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# Coming HOME

**E**ntrepreneurs who want to run a small business on their own and love to work with people can find a great franchise partner in Canadian Residential Inspection Services Ltd. This Canadian franchise system, which has been around for more than 20 years, prides itself on offering a superior system based on a high level of professionalism, which leads to a great experience for customers and profitability for franchisees.

“We put more dollars in our franchisee’s pockets than any other home inspection franchise system,” says Russell Cook, president and founder of the company.

## Franchisees first

Canadian Residential Inspection Services has been working effectively for two decades because it supports its network of independent business owners. That support begins when new franchisees sign on—the company offers one of the most extensive training programs in the industry.

Training takes three months (or roughly 250 to 300 hours) to complete. At the end of the education program, franchisees take an exam and receive a National Certificate Holder designation under the National Certification Authority, which certifies home inspectors in Canada.

However, the learning doesn’t stop there. Once franchisees have landed their first client, Cook or another head office staff member takes the franchisee through his or her first inspection, while ongoing support is available all along the franchisee’s journey. Head office staff perform frequent checks to make sure franchisees are following the system and operating problem-free. Even longstanding franchisees are encouraged to call the Halifax office when they have a business or on-the-job question—and they do come up, according to Cook.

“No one has seen everything in this business,” he says.



Russell Cook, president and founder of Canadian Residential Inspection Services (above), says his franchise offers one of the most extensive training programs in the industry.



Cook's franchisees work hard, but also have time for family and can easily work their schedules around a hobby.



More than 75 per cent of home sales include a home inspection as part of the deal, creating prime opportunities for prospective franchisees.

Photos courtesy Canadian Residential Inspection Services

## A unique approach

Another franchisee advantage offered by Canadian Residential Inspection Services is the system's lack of royalty payments.

Once franchisees build up their contacts and establish a successful track record, they're able to take time off for travel or family, unlike other independent or franchised entrepreneurs working on their own. As Cook says, "The only problem with owning a small business is when you go away, your business falls apart."

To combat this, Cook has set up a system allowing franchisees to book vacation time and rely on colleagues from nearby territories to take client calls while they're away.

## Client benefits

Cook and his team are also proud to offer franchisees and customers one of the most transparent and easy-to-follow reporting systems in the home inspection industry.

Franchisees can fill out home inspection reports right on the inspected premises, with reports that can be understood by even the most inexperienced homebuyer.

Cook says this level of customer service and clarity helps customers feel secure that the information in their home inspection report is clear and unbiased, which often leads to repeat customers and referrals. The strong training, ongoing support and the comprehensive reporting system have also helped protect the company thus far against lawsuits, which have happened to competitors in the industry.

## Ready to expand

In the past two decades, Canadian Residential Inspection Services has been expanding across the country, with an established reputation in the Maritimes and Western Canada. The company is now focusing its expansion plans on the hot real estate market in Ontario. Cook says the company hopes to sell franchises in 40 territories across the province over the next two years.

That said, the company is also selling franchises across the country. The Canadian housing market is still vibrant, and more

than 75 per cent of homes include a home inspection as part of the sale, creating prime opportunities for prospective franchisees from all walks of life.

"You don't have to be a handyman," Cook says, noting his franchisee network currently includes former pilots, builders, farmers, executives and small business owners. While you don't have to know how to build a home, you do have to like working with the public, have strong reading and writing skills and be passionate for finding answers and helping homeowners understand the merits of the properties they are buying. Canadian Residential Inspection franchisees also need to be self-motivated enough to work from a home office and promote their franchises.

The effort pays off. James Kane of the Maritimes has been a franchisee with the company for nine years. "This franchise was the best business decision I've ever made, both financially and from a family perspective. I love what I do."

## Work hard, reap the rewards

If Canadian Residential Inspection Services sounds like the right fit for you, Cook says there are benefits, including great work-life balance. He says his franchisees work hard, but they always have time for family and can easily work their schedules around a hobby. His top franchisees, who follow the system and take pride in their work, bring home a six-figure income and take six weeks off every year.

"We've set it up so it's a lifestyle more than a job." **cbi**

### Canadian Residential Inspection Services

Outlets: 30

Franchise fee: \$24,500

Investment required: \$34,500

Startup capital required: \$10,000

Royalty fee: none

Advertising fund contribution: \$100 per month