

FSB

FORTUNE SMALL BUSINESS

Michael Haith

CEO • MAUI WOWI

Breakthrough Since refocusing its gourmet Hawaiian beverage business on low-cost franchising in 1999, Denver-based Maui Wowi has guzzled more than 200 locations. And its 2002 revenues grew 150% over 2001, to more than \$7 million.

Strange brew Jill and Jeff Summerhays had been selling their homegrown smoothies throughout Utah since 1983 when in the mid-1990s they started thinking seriously about franchising, a daunting prospect. "We are creative concept people," says Jill. "As far as the business end is concerned, we really stink."

Chug-chug They brought in Michael Haith, who spent about \$3 million developing the franchising infrastructure before unleashing a low-cost franchise program in 2001. While \$20,000 typically buys one shop from a competitor like Jamba Juice, \$25,000 buys three Maui Wowi kiosks; you can get ten for \$50,000. And Maui Wowi is about to unveil a new deal: For \$100,000 you can manage an unlimited number of stands within a region and collect a percentage of franchise fees and product sales. "As we grow older, we're not going to be as focused on selling franchises as we are on extending the brand and letting franchise owners within the system grow," Haith says. "Now we're ready to rock & roll." — ANDREW RAFALAF



Photograph by
Chip Simons