



HOW TO FIND THAT PERFECT VOM FASS LOCATION

by Toni Jakovec, Newsletter Editor

The phrase that exemplifies VOM FASS is "only the best". This is true about our amazing products, and it's equally important when choosing a new store location. As a retailer, location is probably the most important decision you'll make. It's wise to give it plenty of thought and research, and to do a comprehensive site evaluation study to find "only the best" location.

This newsletter has covered the importance of store location before. However, when the opportunity recently presented itself to interview VOM FASS commercial realtor specialist, Alan E. Ricks, the timing was perfect to re-visit this important topic.

Toni Jakovec:

Good morning, Al. I know you're very busy, so thank you for taking the time to answer a few questions.



Al Ricks: Happy to do it. Commercial real estate is a mystery to a lot of people, and yet it is of vital importance when choosing to enter into a franchise.

TJ: Let's get started with an easy question. Generally, how much square footage is needed for a VOM FASS store, and what should I expect to pay per square foot?

AR: The optimal square footage for a store is between 1,200 and 1,400 square feet. Another way to look at this is through a cost analysis. You want to stay between 10% and 15% of occupancy cost to sales. For example, if you have projected annual sales of \$400,000 then you want

your occupancy cost to be under \$60,000, which includes your lease, insurance, taxes, common area maintenance, etc.

TJ: How is that square footage divided up between "front of the house" and "back of the house"? Is there a percentage or ratio that is used to divide the space?

AR: The most common ratio is for the sales floor (front of the house) to occupy two-thirds of the total space. Therefore, one-third is designated as back of the house, for prepping, kitchen area, inventory, and office space.

TJ: Now, for the million dollar question, how do prospective VOM FASS franchisees choose a location?

AR: There are a number of proven ways to identify the perfect location. Of course, we look for a location with the optimal demographics. Ideally we want an area with a population of about 100,000 people and a median household income in excess of \$65,000 to \$70,000. The higher, the better, of course.

After identifying the overall market, we then study the "sub-markets". Once the

important sub-markets are established, we look at the corridors supporting those markets: the accessibility, visibility, and patterns of the pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The surrounding tenancy is another helpful indicator. For VOM FASS, these important tenancies would include food stores, kitchen wares, restaurants, and all things related to food.

Another important factor is "co-tenancy". This includes locations where people are already out walking, discovering, exploring, and experiencing, such as a lifestyle center. Since "experiencing" VOM FASS' extraordinary products is a major attraction, the stores fit perfectly into that type of environment. This important placement encourages repeat business, as we are incorporated into the walking and driving traffic patterns of our customers. Also worth noting, being located close to competition is not necessarily a bad thing, as this affords customers the opportunity to compare products.

Tourist areas can also be highly successful locations. Currently VOM FASS has become an important destination for visitors to San Francisco, CA., Jackson Hole, WY, and Sedona, AZ. Visitors experience the quality and variety of VOM FASS products while traveling, and are then able to reorder online. Even airports are a potential venue. In that case, orders could be easily shipped to the customer's home.

Although the VOM FASS team will investigate all of these major factors, due diligence from the prospect is also extremely important. The prospect should personally observe the projected location and count walk-by traffic, and watch during different times of the day as well as different days of the week in order to identify traffic patterns. Generally a good retail center or historic district will provide the necessary pedestrian traffic and visibility.

TJ: This has been very, very informative, Alan. Thank you so very much. Now, would you like to share a recipe using your favorite VOM FASS product?

AR:

Well, I enjoy great granola and by using the amazing oils and vinegars, it is very easy to make granola like Apricot, Blueberry & Pumpkin Seed Granola.