



BayaNigosyante

Letter Guide to Success

A-Z Tips from Filipino Entrepreneurs



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A-Z Tips from Filipino Entrepreneurs





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Department of Trade and Industry

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ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Anchored on the **Values** of Passion, Integrity, Creativity, Competence, Synergy, and Love of Country, and our **Mission** as the government's main economic catalyst in enabling innovative, competitive, job-generating, inclusive business, and Empowering consumers. These we do in order to achieve our **Vision 2022** of “A more inclusive and prosperous Philippines with employment and income opportunities for all.”

Mandate

The DTI is responsible for realizing the country's goal of globally competitive and innovative industry and services sector that contribute to inclusive growth and employment generation.

Pursuant to the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, we shall endeavor to reduce inequality and poverty by expanding economic opportunities in industry and services, and by increasing the access particularly of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), cooperatives and overseas Filipinos (OFs) to these opportunities. To attain these sector outcomes by 2022, we need to:

- Increase local and foreign direct investments
- Increase competitiveness, innovativeness and resilience of industries and services
- Improve access to finance, to production networks, and to markets
- Enhance productivity, efficiency, and resilience
- Ensure consumer access to safe and quality goods and services

These we accomplish through six major programs:

- 1 Exports and Investment Development Program
- 2 Industry Development Program
- 3 SME Development Program
- 4 Consumer Protection Program
- 5 Consumer Education and Advocacy Program
- 6 Good Governance Program

We commit to effect good governance by delivering public service that is predictable, participatory, accountable, efficient, transparent, and honest.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



Alfredo E. Pascual
ALFREDO E. PASCUAL
Secretary

Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of our economy. Amid the challenges of the pandemic, their ability to see possibility in adversity and turn obstacles into opportunities is a testament to their strong entrepreneurial spirit.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has been a staunch supporter of Filipino entrepreneurs and has believed in their capacity to become active contributors to nation-building. Throughout the years, DTI has implemented various programs and projects that provide business development services to entrepreneurs all over the country.

In times of crisis, the DTI has remained committed to helping our micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) get back on their feet, including amid threats to health and restrictions brought about by COVID-19.

As we continue to face unprecedented times, I want to reassure you that the DTI is confident in the ability of MSMEs not just to survive, but to prosper. Filipino entrepreneurs have proven time and time again that they are enterprising and resilient, ready to help fellow Filipinos manage difficulties.

Our vision is to facilitate the growth and expansion of MSMEs—from micro to small, small to medium, and medium to large enterprises. We will continue to strengthen our initiatives so that these businesses can evolve and create more jobs for the Filipino people.

Furthermore, the DTI is committed to promoting digital transformation across the agency and among all MSMEs in the Philippines. I believe that through science, technology, and innovation, we can support the country's development and provide MSMEs with the tools they need to succeed.

This publication, “BayaNigosityante” features the inspiring journeys of 32 MSMEs that persevered and succeeded amid challenges. They are prime examples of what we can achieve if we work hand-in-hand, with unity, determination, and foresight.

I remain confident in the entrepreneurial spirit of Filipinos as we move toward a future after COVID-19—a future that aspires for shared prosperity for all. I am certain that with everyone working together, we can make this happen in the Philippines.

Thank you for your continued support.

Introduction

In times of crisis, it is the entrepreneurs who rise up and take action to create opportunities for themselves and their communities.

Amidst the pandemic, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) continued to implement various programs and projects to ensure the efficient delivery of business development services nationwide. The DTI has put together specific interventions to help mitigate the impact and risks of COVID-19 to its stakeholders, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

This publication, BayaNigosityante, features the inspiring stories of 32 MSMEs, representing the 16 regions of the country who were able to overcome various crises, not just the pandemic but other equally great challenges, and turned these into windows of opportunity.

There are those who started with meager capital but were able to rise up to be among the top manufacturers in their sector. There are individuals who started with very little understanding of business and yet emerged to become entrepreneur-mentors.

Some individuals banded together to form cooperatives to achieve something they would never have been able to do on their own, while others discovered that as long as they had the appropriate support system, they could accomplish anything.

These anecdotes demonstrate how these heroes rose from a zero state to become leaders in their field.

So if you're feeling down about your business during these tough times, remember that you're not alone. Take inspiration from these amazing entrepreneurs and let their stories motivate you to keep pushing forward.

After all, as they say, every hero has a story. And yours is just waiting to be written.



A

ccomplishing the Impossible

The Arts and Crafts Company of Alexandro Condato

Every day, we see a growing number of entrepreneurs taking the leap and starting their own businesses. For many, this is a lifelong dream that they've finally been able to turn into reality. But what does it really take to be a successful entrepreneur? Is it simply having a great idea? Or is there more to it than that?

In truth, there are many different qualities that go into making a successful entrepreneur. But one of the most important is having the ability to see opportunities where others only see challenges. This was certainly the case for Alexandro Condato, a local resident of Tiwi, Albay.

When most people looked at the bamboo and coconut shells that were abundant in his town, they saw nothing more than waste material. But Alexandro saw an opportunity to create something beautiful and useful out of these natural resources.

From Fishing to Crafting

Alexandro is a humble man who started his journey as a local fisherman who toiled under the grueling heat of the sun. It was a tough life, but he managed to get by. One day, he was given the opportunity to attend the Skills Enhancement Training on Bamboo Crafts by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Albay Provincial Office.

He saw this as a chance to improve his life and took it with both hands. After the training, he immediately received orders for his products which were bamboo candle holders. From that day on, he was motivated to pursue bamboo crafts making.

With the Bamboo Crafts Starter Kit he received from DTI, he started his own business and registered it through DTI Albay in 2014 with the name Alexandro Arts and Crafts Manufacturing.

His main products were lamps, pots, and novelty items made from bamboo and coconut shells.

At his first trade fair, he notably remembers selling only 1 item, which cost PhP1,000, while other MSMEs more established than him were sold out. Instead of feeling down, this experience only fueled him more to develop his creations.

"There are instances when your products will be criticized but don't take it negatively, don't let it bother you. You should be inspired to improve and make your product's quality better," he quipped.

When he started his business, it was just a one-man show. He was responsible for everything — from design conceptualization to production. Eventually, he was able to hire three workers who were responsible for the preparation of materials and the production of the items he designed. He made sure to train them well and impart the skills he was able to develop in bamboo and coco crafts making.

Establishing the ABC-Tiwi in 2016 was a turning point for Alex and his business. Realizing that the bamboo and coconut shell crafting industry was picking up and that the number of workers kept growing, he saw the potential in establishing an association that would bring together coconut farmers, ceramic makers, and other indigenous people from Joroan, Bawis, Lourdes and Putsan.



The organization’s main goal was to keep the bamboo industry alive and thriving in its locality. By working together, they could achieve this goal and create a sustainable industry that will benefit all members of the association.

Sticking with the DTI

In the first few years of his operations, Alex’s sales weren’t stable. But this did not deter him.

“In business, don’t be dismayed whether or not you’re making a profit all the time. There will be instances that the sales aren’t good. You have to bide your time and be patient. Your turn will come, don’t give up easily,” he would say to his workers and peers.

He pushed through and focused on developing his craftsmanship by attending more DTI-facilitated activities focused on bamboo crafts and coco shell products. These included skills enhancement activities and product development programs.



DTI Albay helped Alex and ABC Tiwi by inviting them to participate in several major market promotion activities and trade fairs such as Tibay Tiwi Fair, Orgullo Kan Bikol, Bishop Gainza Trade Fair, and Saod Trade Fair.

One thing Alex learned from these events was to always benchmark his products against competitors. He consistently asks himself, “What are they doing that I can incorporate into my design? What can I still do to improve and make my products the best in the market?”

By analyzing the market and looking into nature for inspiration, Alex was able to create innovative products with aesthetically-pleasing designs.

The COVID-19 Effect on the Crafts Industry

In 2020, the pandemic hit the country’s economy hard, leading to some of the sharpest declines in recent times. Many industries



In business, don’t be dismayed whether or not you’re making a profit all the time. There will be instances that the sales aren’t good. You have to bide your time and be patient. Your turn will come, don’t give up easily.”



DTI Programs Available



Skills Enhancement Training
on Bamboo Crafts

DTI trade fairs



This is the story of how a fisherman turned PhP26 into a full-fledged business that earns him PhP180,000 a year.

SCAN ME!



Alexandro Condat



Accomplishing the Impossible: The Arts and Crafts Company of Alexandro Condat



were greatly affected especially MSMEs. Alexandro Arts and Crafts and ABC Tiwi were among these enterprises.

But Alex's growing enterprise was able to bounce back through the loan assistance from the P3 CARES program of DTI. The program offers low-interest loans to small businesses affected by the pandemic to help them restart and recover.

The business is now regaining its foothold in the market now that restrictions have eased.

