



Lil Chef Big Food LLC

Background:

My name is Lorna Flores, and I am a Functional Nutritional Health Coach and Chef, proudly serving as the CEO of Little Chef Big Food. My journey into holistic wellness began eight years ago when I received a diagnosis of Vitiligo after experiencing a miscarriage. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease that leads to the loss of skin pigmentation, spreading like wildfire.

Confronted with a prognosis that offered little hope, suggesting medications and daily creams as the only means of control, I refused to accept a life dictated by statistics. I questioned why I had this condition if I wasn't born with it. This marked the inception of a two-year journey, during which I delved into the realms of nutrition and culinary arts, drawing from nearly a decade of experience in the restaurant and catering industry, even exporting vegetables throughout the US.

Frustrated by conventional medical approaches, I turned to a functional medicine doctor. Unlike conventional methods that merely manage symptoms, functional medicine seeks the root cause of illnesses. Collaborating with my doctor, we performed tests that traditional blood tests had overlooked, revealing micro toxins like molds and parasites. Cleansing my body and identifying personalized triggers became pivotal in my healing journey.

Studying functional nutrition became my passion, exploring how food impacts health and identifying triggers without the need for extravagant expenditures. The realization that my autoimmune condition could be reversed through a holistic lifestyle, including food and

supplements, marked a turning point. I recognized my calling to share this knowledge with the world, leading to the birth of my company. Initially, Lil Chef Big Food LLC organically evolved as I juggled personal chef services and studies. One remarkable client, battling breast cancer due to excessive estrogen production, underwent a transformative dietary modification, embracing a holistic route. Witnessing her recovery solidified my belief in the power of nutrition.

Throughout the years, the business has flourished through referrals, transitioning from personal chef services to a comprehensive 90-day program. Partnering with functional medicine doctors, I introduced epigenetic testing, a groundbreaking approach providing 98 biomarkers of an individual's health. This forms the basis for creating personalized nutritional plans, recipes, and cooking classes—a holistic lifestyle for individuals and their families.

Solution:

The Miami-Dade Business Navigator Program has played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of my business. Working closely with business consultants from Florida SBDC at FIU such as Michelle Caba, Maribel Balbin, and Emily de Armas have been an invaluable experience. Reflecting on my engagement with the Miami-Dade Business Navigator program, I can confidently assert that a significant percentage of my progress can be attributed to Michelle Caba and the rest of the consultants.

When I first met Maribel Balbin, who graciously introduced me to the program, took a keen interest in my business journey. Followed by Michelle Caba, upon hearing my story, immediately recognized the need for a strategic plan. She asked, 'What do you have put together?' I responded, somewhat hesitantly, stating that I primarily relied on referrals. Michelle astutely pointed out that my mission in life is to grow, emphasizing the necessity of a comprehensive plan.

This insightful guidance created a positive impact on both my personal and business development. Michelle skillfully assisted me in crafting a strategic marketing plan that goes beyond a vision board – it encapsulates the purpose and mission of my business. This has proven instrumental when engaging with investors or presenting my brand at various events.

Looking forward to 2024, one of my strategic plans, discussed with Michelle, is to further outsource tools and tasks. This includes enlisting assistance for managing social media platforms like Instagram. In the fast-paced world we navigate today, the demands of my time are extensive from balancing speaking engagements, one-on-one interactions, supermarket visits, cooking trips, and crafting nutritional plans, alongside my responsibilities as a parent proved challenging but creates the necessity of creating a structured foundation. While I initially lacked this base, her insights prompted me to recognize the 'madness' in attempting to handle everything independently. This realization has led to a clear path for expansion – a path that involves building a team or enlisting support to focus on the operational processes that are not my forte.

In essence, the Miami-Dade Business Navigator Program, and particularly the guidance from Michelle Caba, has been instrumental in shaping the strategic direction of my business. The journey forward involves not just growth but a conscious effort to streamline and outsource,

allowing me to concentrate on what truly matters for the continued success of Little Chef Big Food.

From the Owner

"My piece of advice is don't stop studying. And I don't mean like you must go back to school for everything, but, you know, in my industry, it's constantly growing. Every single day, there are new studies, new findings about health. If you just stick to what you learned a couple of years back and not update, you can't help your clients. I am continuously getting informed, making myself knowledgeable to continue helping and to grow. This process helps me expand and, in turn, allows me to better assist my clients. To me, knowledge is power. This is one of the things that Michelle has helped me with. While she's assisting me in one aspect, I am helping myself by gaining more knowledge in the health and wellness world, continuing to evolve as a person."

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