\$483K

Available Territories: All of Canada

Training: Three weeks

Franchise Units Canada: 12 **U.S.:** 150

In Business Since: 2008

Franchising Since: 2008

CFA Member Since: 2008