Brighter and Craftier Future Ahead

Today, Alex's business is doing well, allowing him to provide for his family with two children still studying. From an initial investment of PhP 26, his fare going to the first DTI training he attended, Alexandro Arts and Crafts Manufacturing now earns PhP180,000 annually.

Since it was a simple training that changed Alex's life, he makes it a point to do the same for his community. He shares his knowledge of crafting from bamboo and coconut shells with students and anyone else willing to learn.

Through his business, Alex ensures that his workers earn a decent living to support their families.

Alexandro Condat is a true inspiration to aspiring entrepreneurs who are hoping to improve their lives. He advises to always seize opportunities when they come your way, as these may just be the means to help you accomplish the impossible!



Beating the odds

How Bagnos Multi-Purpose Cooperative Roasted the Perfect Blend for Victory

Every community has a unique story to tell, and each story is made up of countless individual tales of hardship and triumph. In today's world, it is more important than ever for communities to come together and support one another. Such is exactly the mindset of 39 individuals in Banna, Ilocos Norte, who banded together to create the Bagnos Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

Bagnos MPC's Humble Beginnings

It was the year 2000 when 39 members established the Bagnos Multi-Purpose Cooperative with a meager capital of just PhP4,457.00. The cooperative's project manager, Amelia Bautista, had a strong desire to help her town and kababayans, and she was determined to make the cooperative a success.

With Amelia at the helm, Bagnos MPC became one of the most successful cooperatives in the country. To date, the cooperative has over a thousand active members and an asset size of more than PhP10 million. From being a micro-enterprise, it has grown to become a medium-sized enterprise, all because of Amelia's unfathomable dedication and commitment.

Bagnos MPC's DTI Grant Program

As with any successful venture, Bagnos MPC had a support system that helped propel them to where they are now, and that is the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Bagnos MPC is no stranger to DTI programs and projects, having been a grantee of various programs, such as the Shared Service Facilities (SSF). This program provided the needed equipment to process rice coffee and their meat products.

They were also provided with capability building seminars on Digitalization and Business continuity planning, which helped them

understand how they can grow their businesses in a realistic and goal-oriented manner. In line with this, Bagnos MPC also took part in the Pasinaya Virtual Trade Fair and the ONG-PLDT Ka-Asenso Virtual Fair.

The cooperative also participated in the One Town, One Product (OTOP) program to enhance the development of their local products and for its efficient both locally and abroad. Through the Product Development program, Bagnos MPC's homegrown rice coffee was given a Certificate of Product Registration, while the packaging and labelling of their processed meat products were improved to make them more attractive to consumers.

Thanks to these DTI programs and projects, Bagnos MPC was able to enhance their product offerings and become a more competitive player in the market.

Giving Back to the Community

As the saying goes, "to whom much is given, much is expected." This is a philosophy that Amelia lives by. As the Project Manager of Bagnos MPC, she knows that the success of the cooperative is a blessing that needs to be shared with the community.

This is the reason why Bagnos MPC has conducted various community outreach programs, such as giving out microfinancing for the barangays of Banna, Pinili and Nueva Era, providing



 SUCCESS TIPS



Always be ready for any disruption that may affect your business operations



Plan ahead and keep these plans up to date



Be a good citizen



Help others when you can



Love your work, whatever it may be



DTI Programs Available



Pasinaya Virtual Trade Fair

ONG-PLDT Ka-Asenso Virtual Fair



An Inspiring Story of How a Multi-Purpose Cooperative Grew from being a Micro-Enterprise to a Medium Enterprise in a Span of 12 Years.

SCAN ME!



Bagnos MPC



TESTIMONIAL



Jaziell Villanueva



Rice coffee is ❤️ Surprisingly so good and addicting 🥰 Thank you for the smooth transaction 🙏🏻👍 Best coffee



Beating the Odds: How Bagnos MPC Roasted the Perfect Blend for Victory



Select a business that is competitive, unique, and with raw materials that are locally produced—so you could help your community.”



insurance and loans, holding feeding programs, giving gifts to special children and elderly members of the community, running online contests for students, and distributing relief donations to typhoon victims in Luzon.

Through these programs, Bagnos MPC is not only helping to improve the lives of those in need, but also inspiring others to do the same.

The Pandemic Effect

The global pandemic has been a trying time for many businesses, but Bagnos MPC has remained resilient in the face of adversity. Instead of treating the pandemic as a threat to business operations, the cooperative managed to maneuver its strategies to match what was needed at that time.

During the height of the lockdown, Amelia and her team made sure that all their members and several frontliners receive relief goods. As rice is one of their main products, they supplied rice for Banna LGUs relief operations. They even pushed through with the construction of Bagnos Business Center.

These activities enabled Bagnos MPC not just to continue with its business operations, but also to provide much-needed employment for their members and some locals.

Indeed, Bagnos Multi-Purpose Cooperative is commendable for their efforts in continually innovating and improving their products, and we hope that more businesses will follow their lead in taking advantage of DTI programs and projects to enhance their capabilities. Who knows, you might be the next business to move from micro to medium enterprise within a few years!





Balik Pinas, Balik Uma

Gerry Paglinawan's Journey
From OFW to Agripreneur

For years, Gerry Paglinawan thought that being an OFW would improve his life. Little did he know that the fortune he dreamed of could be found in his hometown. After a series of trial and error, Gerry found the best formula that could save not only his business but also help improve the lives of the people around him.

Back to Basics

Gerry grew up in an “uma” or a farm. His mother taught him the basics of entrepreneurship, while his father taught him everything he knew about farming. At 11 years old, just when he was learning all there is about the world, his mother died. Since then, he has helped his father with his farming duties.

Life in the Philippines was tough, and the family struggled to get by. When Gerry was 18, he left home to seek for a better life. He found work in a multinational company as a furniture designer in Vietnam. He was able to practice his gift in arts and earned well from it.

But he knew that being an OFW was not enough. He was determined to make a new life for himself at home, so he eventually saved enough money to start his own business. At 46 years old, Gerry gave up his lucrative salary and went back to the Philippines.

Since he was already familiar with farming, he decided to start a farm in Zamboanga del Sur. Combining the entrepreneurial and farming skills he learned from his parents, Gerry started the Paglinawan Organic Eco Farm.

It was a challenging start. A lot of relatives, friends, and colleagues said Gerry was impoverished as he was back to tilling the land. But Gerry always kept a positive mindset and stayed true to his vision.

At first, the farm only produced organic rice. In 2013, when Gerry got sick, he decided to drink tea made of crushed turmeric that he got from his farm. He felt better in just a matter of hours, so he made more of the same product in powder form.

This made him realize the potential of selling turmeric products on his eco farm. Using the maxim “health is wealth” as his guide, Gerry launched his own line of turmeric-based products.

Together with his family, they tried to encourage fellow OFWs to save and invest not just in any regular business, but in agribusiness. They utilized the theme “Balik Pinas, Balik Uma.”

Gerry's efforts did not go unnoticed. In fact, his family was recognized as the Special Awardee for Outstanding Achievement in Entrepreneurship by no less than President Rodrigo Roa Duterte during the 2017 Model OFW Family of the Year Awards (MOFYA).

However, profit didn't come easily as expected. Since there are already many turmeric products on the market, Gerry found it hard to sell his turmeric product. He knew that standing out was key to getting noticed, so to differentiate their product and build a reputation, they established their own brand. That was when Agriko Multi-Trade & Enterprises Corp was born. Agriko is short for Agriculture Keeps Organic.



DTI Programs Availd



Innovation Business
Recovery



To create a unique product line, Gerry experimented with different ingredients. After years of trial and error, they came up with 5N1 — a health product that is a combination of turmeric, ginger, soursop, moringa, and lemongrass.

DTI Helping with Gerry’s Agribusiness Growth

Even though Gerry had some training in entrepreneurship through his mother, he felt it wasn’t enough to get his agribusiness to succeed. So he sought the Department of Trade and Industry’s help by taking the Kapatid Mentor ME Program.

The Kapatid Mentor ME Program is an initiative that provides mentorship and training to aspiring entrepreneurs. The program aims to help micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) grow their businesses by providing them with access to mentors, resources, and training. Through the program, Gerry learned how to develop a business plan and improve his products and services.

He also trained in Kapatid Agri Mentor ME Program, a training program for aspiring and existing farmers. The program provides technical assistance in production, post-harvest, and business management. With the program’s help, Gerry improved his eco farm’s production and developed a sustainable business model.

Other DTI programs he participated in include One Town, One Product (OTOP) webinars, International Food Expo (IFEX), FoodConnect, Zamboanga Peninsula Exposition (ZAMPEX), Innovation Business Recovery, and several other webinars.

The Pandemic Pushes and Pulls on Agriko

When the pandemic first hit, the world scrambled to understand what was happening and how it would affect lives and businesses. As people began to stock up on essentials, Agriko found itself in the advantage by being able to meet high demand for items that help alleviate COVID symptoms and boost immunity.

