**SALONE FRANCHISING MILANO: WINNING FORMULAS FOR FRANCHISE BUSINESS SUCCESS**

*A sector on the rise: in 2023, revenues almost reached 34 billion euros (+9.9% compared to the previous year). Omnichannel strategies, training, and sustainability are key to growth. At Salone Franchising Milano, all the answers for aspiring entrepreneurs.*

*Milan, 26 September 2024* – A comprehensive reflection on a rapidly evolving industry. This is how Salone Franchising Milano, the event dedicated to retail and franchising organised by Fiera Milano, kicked off today at Allianz-Mico in Milan, running until Saturday.

According to data from Nomisma, **the sector continues to grow at a steady pace**. Thanks to investments aimed at attracting new franchisees, particularly by major brands, and the creation of new franchises, the sector, which today accounts for **1.8% of GDP**, consolidated its growth trend in 2023 with revenues nearing **34 billion euros** (**up 9.9%** compared to the previous year). In Italy, there are **929 franchise brands** operating, with **65,806 active outlets** (**+4,664** compared to the previous year). The strong financial performance is mirrored in other indicators, such as **employment**, which has **increased by 13.8%**, with **34,919 new jobs added**, bringing the total workforce to 287,767.

**OMNICHANNEL, TRAINING, SUSTAINABILITY: HOW FRANCHISING CAN CONTINUE TO GROW**

The sector remains dynamic, adapting to the changing market landscape. While e-commerce has become a well-established channel (47.1% of internet users purchase products online at least once a week), social media engagement is also crucial (Italy has 43 million active social media users, according to Nomisma). In this environment, **omnichannel strategies**, where brands maintain a presence across online channels, are now essential and a potentially winning approach for all franchisors.

Technological innovation doesn't stop there. Big data and artificial intelligence are the next frontiers in a continually evolving digital landscape. While companies are gearing up to meet these challenges, the "human factor" still plays a pivotal role in driving business success.

Well-trained managers and ongoing franchisee **education** are key levers for growth in the franchise business. Industry associations are at the forefront, ensuring the highest level of professionalism for managers at all levels. Initiatives like the Confimprese Academy, which offers tailored training programmes, provide franchisees with the tools to evolve and develop their skills.

Special attention is being given to **women** in business. Although still underrepresented in the sector due to the challenges of balancing personal and professional life, women represent significant potential for the industry. McDonald’s, for instance, has launched specific initiatives aimed at female entrepreneurship, demonstrating that women can be highly successful franchisees. After all, franchising reduces business risk and offers greater guarantees, making it an appealing opportunity for women who want to become entrepreneurs without sacrificing family life.

**Sustainability** has also become a vital component for innovation and demonstrating a company’s commitment. ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria are pursued across all potential dimensions: environmental impact, economic sustainability, and corporate governance. 68% of franchisors already have a sustainability manager or aim to integrate one within the next three years. In an industry that values quality and respect for its workforce, governance is the most widely adopted focus: 63% of franchisors have a code of ethics, and 22% plan to introduce one in the future. Environmental awareness is also a top priority: 87% of franchisors have taken tangible steps such as replacing traditional light bulbs with energy-efficient alternatives or choosing eco-friendly packaging.

The challenges facing the sector, the opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs, and examples of best business practices will continue to be key themes at **Salone Franchising Milano**, which runs **until 28 September 2024** at **Allianz-Mico**.

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