

# Peter Creyf of Waffle Cabin

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Waffle Cabin

We are a grab & go concept that features our premier product of a Liege Style Belgian Waffle  
\$100,001 - \$200,000 REQUEST FREE INFO

Born the son of entrepreneur parents, I wanted to be an airline pilot – this since the age of 4. I kept dreaming of flying, but then every little boy wants to be a pilot. I hadn't plan on becoming an entrepreneur, but I guess my upbringing helped me become one.

I've always been a hard worker and I consider myself as a person with very high ethics. I do not consider myself super-smart, just someone who tries to use his common sense. I wasn't an A-student, and I had to truly work very hard for graduating as pilot and it made me the hard worker I am today and I found that with hard work, one can achieve almost anything.

I am very "experimental", i.e. I will try pretty much anything and am not afraid of much. I like challenges and I like to challenge myself.

I like to be creative and think outside the box. In fact, I think I've actually thrown away the box altogether !

I want to live a life where I can be proud of my achievements and find true happiness. And I am proud of my achievements and I am a happy man – so every extra day I live is a joy already.

I look up to people who achieve happiness , who conquer challenges , who are open-minded , who have integrity and courage , who try to be righteous... no matter of their status, financial situation, ... I dislike people who are self-centered, who are lazy (both physically as well as mentally), ... Don't most people think like this ? So that makes me just an average Joe... not any smarter than the guy sitting next to me.

### **1. Tell us about the Waffle Cabin® concept.**

The Waffle Cabin® concept is based on a superior quality product (the dough and which is made centrally in our facility in Rutland, Vermont) along with the systems, procedures, training and know-how. All 5 are proprietary. It makes the difference between an "OK" waffle and the Mona Lisa of Waffles !

It is a concept based on the KISS method – Keep It Simple, Stupid ! The systems and procedures allow our us to do more volume both in number of waffles as in dollars per square foot, than most if not any quick-serve concept. And without having to give into quality; we do it with a superior quality product.

Training... Starting a company without proper training is like buying beer-making equipment without knowing how to use it, as well as not knowing all the specifics of beer making, yet expecting to make superior beer still.

Quality of the product and know-how... Baking is both an art and a science ! Google "Maillard Reaction" and you'll learn one piece of science right there. To make a Mona Lisa of waffles, you need all "ingredients" – both as actual ingredients that make up the dough, as well as the next steps (proofing your dough, retarding the dough, to be of superior quality. It is our know-how that will allow you to go faster, produce more when needed, and also reduce waste in the end.

The past has already shown us that our approach is the right one, as other concepts seem to disappear as fast as they came.

### **2. How and when did you become involved with Waffle Cabin®?**

Ingrid Heyrman and I are the founders of the Waffle Cabin® and came from Belgium to the US with exactly this idea – setting up and building an Imperium of Waffles. We founded the company in 1998, back we had called it "Leo's Gaufres de Liège" (Gaufre is the French word for waffle and Liège is the city where this waffle originated in Belgium). It was the move to the ski resorts that resulted in the first name change to "Waffle Haus", and which we later changed to Waffle Cabin® (we couldn't trademark the name Waffle Haus).

The name Leo's, is a tribute to my tutor – it also shows our respect to him and our appreciation for all he's done for us. I am – and will eternally be – grateful to Leo – Cheers to you Leo !

### **3. What was your background prior to joining Waffle Cabin®?**

Ingrid was active as a sales consultant to the Datacom industry for many years. The years just prior to the US, she was taking lessons in Spanish, and learning to restore antique furniture – quite a different way to fill the day indeed. Whatever she does, she does it with passion and determination. Ingrid had been to the US several times and liked the way of life very much; she didn't need any convincing to emigrate to the US.

Myself – Peter – I graduated as an airline pilot but at the worst time (3 months into the first Gulf war in 1990) where pilots were sacked by the hundreds and my prospects of finding a job in that industry were absolutely zero then and this for probably some years. Computers were a hobby of mine and that led me to be a sales rep in CAD software first, then facilities management software, and lastly sales manager at an Internet startup. It was my pilot training in the US that had left a seed, and which at some point started to manifest itself. We decided to risk it all and start our American Dream !

When it was decided we would start a waffle company in the US, I was introduced to Leo – my tutor in waffle making and now a dear friend. I worked with him both making the dough as well as in his retail outlets. Yet neither had prepared me well-enough for the startup here in the US, and I only knew or realized that much later on. It was our persistence, along with several other elements that helped us succeed however.

I had the very good fortune of having a good tutor and learning the basics – while still employed in my regular job in Belgium and learning the trade. However, and equally importantly, my 2<sup>nd</sup> dad – Eddy – is the son of a baker (himself going into the fine Belgian chocolates) and he taught me many of the technicalities of baking that were passed onto him by his father. As a result, I can honestly say I have more than likely a much deeper understanding of baking than most people think or realize and I have much of that to thank Eddy for – Cheers to you as well Eddy !

