

Case Study

Meet Todd

Todd Agius,
owner & operator of
FERGUSON PLARRE
BAKEHOUSES
Craigieburn Central



fergusonplarre.com.au

Running your own business is like creating the perfect cake

For many people, running your own business is a dream. Getting the balance right can take time, experience and a touch of innovation. Just like a perfectly tiered cake, everything needs to fit together perfectly – the consistency, taste and of course, the presentation.

Franchising is no different, it doesn't matter how many tiers you have in your business, balancing the operational tasks, managing staff, overheads and even local area marketing is a skill in itself.

***“I had a lot to learn along the way.
I had a lot of experience in the
hospitality industry, but no
business background.”*** – Todd Agius

Getting the right balance of flavours

So what are the secrets to getting the right balance?

Ferguson Plarre's Craigieburn Central franchisee Todd Agius is a great example of someone who has put together the perfect recipe. A **FERGUSON PLARRE** veteran, Todd started his franchise journey at the age of 23.

Todd comes from an event management and hospitality background with the Australian Bridal Service and reception centres. He bought his first Ferguson Plarre franchise with the help of his family.



Award winning birthday cakes created by hand by Australia's best cake decorators!



High quality pies and savouries, hand made by the bakehouse and delivered fresh every day



Essendon legend Jake Carlisle joined Todd for a meet and greet at his Craigieburn Central store

Although he hadn't owned or run a business before, Todd didn't have any fear of going into franchising.

*"It was a bit of a no brainer for me. I grew up with the **FERGUSON PLARRE** brand and knew how good the product was. I wasn't enjoying my previous job... so it was an educated risk".*

Running a business isn't simple. Franchisees need to roll up their sleeves and do some kneading in order to allow the dough to rise perfectly (don't worry, we're speaking metaphorically! There is no baking required when you are part of the **FERGUSON PLARRE BAKEHOUSE** family).

And that's just what Todd did, with excellent results. Although the Craigieburn Central franchise was a brand new outlet, it was very successful from the start!

Of course, support from the team at **FERGUSON PLARRE BAKEHOUSES** plays a key role in ensuring that new franchisees have all of the right ingredients needed to whip up their own success.

FERGUSON PLARRE franchisees are allocated a dedicated **Business Support Manager** who is always there to help and offers personalised support for staff recruitment, local area marketing, sales forecasting, performance management and problem solving.

It's not all one way though, every franchisee is encouraged to give their own input as well, that's something that Todd experienced first-hand. **FERGUSON PLARRE CRAIGIEBURN CENTRAL** is a modern outlet with an extensive menu and an impressive layout, all of which was a source of huge pride to Todd who had a hand in the design of his café.

The shiny new kiosk was built within the Craigieburn Central shopping centre – located in a booming area with a younger consumer demographic.

Going into a franchise on his own meant a lot of hard work but Todd says that purchasing a new franchise in a high traffic shopping centre was part of his dream and a good way to start his franchise journey.

One of 13 cafes within the shopping centre, Todd knew that he needed to put in maximum effort and attention to detail in order to help his business stand out from the crowd. One major aspect of his business plan was his dedication to outstanding customer service.





Key Ingredients to franchise success

The customer service that he and his team deliver is more than the icing on the cake, they are the key ingredients. Todd's high expectations for customer service came directly from feedback from the Craigieburn Central community, where word of mouth is equal to customer traffic. Todd's vision for the business was to provide fantastic customer experiences every time someone paid a visit to his store.

"Everybody knows everybody" says Todd, *"so it's more than just getting the job done. We have to do our best to ensure that everybody who visits our store has a great time"*. He says *"I think one of the most important aspects of this business is wanting to be around people and loving that interaction. When customers visit my store, I'm not just selling them a great coffee and an award winning pie, I'm selling them a little bit of sunshine!"*

Full training and support provided

Since opening his first franchise, Todd has had his own proven system of hiring and training staff. A simple five minute discussion with a candidate gives him a solid understanding of whether they are right for the job, and it's a technique that has proven to be a winner.

Some of his team started working for him when they were 15 or 16, and have stayed as employees for a decade at least. *"I've assembled a great group of staff that I can trust"* he says.

Todd is a very hands on franchisee, training all of his own staff on top of the extensive support offered by the **FERGUSON PLARRE** head office team with regards to barista, finance, technology & customer service training.

"Some learn quicker than others" he says, *"I'd rather have staff that are great at their job, regardless of how much it costs per hour – that experience that well trained staff deliver is something that money can't buy and keeps my customers coming back time and time again"*.



Todd has a great young team, including his Assistant Manager Anthony



The icing on the cake for every franchisee is the support of everyone from head office

No baking required - We make your life easier

With a 115 year old brand, Ferguson Plarre serves a very wide range and age of customers from children coming in with their parents to retirees who grew up with the brand as a household name, particularly in the north-west. As everyone knows, technology has revolutionised the way people shop so just like we have for the last 115 years... we continue to innovate.

Ferguson Plarre is proudly the #1 ranked business on Google for *'birthday cakes'* and *'wedding cakes'* in Australia. We have an online shop optimised for mobile and a database of over 20,000 loyal customers which is growing daily. In addition to this we run targeted radio, newspaper and social media campaigns

along with special promotions and competitions designed to drive customers into our stores. All of this is made available to our franchise partners as part of the **FERGUSON PLARRE** franchise relationship.

Best of all, with no royalty or marketing fees, franchisees are able to leverage profits and still have every opportunity to grow and achieve success.



Making it work – It’s a balancing act

An average day for Todd consists of a 5:30am start when he sets up the kiosk cake display, turns on the oven and the coffee machine (*with a cheeky coffee for himself of course*) and setting up tables and chairs.

At around 8:30am, another member of the team has arrived to help him with the morning coffee run, followed by a mid-morning rush at 10:30am and the peak lunch period from 12:30pm to 2pm.

Getting the mix right is one of the most important aspects with regards to consistency within the business, something that Todd found to be a bit of a challenge at first.

“Being able to delegate is the most important thing” says Todd. *“You have to be able to take yourself out of the business so it’s not just you taking care of every little thing”*.

This is where we come in as a support network, with a personal business support manager, and accounts, marketing, finance and projects teams available to help every franchisee through their journey, not to mention our talented, award winning pastry chefs and cake decorators.



Joining FERGUSON PLARRE is a recipe for franchise success!

Todd's commitment involves working most weekends and late trading which means some days can be 10 - 11 hours, but Todd wouldn't have it any other way. It's about his long term visions, knowing that all of his hard work will pay off in the long run and that he'll be able to support his family for a long time to come.

Being open minded and trying new things has been important for Todd – *“Never assume that business will always be good”* he says, *“we've had to make changes to adapt and with those changes we have grown”*.

Todd's strategy moving forward is to earn as he goes rather than rely on a major capital gain at the end of his term. Right now though, he's got the right mix of ingredients: excellent customer service, a strong team, great leadership and business skills, reliable and pertinent support from the team at Head Office and a brand which continues to innovate.

Innovation has always been the key strategy for Ferguson Plarre, which releases new products in line with consumer trends whilst at the same time instilling the same traditional family values that have seen the business transform from a small family bakery into a growing franchise network with more than 60 stores across Victoria.



With 115 years of baking experience, FERGUSON PLARRE BAKEHOUSES definitely has the right recipe for your business' success!