The local government allowed him to continue his business operations despite quarantine measures. However, they had to follow strict workplace protocols set by Department of Labor and Employment and DTI, and full-time employees were required to come in rotating shifts.

Just when they thought life couldn’t get any sweeter with the high demand for their products, another complication arose. The banks that loaned him money to acquire lands were not keen on extending the payment deadline, even during the pandemic. Thus, the properties were foreclosed.

On top of that, the dealers selling the 5N1 product have bailed on payments, stating the negative effects of the pandemic on their personal lives. This meant cash flow issues.

But Gerry didn’t give up. When he felt that all was lost, he turned to DTI for help. The agency then promptly offered financial assistance to help his agribusiness recover.

A former OFW goes back to farming after realizing that the lands of his hometown would bring him the success he always dreamed of.

SCAN ME!



Paglinawan
Eco Farm

Balik Pinas, Balik Uma: Gerry Paglinawan's Journey From OFW to Agripreneur



Businesses will always experience ups and downs. Sometimes when you feel down, look back at all your achievements and how far you've come."

Demand for their products rose and fell, making forecasting and inventory pretty tough. They adapted by focusing on fast-selling products and pausing the production of items that were not as saleable.

Despite these obstacles, Gerry was still able to adapt and even thrive, thanks to their online presence. The key has been to focus on their marketing strategy and to show consumers different ways of using their products.

Towards a Bountiful Future

Since asking for DTI's help, Gerry has widened his product selection. Now, Agriko is selling 5N1 Turmeric Powder, Turmeric Powder, Ginger Powder, Roasted Black Rice with Turmeric Blend, Pure 5N1 Powder Shot, and Organically Grown Rice.

"There are a lot of factors that are uncertain, but we would like to believe that the worst has passed, and there's nowhere else to go but forward," Gerry said.

Through the Paglinawan Organic Eco Farm and the Agriko Multi-Trade & Enterprises Corp, Gerry plans to continue to innovate new products and create a Filipino brand that will be well-known globally. Right now, he employs 30 people and provides more job opportunities through his partnership with local farmers.

This former OFW's work has shown that agriculture can be a powerful force for good, helping create jobs and alleviate poverty. Thanks to Gerry Paglinawan, more and more people are beginning to see the potential of agriculture as a force for inclusive growth and development.

Balik uma? We definitely agree.



Chocolate Champions

Tirso and Rosana Lisbos' Cacao Conquest

Keeping a tradition alive can be difficult, but Tirso and Rosana Lisbos from Surigao del Norte found a way to do it with a tasty ingredient: Cacao. While the Lisbos' core value is to keep the Filipino culture alive, their small business has had another positive effect on the community — providing some locals a living. This is the inspiring story of how they started.

Sweet Start

The couple got the idea in 2018 when their nephew requested to have *chamorado* — sweet rice porridge with ground up cacao beans --- locally known as *tablea*. However, they could not find at that time the key ingredient in making this traditional Filipino dish.

Not knowing what to do, they turned to their elderly neighbor for help, who taught them how to make tablea out of raw cacao that the Lisbos couple bought from the public market. What was initially intended for their family's consumption, has become a grand business idea. This led to the establishment of Bacuag's Best Homemade Pure Tablea.

Despite their enthusiasm in pursuing the business and a background in retail the first steps were not easy. Firstly, it was hard for them to find local supplies of cacao and secondly, marketing the product wasn't easy.

Since they know that everything can already be researched online, they used the internet not just to promote their products but to find suppliers too.

As such, their venture began with a capital of PhP20,000 and about 10 kilos of raw cacao. Since they have already started the business online, they pursued the platform and continued to market their

products on their Facebook page. However, they found that marketing on social media was quite challenging.

"Your product will not be easily recognized, especially when it is not presentable," Rosana realized.

How DTI Lit the Fire for the Lisbos Couple

In 2019, Tirso and Rosana got in touch with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in Surigao del Norte through the Bacuag Negosyo Center for assistance with product labeling and packaging. This helped their business take off.

The couple also discovered the importance of marketing and advertising after participating in the DTI's Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) Program. Tirso initially thought that having a Facebook page was good enough. After all, it was easier to manage and can be operated through a smartphone. But a mentor in the KMME Program urged him to get a website so that his company would look more professional, so they followed suit.

When they saw that about 80-90% of their sales were coming from online platforms, the couple realized they needed to invest more in advertising and marketing. They had no regrets as they watched their product's reach expand.



⚠️ HOW TO SUCCEED DURING A CRISIS

Create a marketing plan.

Establish online presence using social networking sites and your own website.

Advertise your products online, whether through word-of-mouth promotions or through advertising.

Reach out to bigger markets such as other countries.



DTI's assistance did not stop there, though. The agency helped the couple through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Writeshop seminar, which pushed them to be FDA Certified. Being FDA certified meant that they could export their cacao products to international markets like Australia.

Pandemic Pulls back the Lisbos' Progress

The pandemic threatened the stability of their business as production and operation came to a halt for months. Workers found it hard to come to work due to the enforced quarantine lockdowns throughout the archipelago. Products were hard to sell, so the business almost did not profit.

However, Tirso and Rosana were determined to overcome this challenge. The learning takeaways from the DTI programs they joined helped prepare them for a crisis.

While everyone else was just feeling their way around online marketing, the couple was already an expert in this new medium. They continued with online marketing and were able to strategically use online platforms as tools to recover from the pandemic.

The Ripple Effect

Today, the business supplies a variety of sweetened and unsweetened Cacao products locally and abroad. To further expand their line, they even offer *tsokolatera* sets with a *batirol* made by



DTI Programs Availled



Packaging and Labelling Assistance

FDA Writeshop Seminar

This couple from Surigao del Norte found a way to start a business that satisfies cravings and keeps a Filipino tradition alive and flourishing.

☆☆☆ TESTIMONIALS

 **Aida Capili Vallinas** ...

Just had my cup of choco drink from Bacuag’s Best Homemade Pure Tablea. It’s so yummy, flavorful, delicious. Very invigorating, healthy, pure coco experience from the farm. Ordered my tablea thru online cod -- prompt delivery and perfectly secured and clean packaging.

 **Lor Agbing** ...

You smell the cacao the moment you open the courier’s box! The candied cacao nibs taste awesome! First time for me to try it and definitely will crave for it. The pure tablea is just divine! My Dad, who loves dark chocolates, ate the tablea straight from the packaging, and he loved it!

 **Lourica Rosel** ...

I love the bittersweet taste of the tablea. You can say that it’s really pure cacao for its richness. The nipa sugar has a unique flavor that is perfect for your brewed coffee. Will surely order again. Thanks.

 **Love Traj** ...

Got my Batirol set yesterday which was packed well. Seller was very responsive with my queries. Kudos to you! The taste of the tsokolate was indeed really good. Even my kids loved it too!

SCAN ME!



Cacao Quest



DTI will not stop helping you until you improve your product and business, and their seminars will mold you into becoming a better entrepreneur.”



Chocolate Champions: Tirso and Rosana Lisbos’ Cacao Conquest



a local woodcarver to encourage people to make tsokolate the traditional way.

From a starting capital of PhP20,000 that has grown to PhP1.5 million, Mr. Lisbos said that they now have the capacity and FDA-approved equipment to advance their business, which they had worked hard on developing.

As any business-savvy individual knows, your business decisions affect more than just yourself. Tirso is well aware of this ripple effect, as the choices he makes for their small business impact many people’s lives — cacao farmers, packaging suppliers, local woodcarvers, nipa sugar producers, and most importantly, their six production staff members who are out-of-school youth.

Although running a business can be very tiring, Tirso and Rosana Lisbos find meaning in their work, knowing that they are bettering not just themselves but others, too.

They dream of continuing to level up the business together with their employees. With the way these Chocolate Champions run Bacuag’s Best Homemade Pure Tablea, we are sure they’ll achieve nothing but sweet success.



Davie to the Rescue

Maco's Femme Power

Empowerment through entrepreneurship is not a new idea. What's different about this initiative, though? It gives people the freedom and support they need to actualize their potential in ways they never thought possible!

This philosophy was how Davie Villocino got the idea to set up a One-Stop Shop for products made by the women of Maco, Davao de Oro. Seeing what women empowerment could do to a community amid the current pandemic, she was inspired to pursue and help these women become more self-reliant.

How the One-Stop Shop was Born

Davie founded the Municipal Council of Women of Maco (MCoW) because she saw a lot of potential from the livelihood products that were produced at home by the councils of women in Maco, Davao de Oro.

These products were food and drinks such as organic coffee, boneless Bangus, chorizo, bread, banana chips, taro chips, and camote chips. The women of Maco also produced household necessities like dishwashing liquid and women's garments. However, while these goods are profitable, Davie discovered a pressing issue she must address.

"The idea of my business was based on the fact that many livelihood products created by people are useful and have the potential to sell. However, these were not properly marketed and, more so, difficult to access," said Davie.

Promotion and accessibility are two important factors that led Davie to create a platform for livelihood products. The One-Stop Shop was then born.

