



Thomas Kremer, AmRest President, Franchise Excellence & Expansion

How restaurants can thrive in the ‘new normal’

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Interview with Thomas Kremer, AmRest President, Franchise Excellence & Expansion

Sushi Shop’s boutique delivery service has excelled during the Covid-19 crisis, proving that its innovative restaurant delivery model is here to stay. With over €200 million in annual sales across Europe, the brand has now set its sights on the UK market. In this interview with Thomas Kremer, President of Franchise Excellence and Expansion at AmRest, we take a look at how to win in the current volatile business landscape and why now could be the right time to invest.

How has Sushi Shop fared during the pandemic?

TK: Very well. The brand has achieved double-digit growth this year despite market conditions. Even in locations where our restaurants are closed for dine-in, the numbers are very strong.

What has been the success behind that growth?

TK: Delivery has been the winner in this crisis, so this is what our restaurants have focused on. We have very high delivery sales and sushi travels easily. Additionally, the average basket size is going up because people do not just order for themselves, but also order for their family. There is lots of opportunity in this segment of the market, and Sushi Shop is an ideal brand to take advantage of it.

What specifically makes Sushi Shop so successful?

TK: It's a high-level product offer, combined with strong marketing and brand experience. Sushi is a growing segment, which makes it an opportunity. It's not like some other segments which are highly competitive, and you can only take market share from your competitors.

Sushi Shop is also very flexible concept. For example, in Marylebone, London we have a bigger dine-in restaurant. However, some franchisees choose to run a small delivery and takeaway unit without dining. There are not many concepts out there which have so much flexibility when it comes to building investment.



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How does AmRest support its Sushi Shop franchisees?

TK: We aim to build the best package out there for our franchisees, allowing them to focus on their operations. We have all the systems in place and when we partner up with a potential franchisee, we know what is important to be successful. People are the key to excellence. When we have the right people in place, both as franchisors and franchisees, the business has a very high chance to work.

We have significant experience in working with franchisees, so we are able to provide strong support for our partners, wherever they are. AmRest has almost 500 franchised outlets across the globe.

Given sushi's growth, is this the right time to be investing in Sushi Shop?

TK: Yes. In addition to being part of a growing segment in the food industry, the Sushi Shop business model has shown itself to be crisis-proof across our portfolio.

What about the commercial property opportunities?

TK: Now is an excellent time to invest. The economic effects of Covid-19 mean that there will be consolidation in the market. Consolidation means new opportunities. For the first time for years, rent has gone down for commercial properties, meaning that you can get a prime location for a good price. The situation was very different a few years ago.

How do you foresee Sushi Shop's growth in the UK?

TK: There is a real opportunity to grow the brand across the UK. While companies might have previously have only considered central London expansion, this has changed – there are now a range of opportunities, both in the suburbs and in other regional hubs such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Brighton only to name a few. As things stand today, we think there is an opportunity for an additional 50 Sushi Shop outlets to succeed in the UK.

What would you say to those who are considering becoming a Sushi Shop franchisee?

TK: There is no lack of opportunity. For those who are already in the industry, we provide a flexible, transferable, and successful model that sets franchisees up for expansion beyond a single unit. More broadly, being a Sushi Shop franchisee gives people the opportunity to be their own boss and define their own destiny. As the business landscape reconfigures itself, now is a good time to make the move.



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