

HOW TO START A LOW-COST BUSINESS

Entrepreneur's

# startups®

BE YOUR OWN BOSS

# 100

# DAYS TO LAUNCH



How Abvio's Steve Kusmer (pictured) and Kevin Wallace unveiled their fitness app in a hurry

AN ACTION PLAN TO GET YOUR BUSINESS UP AND RUNNING FOR SUCCESS

PLUS: 4 TIPS FOR FAST GROWTH

SUMMER 2011  
ENTREPRENEUR.COM



# Let's get physical

## Jazzercise franchisees keep spandex alive

**B**ack in the days of leg warmers, spandex and Olivia Newton John's "Physical," dance fitness was all the rage. But today only one of the many franchises that sought to capitalize on that particular craze remains: Jazzercise.

Why? It's not because people stopped loving dance. Just look at all the dance-themed reality shows on TV today (including *Dancing with the Stars*, whose two-time champion Cheryl Burke is now the spokeswoman for Jazzercise). Kelly Sweeney, Jazzercise's VP of U.S. sales, attributes the company's survival, and its continued growth long after its competitors went the way of other '80s fads, to its unique franchising model.

Jazzercise has a few types of franchisees. One is class owners. Like most of Jazzercise's franchisees, class owners teach classes themselves, but they also recruit instructors to teach for them. Those other instructors are not employees, though—they're fellow franchisees. Associate franchisees, to be exact.

Most Jazzercise franchisees begin as associates, and it's easy to see why.

Associates can teach as many classes as they like (with a minimum of four per month) and leave running the business largely to the class owners. "It's a great way to get your feet wet and learn the business before you jump right in," Sweeney explains.

This model also benefits those who choose to make the jump to being class owners. "It's not like running a fast-food place, where you have somebody quitting everyday," Sweeney says. "Associate franchisees care about how well we do, because it's not just a paycheck to them—it's their own business."

The two-tiered model allows people from every walk of life to become franchisees. Mothers with small children can start out as associates teaching a few classes a week, then take on more classes or even become class owners as their kids get older. As instructors get older themselves, they can teach low-impact Jazzercise Lite classes or transition to running the business more and teaching less. And with a franchise fee of only \$1,000, even people as young as 18 can go from attending Jazzercise Junior classes to owning their own business.

It's also a business that can move with you. Kim Romines, a former ballet dancer, started out as an associate franchisee in Kansas City in 2001. But in 2003 her husband's job took her to Watkinsville, Ga., where there were no existing Jazzercise classes, "so I could either start them, or not have Jazzercise," she says. She chose the former.

After a month of searching for a location, she got into a women's health center and became a class owner. She built the business up to 17 instructors with 40 classes a week and had even moved into her own center before she had to relocate again in 2008.

Now in Abilene, Texas—and determined to stay put this time—Romines is building her business up once more, offering classes in two local churches. She's recruited 10 new instructors so far. One is a military wife, and a few plan to move in the next few years, so she knows they won't be with her forever—but she knows from her own experience that they'll be OK.

"They'll have their own business to take with them," Romines says, "and I love that."



## STEPS TO JAZZERCISE

**It takes just 12 weeks for a Jazzerciser to go from attendee to franchisee. Here are the steps each new instructor must go through:**

1. Complete and submit a Franchised Instructor Application.
2. Attend a movement screening, where you will be evaluated for leadership ability and movement skills.
3. Get CPR certification and pass an online health and fitness exam.
4. Carefully review the Franchise Disclosure Document and Franchise Agreement, then sign and return the agreement.
5. Study training materials, including training and choreography videos, choreography notes and music and a fitness resource book.
6. Attend a weekend workshop, "audition" by performing several Jazzercise routines and receive training in teaching techniques, recruiting, class procedures and more.

After completing the workshop, you become a certified Jazzercise instructor. You can teach classes for another franchisee as an associate, or if you desire to be a class owner, find a place to hold classes—parks, YMCAs, churches—and get to work marketing your business and setting up classes. —T.S.

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# LOW-COST FRANCHISE LISTING

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# 195

By  
Tracy  
Stapp

# FRANCHISES you can start for under \$50,000

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**Express Tax**

Tax preparation & electronic filing  
(888) 417-4461  
expresstaxservice.com  
Total cost: \$16.5K-48.4K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 279/0

**H & R Block**

Tax preparation & electronic filing  
(816) 854-3000  
hrblock.com  
Total cost: \$34.4K-110K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 4,572/7,228

**Instant Tax Service**

Retail tax preparation & electronic filing  
(888) 870-1040  
instanttaxservicefranchise.com  
Total cost: \$39K-89K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 873/0

**Smart Tax**

Tax preparation  
(800) 991-0908  
thesmartwaytofile.com  
Total cost: \$36.7K-93.6K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 8/2

**Tax Centers of America**

Tax preparation & electronic filing  
(479) 968-4796  
buy1get4free.com  
Total cost: \$20.1K-63.8K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 179/1

