

OPPORTUNITIES

Need Some Cash?

CASH PLUS ASKS THAT QUESTION OF ITS POTENTIAL FRANCHISEES—AND CHARITIES.

BY P. KELLY SMITH

WHEN JULIE AND CRAIG WELLS BOUGHT Cash Plus Inc., their goal was to make it more than just a financial services franchise. The pair had humanitarian ideals in mind, partnering with Save the Children, which sponsors under-



SHARE THE WEALTH: Not happy with just handling money, Julie and Craig Wells are giving some of it away.

privileged children around the world. "Our goal is to sponsor 10 children out of each of our stores," says Craig, 48, CEO and president. Some Cash Plus stores also offer discounts for bringing in canned foods, which are distributed to local food banks and rescue missions. How did it all start? When Julie and Craig acquired Cash Plus in 1996, they had been looking at a variety of franchise opportunities. Craig had been in commercial real estate for 13 years,

and Julie had a background in marketing and PR. When the previous owners approached them about becoming franchisors of Cash Plus, they saw an opportunity. They were right: The franchise opened 14 stores in 1996 alone.

Today, the company's services include check cashing, payday advances, international wire transfers and money orders. With more than 70 locations in nine states, Cash Plus earned sales of \$18 million for 2000. And the franchise is still growing, opening 30 locations in the past 18 months and on the lookout for middle-management types and current franchisees to become unit owners—and charitable entrepreneurs.

"We're trying to do good within our community and be outstanding corporate citizens," says Julie, 42, COO. Sounds like they're right on the money.

Lights, Camera ... Ad!

THIS ENTREPRENEUR HITS IT BIG WITH A SMALL-SCREEN FRANCHISE.

MEET ALAN BAKER, WHO HAS THE distinction of being TVAmerica's first franchisee. "I just think being the first of anything has a certain connotation that lends itself to good things," he says.

Baker, 41, first heard of the TV-listing publisher about four years ago, when a friend approached him about selling ads for the company. Even though Baker had started a promotional advertising company, Creative Marketing Concepts, just a few months before, he seized the chance to work with TVAmerica. He still balances both today.

"I would say it's



TV DEBUT: Originally approached just to sell ads, Alan Baker bought into TVAmerica as its first franchisee.

probably 75 percent TVAmerica, 25 percent Creative Marketing Concepts," says Baker. "The promotional business, that comes in anyway. For TVAmerica, I really have to go out and pound the pavement and see people every day."

Those people are advertisers who appear in the TV-listing magazine that TVAmerica publishes and Baker distributes in New York City's Capital District. "We cold-call and determine who would be good prospects for advertising, then go out . . . and do a presentation," Baker says of a typical day. "I'm very structured with my presentation. I go from a little history of the company to looking through the book itself and showing why it's a good program."

And Baker has no doubts about TVAmerica: "I think it's a great product, and my enthusiasm rolls off onto the people I talk to." —Devlin Smith ■

WHAT'S NEW

FORGET TEXTBOOKS—THE IFA'S TEACHING FRANCHISING ONLINE.

How do you make education more accessible? The International Franchise Association answered that question quickly: Put programs on the Internet.

The IFA's Franchise Sales Compliance program teaches franchise executives about the regulations governing franchise sales. Franchising Basics helps prospective franchisees become savvy investors. The fee for Franchise Sales Compliance is \$125 for members and \$250 for nonmembers; Franchise Basics costs \$25.

Get more information at the IFA's Web site, www.franchise.org. —D.S.

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