Check Your Tech

Ten Ways to Deliver a Better First Impression for Franchise Prospects and Convert More Leads to Deals

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You only have one shot at a great first impression

Your franchise candidate has done the research, read your press and checked out reviews – now they want to reach out to learn more.

They get to your brand's development website and start to fill out an inquiry – but something's not working right, preventing them from connecting with your recruiter.

The result? A bad first impression and potential loss of the lead. With a conversion rate of about 1% from initial lead to deal in franchising, you have to ask yourself – is your technology helping your conversion rate? It is delivering a great first impression? Is it increasing your recruiter efficiency?

If your systems are working well, the answer should be yes to all three questions. But how do you know if all is right on your site?

Eliminate embarrassing errors from your online inquiry technology and automation

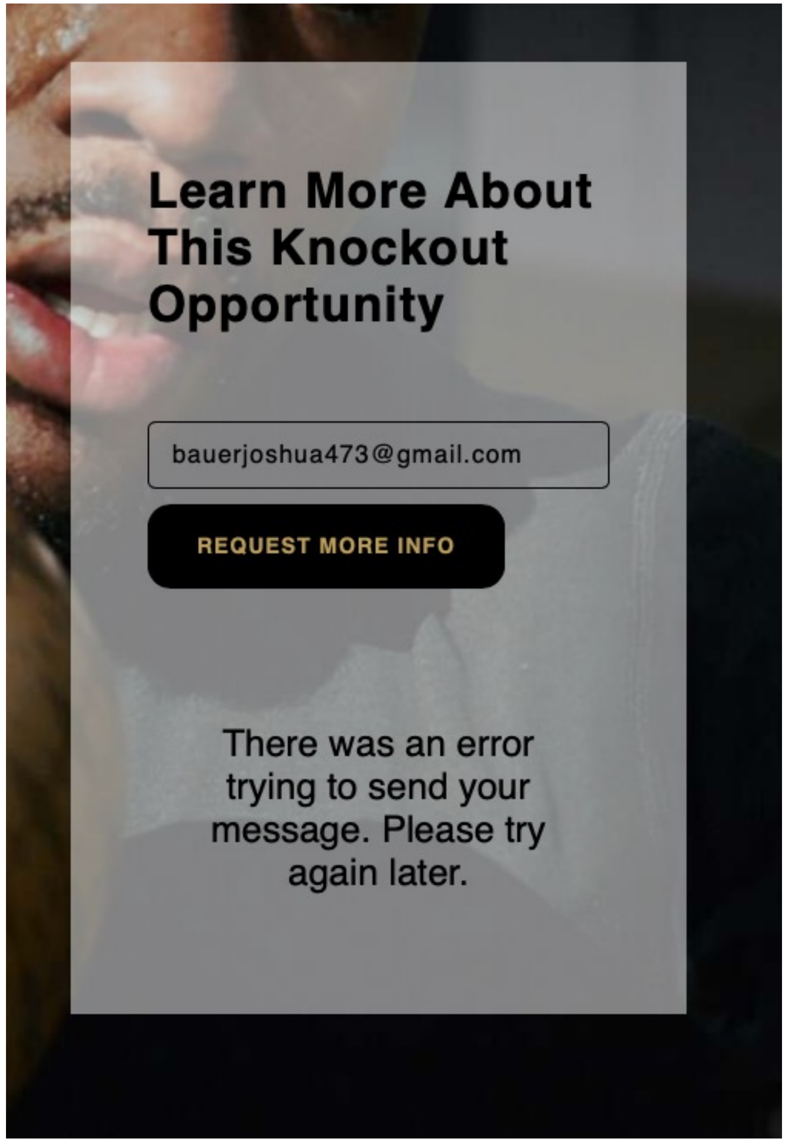
The ServiceScore® team has researched hundreds of franchise brands over the past 5 years to provide Mystery Shopping performance data for the STAR Awards at the Franchise Leadership and Development Conference, produced by Franchise Update Media.

We've witnessed the good, bad and broken in frandev websites so this year, we decided to write it all down to share with our development friends to help improve the experience for candidates.

We've got receipts. You'll see the screen shots and description of the issues we saw most often, to help you experience what a candidate sometimes experiences.

And don't miss our Check(list) Your Tech at the end, a summary of tactics and frequency for keeping everything tuned up. Read on for the 10 biggest opportunities to drive a better, more effective lead process – when you Check Your Tech!

