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A Brave New Service Economy

Kirsten Hudson's *Franchises for the New World*

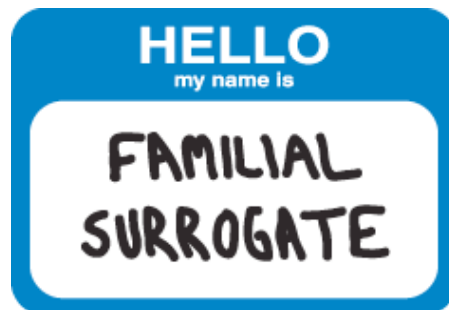
The *Urban Donkey* is a trained Afghan mountain goat that follows you around the city, toting packages for you in "tastefully designed panniers." Perhaps you didn't realize you needed a beast of burden for your city schlepping. Perhaps you don't need one at all. That's beside the point, because *it's a good idea*. And good ideas, like pack-goats in the city, are too rare.

Urban Donkey is part of Kirsten Hudson's art project/business concept *Franchises for the New World*. "Profitable businesses are based on successful ideas," Hudson says, "not necessarily valuable ones." Her aim is to challenge the old business model (a business takes off and duplicate models are franchised) by putting an immediate investment in the ideas that start businesses. The plan is simple: people who come up with innovative ideas for businesses franchise the concepts to those willing to make them a reality. Shares in the company are divided among those who brought the business into being, with profits derived from the franchise fees.

Does this mean we can look forward to Friday afternoons with a partially adopted child (*Partial Adoption: All of the kid, part of the time*)? As Hudson explains, "Some of these ideas are based on needs that can't be met, some on those that should be, and still others on needs that, in the end, shouldn't really be met." To be sure, some of the franchises will exist more in theory than execution, and *Franchises* remains, primarily, an art project. In Hudson's words, "There is always a high degree of blurriness and cross inspiration. The franchise [ideas] always lean towards the utopian, dystopian, or absurd, while my entrepreneurial ventures focus on bringing together the positive and the possible." Right now, she is interested in the commercial application of franchise-related concepts, and working on a system to provide large scale peer-to-peer telephonic services based on franchise ideas.

The concepts themselves challenge ideas of what we value in society and how we perceive our needs. Whether there will ever be an IPO for *Franchises for the New World* remains to be seen, but stock in the artistic value of Hudson's project is trading high.

--Alexandra Wagner



Familial Surrogacy: Show up without being there

Intellectual property of Kirsten Hudson and Chelsea Pennebaker

The pitch: Familial Surrogates are available to serve in your stead in all family situations. They can attend weddings, holiday dinners, or interventions. If, at any time, you are unable (or unwilling) to be there yourself, send a surrogate in your place. Surrogates can also confront family members, have "difficult" conversations, or fulfill assignments by therapists or 12-step sponsors. After a visit by a Familial Surrogate, what needs to be said will have been said—but without you saying it, and thus without the attendant guilt, anger, or awkwardness typical of the aftermath of such situations. Surrogates speak with your "voice" and report back what your ears need to hear.

Franchisees: Familial Surrogacy is a perfect franchise for therapists with a background in roleplaying or acting who are looking for a more proactive role in their clients' lives.

Safe Revenge

Created in response to a need articulated by Harris Silver

The pitch: They say that living well is the best revenge, but is it really true? Some of us have perfectly internalized an ethos of karma, turning the other cheek, detachment, and compassion. The rest of us crave revenge. But this is not so simple. Too often revenge poses problems of legality as well as morality. What you don't want is revenge that rebounds, that twists you into someone you don't want to be, or makes you either unsatisfied or feeling guilty. *Safe Revenge* plots a path that not only benefits you, but also directly addresses the wrong that's been done—all in a creative, precise, and safe manner.

A *Safe Revenge* consultant will work with you to uncover the exact nature of the wrong done to you,



and determine what action or transformation would address that wrong in such a way that your life improves, no longer weighed down by resentment and anger.



Contractual Worrying: Why worry when we can worry for you?

