

# Franchise Expo South Creates a Gateway to Latin America

Fourth annual Franchise Expo South caters to an international population and offers exhibitors access to top franchise talent.

BY JOEL GOLDSTEIN



**T**his coming January will likely bring the bitter cold to much of the United States, but in Miami Beach, things will be heating up when the fourth annual Franchise Expo South kicks off Jan. 15 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. More than 10,000 people from dozens of countries visited FES last January, and expectations are even

higher for the 2010 event.

And why wouldn't they be? All the key components are there to make a stellar show. First, you have the city of Miami—the gateway to Latin America, and a city that attracts one of the most diverse and cultural populations in the country. Second, the producers of Franchise Expo South, MFV Expositions, are closely networking with franchise associations in countries around the globe to establish international pavilions with Brazil, Spain and France. And third, there's the support of the International Franchise Association, which sponsors not only FES but also the West Coast Franchise Expo and the International Franchise Expo.

"Last January [attendees from] more than 40 countries visited Franchise Expo South," said Jim Mastandrea, regional sales manager for MFV Expositions. "The event primarily serves the Southeast, Latin America and the Caribbean. We've seen such strong international interest that the event is actually becoming a mini IFE."

Mastandrea credits a large part of that success to the location of the event.

"Miami is such an international city, so we're seeing enormous interest from countries outside of that group," he said. "Investors, franchisors and prospects from Puerto Rico, South America and Europe will be in attendance and Miami is the venue that helped attract that audience."

Fabio Scocimara, director of international development for MFV Expositions, is credited with actually selecting Miami Beach as the site for FES.

"The main reason Miami Beach was chosen is because it's a very metropolitan city," said Scocimara. "Everyone knows it is a strong Latin market, but people are surprised to hear it's also a large hub for Europeans. Another positive aspect of Miami is that, from a business standpoint, Latin Americans and Spaniards have a niche in the market, because they speak the language. That's an important factor, and it's helping FES to become a top international show."

With such strong international presence at FES, MFV Expositions has been able to generate international pavilions to better help attendees and franchisors network and meet face to face.

**Franchise**  
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"We work very closely with the trade commission of Spain," said Mastandrea. "They have a group based in Miami so we're able to disseminate our information directly to franchisors and business owners in Madrid and other major markets in the country. Relationships like that have helped us to build a strong international pavilion presence."

Mastandrea said a similar program is in motion with France and Brazil.

"We continue to work closely with the embassies to help promote Franchise Expo South to franchisors in other countries," he said. "It's been very successful. People are interested and attracted to these events. The programs have grown organically."

One reason the international audience continues to grow at FES is because international franchisors do not have to register a franchise disclosure document before exhibiting. In Florida, foreign companies can attend a trade show and get an idea of the market, without having to spend thousands preparing documentation.