1. Make sure your inquiry form is sending



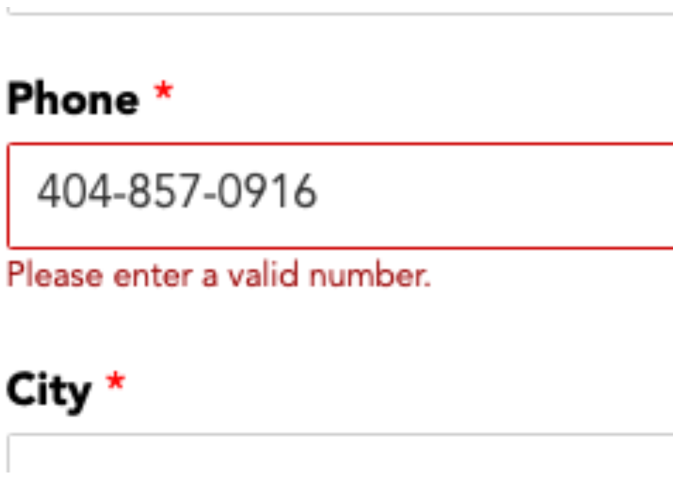
One of the issues we see most often is that the form submission isn't working. The user fills out all the info, then hits the 'submit' button, only to have an error message displayed or a spinning ball/hour-glass, indicating that the website timed out due to a glitch.

In this example, the visitor filled out their contact information and when they hit the "request more info button", an error message occurred.

2. Check that all form fills are working

Be sure that every time a visitor must enter their personal information, each form fill entry is set up to work correctly and in the variety of ways that a visitor might enter their information.

For example, with a phone number, a prospect may put a 1 in front of the number, they may put hyphens in, or they may enter all 10 numbers in a row. The form fill should allow for the multiple ways that a valid phone number can be entered.

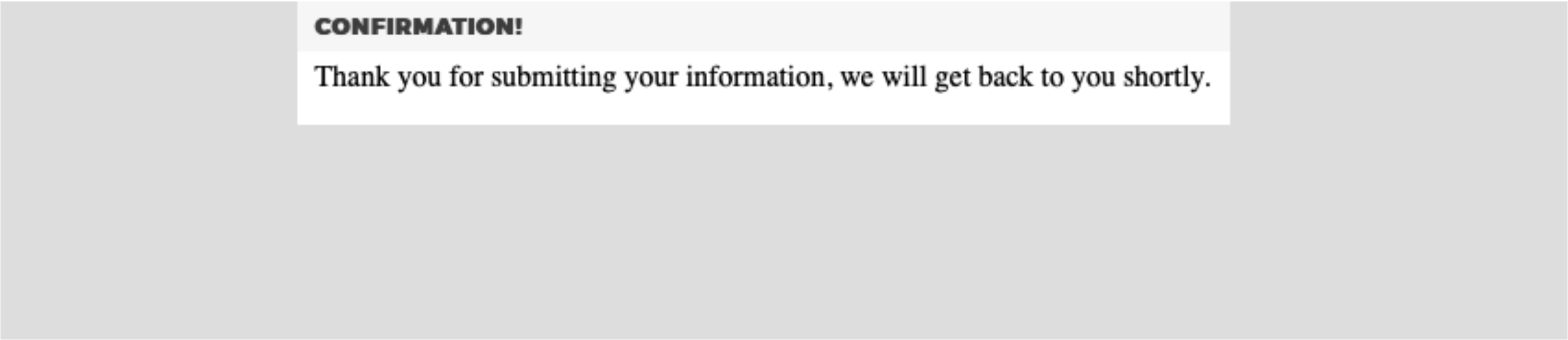


In this example, the visitor just gets an error message no matter which way the phone number is entered. And since this field is required, the form can't be submitted.