The pitch: With everything going on, we all have more than enough to worry about. But we really don't have time to worry while getting things done. Contractual Worriers will do the worrying for you. Concentrated, dedicated worrying.

Franchisees: Potential franchisees should be obsessively focused and able to take on the cares of others at the drop of a hat. Worrying can be done while performing routine or menial tasks, but should not be done at the same time as anything that could potentially distract you from worrying.

Yeasayers: When you want to say "yes"

The pitch: Debating whether or not to buy that pair of shoes or make a move on the new trainer at your gym? Let Yeasayers talk you into what you already want. With enthusiasm and good sense, we will encourage you to "Go for it!" Move beyond your fear and doubt and make a great leap forward.

Naysayers: When you need to be told to say "no"

The pitch: Like a reliable best friend, *Naysayers* will talk you out of making terrible mistakes—spending too much money, fucking the wrong guy, moving to Cincinnati, etc.

Franchisees: Opportunities are available in all area codes and metro areas. A perfect home business. Franchisees will be provided an initial publicity package to introduce the service to their region, including posters, business cards, stickers, and marketing tips. Potential franchisees must prove aptitude for the requirements of the service, take a two-day training course, and complete a brief internship.



Beachification: All the scent with only some of the sand

The pitch: After returning to the city from the beach, you can smell it in your clothing—that good smell of ocean and salty air. It lasts a few days and then fades away. With *Beachification*, you can enjoy that smell on a regular basis. Imagine going to sleep on beach-kissed sheets, or towel-drying your hair with beachy roughness. Beachifiers pick up your clean sheets, towels, sweaters, or any other items, bring them to a pristine beach, and let them hang out. You get the items back folded and ready for use. A decadent yet delicate treat.

Franchisees: Franchisees must be clean and presentable, with an outdoorsy yet urbane ethos. They must possess a vehicle and a clean driver's license. Franchisees must also have regular, reliable access to a rural beach. This franchise would be perfect for an artist or writer living year-round in a beach community.

Remedial Home Training

The pitch: Sometimes quirks, foibles, and faux pas are endearing, and sometimes they cause you to lose your job or lover. Whether forgotten or never learned, common courtesies and appropriate behaviors can be elusive and confusing. Often, it is our partner who helps us refine our manners and break our bad habits so we don't make asses of ourselves. But that responsibility can put a strain on a relationship. Remedial Home Trainers will help you address those areas that cause you the most pain or difficulty. With simple aversion therapy, role-playing, personal coaching, and field trips, *RHT* is the quickest way to learn the lessons you should have learned long ago. *RHT* will also include structured lessons and cheat sheets (for instance, on what to do if you're expecting an overnight guest—or how to behave if you have an unexpected overnight guest and your apartment is a mess). *Remedial Home Training's* goal is to make you not only fully functional, but charming and attractive.

Franchisees: Potential franchisees should have exceptionally good manners including, but not limited to, table manners and thank-you note writing. They should feel comfortable in all social situations and have good posture. They should be kind and understanding to the needy, a drill sergeant to the flawed. Remedial Home Trainers may be called upon to do site visits, and should expect regular semi-emergency phone calls.

Layer Ladies

The pitch: When it rains, it rains. And when it rains, street vendors put out umbrellas for urban dwellers to purchase for a minimal fee. The same is not true of other weather or social eventualities. Indeed, how often have you found yourself caught with the wrong clothing—too warm, too cold, too dressy, dirty, boring, etc.? *Layer Ladies* to the rescue! *Layer Ladies* carry all kinds of layers to make you warmer or cooler, protect you from rain, dress you up or down, or prepare you to work out or go to the beach on the spur of the moment. Layers are uniformly priced, one size fits most, and attractively packaged. All layers are non-returnable for rapid transactions, with no trying-on allowed.

Franchisees: Franchisees must be willing to work in all kinds of weather, and must be physically strong. *Layer Ladies* may contract directly

with suppliers, but all potential layers must be pre-approved.

