

FRANCHISING TODAY

The leading source for today's franchise executives, owners, investors and entrepreneurs

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

A large, realistic illustration of a shark swimming towards the viewer in clear blue water. Several smaller fish are scattered around the shark. In the lower right foreground, a scuba diver in full gear is visible, holding a long pole. On the left side, there is a faint, stylized target graphic.

Diving For DOLLARS

Blue Coast CEO's passions are diving and saving clients money. PAGE 26

AT YOUR SERVICE

Annex Brands anticipates customers' needs.

PASSION FOR PETS

Wanted: Animal lovers for new Petland franchises.



BLUE COAST SAVINGS CONSULTANTS

www.bluecoastsavings.com / HQ: Key West, Fla. / Shawn Hull, founder and CEO: "I love making a difference in the world, whether that's in business or my personal life."

Diving for Dollars

A fast-growing company, Blue Coast Savings sails into success by helping businesses reduce expenses. **BY KAT ZEMAN**

When he's not scuba diving

with sharks or observing exotic underwater ecosystems, Shawn Hull spends his days fishing in a revenue stream.

Formulas for fiscal savings come as easily to Hull as kneeling at the bottom of the ocean floor while a tiger shark circles close by. As a certified dive instructor, he does not fear the shark. He admires its beauty, power and strength.

As CEO of Key West, Fla.-based Blue Coast Savings Consultants, Hull engages in a similar philosophy. He does not fear challenges. He embraces them. A seeker of new opportunities, Hull founded his company on the simple belief that every business can afford to increase its bottom line – and he's more than willing to help them dive for dollars.

"There are two ways for businesses to make money," Hull says. "They can either increase sales or reduce their expenses. I help them with the latter and I offer about 20 different business solutions for doing it."

Blue Coast's services include specialized tax incentives, expense reduction and revenue gains. There's an added benefit: The company doesn't charge clients if it can't find a way to save them money. "We provide a risk-free financial benefit," Hull adds. "If there is no refund, there is no fee. We are 100 percent performance based."



Blue Coast CEO Shawn Hull helps clients find specialized tax incentives, expense reductions and revenue gains in their businesses.

SAILING UPSTREAM

Hull has sailed his company – named one of America's fastest-growing private companies in 2017 by *Inc.* – upstream. His revenue is two-fold.

A part of his business focuses on advising clients on how to save money. The other part offers other entrepreneurs the opportunity to do the same. "I wanted to develop something that

had all the elements that I loved about owning a business,” he says. “I wanted something with no downside.”

That’s when he founded the Blue Coast business model. While it has many similarities to a franchise, it’s more of a business opportunity, Hull says. “The business opportunity is like a franchise,” he explains. “The differences are that you don’t use the Blue Coast trademark, you don’t have territories and you don’t have to follow a strict system.”

Entrepreneurs wishing to become consultants using the Blue Coast platform and services will be charged a one-time fee of \$21,900. There are no royalties associated.

Since its inception in 2001, Blue Coast has earned its name as a trusted

national organization in business savings consulting, claiming “the most unique business model in the country.”

Former major league baseball player and sports broadcaster Bill Ripken serves as its spokesperson. “Blue Coast is a smart business that makes sense in any economy because it delivers what all American companies need: savings,” Ripken says in a video. “Our products have saved businesses millions of dollars. It’s a business with the resources to be successful.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

Blue Coast’s advisors focus on improving a company’s bottom line. They zero in on three categories of a company’s profit and loss statement:

expense reduction, specialized tax incentives and revenue gain.

When it comes to expense reduction, Blue Coast advisors have found that more than 70 percent of businesses overpay their workers’ compensation insurance premiums and 80 percent overpay or are overcharged on their waste bills. Invoices from wireless companies often include overcharges and unnecessary fees.

“We audit a company’s expenses like their waste, utilities, wireless bills, parcel and credit cards,” Hull says. “We audit and we do all the billing for our advisors and their clients.”