3. Redirect Visitors to more content after Lead Form Submission

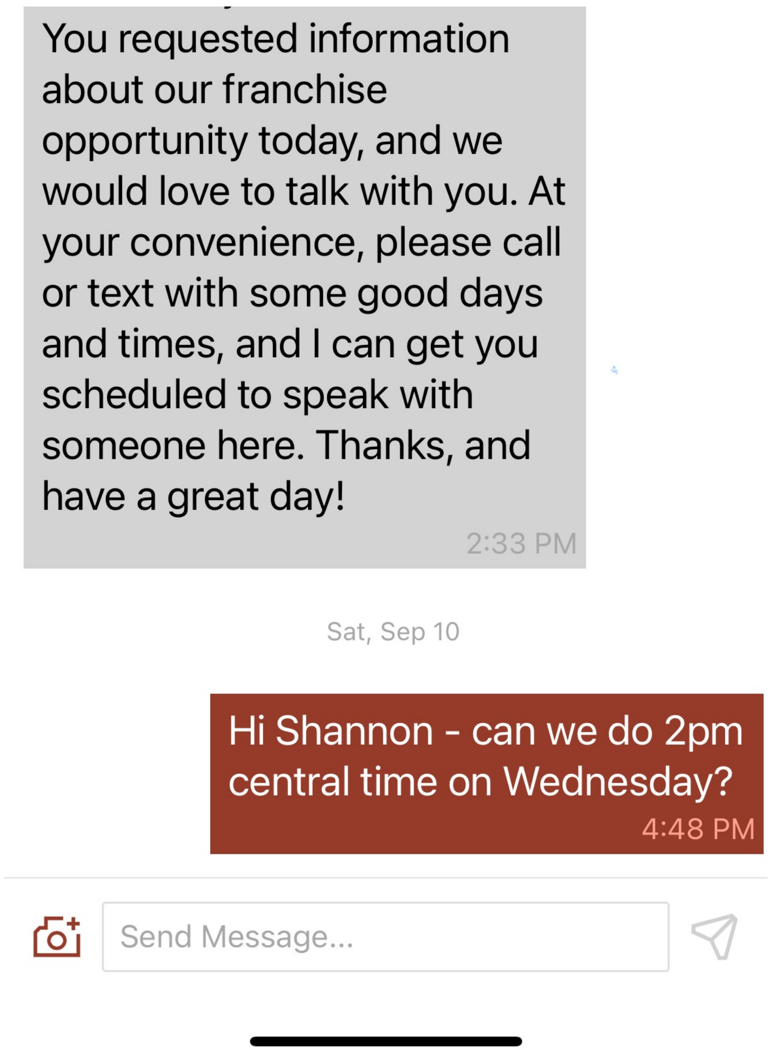
After a visitor to your website submits the form, instead of just displaying a message the that the form has been sent, serve up a page with options for the caller to keep learning about the brand while they wait for a follow-up.

A set of options works best to capture the interest of different types of prospects. These can include franchisee testimonial videos, links to financial information, details of the awarding process, white papers, press and more. AND make sure that all these links are working well for the visitor to smoothly access the content.



In this example, the visitor just gets a message that their lead form has been sent, missing the opportunity to serve up additional content that invites the prospect to keep exploring.

4. Be sure auto-texting is monitored and linked to humans

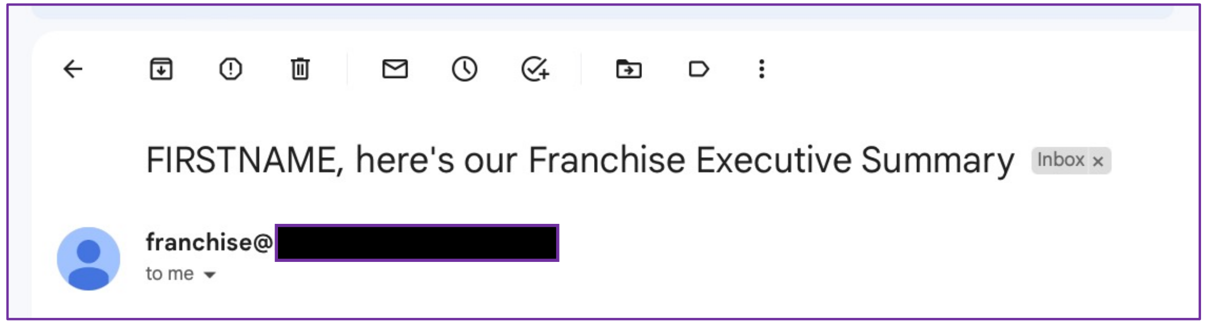


Providing automatic texting after a lead form submission is a great way to get a quick response to a prospect. However, it's important that the conversation is monitored so that no candidate texts go unanswered.

