

SWEET BEGINNINGS

2607 McBain Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6L 2C7
Contact: Elana Lancit
Phone: 604-738-9552

For Immediate Release

May 2006

SWEET BEGINNINGS PLANS 10 LOCATIONS IN CALIFORNIA

(Vancouver, BC)---Sweet Beginnings Wedding Consulting & Event Planners, the world's only franchised, full-service wedding planning and décor provider, soon hopes to expand its presence in California. The first United States location is scheduled to open in Los Angeles this spring.

Virginia Green is thrilled to be the first person offering Sweet Beginnings in the United States. Green first became interested in Sweet Beginnings after learning about the company at a local convention. "The concept appealed to me and I like that you can choose to operate Sweet Beginnings from home and you can choose to work full or part-time. Furthermore, the company offers a great training program," said Green.

Sweet Beginnings, which began franchising in November 2004 and in less than a year grew to 15 locations in the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, is rapidly expanding in the United States. Rob Lancit, CEO of Sweet Beginnings, said the company would like to have 10 franchises open in the United States by the end of 2007

Sweet Beginnings plans to open in the following California markets:

- Orange County, 3 units
- San Bernardino, 2 units
- Sacramento, 1 unit
- San Diego, 3 units
- San Francisco, 1 unit

“This is the type of concept that will have a very big snowball effect once we get established in the U.S. market,” Rob said of Sweet Beginnings.

Strong interest in the concept has already been generated in Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois and New York, Rob said.

It would have been hard for Sweet Beginnings to ignore the U.S. wedding market, where more than \$80 billion was spent on 2.1 million weddings from June 2003 to June 2004, according to the Association for Wedding Professionals International (AFWPI). According to industry figures, the average budget for a wedding is estimated to be \$20,000 and includes 175 invited guests. A recent study found that half of all brides will use a wedding consultant or wedding day planner.

“Our franchisee validation in Canada has been extremely strong and we expect more of the same as we expand into the U.S. market,” Rob said. “I think there are far more growth opportunities for us in the United States.”

The estimated initial investment for a Sweet Beginnings franchise is \$35,000, which includes training and an initial inventory of décor and rental items for a 200-person event. Sweet Beginnings is designed as a home-based business, requiring nothing more than a traditional home office set-up.

Additional employees aren’t required at the onset, but coordinators and decorators can be hired on a per-event basis as the business matures. Elana Lancit, founder and president, coordinates about 220 events each year including an average of five weddings every Saturday. More than 80 percent of Sweet Beginnings’ business comes from wedding consulting.

Sweet Beginnings’ training includes three or four days of field training in the franchisee’s territory, including being accompanied on visits to local suppliers and vendors as well as training with the franchisee’s first wedding or corporate event. Franchisees’ marketing expenses are minimal and generally limited to local bridal directory advertisements and informational displays at bridal shows.

Wedding consulting is still in its infancy and the industry is mainly comprised of individual business owners. However, Rob said many such businesses are “here today and gone tomorrow.” Conversely, Sweet Beginnings offers prospective franchisees a proven operating system and support network.

#####