**How low  
can they go?  
The five  
lowest-cost  
franchises:**

**1**

**CRUISE PLANNERS/  
AMERICAN EXPRESS,  
STARTING AT \$1.6K**

**2**

**BUILDINGSTARS INC.,  
STARTING AT \$2.2K**

**3**

**TRAVEL LEADERS,  
STARTING AT \$2.9K**

**4**

**JAZZERCISE INC.,  
STARTING AT \$2.98K**

**5**

**JAN-PRO FRANCHISES  
INT'L. INC.,  
STARTING AT \$3.2K**

**The Tax Refund Store**

Tax preparation  
(972) 412-8872  
thetaxrefundstore.com  
Total cost: \$42.7K-50K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 0/1

**Miscellaneous Financial Services**

**ACFN-The ATM Franchise Business**

Automated teller machines  
(888) 794-2236  
acfnfranchised.com  
Total cost: \$35K-47.5K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 163/1

**Fiesta Insurance Franchise Corp.**

Insurance & tax preparation services  
(714) 842-5420  
fiestafranchise.com  
Total cost: \$3.4K-79.4K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 66/2

**FOOD**

**Candy Bouquet Int'l.**

Floral-like designer  
gifts & gourmet confections  
(877) 226-3901  
candybouquet.com  
Total cost: \$10.2K-46.6K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 555/0

**Happy & Healthy Products Inc.**

Frozen fruit bars  
(800) 764-6114  
happyandhealthy.com  
Total cost: \$32.4K-85.7K  
Total franchises/co.-owned: 56/0

**“We attract people that have had very successful careers and now want a strong business that ‘feels’ better. They want to work everyday for a good cause and enjoy what they do.”** —Bette Fetter, CEO/founder, Young Rembrandts

**Pestmaster Services Inc.**

Pest & weed control  
 (760) 873-8100  
 pestmaster.com  
 Total cost: \$29.3K-80.5K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 24/10

**Pet Butler**

Pet waste cleanup & removal  
 (800) 738-2885  
 petbutler.com  
 Total cost: \$17K-29K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 41/0

**U.S. Lawns**

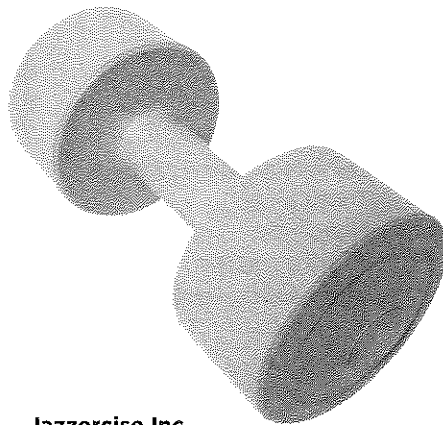
Commercial landscape  
 maintenance services  
 (800) 875-2967  
 uslawns/franchise.com  
 Total cost: \$48.5K-85K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 214/0

**Yellow Van Handyman**

Handyman services  
 (206) 763-6800  
 yellowvanhandyman.com  
 Total cost: \$17K-29K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 36/0

**PERSONAL CARE****Fitness Businesses****Curves**

Women's fitness & weight-loss center  
 (800) 848-1096  
 buycurves.com  
 Total cost: \$31.8K-39.1K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 8,119/0

**Jazzercise Inc.**

Dance fitness classes  
 (760) 476-1750  
 jazzercise.com  
 Total cost: \$2.98K-75.5K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 8,009/2

**My Personal Trainer**

Personal training  
 & nutritional programs  
 (330) 491-9999  
 mypersonaltrainerinc.com  
 Total cost: \$49.9K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 1/4

**Senior Care****Acti-Kare Inc.**

Nonmedical in-home senior care  
 (888) 451-5273  
 actikare.com  
 Total cost: \$25.7K-41.6K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 21/0

**Companion Connection Senior Care**

Medical & nonmedical senior care  
 (800) 270-6949  
 companionconnectionsniiorcare.com  
 Total cost: \$21.8K-45.8K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 89/2

**FirstLight HomeCare**

Nonmedical in-home care services  
 (877) 570-0002  
 firstlightfranchise.com  
 Total cost: \$49.9K-69.6K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 15/0

**Home Helpers/Direct Link**

Nonmedical care services  
 (866) 708-8921  
 homehelpers.cc  
 Total cost: \$47.2K-86.4K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 658/0

**HomeWell Senior Care**

In-home senior care  
 (800) 354-7553  
 homewellseniorcare.com  
 Total cost: \$48.5K-67.5K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 33/1

**Stay at Home**

Nonmedical in-home care  
 (865) 692-1101  
 stayhomeweb.com  
 Total cost: \$49.9K-69.9K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 10/0

**Touching Hearts At Home**

Nonmedical home care  
 for seniors & disabled people  
 (877) 870-8750  
 touchinghearts.com  
 Total cost: \$41.8K-62.4K  
 Total franchises/co.-owned: 31/0

**"In March I earned \$17.6K and have been over \$10K for the last six months straight, all for an investment of about \$27K. Not bad for a guy who one year ago knew absolutely nothing about refinishing floors."** —Mr. Sandless franchisee Neil Bass