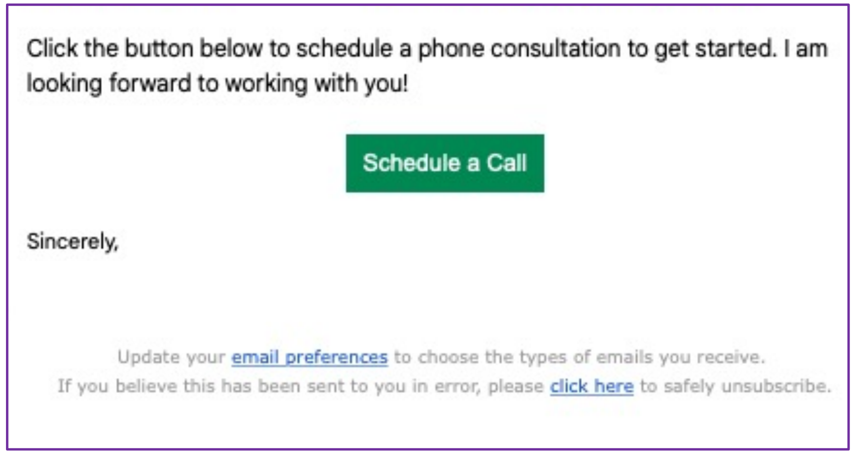
In this example, the candidate responded to the recruiter's text with a time and date to meet with from the recruiter, but the recruiter never texted back.

Look at Links

5. Check your email templates for link and formatting errors



In this example, the email template isn't pulling the prospect's name from the data base correctly, so the email subject line and content is addressed to, "FIRSTNAME".

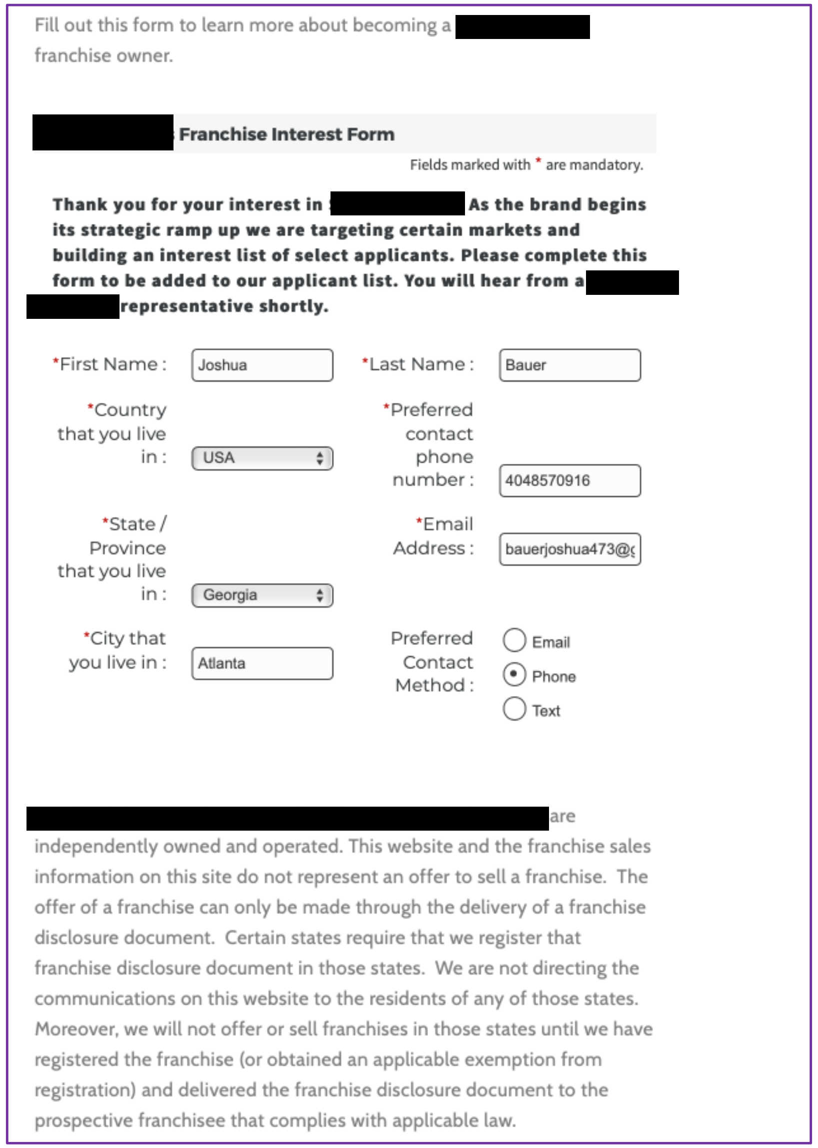


In this example, clicking the "schedule a call" button in the email took the reader the brand's website, rather than providing a way to schedule a call with the recruiter. Also, the email was not signed by anyone or with a name – just ends with, "Sincerely…."