Decisionatrix: No decision too small or too big

The pitch: Are you stumped by a crucial decision? Don't know where to turn for help? Caught between a rock and a hard place? Unable to tell pro from con? On the fence? Call the *Decisionatrix*. We'll make the decision for you. It's quick and easy, and only \$3.95 per minute. Don't torture yourself with endless internal debates—pick up the phone and let us decide.

Franchisees: You know who you are.



Domestic Curation

The pitch: As we move through our lives, we all acquire mementos, artifacts, and other detritus: gifts from ex-boyfriends, art made by friends or children, objects inherited from grandparents and great aunts, souvenirs from decades of vacationing. Not all of these objects merit careful preservation or display. Sentiment and an addled brain, however, keep you from being the best judge of what should stay or go.

Domestic Curators are available to help you rid yourself of that which does not belong, and properly archive and/or exhibit that which remains. **Franchisees:** Potential franchisees should have a working knowledge of clutter-clearing, an authoritative yet friendly disposition, and a background in art history, design, interior decorating, and/or childcare. We encourage multiple applicants for each available franchise, particularly those with overlapping and complementary skills. Franchisees will need to complete an internship job and a supervised curation project to the satisfaction of DC, Inc. before opening an independent franchise. Franchisees will be listed in our national directory and publicized through our website and press packages.



Urban Donkey: Don't be one—buy one

Intellectual property of Kirsten Hudson and Simone Shubuck
Personal, storefront, or rental models available

The pitch: The ultimate in urban-acquisitions transport. The problem is common: throughout the day we acquire packages, bags, and possessions that immediately become burdens. The solution has long eluded modern urban consumers. Taxis are always an option, but finding one can be difficult, and if multiple stops are involved, loading and unloading provides its own unpleasantness. Many have thought of dogs or children as potential beasts of burden, but the problems inherent in these solutions are immediately apparent. So we proudly introduce Urban Donkey. UD is a specially bred and trained Afghan mountain goat. UD does not require the affection or attention that a dog or child would, and doesn't require the space of a burro or horse. Your *Urban Donkey* lives outside, eats leftovers, and will follow you all day, every day, toting packages in its tastefully designed panniers.

SpaBus

The pitch: With so many people afraid to fly, and with an ever-growing interest in self-pampering, the time has come for SpaBus. Each *SpaBus* is a luxury cruiser, specially outfitted and staffed with beauty and fitness consultants to provide you with a variety of spa treatments,

from facials and massages to nutritional counseling. Consultations on weight loss, personal grooming, and other subjects are available. As a *SpaBus* passenger, you're encouraged to meditate and mellow out. On longer journeys, yoga classes are conducted at rest stops, and special seminars are offered on topics such as self-empowerment through assertion, or making money by increasing abundance. Special trips can be arranged by focus (e.g., detoxification) or group (e.g., a cross-country bridal shower).

Franchisees: The initial investment for *SpaBus* is quite high, but the rewards are equally substantial. Each franchisee must convert a luxury bus to a *SpaBus*, engage spa personnel, and commit to regular routes. Those who have a background in marketing or beauty, or with experience as camp counselors, are particularly urged to consider *SpaBus*. *SpaBus* Headquarters will provide franchisees a database of staff persons and special-interest experts, and assist potential travelers with a toll-free number to reach local affiliates servicing the requested route.

Resolution Coaching: Usually cheaper than therapy

The pitch: Every year you make resolutions, and every year you fail to meet them. With *Resolution Coaching*, this won't happen. We will help you define or refine your resolutions, put in place a time-sensitive action plan, and with regular phone calls and sit-downs help you reach your goals.

Franchisees: Potential *Resolution Coaches* should be available for a short, intense season of work at the beginning of every year. Coaches should be enthusiastic, optimistic, organized, and with a background in producing, therapy, or management. Coaches must be open-minded and prepared to support the agendas of others by holding a firm grasp of the plausible and the possible. Franchisees will be supported with intake and progress forms, as well as suggestions for timing and techniques for recalcitrant clients. Franchisees will undergo a four-week *Resolution Coaching* process before certification by *Franchises for the New World*.