The One-Stop Shop would provide a place for them to sell their products and for people in the community to buy them. This would help the women generate income and support their families while providing the community with much-needed products.

This platform is easily accessible by everyone and can be efficiently advertised on social media. Through the One-Stop Shop, Davie hopes to provide a convenient location for people to purchase them.

"The main mission of my business is to revive the livelihood projects of the women in the municipality and give them a platform to sell and market their creativity. I see my enterprise as the leading business in Maco, marketing products mostly homemade."

Davie has always been a risk-taker. When she decided to start her own business, she invested Php 30,000 and recruited staff to help her market the products to co-workers and the women's council members. Thanks to feedback and recommendations from her clients, the business gradually grew.

After observing the market, she understood what the customers want and developed concepts for items she thought people would like. Women's council members offered extra input, which helped boost sales.

 STEPS TO RUNNING A BUSINESS AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

Use social media as an avenue to showcase and sell your products.

Keep your audiences updated about your business.

Always improve the quality of your existing products.

Don't be afraid to offer new products.



How DTI Gave More Power to MCoW

The Department of Trade and Industry helped the MCoW through the SSF or Shared Service Facilities. Through this program, the DTI recommended that they use the Compostella Valley bamboo craft facility to improve the quality of their products.

Through this initiative, the members of the organization were able to improve not only the quality of their products but also their marketing skills. As a result, the organization gained more presence in the area.

Harnessing the Power of Social Media

The year 2020 was a difficult time for the organization and its members. With outbreaks of the COVID-19 pandemic hitting Philippine shores, businesses became limited as people could not go out and spend money due to job losses or lockdown of production facilities. The pandemic led to MCoW's sales declining, making business more challenging than ever.

But Davie did not give up! She found new ways to keep her business going — and the answer was social media. Since everyone was confined to their homes, Davie used the power of social networks to connect with people to promote their products not only in Davao de Oro but also in places she could not have easily reached.

Davie related, “In the face of this pandemic, the power of the internet is more realized and appreciated. I harnessed this power to market my products online so people can still buy on a delivery basis.”

Despite the situation, MCoW was able to improve its operations and cater to the needs of the people, thanks to social media. They kept their Facebook page and other social media accounts updated, making people aware of MCoW's products and what they can order online.



DTI Programs Available



Sometimes, the only way to empower yourself is by uplifting other people — which is exactly what Davie Villocino did.

SCAN ME!



MCoW Maco



The main mission of my business is to revive the livelihood projects of the women in the municipality and give them a platform to sell and market their creativity.”



According to Davie, the products remained in demand, and the revenues were enough to keep the business going. They have also added new products such as wooden tables, rattan chairs, Lechon trays, flower stands, and fish trays to sell online. Right now, they are planning to explore crafting souvenirs that highlight the unique features of the Municipality of Maco.

Moving Forward

Maco's long history of female empowerment was never more evident than during the COVID-19 crisis. Davie saw the opportunity to uplift her fellow women by giving them a venue to sell their products and earn a living, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Now, through DTI's assistance, Davie and the members of MCoW will be more confident that they can weather any storm coming their way.

Empowering the Community

How JCS Beatus Trading Evolved to Focus on Local Products and Skilled Workers

When asked why she decided to start a small beadwork company in 2010, Cynthia Chuidian Medina simply answered: “We want to uplift the lives of farmers at the grassroots level.”

The year before, Cynthia and her husband Rene had made the decision to move away from the hustle and bustle of city life. After working for decades in the corporate world as a financial manager in a large industrial conglomerate, she felt that it was time to settle down in a more laid-back environment.

Little did she know that moving to the province would inspire her to create a business that would eventually help boost the lives of locals.

Crafting a New Beginning

“My family is all settled, and we could retire peacefully as we can provide for our needs,” she added. Her passion for arts and crafts was still strong, though, so she turned back to her old hobby after relocating to Victoria, Tarlac — a place close to her heart.

Realizing that her passion could help others earn a living, she started gathering the farmers and housewives within Victoria and nearby areas to teach them beadworks. Together with her sisters, she established JCS Beatus Trading Inc., a beads and beadwork supply enterprise.

JCS Beatus became a pioneer in beadworking, applying its beads not only in women’s accessories but also in developing products for lighting, lanterns, and homewares. Under Cynthia’s leadership, the company provided free beadworks livelihood training to women farmers, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), and Persons Deprived of

Liberty (PDL). These trainings not only helped develop their skills but also provided them with job orders.

Cynthia also headed TARLAC Henyo Entrepreneurs Marketing Cooperative, (THEM Coop) for five years as Chairman and is currently leading its operations as General Manager. THEM Coop is the leader in Marketing Activities for small entrepreneurs in the province of Tarlac and has represented the province in several local, national, and international trade fairs and exhibits.

Going Local

2019 was a pivotal year for Cynthia and her company. After much deliberation, they decided to shift their focus from beadwork to macrame weaving, using locally sourced materials.

This decision was driven by two main factors: an increasing awareness of the importance of supporting local businesses and a desire to use more sustainable, environmentally friendly materials.

The transition was not easy, but it was ultimately successful, thanks to the hard work of Cynthia and her team. They conducted new training to update the skills of their previous beadworkers, starting with the PWD group of Victoria and the PDL group of BJMP Tarlac City.

The group was then able to create beautiful, unique pieces that had a positive impact on their community. With this shift, Cynthia



 DID YOU KNOW?



Macramé is a type of textile made using knotting techniques. It originated in 13th century Arabia but spread to other parts of the world, including the Philippines, during the age of exploration.



changed her business name from JCS Beatus Trading, Inc to JCS Arts and Handy Crafts, a social enterprise.

Flourishing with the Help of DTI

Under Cynthia's helm, the THEM Cooperative joined the Likha ng Central Luzon Trade Fair in Metro Manila in 2019. They exhibited and sold the weaved macrame products crafted by the locals of Tarlac, which were instant hits.

Cynthia said that this was the most successful fair they've ever had, with sales totaling more than PhP100,000 over the five-day event. They received inquiries from buyers all over Metro Manila, as well as from Portugal and other export markets.

The group became a regular participant in provincial trade fairs and other regional events like the National Arts and Crafts Fair (NACF).

The Pandemic Disruption

The business picked up quickly, and orders were coming in left and right. However, just as things were looking up, the pandemic of 2020 hit, and disruptions began.

The lockdown limited the movement of people and goods, making it difficult to source materials and ship products. But through it all, she did not give up. Cynthia ploughed on despite the inconveniences that COVID-19 brought forth.



DTI Programs Available



Likha ng Central Luzon Trade Fair



Sometimes, the only way to empower yourself is by uplifting other people — which is exactly what Davie Villocino did.

SCAN ME!



JCS Beatus Trading



The main mission of my business is to revive the livelihood projects of the women in the municipality and give them a platform to sell and market their creativity.”

LESSONS LEARNED



Go local! Local products are easier to source, and it helps the community by providing more employment and business opportunities.

She thought of the situation of her weavers, who rely on her for income. “You will realize it’s not just for you; it’s for others too.”

Cynthia made sure that her 14 partner weavers in Tarlac had job orders so that each of them would earn at least PhP2,000 every month.

With the National Arts and Crafts Fair Artisanal Shop switching to online platforms, Cynthia and her team were still able to find customers for their products.

Looking Forward

JCS Arts and Handy Crafts is still going strong today, thanks to the resilience of Cynthia Chuidian Medina. With the pandemic over and done, she is now looking to the future and expanding her business even further while helping local weavers earn more than just a decent living.

With her dedication and crafty skills, we’re sure that she will succeed. A salute to you, Cynthia!





F

lourishing with Food Fusion

How Glenn Villacin Combined Cultures To Suit the Filipino Palate

For Chef Glenn Villacin of Iligan City, food is not just a means to satisfy hunger. It's also something that should represent emerging cultures so people can relate to it in some way because of its universality.

This was why he decided to start his food businesses, which he called the Kogi-Yah Yakiniku Bar, and Ramen-yah Japanese Noodle and Bento.

But he learned recently that even though he's passionate about culinary arts, the unexpected can still happen. And if you are not ready to fight for your dreams, it could extinguish the fire of passion in your heart.

Blazing Background

Chef Glenn started his culinary journey with a barbecue station, a lechon house, and then a restaurant — all while still in college. Upon graduation, he joined one of the largest corporations in the country, working on a job unrelated to his passion.

But something stirred within Chef Glenn. He felt that corporate work does not inspire his spirit. He decided to go to Japan and work in a bento box factory that supplies convenience stores with lunch boxes. He stayed there for a decade and accumulated the necessary experience to feed his true passion.

This experience prompted him to start Ramen-Yah! Japanese Noodle and Bento Restaurant in his hometown of Iligan City, Philippines, in 2013.

He noticed that the Korean culture is widely accepted in the Philippines, so he felt it would be an excellent concept to merge two east Asian traditions through culinary fusion.

