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## **Largest franchised brands double yearly sales gains**

*Franchise industry adds more than \$26.9 billion in global sales, a 4.2 percent rise led by the 10 largest franchises that grew sales by \$10.8 billion. CEO Jennifer Schuler of Wetzel's Pretzels is one of four exclusive interviews with Top 200+ standouts. Online database launches today, listing all 500 brands by worldwide sales.*

MINNEAPOLIS—The 200 largest U.S.-based franchisors grew their combined annual sales by more than \$26.9 billion or 4.2 percent last year, to \$671.3 billion, with most categories seeing across-the-board gains well above the previous year, according to the newly released Franchise Times Top 200+, an exclusive ranking of the 500 largest franchises.

The 10 largest franchised brands added \$10.8 billion in sales, a 3.6 percent increase compared to that cohort's \$14.3 billion or 5 percent sales growth the prior year. The top 10 now account for more than \$310 billion in annual sales—that's almost half of the entire top 200, which recorded sales of \$671.3 billion in 2018.

Those numbers are a new high-water mark for the ranking, which is the result of a five-month research and reporting effort that leads to the most credible and objective franchise ranking available, said Franchise Times Editor Laura Michaels.

“While the overall growth rate slowed some, many companies and categories still saw strong sales increases in 2018. McDonald's, for one, grew by an incredible \$5.2 billion, accelerating from \$5 billion in growth reported last year. Chick-fil-A grew sales by 16.2 percent, helping the chicken subcategory of restaurants grow by 9.8 percent, followed by Mexican at 6.8 percent as the strongest subcategories,” said Nicholas Upton, restaurant editor at Franchise Times who wrote the lead article for the project. “The growth leader, however, was health and medical, which as a category grew sales by 14.5 percent, followed closely by personal services at 14.3 percent. The big decliner was casual dining, though, with a 1 percent sales decline.”

McDonald's retains its spot atop the Franchise Times Top 200+, hitting \$96.14 billion in sales. Conversely, Subway took a tumble, shedding \$1.1 billion in sales and falling off the top five for the first time since 2009.

In an exclusive interview, Wetzel's Pretzels CEO Jennifer Schuler discusses her brand's Twisted Kitchen lab and how innovation is driving the sales that led to 5.2 percent growth last year. It is one of four exclusive founder and CEO interviews included in this year's ranking.

### Franchise Times Fastest-Growing Industry Sectors

1. Health & Medical +14.5%
2. Personal Services +14.3%
3. Cleaning +8.4%
4. Business Services +5.3%
5. Hotels & Hospitality +5.2%

#### Franchise Times Top 10 Franchises by Worldwide Sales

1. McDonald's; \$96.1 billion sales, +5.8% from prior year; 37,855 units, +1.6%
2. 7-Eleven; \$86 billion\* sales, +1.2% from prior year; 67,656 units, +4.7%
3. KFC; \$26.2 billion sales, +7% from prior year; 22,621 units, +5.3%
4. Burger King; \$21.6 billion sales, +7.7% from prior year; 17,796 units, +6.1%
5. Ace Hardware; \$16.6 billion sales, +4% from prior year; 5,376 units, -2.8%
6. Subway; \$16.2 billion sales, -6.4% from prior year; 42,427 units, -3.4%
7. Domino's; \$13.5 billion sales, +10.2% from prior year; 16,114 units, +8.5%
8. Pizza Hut; \$12.2 billion sales, +1.5% from prior year; 17,149 units, +2.4%
9. Marriott; \$12 billion\* sales, +4.3% from prior year; 651 units, +0.6%
10. Taco Bell; \$10.7 billion sales; +6.3% from prior year; 7,072 units, +3.3%

\*Franchise Times estimate

#### Franchise Times Top 10 Fastest Growers by Sales

1. Orangetheory: 43.1% increase from prior year
2. HomeVestors: 26.5%
3. Circle K: 26%
4. Hand & Stone: 24.6%
5. Blaze Pizza: 22.4%
6. Planet Fitness: 21.7%
7. Jan-Pro: 21.4%
8. Senior Helpers: 20.7%
9. Tropical Smoothie: 20.3%
10. Anytime Fitness: 19.5%

#### Franchise Times Top 10 Fastest Growers by Units

1. Blaze Pizza: 32.9% increase from prior year
2. Orangetheory: 31.8%
3. Hyatt : 17.2%
4. Freddy's : 16.7%
5. Realty One Group: 16.5%
6. Planet Fitness: 14.8%
7. Tropical Smoothie: 14.3%
8. Circle K : 13.7%
9. Hand & Stone: 12.5%
10. Smoothie King: 12.2%

#### ABOUT THE FRANCHISE TIMES TOP 200+

The Franchise Times Top 200+® is the only ranking by systemwide sales and units of the largest 500 U.S.-based franchise brands. Published in the October issue and available in a searchable database online, the Franchise Times Top 200+ also analyzes industry sectors based on percentage change in sales growth, reports the 10 fastest-growing franchises by four different measures, and includes exclusive news stories about the biggest names in franchising. The rankings and full report, and the searchable online database, are available at [www.franchisetimes.com/Top200](http://www.franchisetimes.com/Top200).