

LATINO LEADERS

CONNECTING LEADERS, INSPIRING THE FUTURE

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ENRIQUE "RICK" HERNANDEZ

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF MCDONALD'S

INSIDE THE MIND OF THE VISIONARY LEADER OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST RESTAURANT CHAIN



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THE MARTINEZ FAMILY

PUTTING THE AUTHENTIC MEXICAN SALSA ON THE MAP; THEIR SECRET RECIPE? FAMILY, EDUCATION & QUALITY.

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SPECIAL FEATURE

BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR LATINOS

THE EFFORT OF CORPORATE AMERICA IN BRINGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LATINO EMPLOYEES AND EXECUTIVES IS ON THE RISE; KNOW WHAT COMPANIES ARE DOING IT THE BEST AND MORE EFFECTIVE WAY.

COMPANIES WITH MEXICAN ORIGIN IN THE U.S.

OUR LIST OF COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY STABLISHED A COMPANY IN THE US.

EXCLUSIVE:


THE STORY OF ONE OF THE LEADING LATINAS IN WINE: LAURA CATENA FROM BODEGA CATENA-ZAPATA, THE COMPANY THAT HAS PUT MALBEC BACK ON THE WORLD'S MAP.

PLUS:

WHAT ARE JESSE CORTEZ, FABIAN NUÑEZ, XAVIER GUTIERREZ AND EVELYN RIOS ORTIZ DOING?



FAMILY EQUALS OPPORTUNITY

 *Lorenzo Almanza*

Authentico Foods, Inc. is a food manufacturer located in Chicago focused on authentic, all-natural Hispanic products. The company was formed through the combination of two long-standing brands, La Guadalupeana and El Ranchero.

ONE MAJOR quality that sticks out for President and CEO Alejandro Castro is the concept of family.

Family is the true aspect that brings the company together. It dates back to Castro's early days growing up as a predecessor to his father and grandfather.

"When I was 12 years old, I started going with my dad to work. I started with bagging groceries and after with washing windows. I found my way to the backroom of the grocery store one day where I was making masas and tamales," he said.

The company first began in the 1940s when Castros' grandparents bought a bakery called La Victoria, and changed the name to La Guadalupeana to their devotion of Our lady of Guadalupe.

The devotion his grandparents had soon allowed them to turn the bakery into a much bigger concept. "Over the years the bakery grew to a convenient store, then to a grocery store."

His father's footsteps soon followed his grandparents, and it was because of this that Castro was able to grow even more. He describes that it was his dad who first had the idea of growing the company beyond just a grocery store.

He adds on that his father "did help with the business and eventually bought the company from my grandparents and grew the grocery store to a manufacturing plant and another mini market."

"He invested his money in real estate and the company grew and we started distributing mazas and tamales throughout the Mid-West from a plant."

Castro reiterates that because of his youthful experience he was able to take "the helm of the company."

"I was running the mini marts, the grocery stores, the USDA manufacturing plant, and managing his real estate investments."

This experience would be the start of Authentic Food. From here, Castro brought the company from his family



in 2017 and expanded La Guadalupeana to even further heights.

"I then took the company straight to just manufacturing, at the point we got out of the grocery business, out of the real estate business and just focused on manufacturing and distribution of our mazas and tamales," he said.

It was his intelligence that propelled him to buy El Ranchero with an investment in 2019 and start the merger of Authentic Food Inc. The combination allowed him to expand beyond tamales and masa by also adding chips and tostadas.

His philosophy of family was something he learned to develop not only as an employer, but as an owner as well.

"If you're one of my family and you're coming here, I make it very clear you have to work a hundred and ten percent because everybody else is looking at you and knowing you're a family member," Castro entailed.

While being the President of a company is not easy, Castro reiterates that none of this would be possible without family.

"I wouldn't be able to do this without the support of my family and the integrity my grandfather instilled upon my father, as well as myself," Castro said.

He truly believes that his grandfather "would be proud of the fact that we're still a family run business."

"My father would still be proud of the fact that I have the values he and my grandfather entrusted in me."

Castro hopes to continue his family's legacy and make Authentic Food the staple of brand authentic American-Mexican food in the Midwest. Today, company is interested in evaluating opportunities to expand its Hispanic product offering through strategic acquisitions. ●