"I've noticed some similarities in Korean and Japanese cuisine. Since I love *shabu-shabu* (hot pot dish), I thought of opening a restaurant that serves one," he commented.

Glenn opened the Kogi-Yah Yakiniku Bar in 2018, which fuses the culinary traditions of both cultures. The restaurant offers popular oriental food such as *samgyeopsal* (a grilled dish), *ramen* (noodle soup), and *sushi* (cooked rice topped or wrapped with other ingredients).

Rising from the Covid-19 Crisis

However, in March 2020, Glenn was not exempt from the difficulties that confronted many other entrepreneurs in the country — the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's saddening but we had to let go of our staff. I even had an outstanding loan that I had to pay so it was very hard for me," he recalled.

The pandemic may hurt the economy, but our Iligan City's fusion chef refused to put his apron down and close his restaurant. Glenn realized that they could continue their operations by relying on delivery services alone. He then utilized his restaurant's social media presence to let his customers know that they are open and available for delivery.

But Glenn quickly realized that innovation was not enough to keep his business afloat. He needed assistance to restart his

 DID YOU KNOW?



Kogi-Yah Yakiniku Bar’s unique name comes from *kogi*, a Korean term for meat, and *yah* and *yakiniku*, Japanese for ‘store’ and ‘grilled meat,’ respectively.

business and get back on track. Thankfully, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) was there to provide support through a livelihood kit.

While he was struggling to keep his business afloat, he still took time to participate in DTI’s Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) program.

“Through KMME, I’ve learned the importance of knowing my business well, how to manage my people effectively, and find ways for an entrepreneur to entice people in getting to know one’s business,” he expressed.

Glenn strengthened his products’ quality control, something that one of the KMME mentors recommended, especially since he is engaged in food delivery.

While other entrepreneurs continued to suffer the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Glenn’s business has now recovered, with six employees backing all his ventures.

While he was just barely surviving with a PhP1,000.00 per day revenue in Kogi-Yah Yakiniku Bar before, his daily revenue has now reached an average of PhP4,000.00 per day thanks to his innovation and willingness to adapt to change.



DTI Programs Available



DTI NECTAD BYD

mentor me PROGRAM

Kapatid

Livelihood Kit



A chemical engineer turned Asian cuisine chef learned that a business can still recover as long you know how to adapt to change, innovate and diversify.

SCAN ME!



Ramen-yah Japanese
Noodle and Bento



Flourishing with Food Fusion: How Glenn Villacin Combined Cultures To Suit the Filipino Palate



“Be updated with government policies since it has a huge economic impact. If customers are no longer coming, try to diversify your product or change your concept. Innovate, adjust, and diversify.”

Despite having problems of his own during the height of the pandemic, he provided assistance packages to people around him, especially his staff. He gave food packets to frontliners and representatives of IHARRA (Iligan Hotels & Resorts Restaurants Association), where he is also the president-elect, demonstrating his blazing Bayanihan spirit.

Mouthwatering Mission for the Future

Despite the challenges, Chef Glenn remains positive and continues to explore ways to improve his restaurant business. His love for cooking and providing good food to others is what drives him to continue serving the people of Iligan City with delicious fusion dishes.

Glenn intends to branch out in Cagayan de Oro City and increase brand recognition for his new processed food business. He feels that continuous improvement and setting oneself apart from the competition can keep any business afloat during tough times.

One thing is for sure, Chef Glenn Villacin did not just fuse culinary dishes; he also fused determination and passion to rise up from difficulties and come out victorious.

Fabricating Fortune

Regina Madio's Handwoven Accomplishments

Regina Madio is a perfect example of how turning inspiration into action can create success. Regina, the owner and founder of the PRAJ Pasalubong Center, had very humble beginnings. What started as a coin purse maker became one of the province's largest producers of Kalinga woven goods and packaging, with an annual profit of over a million pesos.

Handwoven History

Regina Madio spent seven years as a bill custodian for an electric cooperative and thought about doing something other than working in an office. In pursuit of this dream, she set up a small business selling office supplies and plush animals along the provincial road in Bulanao. In 2006, after modest success, she quit her job to become a full-time entrepreneur.

In 2007, Regina noticed an interesting-looking coin purse while traveling around Baguio City's tourist spots. It was covered in various designs and was made of woven cloth. Upon returning home, she thought she could manufacture a similar coin purse using Kalinga woven cloth.

"Hindi ko alam kung paano magtahi kaya, yon tinastas ko yung coin purse. Di ako marunong sa measurements kaya nilapag ko na lang ung natastas at ginaya gamit ung woven cloth ng Kalinga."

(I don't know how to sew, so I deconstructed the coin purse I bought. I also have no idea about measurements, so I laid down the deconstructed coin purse and imitated it using Kalinga woven cloth.)

Even though Regina didn't know how to sew, her desire led her to discover how she could make coin purses by replicating the one

she bought. She came up with a few versions of her own using Kalinga fabric and design, which she displayed later at her store.

But as fate would have it, someone noticed the coin purse and asked Regina if she could make 300 more of it as a wedding giveaway. With this, Regina saw potential in using Kalinga fabric to make purses, accessories, and other products.

Even though Regina's business was beginning to improve, she felt limited since she only had one assistant. At this point, she realized that she needed help to make her business bigger.

Sewing Success with the Help of DTI

In 2009, Regina sought the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) for technical assistance through the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SET-UP) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) training and seminars for designs, branding, and packaging.

After finishing the training and getting three new sewing machines, she hired three more workers and bought more Kalinga fabric from the weaving associations and groups in the province. Later on, Regina diversified her products and expanded to bead works, children's wear, toppers, table runners, bracelets, and other accessories.



 SUCCESS TIPS

Learn from other products; see how you can improve them and make them your own.

Establish a goal and work towards it.

Criticisms can help improve your product's quality.



With DTI's assistance, Regina exposed her products to wider market in other parts of the Philippines, such as in Mega Manila (particularly the Mall of Asia), Davao City, and other metropolitan areas around the country.

"Dahil sa mga trade fair, dun ako nakakuha ng mas marami pang idea kung paano pagandahin yung products ko at kung ano pa possibleng expansion and gagawin. Na-criticize yung ibang product ko na maganda kasi nabigyan ako ng tulong kung paano upgrade yung quality lalo sa finishing," Regina expressed.

(Because of trade fairs, I got more ideas on improving my products and other possible ways to expand my business. Of course, they were criticized, but it helped me improve my product's quality, especially the finishing.)

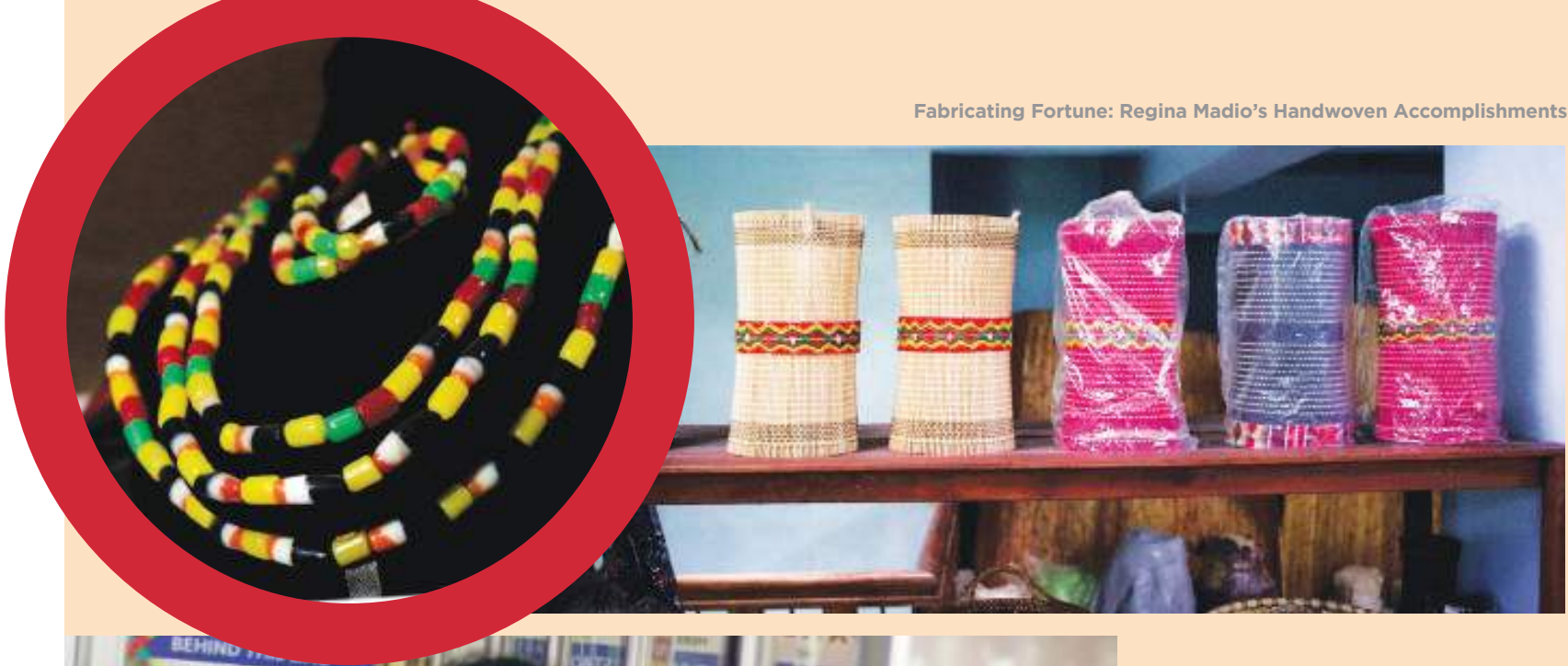
In 2019, Regina participated in the Kapatid Mentor ME Project (KMME) of the DTI, which provided much-needed business knowledge, network, and aid to strengthen her operations.