Having email templates that go out after a lead form submission is a great way to show a quick response, but it's just as important that they give a great first impression.

Check for formatting issues and broken or incorrect links to prevent confusion or frustration for a candidate.

6. Make sure your forms don’t need a scroll bar


Fill out this form to learn more about becoming a [redacted] franchise owner.

[redacted] Franchise Interest Form

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Thank you for your interest in [redacted] As the brand begins its strategic ramp up we are targeting certain markets and building an interest list of select applicants. Please complete this form to be added to our applicant list. You will hear from a [redacted] representative shortly.

*First Name : Joshua
*Last Name : Bauer
*Country that you live in : USA
*Preferred contact phone number : 4048570916
*State / Province that you live in : Georgia
*Email Address : bauerjoshua473@
*City that you live in : Atlanta
Preferred Contact Method : Email / Phone / Text

[redacted] are independently owned and operated. This website and the franchise sales information on this site do not represent an offer to sell a franchise. The offer of a franchise can only be made through the delivery of a franchise disclosure document. Certain states require that we register that franchise disclosure document in those states. We are not directing the communications on this website to the residents of any of those states. Moreover, we will not offer or sell franchises in those states until we have registered the franchise (or obtained an applicable exemption from registration) and delivered the franchise disclosure document to the prospective franchisee that complies with applicable law.

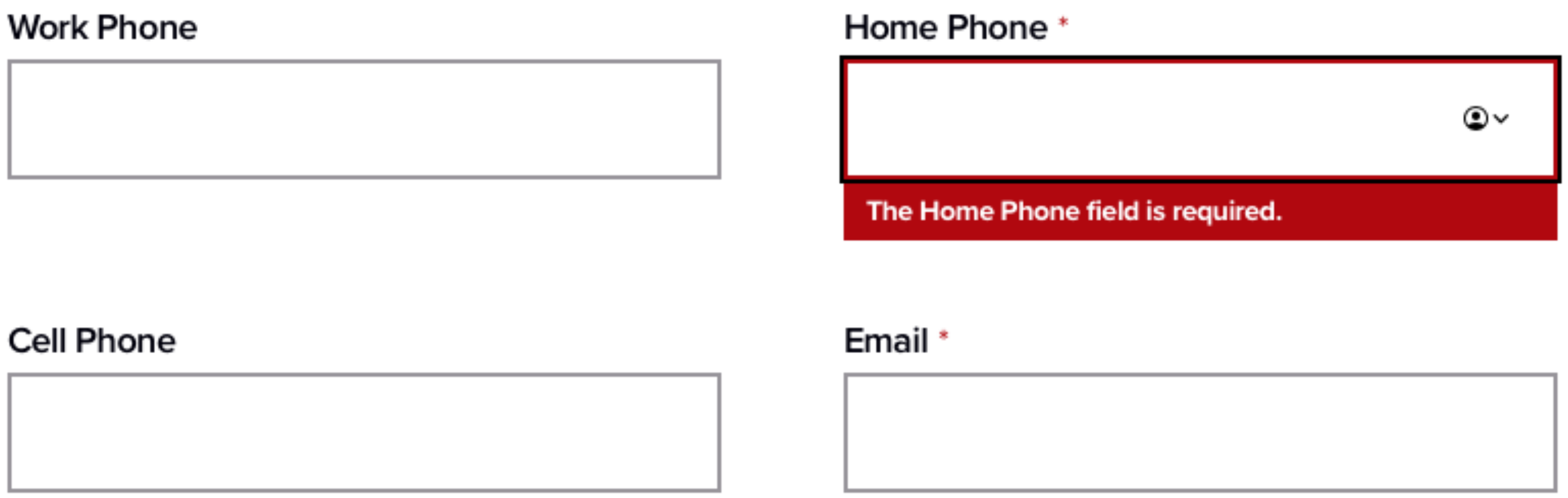
It’s important to check that if you’re requesting a longer list of information on your inquiry form that, if the form needs a scroll bar on a website, it works correctly and that it is intuitive for the visitor to find a scroll bar to complete the form.

Better yet, don’t have a scroll bar at all.

In this example, the form is imbedded in a page where it appears complete, but actually needs a scroll bar down for a visitor to complete the form and submit the information. Frustrating and not intuitive for users, providing high risk of abandonment.