#### **4. What are some of the advantages in being a Waffle Cabin® franchisee?**

From all the above – the concept, the know-how behind it, the training, not to mention the support, etc... and where you are now part of a team, rather than being on your own. Unless you really know how to do this yourself very well, you are going to be competing with a fierce competitor who knows probably much more about this than you do.

If you compare it to other franchise concepts, Waffle Cabin has – as I call it – legs to run. You are putting your trust in, and banking your future on a concept and a product that have truly a very bright future. As an example, today I would not invest in cinema's as much of the movie-going has moved over to watching at home (Netflix, bigger and better TV screens for less \$). Read on and you will better understand why...

#### **5. Who is your ideal franchisee ?**

From the time we started to today (Fall 2017) it is more the smaller entrepreneur, the Mom & Pop who want to start something new and exciting, etc.

And as the franchise grows, so will the opportunities for these franchisees and they can choose to stay at the level they are, or grow into bigger companies themselves.

And as the franchise gets even bigger, this will attract larger companies looking to buy a franchise I guess... At that time, I think much will change, but we'll cross that bridge when we get there... This will create opportunities for the franchise as well as for existing franchisees who may want to still grow even more, or cash out....

#### **6. Tell us a little about the Specialty Food Market?**

Our brand, concept and products fall under the **Specialty Eateries** food segment. This industry operates limited service restaurants that serve specialty snack items or non-alcoholic beverages for consumptions on premises or as a grab & go item.

It is a growing segment in the food industry in general as more and more people are eating on less “timed” or “regular” basis, but where snacks are consumed. Many people skip breakfast or lunch and have a snack at different times. Many articles have come out in trade magazines explaining this trend. We are part of a growing segment within the food industry market.

### **7. What are some of the greatest lessons you’ve learned in growing this franchise?**

Do what you like and be(come) the best at it.

There is only one substitute for persistence – and that is extreme persistence.

Be true to your heart and goals.

Everyone’s road has both road blocks as well as opportunities thrown his/her way – unfortunately most people don’t see these opportunities when they arise. Learn to see the opportunities and be ready to grab them. And if opportunity hasn’t knocked for a while – then create opportunities ! That is easier said than done, I am very well aware of that but it can be done. We actually created the opportunity of starting in the ski resorts !

We all too often fall into the trap of Murphy’s law. Instead - follow **Peter’s laws** – funny we share the same first name, but I cannot take credit for these. That honor goes to Peter Diamandis.

<http://www.diamandis.com/peters-laws> and <http://www.diamandis.com>. My hat off to Peter Diamandis for so clearly spelling out what many entrepreneur’s DNA is about.

### **8. Do you have a mentor and is there someone you use for inspiration?**

I really wish I had one. Unfortunately, I don’t have one, at least not now. I have had Leo as a mentor, when I was in Belgium. Leo was a very hard-working man, who I respect enormously. As an alternative, I look for situations that inspire me, actions that people – even everyday people – take and which I find very inspiring, traits in people which I respect and which inspire me. Integrity, character, courage, persistence, respect, etc... All the traits everyone looks up to.

I have had 3 other people in my life who I saw as mentors, but in a way actually more as a “surrogate parent” – I guess mainly because there was an emotional connection as well. I consider myself very lucky I have had these people in my life; they were more than mentors.

### **9. What advice do you have for someone looking to acquire a Franchise?**

I have only really life-lessons I could share, which are in a way irrelevant whether you are looking to acquire a franchise, looking for a job, ...

“Do what you love, and/or love what you do”. If what you do now isn’t doing that, change ! Once you found what you really want to do, do the research and either join a winning team or create a winning team. As I said, make efforts to be(come) the best !

“Be persistent, even relentless”.

Work in a way that not just others are proud of you, but where you are proud of yourself.

Seek happiness. It is the ultimate goal. “Be truly, deeply happy, both professionally as well as personally” Easier said than done....

Last but not least is for you to be a franchisee, it still means you are an entrepreneur; you are starting your own company. And for that you need to be ready to give it not just you all, but more than that ! Be prepared that you may very well me making less money initially, but where the reward may be (and hopefully will be) later on. Peter’s Laws as described above, is what one really needs to be about...

### **10. In your opinion, why do you think that Waffle Cabin® would be a great opportunity for someone?**

For all of the above – It is a growing company in a segment that has been described by trade magazines & professionals as having much growth potential. We are the #1 in with this product in the US at this moment. The path ahead looks very promising and as much as I as the CEO stand behind the quality of our product, I also stand behind the quality of the leadership of the franchisor as a company. We seek to have integrity, courage, etc... - all of the traits that I as CEO look up to, I want to reflect this in our company.

I believe this company and this concept has legs to run a marathon. It is like a true thoroughbred and you as the jockey can decide how fast and how far you want this horse to run. And run it can!