Pandemic Causing a Wrinkle in Plans

Just as things were going smoothly in Regina's business, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted everything.

Regina had to shut down her company for a month due to the implementation of nationwide lockdowns. Even though there were days when she had zero sales, Regina still considered the welfare of her employees. During the lockdown, she gave four of her workers their full salaries on top of the assistance she provided.

Realizing that the situation would not return to normal soon, Regina set up a work-from-home arrangement and had her staff



DTI Programs Availled



Trade Fairs

For Regina Madio, a businesswoman in Kalinga-Apayao, inspiration comes unexpectedly; what you do with inspiration is up to you.

SCAN ME!



PRAJ Pasalubong
Center and General
Merchandise



Because of trade fairs, I got more ideas on improving my products and other possible ways to expand my business. Of course, they were criticized, but it helped me improve my product's quality, especially the finishing."



Fabricating Fortune: Regina Madio's Handwoven Accomplishments



sew face masks from Kalinga woven fabric. Thankfully, this item was saleable, and it quickly became their most popular product.

Meanwhile, her fruit and vegetable garden yielded a bountiful harvest. Even though her losses at the height of the pandemic were huge, she didn't suffer as much as other businesses because of the yield from her farm.

Still thinking about what she could still do for her community, Regina and her husband gave away woven cloth face masks to medical frontliners and government office workers. They also shared a good portion of their fruit and vegetable harvest with families severely affected by the pandemic.

Moving Forward

Regina's journey to success was not an easy one. She faced many challenges along the way, but she did not give up. With her business instinct, concern for other people, and the help of DTI, Regina overcame these wrinkly challenges and fabricated her fortune.

"Madami naitulong ng DTI. Dahil sa kanila, I became a national awardee of the Productivity Olympics in 2015 and recognized in the regions several times," said Regina.

(The DTI helped me a lot. Without them, I won't be recognized as a national awardee of the Productivity Olympics in 2015 and in the regions several times.)

The PRAJ Pasalubong center, which started from being a simple store, is now one of the province's largest producers of Kalinga woven products and packaging, with an annual profit of over a million pesos. Truly, Regina Madio is an epitome of an entrepreneur who can weave inspiration into reality.



Gloom to Bloom

The Healthy Pursuit of Green Thumb Farm and Al Fresco Restaurant

Rona Denque of Corella, Bohol never thought that one day she would be handling pots and bags instead of papers and pens. When Rona switched from career to another, she found that the new venture was not fulfilling its potential.

But instead of giving up on it and returning to her lending business, she pushed on and continued to improve until she reached the peak of the mushroom industry. Our Mushroom Queen managed through some tough times by improving every aspect of her new business; which eventually led her to become a leading figure within this blooming industry!

A Gloomy History

Initially, Rona saw farming as a way to de-stress from her lending business. At first, she would harvest her organically grown vegetables for personal consumption while selling surplus to her friends.

But out of curiosity, Rona decided to farm oyster mushrooms. To ensure a healthy harvest, she did her research by interviewing mushroom farmers who were knowledgeable about the process. Even though the public held a negative impression on mushrooms, Rona believed it had huge potential in the market.

That was when the Green Thumb Farm was born.

But shifting from lending to farming proved to be a challenge for Rona. As a budding entrepreneur who was just learning the ins and outs of the trade, she had difficulty selling her mushrooms.

While she had an impressive harvest at one point, most of them ended up as hog food. Desperate to make a profit, she decided to

sell the mushrooms to the public market. However, the consumers were still not interested.

How the DTI Opened Up an Opportunity

Rona was eager to turn things around, so she took a Food Safety Seminar from the Negosyo Center-BOSS (Business One Stop Shop) of Bohol. She learned how to test the shelf life of her products and how to handle and store processed food correctly.

From that point, she continued to learn new things that could help her business succeed. She attended seminars and trainings, such as the Kapatid Mentor ME Program. She also attended product development courses, with further help from DTI and Negosyo Center.

Rona learned about other aspects such as product improvement through packaging and labeling designs, food taste and shelf life recommendations from a DTI resident Food Technologist, and free assistance through Negosyo Center.

With the help of these trainings, Rona began to turn things around. She processed her mushrooms into chicharon, chili sauce, pickled mushrooms, and *tocino*. On top of these, she inked deals with major wholesalers that led to the popularity of her mushroom products in Cebu and Mindanao.



Pandemic Produces a Spore of Hope

Just as Rona began to reap the benefits of her mushroom business venture, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. When the national lockdown was announced, she had difficulty transporting her harvest intended for the National Food Fair.

“A substantial number of products expired due non-movement of inventory,” she remembers.

But she had to do something, or the pandemic would severely affect her employees. Rona participated in barter events and exchanged mushroom products for rice and groceries to ease her employee’s difficult economic situation.

Rona’s desire to help her employees inspired her to look for ways to rise above the effects of the pandemic. She noted that visitors who come for training in her farm often look for a place to eat after visiting.

Since the quarantine regulations have been easing up, people wanted to try new things such as eating in restaurants. Diners now prefer open areas for health and safety reasons. Seeing a golden opportunity, Rona and her husband came up with Al Fresco dining.

In a short time, the couple’s vacant and lifeless lot in Green Thumb Farm was transformed to a stress-free and peaceful outdoor dining facility. The al fresco restaurant serves mushroom-based meals harvested from Rona’s farm — providing a true farm to table experience.

To help her fellow KMME graduates, Rona decided to source hot drinks and desserts from them and added them to her menu. They even sold artisanal soaps for souvenirs.

“Collaboration was a key factor in the positive response to our restaurant,” expressed Rona.



DTI Programs Availled



Food Safety Seminars



Product labeling and packaging

A businesswoman from Corella, Bohol, discovered that a hobby could become a lucrative business venture and an empowering way to help people in need.

SCAN ME!



Green Thumb Farm and
Al Fresco Restaurant



Gloom to Bloom: The Healthy Pursuit of Green Thumb Farm and Al Fresco Restaurant



It's being single minded and innovative that gave me the strength to survive the challenges today."



Towards a Blooming Future

Rona's Al Fresco restaurant has since expanded its business hours from appointment-only weekends to week-long operations. The expanded operations have resulted in demand for new jobs. Because of this development, Rona has decided to hire displaced workers and a PWD in Bohol. Now, the overwhelming demand for her mushrooms has resulted in job security for her employees and the farmers around Corella.

Looking back, Rona Denque said that her learnings from DTI helped her navigate the new normal. "The lessons from the trainings especially from Kapatid Mentor Micro Enterprise (KMME) Program struck me the most," she said. Without those seminars and trainings, Rona added that she would not have thought about adjusting to the current situation and would instead simply close her business.

"It's being singled minded and innovative that gave me the strength to survive the challenges today," quipped Rona.

Indeed, Rona has found an innovative way to make mushrooms one of the blooming industries in Bohol. Through her continuous research and innovation, she developed a way to sustain a unique business amidst the challenges brought by the pandemic.

Hopeless to Hopeful

Sweet Moh Bakeshop's Persistence During the Pandemic

Zamboanga City is a province in the southern Philippines severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses were forced to close, and a lot of people lost their jobs. However, one entrepreneur in this city refused to give up.

The entrepreneur is a woman named Onoda Moharin, who owns a micro business named Sweet Moh's Bakeshop. When the pandemic hit, her business was among the many that were forced to close. But while the pandemic has been a difficult time for everyone, Onoda's innovative solutions to problems are what makes her a cut above the rest.

Sweet Moh's Tasty Tale

Onoda's journey to success started in 2015 as a home-based business at a rented apartment in Tetuan, Zamboanga City. She baked cookies and pies and displayed them in her sister's clinic in Isabela City, Basilan.

One day, one of her sister's pregnant clients bought a slice of pineapple pie and took it home. Within 30 minutes, she came back and bought the entire pie. She told Onoda that that was the best pineapple pie she had ever tasted. It was the finest testimonial they've heard, which prompted Onoda to turn this side hustle into a full-time business.