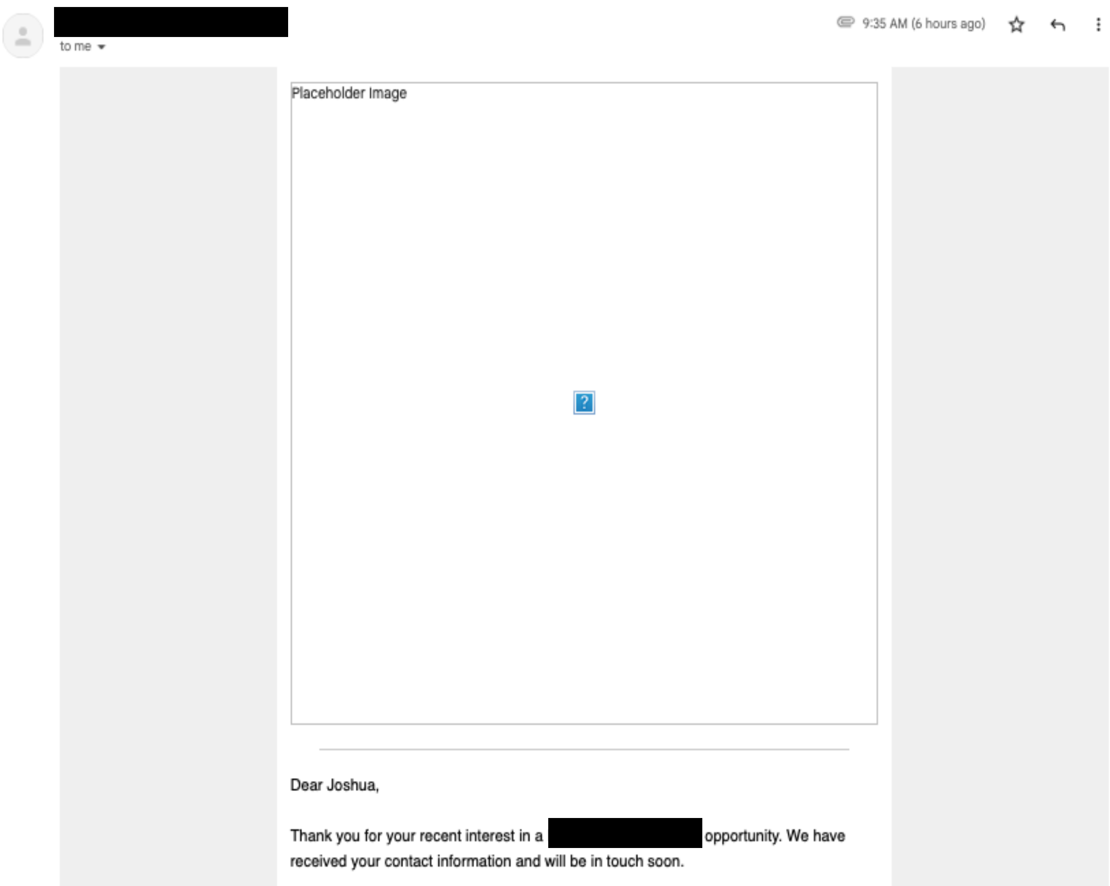
7. Make sure your lead forms are keeping up with the times

Gathering contact information from a prospect up front can be a great way to ensure the recruiter has success in reaching out, but you want to be sure that what's requested is relevant and applicable – if not, remove it.



In this example, the brand is requiring a home phone number, which many people no longer have (vs. a mobile or cell phone that they use for all calls outside of work).

