



How Ace Handyman Services Capitalized on the 'Do It for Me' Economy to Jumpstart Its Growth

A well-timed acquisition helped the home repair business jump onto the Franchise 500 list for the first time.

By [Jessica Thomas](#) January 6, 2022

Andy Bell puts his good luck to work. In 2001 he was running a small company called Handyman Matters and won \$50,000 worth of legal services from a business contest. He used the windfall to draft a franchise disclosure document and operations manual, which ultimately helped him begin franchising his company. Then, in 2019, just months before the onset of the pandemic, he sold that company to Ace Hardware. His company was transformed into [Ace Handyman Services](#), which was perfectly positioned to assist people in their homes during COVID. It now has 252 territories across 42 states, having added around 100 in the past year, and has landed almost squarely in the middle of our list.

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Here, Bell explains how that explosive growth happened.

Who approached who about the acquisition?

[Ace Hardware VP and CFO] Bill Guzik called me one day. He was seeing the “do it for me” economy start to emerge, and he wanted to position Ace to bring help into people’s homes. It took me a nanosecond to say “absolutely” to partnering with them.

What is the “do it for me” economy?

People see home as a sacred place and want to make it more comfortable and useful for not only their personal lives but also their careers. So this economy creates more services to assist with the greatest investment many of us have.

How has the association with Ace helped you during COVID?

We were really fortunate to rebrand in March 2020. There are some statistics that say 9 out of 10 people recognize the Ace brand in America, and that really inspired our franchise owners. The consideration that potential franchise owners gave us was greater and more profound than before.

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You’ve more than doubled your locations since the acquisition.

Ace has continued to invest in us. We’ve doubled our staff, training, marketing, support, and administrative capabilities. There are disciplines within Ace that we’ve been able to leverage, like accounting.

But that would’ve only gone so far had the fundamentals of the business not been

so strong. We answer the phone and show up on time. We've got technology that tells the customer who's walking into their home and what their credentials are. We kept doing everything we've done in a lot of respects, but now we've been introduced to millions of Ace Hardware customers.

Why do you think you're now drawing many new franchisees with corporate backgrounds?

People who did a lot of face-to-face sales tend to not be the biggest proponents of doing everything on Zoom. They see this as an opportunity to change direction but not change how they do business.



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