In a few weeks' time, Onoda faced a delightful challenge — orders kept coming in. That was when she decided to buy a bigger oven and eventually open a bakery beside her sister's clinic, and she named it Sweet Moh Bakeshop.

As someone who studied at UP Los Baños, buko pie had a significant impact on Onoda's life. This is why when she decided

to open a bakery, she did not hesitate to include this coconut-based delicacy on her menu.

It seemed as if the bakeshop was growing exponentially and everything was going well until Basilan's coconut industry was hit hard by the dreadful Cocolisap. Since one of their main products was buko pie, Onoda had to search for a different source of buko, or else the business would greatly suffer. Thankfully, they were able to find a supplier in Zamboanga City, even if it meant having to purchase and transport this raw ingredient from there to Basilan every day.

How the DTI Helped Bake Onoda's Success

Onoda found her biggest success upon joining ZAMPEX, the Zamboanga Peninsula Exposition, in 2017. The response to their products was so significant that they were convinced to open their first branch. Banking on the lessons of running the first branch, they eventually offered two more branches.

In 2018, she attended the DTI's Kapatid Mentor ME Program to hone her entrepreneurial skills further. One of the first things she learned is that securing a business permit is essential in ensuring the public that your business is legitimate and safe to transact with.

In the program, she learned how to develop a business plan and met other young entrepreneurs with whom she could bounce ideas off.



 SUCCESS TIPS



Secure a business permit because it ensures the public that the business is safe.

You should not only put a 30% mark up to be profitable; aim higher. Make it up to 70% to make your business lucrative.

Another lesson she learned during her mentorship is proper accounting and how to properly put a mark-up on her baked products.

“In business, you should not only put 30% mark up to be profitable. You should aim higher. Make it up to 70% to make it a lucrative business,” she expressed.

Pondering during the Pandemic
In the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic, Onoda's bakery virtually had zero business funds. When the local government announced a lockdown in March of 2020, she had to make drastic decisions.

First, she paid her workers, then she had to do the same for her suppliers. However, her funds were insufficient to pay everyone at once, so she wrote promissory notes to several suppliers. What was left was a small sum that she kept for herself and her family during the uncertain times of the pandemic.

Even when funds were already pretty low, Onoda did her best to help the community. During an outreach program spearheaded by their homeowner's association, she gave away several boxes of canned condensed and evaporated milk that she had in stock.

After almost two months of being closed, Onoda slowly opened the business, even when they were still afraid of the COVID-19 virus and even when the vaccine was not yet available. As she no longer had funds to restart the business, she had to borrow money from family members.

The journey back was not as smooth as when she was starting out. The first few months of the pandemic were the hardest. There were only a handful of customers, so she only sold a limited amount of baked goods.

But Onoda did not give up. She hired a friend to manage her Facebook page to get more customers. It was a successful endeavor; from 430 followers, the social media manager was able to increase it to 5,650 followers!



DTI Programs Aailed



An entrepreneur in Zamboanga City was given two hard choices during the pandemic: stay down or continue to fight. She chose the latter and came back stronger.

SCAN ME!



Sweet Moh Bakeshop

TESTIMONIALS

Arwyzza Wahid

Delicious pies with crispy crust and filling with just the right amount of sweetness. Also provides nice delivery service.

Rosemarie Uson

They have the fastest delivery in town, I was surprised in 30 minutes dumating na order ko considering malayo bahay namin and mura lang ang charge compare sa iba. I ordered the sampler set + 1.5 coke and my picky eater kids love the choco pie. Thank you, Sweet Moh's, dili lang kayo sweet, mabilis and maasahan pa. 10 stars for excellent service and for the yummy merienda.

Yoonii Mint

Freshly baked pies with premium quality ingredients. Just the right kick of sweetness. Many flavors to choose from, though Buko Pie is my favorite.

ZC Car Rental

The buko lychee pie, I like but the apple pie, my God, I love it. And for a low low price. Thank you, Sweet Moh's.



Hopeless to Hopeful: Sweet Moh Bakeshop's Persistence During the Pandemic



Challenges are very uncomfortable, sometimes unimaginable. Accepting it as part of your business journey will make it easy to handle; no matter how big or small it is. I have no huge capital in my hands, but I have a huge determination to win."

Sweet Moh's owner then contacted her previous customers to inform them that her bakery had reopened. She also partnered with delivery services such as Maxim to make it easier for customers to purchase her products. Onada recalled that she even had to wake up at four in the morning every day to deliver pies to the Pier of Zamboanga. These pies were then transported to her first branch in Isabela, Basilan.

All these to make sure they earn enough to make a living during one of the harshest periods the whole world has ever experienced.

Towards a Freshly-Baked Future

Sweet Moh Bakeshop is the epitome of a small business success story. Faced with unimaginable challenges during the pandemic, Onoda never gave up. She persisted through it all and came out stronger on the other side.

Her story is a reminder that no matter how tough times might get, we should always be hopeful and expect the best. Onoda Moharin's journey to success is an inspiration to us all. She may not have a huge capital, but she was determined to win.

Thank you, Onoda, for reminding us of the power of hope and determination.



Inclusive Enterprise

Carmelita Rejano-Reyes becomes Marinduque's Modern-day Good Samaritan

How do you keep a business afloat during one of the most difficult times in our history while extending a helping hand to those who need help? While these are two of the toughest endeavors today, one person managed to do both at the same time.

Carmelita Rejano-Reyes, the owner of Rejano's Bakery, did not hesitate to help those in need during the pandemic. Ka Mita, as she was known in the community, used all her resources and knowledge to keep her business afloat while providing not just job opportunities but other types of community assistance she could manage.

Rejano's Rich and Robust Roots

Rejano's Bakery started in 1946 when Ka Mita's grandmother baked arrowroot cookies as a present for Marinduque's wealthy families. These families instantly loved the baked arrowroot cookies, prompting them to develop the product and transforming it into a business with the aid of local farmers in the province.

Arrowroot cookies are bite-sized treats made from the starch of uraro rhizome, an underground tuber. These cookies offer a unique sweetness, flavor, and texture that distinguishes them from similar baked treats on the market. These gluten-free cookies make them an excellent choice for health enthusiasts.

Ka Mita's grandparents were able to provide their family with a brighter future after starting a business that began as a small act of generosity. The company helped the owner's nine grandchildren, including Ka Mita, finish college and establish professional careers here and abroad.

As the years passed, one of the descendants had to take over the company. This is when Ka Mita became a third-generation entrepreneur and took over management of the family business.

Growing up, it occurred to Ka Mita that she had an innate business acumen. She had a plan in place at a young age to enhance the company's operations. That is why she looked for methods to modernize the entire arrowroot cookie baking process when she took over the business.

She also put up the Rejano's Bakery's souvenir shop at Boac Hotel, which has now become a must-see tourist destination in Marinduque. Ka Mita coordinated with different entrepreneurs and manufacturers in the province to bring all of Marinduque's best in one place. More than their trademark delectable arrowroot cookies, this one-stop shop offers a diverse selection of items that would make excellent gifts for friends and family.

How DTI Helped the Business Stay Competitive

Ka Mita recalls that during her early years of running the bakery, one of the country's major supermarkets did not allow her arrowroot cookies to be displayed on their shelves. She considered it a challenge and went to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for assistance.

 DID YOU KNOW?

Arrowroot cookies are bite-sized snacks made from the starch of Uraro rhizome, an underground tuber. These sweet and flaky cookies with meringue-like ridges have a distinct sweetness, flavor, and texture, which makes them stand out from other similar products available in the market. These cookies are gluten-free, making them a healthy snack option.



She then participated in the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) program, which helps entrepreneurs grow their businesses by providing them access to a wide network of industry mentors. Through the program, Ka Mita had the opportunity to talk with other established business owners and learn from their successes and failures.

The agency also provided her with Product Label and Packaging training, which helped her improve the overall presentation of Rejano’s products. After seeing the improvement, the same supermarket chain which initially rejected her purchased half a million worth of Rejano’s Bakery products!

But Ka Mita did not take her success for granted. To further enhance her business, she also sought the help of other government agencies, such as the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). From a production capacity of 20 kilos of arrowroot starch per day, Rejano’s bakery can now produce up to 80 to 150 kilos daily because of the equipment supplied by the said agency. Rejano’s Bakery also received assistance through DOST’s Small Business Technology Upgrading Program (DOST-SETUP).

Furthermore, Ka Mita participated in multiple online and physical workshops and events. This includes DTI MIMAROPA’s workshops on good manufacturing practices and food safety management, FDA’s Qualified Persons in Industry Regulatory Affairs (QPIRA) Training, the SGS Kaagapay sa Negosyo program, national trade fairs, and several local mini bazaars in Marinduque.

As of this writing, Rejano’s Bakery has a Trademark Registration with the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines.

