

BEYOND THE FEATURE LIST

8 Questions for Evaluating a Franchise Website Platform

Start with your operational problems — not the feature list.

A better way to evaluate franchise website platforms

The more sophisticated franchisors ask better questions — give the vendor a real scenario and ask them to show exactly how the system handles it.

THE TYPICAL APPROACH

Run through the feature checklist. Ask what the platform does.

The result: a polished demo designed around strengths — not your edge cases.

THE BETTER APPROACH

Start with operational problems your brand already encounters.

Ask the vendor to show exactly how the architecture solves each one in real time.

If a lead lands on the wrong local page, does it still route to the right location?

ROUTING MODEL

Is routing ZIP-based, radius-based, or both?

Confirm rules can be set per brand — not forced into one global config.

WRONG-PAGE ROUTING

If a customer lands on Franchisee A's page but enters a ZIP for Franchisee B, the lead must follow territory rules — not the page where the form appeared.

HIGH-INTENT PATHS

When a ZIP resolves to one clear location, can the platform take the customer directly there? Extra steps add friction when the match is already known.

ROUTING FAILURES

Ask who is alerted when a lead fails to reach the CRM. Your team needs visibility into individual delivery failures — not just the assumption that everything worked.

How do you stop near-identical local pages from sending the wrong indexing signals?

LOCAL DIFFERENTIATION

Ask how the platform supports meaningful local variation — services, staff, promotions, pricing, photos, and FAQs — without requiring corporate to maintain hundreds of disconnected sites.

CONTEXT ACROSS THE JOURNEY

As a visitor moves from a local page to a corporate article, do the local CTAs, phone numbers, and tracking follow them — or revert to generic corporate content?

PARENT-CHILD INHERITANCE

Corporate should push a new module or CTA across the network while preserving approved local variations. Ask whether a local override can happen without breaking inheritance everywhere else.

Do you capture first-touch attribution, or only last-touch?

FIRST-TOUCH

Captures and stores the original entry point — UTM parameters, click IDs — so a lead who converts on a later visit still carries the first visit's attribution data.

Reveals what actually created demand, not just what closed it.

LAST-TOUCH ONLY

The website sits between marketing activity and the CRM. If it loses the original source before conversion, your reporting over-credits the final interaction and hides what actually created demand.

Also ask: can UTMs, click IDs, and franchisee identifiers pass to the CRM automatically?

Can you see exactly what a franchisee changed, from what, to what?

EDIT SCOPE

Control the specific fields a franchisee may edit — hours, hero image, staff bios — without giving access to page structure or core brand messaging.

APPROVAL BEFORE PUBLICATION

Can lower-risk edits publish immediately while higher-risk ones require review?
Configurable by field, page, content type, or user role.

FIELD-LEVEL AUDIT LOGS

A page-level log only tells you something changed. Corporate should see the previous value, the new value, who made the change, and when.

USER ROLES

A network with experienced local marketers and occasional users should not be limited to one blanket permission set. Multiple access levels make the audit trail meaningful.

Are reviews pulled natively, or stitched together with a scraper?

STOREFRONT LOCATIONS

Ask how each page connects to the correct business profile or Place ID, and what happens when a location moves, merges, or changes its listing.

Confirm how ratings, review content, attribution requirements, and update frequency are handled. A generic "review widget" answer does not explain coverage or maintenance.

SERVICE-AREA BUSINESSES

Google's available location data and matching behavior can differ for businesses without a public storefront. A restaurant demo does not prove full coverage.

Test the platform with one of your actual service-area locations. If part of the network requires a workaround, understand the coverage, compliance, cost, and maintenance.

Is your schema markup auto-generated per location, or hand-built and copied?

LOCATION-LEVEL SCHEMA

Markup generated for each franchisee — including location-specific name, address, phone, hours, services, and geographic coverage — updated automatically when fields change.

STRUCTURED FAQs

Questions and answers stored as discrete fields that feed the page and structured data. Local teams should be able to customize approved answers without losing the corporate fallback.

VISIBLE SUPPORTING CONTENT

Structured data does not replace the information people and search systems need on the page. Ask how the platform surfaces useful pricing context and long-tail service answers at the local level.

Can you pull data out through an API — not just push leads in?

READ AND WRITE ACCESS

Your team should be able to retrieve leads, content, location records, franchisee status, and publishing information — and update approved structured fields — without depending on the vendor for every request.

DOCUMENTATION AND PERMISSIONS

Ask to see the docs, authentication model, and permission controls. Get clear examples of what is available and where the boundaries are.

PROGRAMMATIC EXPERIMENTATION

If your testing tool needs location or franchisee metadata, confirm the platform can expose it through documented APIs — not one-off setup for every local site.

VENDOR INTEROPERABILITY

If franchisees use approved tracking, booking, or advertising vendors, ask whether those systems can read or update only the authorized data they need — without breaking the network's centralized model.

What's your actual plan for AI agents interacting with your site?

ACCESSIBLE HTML

Is important content available in server-rendered or pre-rendered HTML? Not every crawler or agent handles client-side JavaScript the same way.

LLMS.TXT

Treat as an emerging format, not a substitute for crawlable pages or structured data. Ideally generated from the same structured source — not another repository to maintain.

MCP SUPPORT

Ask what Model Context Protocol capabilities are actually live today. Reading hours of operation is different from publishing content or updating location data.

CAPABILITY VS. ROADMAP

Get the present scope in writing, ask what is planned, and determine what the documented REST API can support in the meantime. "AI-ready" is not a sufficient answer.

The Underlying Test

"Here's a specific operational problem we have —

how does your architecture actually solve it?"

A vendor that can walk through ZIP-based routing edge cases, field-level audit logs, and the Places API storefront limitation in real time is telling you more than any pitch deck will.



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