Style Stops

The pitch: Many of us leave our homes at the start of the day looking good. At some point, however, we catch sight of ourselves in a mirror and realize that something's gone awry. *Style Stops* can fix your immediate problems as well as offer helpful suggestions for avoiding such disasters in the future.

Franchisees: Potential franchisees must have good personal style as well as an awareness of basic style mistakes and remedies. They should have wide-ranging knowledge in the areas of personal hygiene, fashion, and makeup, and be cheery and encouraging, with an ability to work quickly under pressure. Potential franchisees must complete 20 timed makeovers. *Style Stops* can be set up in fixed locations, be mounted on moving transport, or operate on an on-call basis.

Buzz Collars: Not just for criminals and dogs anymore Also available in wrist and ankle versions

The pitch: Buzz collars are commonly used to train or restrain dogs and to limit criminals' range of movement. But at somewhat less painful settings, the market for *Buzz Collars* is infinite:

Tourists: *Buzz Collars* with global positioning functionality can be programmed to alert you to station stops on mass transit or to wrong turns, keeping you within your geographical comfort zone.

Parents: Younger children's collars can be set to go off when they've strayed outside of boundaries you've prescribed or into dangerous areas. Subtle signals can be sent to establish routines—such as getting up and out the door for school, or helping out around the house. Longer range *Buzz Collars* can be activated when it's time to head home or simply to reach out and say, "I'm always with you." For teenagers, collars can be used to regulate curfews, providing both notification and warning as curfews approach. When fitted with chemical sensors, the collars can also assist your kids in avoiding toxic environments.

Group leaders: *Buzz Collars* are an organizer's dream come true. Imagine calling together 30 people with a single press of a button. Within moments each member of your party will be assembling—no more searching and calling out in frustration.

Restaurateurs: Hand out *Buzz Collars* to those waiting for a table. When the table's ready, flick the switch.

Couples: Separated from your significant other at a crowded event? Collars with messaging can provide not only an easy method of connecting and communicating, but also a way to strategize your next steps and exit strategies. *Buzz Collars* also have potential use as a sex toy.

Individuals: For use as a personal trainer, timekeeper, alarm clock, or other assistant, *Buzz Collars* can be tied into various informational sources, from the weather to GPS to your vital signs.

Re-Nippling

A collaborative venture with David Buchwald

The pitch: Many retail environments change their mannequins frequently, not because of changes in hair and makeup styles but because the nipples have gone out of style. If you're a retail manager, you know that pointy is so 2001. You now have the opportunity to replace not the mannequins themselves, but their nipples. *Re-Nippling* offers a wide selection of nipples in a range of materials, and custom nipples can also be designed and manufactured.

Franchisees: *Re-Nippling* is a new opportunity for the door-to-door salesperson. Franchisees are responsible for removal of existing nipples as well as installation of the new.

Faux Vacation

The pitch: As William Gibson stated in "The Gernsback Continuum," to photograph the existing is difficult, but to photograph that which does not exist requires a very special genius. *Faux Vacation* consultants will work with you to construct and document events that haven't occurred, didn't go according to plan, or failed to be documented in an acceptable manner. The benefits are immeasurable: *Faux Vacation* may free you from the burden of carrying bulky camera equipment, or you may gain the privacy to attend to embarrassing personal needs (say, detox or community service).

Franchisees: In addition to photographers and videographers, *Faux Vacation* franchisees may include writers, visualization coaches, or others in creative careers.

Amish Unlearning

The pitch: Too often we have to wait for a piece of electronics to break before experiencing the joy of its absence. *Amish Unlearning* specialists will work with you to determine which technologies improve your quality of life, and which do not.

Franchisees: Potential franchisees don't have to be Amish, but must show an aptitude for coaching clients in experiencing the alternative pleasures of environment and community, while finding low- to no-tech replacements for the destructive machines in their lives.

The original, abridged article can be found in TENbyTEN's "Cheap" issue, vol. 2, no. 3.

Illustrations by Deborah Johnson