



# Tracy Johnstone

Tracy Johnstone was a McDonald's franchisee and owner/operator for 30 years. In that time, she grew her business to seven restaurants in three counties with more than \$20M annual revenues.

In her time with McDonald's, Tracy broke barriers to earn leadership roles at the national level with her franchisor. She worked with McDonald's senior leadership in those roles as she represented the owner/operators. That award-winning leadership, advocating for the franchisee while fostering collaboration with the franchisor, allows her to effectively work with clients as they navigate those kinds of relationships.

Tracy served in elected roles within the McDonald's system, including the McDonald's Operator National Advertising Fund and President of the Northwest Florida Marketing Co-op. In those roles, she represented and led her fellow operators in media planning, content, and execution. Her background with big brand advertising, coupled with local brand building allows her to provide a wide swath of support to individuals and business.

Tracy served as the chair of the Women Operators Network and she led the franchisee COVID response for the entire nation. Tracy's credentials and expertise in the area of disaster response and food safety were key in her selection to lead the COVID response team.

Tracy is a member of the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), where she serves on the retail food team. She has been featured as a speaker for AFDO seminars and conferences. She was a featured panelist for the Food Protection FDA/Regulatory/Industry Panel and was interviewed for the AFDO podcast speaking about disaster response and food safety.

Tracy's core expertise areas are:

- **Corporate Operations.** Tracy helped grow her family's franchises in both number and revenue through the rigorous implementation of processes and routines that gave security and predictability to her employees and customers, as well as generated reliable revenues in a penny-profit model.
- **Profitability.** As mentioned, McDonald's (and most quick-service chains) runs on tight margins. Tracy learned to "count the ketchup packets," track the pennies, and grow profitably year over year.
- **Culture and People Management.** Tracy hired, grew, and managed thousands of employees and opened multiple restaurants in her McDonald's tenure. She developed what she named the Johnstone Difference, her approach to building company culture, managing people with empathy and enthusiasm, and building loyalty in employees and customers. Many of her staff were with her for decades.
- **Strategic Communication.** Tracy was the franchisee lead for marketing with McDonald's in the Southeast U.S., as well as planning strategic communication and positioning for her own restaurants. She also became an expert in crisis management and communication when Hurricane Michael devastated Panama City, Florida and several of her restaurants in 2018. In addition to managing the rebuild of her locations and the care of her 300 employees, she coordinated operations and communication of other owner/operators nationally as they banded together to help rebuild.

Tracy's *Johnstone Difference* approach worked so well that, when she transitioned out of the McDonald's system, she started a consultancy of the same name to help other brands take advantage of her three-decade experience with the top franchisor in American history.

Tracy knows the operations of tightly-run, penny-profit businesses inside and out, and spent 30 years building them, building wealth, and building people.