8. Check that photos on website and in emails display on top devices, browsers

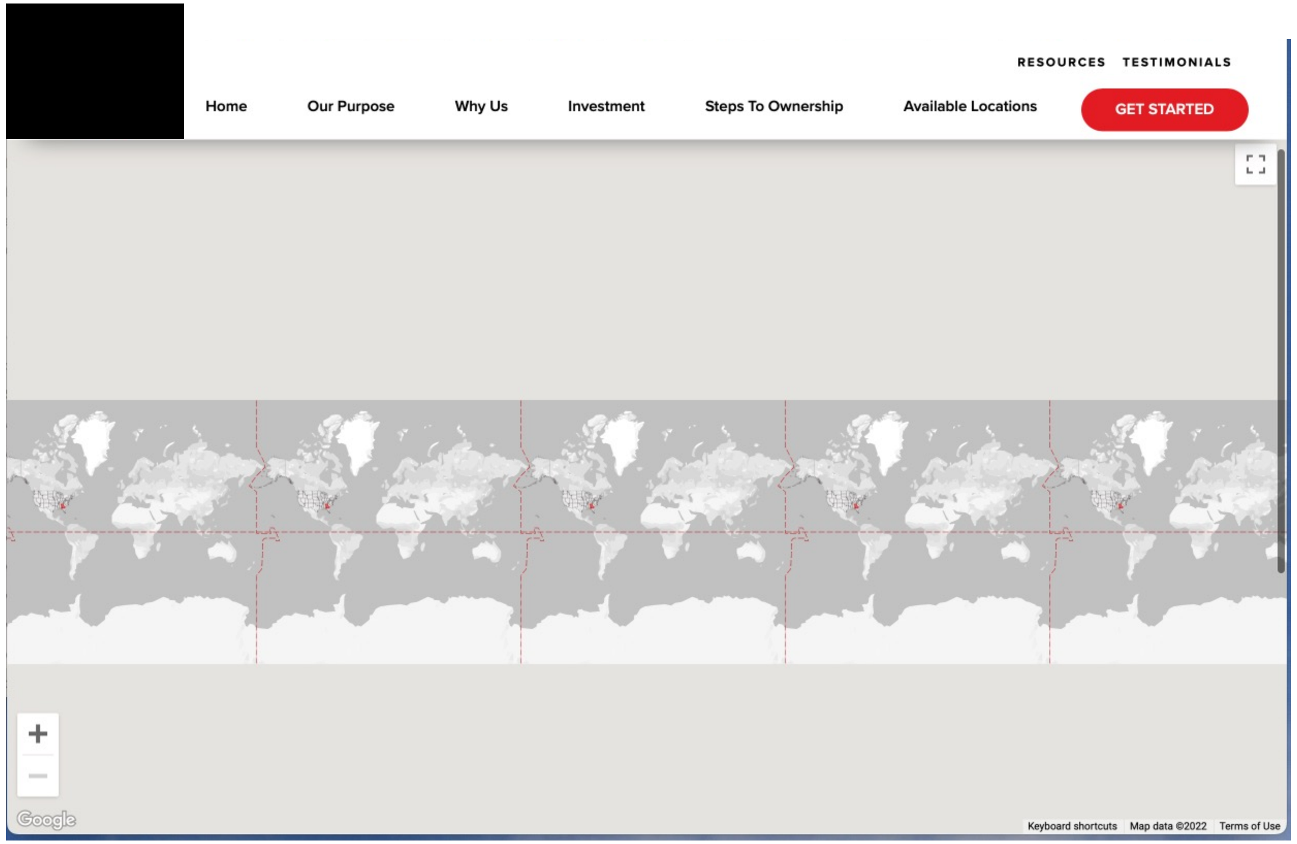


In this example, an email opened in Gmail did not display the image at the top of an email, providing a poor impression for the reader – especially from a brand that touted its technology as a differentiator.

Including photos and graphics in emails is a great way to add interest and illustrate the brand opportunity. It's important, though to make sure that the image type and format allows the image to be seen on the most used email programs, devices and web browsers.

