

**Title:**

Burgers and Bulldozers: New Franchise Roundup

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509

**Summary:**

With hundreds of new franchise concepts being started every year, it is nearly impossible to keep track of the freshest ideas. Here is an update of two new franchises and how they have fared in their first several months of franchising

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**Article Body:**

With hundreds of new franchise concepts being started every year, it is nearly impossible to keep track of the freshest ideas. Here is an update of two new franchises and how they have fared in their first several months of franchising.

The Counter - No, this isn't just another fast food hamburger joint. Besides serving hamburgers, The Counter has as much in common with your local McDonalds or Wendy's as the World Cup has to do with your child's weekend soccer game. First opened in Santa Monica in 2003, this trendy update to the classic burger joint serves its burgers with any combination of 10 cheeses, 26 toppings, and 17 sauces. So, go ahead and order that Danish Bleu Cheese Burger topped with dried cranberries and a ginger soy glaze you always wanted.

Since 2003, The Counter has received the type of press that most companies can only dream about. After being listed as one of the top 20 burgers in the country by GQ, the holy grail of endorsers, The Oprah Winfrey Show, named it the "Best Burger in the USA." (An aside on the power of the O-nod, sales jumped from \$44,000/mo to \$245,000/mo after the endorsement)

With all of this success, The Counter did the only logical next step and began selling franchises in early 2006 with a \$40,000 franchise fee and 6% royalty.

So how is it going? The company has already inked agreements for 60 restaurants in California alone. Next up is expansion into Florida, New York, Arizona and Nevada followed by the rest of the country. With long range projections of only 400 to 600 units, The Counter is well on its way to franchising stardom.

EQUIPRO - If Santa Monica and The Counter just seem too trendy and hip, this

light equipment repair franchise from Wisconsin surely won't. EQUIPRO, a subsidiary of Wacker Corporation began providing repair service to the light construction equipment industry in 2003. At the same time that the light equipment market is growing at nearly ten percent per year, many large equipment dealers have been cutting back on service support. In response to these trends, EQUIPRO began to build out its network of service centers.

EQUIPRO focuses on providing service for the following manufacturers: ICS, MI-T-M, MK Diamond, Sullair, and Wacker. The franchises are also full-service dealers for Honda, Briggs & Stratton, Robin/Subaru, Wacker and Kohler engines.

For each franchise, the company hires a Metro Service Specialist (MSS). The MSS is an employee of EQUIPRO, Inc. hired on behalf of the franchisee to develop service sales and act as a liaison for EQUIPRO's OEM partners in the local market. The responsibilities of the MSS include effectively calling on contractor offices and jobsites, equipment and rental dealers, as well as national accounts to promote solutions for equipment repair and parts. In addition, EQUIPRO provides professional training on business operations and technical details both in the classroom and on-site.

Franchising since June 2005, new franchisees can expect to invest between \$145,000 and \$350,000. EQUIPRO has opened 12 service centers and plans on opening 33 units by the end of 2006 and 150 in the next seven years.