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# How a Local Eatery Takes Things National

Franchising guru George Naddaff, the man who set Boston Market on the road to success, made his first fortune selling chicken. Now he's ready to make another with bison burgers. **By Jason Schwartz**

George Naddaff got his start in the food biz operating 19 KFCs around Boston in the 1960s. But his big score didn't come until 1988, when he stopped into a home-style eatery in Newton. He was so impressed that he built it into a national poultry powerhouse called Boston Chicken, then sold it off for millions to

buyers who renamed it Boston Market.

Four years ago, driving through Watertown, Naddaff passed a small restaurant called Lo Fat Know Fat and had a familiar feeling. He counted a line of 20 young people snaking out the door—and “being an entrepreneur,” he says, “when I see a line,

I get excited.” He pulled over, went in for a bite, and then got down to work.

Now Naddaff's finally ready to launch the store as a nationwide chain. Here's how he prepped his latest venture, drawing on the same ideas that made his last one such a juggernaut.



## A FAT CHANCE

To its backer, **Lo Fat Know Fat** (like Boston Market) appeals to an underserved demographic—in this case, young, health-conscious eaters looking to grab fast food made with them in mind (baked fries, less fat in the cheese, etc.).

## STEAK OUT

**Naddaff** spent three weeks eating at Lo Fat Know Fat twice daily, and took copious notes on what he saw. He then monitored its second outpost in Shrewsbury. Convinced the concept was solid, Naddaff bought the company.

## TEST KITCHEN

To ramp up efficiency, Naddaff opened more locations and tinkered with their operations. He rejiggered the menu, cut deals with food suppliers, and bought new equipment (including an automated gadget to bake those healthier fries).

## IDENTITY CRISIS

Naddaff hated the restaurant's name. He tried simplifying it to **KnowFat**, but that didn't help—it wrongly implied fat-free food. A marketing firm brainstormed lots of alternatives. **UFood Grill**, which Naddaff thinks has youthful appeal, won.

## VENDING CUISINE

Franchises are now going for \$35,000 a pop, with Naddaff set to earn 5 percent of all sales. To ensure only experienced restaurateurs apply, he insists they buy at least 10 at once. Big deals have been struck in Houston and south Florida.

## BUY GEORGE

To hype the brand, Naddaff inked **George Foreman**, a perennial spokesman with a serious appetite. The goal is to open 800 UFood Grills in five years—large enough to really cash in on by taking the company public or selling it off.



THIS JUST IN: Channel 5's spiffy HD set.

## Watch and Learn

Channel 5 works the kinks out of its new format.

Competing stations would do well to tune in to NewsCenter 5. In May its news team became the first in Boston to broadcast in high definition (HD)—and since all stations nationwide must do likewise by 2009, the ABC affiliate's misadventures with the format may offer valuable lessons.

The challenges began with some of Channel 5's macho men, who had previously balked at donning makeup for the camera. When HD exposed every tiny blemish with unflattering clarity, they suddenly had reason to powder up—a newfound vanity the station encouraged by hosting a week of cosmetics training.

That wasn't the only curveball, though. The technological upgrade, which cost a reported \$10 million, included a spruced-up set double

the size of the old one. Behind the anchor desk, designers placed an intentionally blurry image of the Boston skyline—against which, producers figured, bubbly news readers like Liz Brunner would stand out.

They stood out, all right. So much so that perplexed viewers started complaining, wondering if their sets were on the fritz. Some, furious about seeing fuzziness on their high-def TVs, pledged not to watch until a new backdrop was in place. By June the station had ordered a replacement. While it was being completed, directors used more close-up shots to avoid showing the offending background. Good thing by then the talent had all come to appreciate the wonders of a little makeup. —Amy Derjue