



## Backed By Tenured Corporate Team, Wild Birds Unlimited Boasts Experience Needed To Grow Brand The Right Way

*Birds of a feather definitely flock together--at least, that's the case for Wild Birds Unlimited.*

Megan Ferringer  
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Since 1981, Wild Birds Unlimited has strived to provide the best-possible products and knowledgeable local advice to help nature lovers and backyard bird-feeding enthusiasts attract the kinds of birds they want to their yards. Today, the brand boasts a strong system of more than 300 locations and counting. Much of that continued success is due, in large part, to Wild Birds Unlimited's in-depth training for each and every franchise owner on the best practices first established by Jim Carpenter, the brand's founder and CEO. This ultimately ensures that every franchisee and employee understands how Wild Birds Unlimited works together to best service customers' needs.

But this training extends far beyond the brand's franchisees—it has also helped yield a leadership team with extensive tenure and knowledge, too.

When Carpenter made the decision to franchise his business back in 1983, things grew slowly at first—opening four to five franchises in the first few years. But by 1989, interest in Wild Birds Unlimited started growing and Carpenter knew that the brand had the capacity to open 20 to 30 stores a year. It was then that Carpenter realized it was time to build his Franchise

Support Center team. He chose Paul Pickett, who today serves as the chief development officer. At the time, he was the first full-time employee of the franchise.

Several other longtime employees share a similar history with the brand. Jim Lesch, the director of purchasing, has been with the brand for 26 years. Pat Parkinson, who was first hired in 1995 as the director of retail operations, is now the executive vice president and chief operating officer. And Amy Moore, the current director of retail operations, grew up in this business—her family owned one of the franchises in Michigan—and started with WBU as a business coach.

“Simply put, this is a phenomenal place to work, and we are very fortunate to have a very long-term staff,” Pickett said. “Very early on, Jim Carpenter started surrounding himself with employees who would eventually become the team that has helped drive the brand to national recognition. For all of us to be able to say that we were in it from the very beginning truly shows our long term commitment to a brand we deeply believe in.”

The impressive tenure of Wild Birds Unlimited’s corporate team has also become a source of inspiration for franchisees. Greg McGinnis, who joined the franchise in 2013 as an owner in Gastonia, North Carolina, said that it wasn’t until he talked to Pickett that he was really sold on Wild Birds Unlimited.

“My sister and I talked to Paul and started the process of learning more about the franchise by visiting a handful of stores. I was just totally impressed, especially considering the tenure of employees at corporate—that’s something you don’t see very often. It’s clear that they are tremendous advocates of the brand,” McGinnis said. “When you see people as dedicated as Pickett to a cause, it becomes infectious and it becomes a way of life—you can’t help but feel that same kind of passion.”

To learn more about franchising with Wild Birds Unlimited, [click here](#).