

SPONSORED



Rob and Lynne Kerrison Traded Big Business for Education with Tutor Doctor

04/11/18 08:59:42

Before arriving at [Tutor Doctor](#), Rob and Lynne Kerrison had already built enviable careers in the corporate world. Rob worked through a series of high-level sales and marketing jobs for international companies in a variety of sectors— “different industries, but always sizable businesses with sizable budgets,” he said—and Lynne worked at a senior level within the HR function for Tesco, one of the largest retailers in the world. When Lynne stopped working to have kids, it got them thinking about where their careers were taking them and what they wanted to do next.

“We did not know what we wanted to do, but both of us were feeling we were up for a change,” Rob said. “What I did know was that I wanted to own my own business.”

Searching for next steps, the Kerrisons were introduced to a franchise broker and decided to see what he had to offer. The broker spent two days with the Kerrisons, asking them about their backgrounds, aspirations, skillsets and any other information that might pertain to their career preferences. A week later, the broker returned with a list of six franchises that he thought might suit the Kerrisons. At the top of the list was [Tutor Doctor](#), and Rob says the list could have ended right there.

“Tutor Doctor was the first concept we learned about, and we loved it,” he said. “It got us excited to learn

about the next five, but frankly, they were all a bit of a letdown after Tutor Doctor.”

Rob and Lynne saw a lot of potential in Tutor Doctor’s model from a business perspective, but what most grabbed their attention was the brand’s clearly established set of values, which Rob says aligned directly with his and Lynne’s.

“Tutor Doctor felt very real,” he said. “The need for their services is obvious, and it was clear that was not going to go away anytime soon, but more importantly, we could see ourselves in it. We knew it was something we could feel good about doing every day.”

Tutor Doctor’s model also afforded the Kerrisons a number of logistical benefits absent from their corporate careers, benefits that Rob was eager to take advantage of.

“It was something we could do from home, we did not have to buy a bunch of inventory and we did not have to buy or build a store,” he said. “That meant that we could get started fast and for a relatively modest investment.”

The Kerrisons followed up with Tutor Doctor’s development team and began the application process. They were nearly ready to sign a contract when Rob got another job offer in the corporate world and decided to take it.

“Partly it was cold feet—Tutor Doctor would be a big change, so taking the other job felt safer—and partly it was because Lynne was not quite ready to work full time. She wanted to stay with the kids for a bit longer, and we knew we wanted both of us working on the business,” Rob said.

Rob accepted the offer and worked that job for a year. In that time, he says his interest in Tutor Doctor only increased.

“Things were fine with the job, but not great, and I kept thinking about the freedom of Tutor Doctor and the option of doing something different, something that would have a positive impact on people,” he said.

So, after a year, Rob and Lynne reached back out to Tutor Doctor and signed a contract to open a territory in Cambridge, a market where they suspected, correctly, the academic orientation of the city would provide an underlying demand for tutoring.

The Kerrisons opened their Tutor Doctor business in 2010. Eight years later, they are one of the largest franchisees in the system, delivering thousands of tutoring sessions per year and earning a spot in Tutor Doctor’s President’s Circle, an honor offered to the franchise’s highest achievers according to a variety of metrics.

“The President’s Circle is the top ten operators in our system,” said Scott Thompson, Tutor Doctor’s senior vice president of global franchise development. “It is measured by a number of targets, including sales and number of tutoring sessions completed. We are not just interested in revenue, we want to see that students are progressing. We have a number of benchmarks to measure that, and Rob and Lynne hit them all.”

Rob attributes much of the success of his Tutor Doctor to a focus on service, which he says fuels every other aspect of the operation.

“The growth of our business comes down to a three-step process: recommendation, referral, renewal,” he said. “That process relies on good service. If we focus on making a positive impact on the lives of our students and their families, the recommendations follow, the referrals follow and the renewals follow.”

But the Kerrisons’ success was not achieved through their hard work alone. Rob admits they rely heavily

on the support of Tutor Doctor's corporate team as well as other franchisees in the system.

"When we started with Tutor Doctor, we had basically nothing. We were not teachers, we did not have any tutors, we did not even have an office," Rob said. "But Tutor Doctor trained us on everything we needed to know to get started, and they put us in touch with another franchisee, who I met with and observed. I learned a lot from him, and we became friends. That is one of the best parts about being in this system. You are on a team, part of a bigger ship. I think that is critical. You can always get someone on the phone, and you can always find a solution for any problem you may face. Some of the relationships you form are formalized and official, others are just people you come to know within the system, and all of them are working to support each other."

Over their eight years with Tutor Doctor, the Kerrisons have built an operation strong enough to run without their direct day-to-day oversight, allowing them to focus their efforts on supporting their office team and tutors.

"I have worked in every role in the business, but now we have a full staff," Rob said. "We have built a business that can actually run without us, which is an important place for any franchisee to get to. Our job now is to make sure we have the right people working and that they have everything they need to do great work."

According to Thompson, that high-level approach is exactly what makes the Kerrisons such strong Tutor Doctor franchisees.

"The Kerrisons execute every aspect of the business at a high level," Thompson said. "Nothing slips through the cracks. They are involved in the community, they know the importance of marketing, they are great communicators and great leaders, and they have built a very strong culture within their operation. They are not singularly focused on any one thing; they are looking at the big picture."

That strategy has enabled the Kerrisons' Tutor Doctor to provide more than 60,000 tutoring sessions over the years, a growing number that Rob wears as a badge of honor.

"60,000 sessions. That is what I am most proud of," he said. "That is 60,000 times someone has learned something new, 60,000 times a student has developed a little more confidence. We have put in a lot of work to make that happen, and it says a lot about the quality, passion and work ethic of our tutors."

The Kerrisons have no plans to stop building on that number anytime soon. Rob says he and Lynne have found exactly what they were looking for when they decided to start their own business, and it is only getting better.

"It was a bit scary at first," Rob said. "People are trusting you to help their children, and you have to take that responsibility seriously. But we learned so much so quickly, and it is very satisfying to be dedicating ourselves to such an important service. And the work is getting better and better. Tutor Doctor has always been driven by data and research, and the brand has developed new tools and strategies to make our services more accessible and more effective. We are excited to see Tutor Doctor grow, and we are excited to continue growing along with it."

Startup costs to open a local Tutor Doctor territory range from £48,557 to £68,547 and regional territories range from £52,101 to £72,091. For more information or to inquire about investing in your own territory, call Tutor Doctor's international franchise development team at +44.020.8133.3525.