



Natalia Serur and Corina Jimenez
Tinajita LLC (dba Vegallia)

Background

Tinajita LLC dba Vegallia started in 2011 out of necessity when my mom faced stomach cancer, requiring a restrictive diet. We struggled to find suitable food options that met her needs. That's when we decided we couldn't settle for a society filled with processed sugars. We sought a healthier, flexible alternative that didn't compromise taste. And so, the concept of Vegallia came to life.

After relocating to the U.S. from Venezuela in 2015, we assembled a team of food science specialists and nutritionists. Combining our existing knowledge and experiences from Venezuela, and participating in organic food expos, our goal was clear: to create something even better. This led us to the development of a new recipe.

In 2017, we proudly opened our production center in Florida, becoming the first fully frozen dessert plant-based manufacturing facility in the U.S., as recognized by the FDA. Our product resembles Italian gelato but crafted with a distinct recipe using high-end, all-natural, organic ingredients. Most importantly, it's sugar-free, dairy-free, gluten-free, and holds certifications for being vegan, non-GMO, and kosher.

We offer online orders with free delivery in the Miami-Dade and Broward areas, and we ship nationwide. People can also find our products in specialty stores, including kosher supermarkets

and mom-and-pop shops. Additionally, our frozen desserts are featured in various food service establishments, including restaurants and hospitality businesses.

Solution

The Miami-Dade Business Navigator Program, local initiative funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration, led by the Florida SBDC at FIU, came at a crucial moment, precisely when we were grappling with the challenges of the pandemic, navigating a business reinvention, and undergoing a rebranding. To survive, we ventured into white labels, but we needed more resources, guidance, and advisors. The MDBN turned out to be a game-changer, connecting us with incredible organizations that support entrepreneurs.

One consultant we worked with was Roslyn Rice from Florida SBDC at FIU, played a pivotal role in establishing our new sales strategy, offering support in dealings with larger distributors, helping set key performance indicators (KPIs), and skillfully identifying and addressing flaws in our business. Recently, we've also benefitted greatly from working with FSBDC at FIU consultant Lilian Urbanadt. She swiftly brought us up to speed on everything we needed from QuickBooks in just a couple of days. Her patience and expertise were invaluable in teaching us the essentials for maintaining a healthy financial aspect of the business. In essence, our collaboration from consulting and trainings with various spokes such as Branches, StartUP FIU Local & Prospera have left a significant and positive mark on our business journey.

From the Owner

“Get connected. Learn about the process. There are fantastic resources available, and assistance like the Miami-Dade Business Navigator Program that has been invaluable. There are numerous tools and insights these programs can provide. It's a treasure trove that can prevent you from making the same mistakes we did when we lacked such resources. For us, working with the program has been a clear distinction, a before and after. So, my suggestion is to truly take your time, immerse yourself in acquiring all the resources these programs offer. It will not only help you organize your business but also foster its growth in a structured manner.

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