



Changing the way Tech is taught

With its fun approach to learning, this franchise is changing the way children and adults learn ICT...

Russell Pengelly's vision of creating a place where pint-sized learners would enjoy tackling the work in front of them – no matter what subject – came to fruition when he founded Computers 4 Kids in 1994.

Today the children-focused franchise has offices across South Africa, the UK, Ireland, Ghana, Nigeria, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia and supplies hundreds of schools with integrated ICT curriculum materials, support and methodologies covering local classroom themes and topics. The original vision has also extended to encompass learners from the age of four to 104.

Pengelly ascribes much of the concept's success to the e-Learner international certification granted to successful learners, which is appealing to potential clients, and allows franchisees to offer a unique service. The franchise also falls into the specialised education sector, a niche area with great potential for growth.

"The main difference between our internationally endorsed programme and other products is that we offer an integrated approach to learning about ICT and fill the gap where schools and class teachers are failing. Learners, therefore, also study language, maths, EMS (Economic Management Science) and other learning areas while working towards an international certificate; a unique approach," explains Pengelly.

The costs

The Computers 4 Kids franchise package is also extremely affordable, and motivated, hard-working franchisees can make money from day one, Pengelly says. For R35 000 (excl. VAT), franchisees receive all the hardware needed to operate the business including 4 laptops, 175 manuals covering the e-Learner certification course and the required software. Stationery and the initial décor for the centre, as well as training are all included to allow franchisees to make money from day one. There is a monthly royalty of R500 (excl. VAT) for the duration of the five-year renewable agreement. Packages aimed at existing IT centres and internet cafés are also available.

Overheads aren't high as the franchise can be run from home, a small office or any other venue that is suitable for IT classes.

According to Pengelly, prospective franchisees should be enthusiastic and have a passion for education and IT. They don't need a background in education as full training is provided at one of the company's regional offices. Lesson plans are also comprehensive. Each one details the ICT applications that will be used, the subjects covered and the lesson's objectives and outcomes. This is then backed up by a detailed lesson plan,



which can be followed verbatim by facilitators who are not confident about tackling ICT issues. These facilitators will grow in confidence as they present more classes.

Lessons are broken down into clear sections: educational games, keyboard/mouse skills, "tech talk", integrated activities and plenary sessions. The integrated activities, which make up the majority of the lessons, are detailed in an excellent manual.

Ongoing support

The Computers 4 Kids support team is available to franchisees on an ongoing basis either via email or on the phone. The Monday Morning Memo ensures that the team stays in contact with franchisees and is also used to pass on any news of interest to franchisees. Online live support is available during office hours.

Franchisees tackle their own marketing by targeting children at schools in the area through flyers and handouts. Any leads received at head office are also passed on to franchisees. Franchisees then contract with the parents of the learners or with the learners themselves.

Families prioritise spending on children even in tough economic times, Pengelly points out, and this will ensure that the concept grows from strength to strength. Parents still want to ensure that their children are well-educated, and Computers 4 Kids really offers more than the average training centre – learners are taught ICT skills while also covering classroom content.

Computers 4 Kids has been the market leader in its field in Africa for more than 15 years and services over 450 schools and 200 000 learners on a monthly basis. With its fun approach to learning, this franchise is changing the way children learn ICT.

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