Credit cards are especially notorious for having intentionally complex systems with more than 1,000 different fees that make up interchange



Shawn Hull's passion is traveling the world and diving with tiger sharks, bull sharks and hammerheads.

Photo courtesy of Jim Abernethy of Jim Abernethy's Scuba Adventures

rates, he says. Blue Coast does not ask a business to switch merchant providers. It acts as a third party auditing agency that reviews and audits the business' merchant account, and lowers their credit card processing costs by eliminating overcharges.

"We can actually eliminate the merchant account fees completely," Hull says. "This is new to the United States but has been done in Europe and Australia. Most businesses don't know about these things."

Blue Coast estimates that credit card audit and subsequent payment optimization solutions, on average, save its customers up to 21 percent on processing fees.

TAKING ACTION

One of Blue Coast's main services is consulting for class action lawsuit settlement claims. Its advisors seek to recover money from antitrust and other class action lawsuits.

"There are billions of dollars' worth of class actions that businesses have already paid for and it's essentially free money to get back and can be significant," Hull explains.

Specialized tax incentives are another way for businesses to cut costs. Blue Coast focuses on cost segregation for commercial property, commercial property tax reviews, manufacturing tax credits and hiring incentive programs. In addition, the company claims it can create a profit for its clients' accounts payable departments.

"We can go into companies across America and turn their accounts payables department into a profit center," Hull says. "A company can actually receive hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars by simply paying their bills and the service doesn't cost them anything. Our advisors are really focused on this right now because we have multiple proprietary marketing venues to get to CFOs."

CHOOSING YOUR FUTURE

The company has consultants that use its business model platform and services throughout the United States. Many of its advisors are corporate executives, business owners and retired professionals.

"The key to having the best advisors is to pick people you think will be successful in your business, not just those that can afford it," Hull says. "Our advisors are our company. You have to love what you do. It can't just be about money."

Blue Coast takes pride in providing its consultants with ongoing support and mentoring. One of its slogans is "You're in business for yourself but not by yourself."

Its process begins with two to three weeks of training that includes creating a personalized business plan. The

company then provides marketing services and a support system of national account managers that help consultants with client engagements and technical details.

YOU HAVE
"YOU HAVE TO LOVE WHAT
YOU DO. IT CAN'T JUST BE
ABOUT MONEY."

— SHAWN HULL

The company's marketing services include a professional website for its consultants (with Bill Ripken's testimonial) and access to coaching and advisors. They also include a proprietary app that calculates savings for their clients. Promotional materials, lead-generation tools, pre-set client appointments, referral business and administrative support are available as well.

"We have advisors who have worked closely with us for many years," Hull adds. The company has both full-



Former major league baseball player and sports broadcaster Bill Ripken serves as Blue Coast Saving's spokesperson.



Blue Coast works closely with clients to understand their needs and only bills for savings it finds for them.

time and part-time consultants. “We are designed to work alongside your day job,” he says.

Blue Coast is 100 percent performance-based. It only bills clients for savings that it finds for them. Its advisors can build a consulting practice with long-term residual income.

“Our advisors are very attracted to residuals,” Hull says. “We have purposefully built our company with residuals in mind and some pay the life of a business.” The company’s model is a solid team approach with low overhead.

Hull’s goal for Blue Coast for this year is to “save and refund \$130 million to \$140 million for companies,” he says. “We have already helped tens of thousands of businesses save millions.”

ADVENTURE AWAITS

Hull believes that the secret to being successful in business is balance. It’s important to have a strong work ethic. But it’s also critical to find time for family, friends and leisure. He invites his consultants to visit him in Key West. They often go scuba diving or fishing.

“I love to travel the world and dive with tiger sharks, bull sharks and hammerheads,” he says. “I want to protect the oceans for my girls. I’ve even had my kids in the water with whale sharks and manta rays.”

Among scuba divers – a very close-knit community – diving with sharks is not considered dangerous. It’s adventurous. “What are we all working for if we can’t go and enjoy the fruits of our labor,” Hull says. “I love making a difference in the world, whether that’s in business or my personal life. To me, it’s all connected.”