Assess your APIs

9. Check that website plug-ins and API’s are working correctly



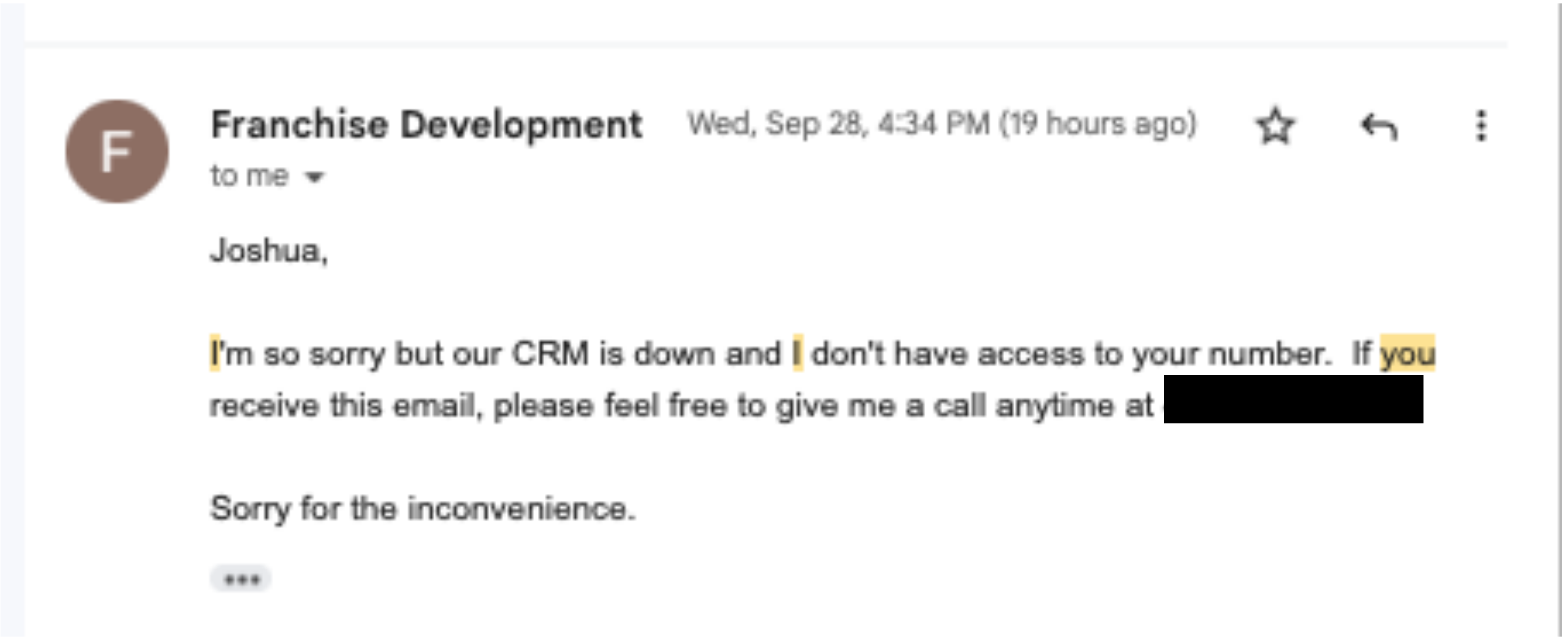
In this example, the website is using a plug-in from Google Maps to show open territories for development, but it displays it in a very zoomed-out setting that can’t be magnified with the “+” button.

If your website relies on plug-ins or APIs from other sources, be sure they are displaying properly for visitors using a variety of the top browsers.

Step up with a back-up

10. Have a back up to CRM for a call with a candidate

We get it, there are always times when an internet connection is down or a CRM can't be accessed. To prevent a missed opportunity with a candidate, it's a great idea to have the key information for a call included with a meeting appointment. For example, phone number, territory of interest and purpose of the call.



In this example, the Recruiter is a no-show for a scheduled call because he doesn't have access to the candidate's phone number, so he must send an email 4 minutes after the call is supposed to start that he isn't able to call as scheduled.

Check(list) Your Tech

1. Make sure your inquiry form is sending	Monthly: Test out the form and ensure it is sent and received (on multiple browsers)
2. Check that all form fills are working	Bi-monthly: Review form to ensure each entry can be completed with ease
3. Redirect Visitors to more content after Lead Form Submission	Initial and Yearly: review the user experience after form is submitted to ensure engaging content – check that all links work
4. Be sure auto-texting is monitored and linked to humans	Bi-monthly: Check or Mystery Shop your recruiters/qualifiers to ensure texting is smooth and responsive
5. Check your email templates for link and formatting errors	Bi-monthly: Test or Mystery Shop all outreach and drip campaign emails to check links, proofread and eliminate errors
6. Make sure your forms don't need a scroll bar	Bi-monthly: Check your forms on top 5 used web browsers, computer and mobile to ensure smooth, intuitive use
7. Make sure your lead forms are keeping up with the times	Semi-annually: review the content of your forms and eliminate or change anything not needed or outdated
8. Check that photos on website and in emails display properly	Bi-monthly: Check or Mystery Shop web pages and emails on multiple browsers, email programs, computer and mobile
9. Check that website plug-ins and API's are working correctly	Bi-monthly: Check all third-party plug-in or API feeds to websites on multiple browsers, computer and mobile
10. Have a back up to CRM for a call with a candidate	Semi-annually: review with qualifiers and recruiter the need to have all contact info, territory and notes in meeting invites

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Ok, but what if I want some help?

More automation and technology bring more opportunity for things to go wrong. But it also brings the opportunity for setting your brand apart with a smooth, outstanding experience for prospects when they reach out to connect.

Check Your Tech yourself or give us a call to chat about our Mystery Shopping services for leading franchise brands.

414.436.0040

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