The Modern-Day Good Samaritan Rises During the Pandemic
Before the pandemic struck the archipelago, Carmelita’s arrowroot cookie shop enjoyed huge success. However, Rejano’s Bakery, just like other businesses, couldn’t dodge the pandemic’s impact. The strict community quarantine measures decreased sales and reduced market avenues due to cancellations of national and local trade fairs. The difficulty of transporting raw materials and end products has ultimately added to her entrepreneurial worries.

However, instead of worrying about herself, the first thing that came into her mind was the people who relied on her. Her determination and dedication to assisting the struggling arrowroot farmers in the community pushed her to find a way to keep the bakery going.

To continue their production while abiding with the strict minimum health protocols, the management implemented an alternative work rotation for the staff to minimize contact with each other. They also sold their products to different barangays in the municipality of Sta. Cruz for a low price of PhP2.00 each.

She likewise committed Rejano’s Bakery to the production of eNutribuns, a Department of Science and Technology (DOST) project, by baking 7,000 pieces of Nutribuns every two days, three times a week for two months.



DTI Programs Aailed



Product Label and Packaging training



Workshops on good manufacturing practices and food safety management



For Carmelita “Ka Mita” Rejano-Reyes, there should be no compromise between having a good heart for other people and keeping her business thriving.

SCAN ME!



Rejano's Bakery



Inclusive Enterprise: Carmelita Rejano-Reyes becomes Marinduque's Modern-day Good Samaritan



Unang-una kinakailangang may puso ka, dahil kung negosyante ka nga at ikaw naman ay madamot ayaw mong tumulong, talagang wala, walang mangyayari. Kailangang bukas ang iyong puso na tumulong sa kapwa.”

Truly a modern-day Good Samaritan, Ka Mita then opened the doors of Matalaba Retreat House and Gospel Outreach Chapel, a sanctuary built from the savings she earned through the bakery, to become a quarantine facility. She even prepared packed foods for those in the isolation facility.

To help her business recover from the adverse effects of the pandemic, the DTI provided Ka Mita with a Php 400,000 loan through the P3 CARES Loan Program. With the loan, she was able to maintain production and keep her business running steadily.

Sweet Hopes for the Future

2022 marks Rejano's Bakery's 76th year in the business. The enterprise has been through all kinds of challenges, and the pandemic was just another obstacle in its long journey.

With the help of DTI and other government agencies, they have been able to continue production and ride the crisis out. Ka Mita has now started venturing into eCommerce through Shopee, allowing her to reach more customers on a national level.

Despite her efforts to grow Rejano's Bakery, she hasn't stopped supporting those around her. Until now, Ka Mita supports her employees and the farmer-suppliers by providing medicines, rice subsidies, and even financial assistance.

She also reached out to individuals outside her own enterprise by leading a seminar for business owners on special recipes they can offer tourists as an additional revenue source. As a member of Marinduque's Provincial Tourism Council, Ka Mita helped establishments affected by the pandemic acquire the appropriate accreditation from the Department of Tourism so they could continue operating.

From having a capital of Php200,000, Rejanos Bakery is now worth Php 3 million. They have nine full-time employees, on top of the other part-time employees and farmers who are vital in their day-to-day operations. Ka Mita also hired a couple of People with Disabilities (PWDs) at her bakery and farm, making her business truly inclusive.

For Carmelita “Ka Mita” Rejano-Reyes, success is not only about achieving your goals but also leaving a lasting positive impact on others. Just like her arrowroot products, she wants her legacy to be one that is sweet and satisfying. We have no doubt that it will be.





Journey to Prosperity

The Jedidiah Food Industry's Story

It's not often that you hear a success story about a business that started in jail, but Jedidiah Food Company is the exception. Founded by Darlyn C. Bagtas, Jedidiah started as a small livelihood program for inmates in 2011.

This small business has faced many challenges over the years, but they have persevered and succeeded in becoming one of the top Turmeric tea producers in the country.

If you're looking for the best way to run your business, follow Darlyn's lead.

The Humble Beginnings of Jedidiah Food Company

Who would have thought that a simple turmeric tea-making business would become a multi-million peso company? But that's exactly what happened with Jedidiah Food Industry.

The venture started as a PhP30,000-worth livelihood program initiated by Darlyn for inmates in the Bulacan Provincial Jail in 2011. The workers dried and extracted the Turmeric root to make pure Turmeric powder which can be consumed as tea. The finished products were then brought to the Provincial Government Pasalubong Center to be sold.

Seeing the potential of the venture to become a full-fledged business, Darlyn decided to put up her own food company. With four workers and an initial capital of PhP1.5 million, Jedidiah Food Industry was launched.

Working Smart with the Help of DTI

Darlyn is one savvy businesswoman. She knew that in order to take

her company to the next level, she needed to get herself educated on all things business related.

As such, she attended various seminars sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which included Finding the Right Market for the Right Product Seminar, Quality Customer Service Seminar, and Visual Merchandising Seminar. These trainings equipped her with the knowledge she can use to apply in her business.

But DTI didn't stop there in assisting Darlyn. The agency also helped improve her product through the Product Development Assistance Program. With it, Darlyn fully understood the value of proper packaging — it can make or break a product sales-wise. In time, she was able to improve her clear pouch packaging to all-aluminum packs required for exporting. She also upgraded the box and bottle containers for her tea line.

Darlyn's pursuit of excellence is tireless. Not only did she innovate new products, but she also built a production facility and applied for FDA approval.

To boost product visibility, Darlyn regularly participated in trade fairs such as the GTH (Global Trade Hub) Trade Fair, BUFFEX (Bulacan Food Fair and Exposition) 2015-2016, *Likha ng Central Luzon*, and The Big Bite Northern Festival. Her products were so well-accepted that even major supermarkets and grocery stores

 SUCCESS TIPS

Find the right market for
your product

Improve your label and packaging to
attract more customers

Provide quality customer service

Continue learning about how to run
your business properly



nationwide, such as Landmark, South Supermarket, and Robinsons Supermarket, agreed to carry her products.

Through the International Food Exposition, the business was able to penetrate the international scene. Jedidah's products can now be found in other countries like Hong Kong and Guam.

With DTI's help, Darlyn was able to take her company to new heights — both locally and internationally.

Business Wasn't Always Sweet

But business isn't always a bed of roses, as Jedidah Food Company has also experienced its fair share of challenges throughout the years.

One of their difficulties was liquidity issues since they had to maintain a certain inventory level to meet the demands of their clients. They also encountered supply issues, especially during the dry season when it became difficult to source Turmeric.

To solve this problem, they started to source their Turmeric from additional suppliers in Mindoro, Talavera, Romblon, Batangas, and Dona Remedios Trinidad. Darlyn also decided to reduce production during lean seasons to avoid oversupply and wastage.

Despite these challenges, Jedidah Food Company has remained strong and continues to produce quality products that are enjoyed by many.



DTI Programs Available



Finding the Right
Market for the Right
Product Seminar

Quality Customer
Service Seminar

Visual Merchandising
Seminar

Product Development
Assistance Program

GTH Trade Fair, BUFFEX
2015-2016, Likha ng Central
Luzon, and The Big Bite
Northern Festival

What started as a small livelihood program for detainees in Bulacan became a full-fledged food company with international reach thanks to one woman's perseverance.

SCAN ME!



Jedidiah Food Industry



A Bright Future Ahead

Jedidiah Food Company is proof that with hard work and determination, anyone can achieve their dreams. From a small livelihood program to a full-fledged food company with international reach, Darlyn's venture has come a long way.

And she's not stopping there. With DTI's assistance, Jedidiah Food Company is well on its way to becoming one of the leading food companies in the Philippines.

Who knows, maybe Jedidiah Food Industry will even become a world-class brand. We certainly hope so! Until then, we'll continue to support Jedidiah Food Company in its journey to prosperity.

Juicy Outcome

Young Owner of BcDc Agricultural Products becomes a Role Model for MSMEs

When we were young, our parents usually asked us what we wanted to be when we grew up. While most of us choose to be a doctor, engineer, or lawyer, one girl chose a different path.

Lurie Mary Grace Fajutag, the owner of BcDc Agricultural Products in San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro, was born into an entrepreneurial family. While self-employment seems to be the obvious choice for millennials and the GenZ age groups in the digital era, Lurie knew it'd be a difficult road to BcDc Agricultural Products' success. Nevertheless, she plowed on.

From Backyard to Business

Calamansi is a common citrus fruit in Oriental Mindoro, where it can be commonly found growing in backyard gardens. Lurie's family has a couple of these at home, which they use for self-consumption. This was where Lurie got the idea to utilize the ordinary citrus fruit as an extraordinary way of earning money.

Just like other success stories, BcDc follows the same plot line. Lurie started her business from the juice she made from the fruits of their two calamansi trees. With Php2,000 in start-up capital, Lurie registered BcDc Agricultural Products with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2015.

The B, C, D, and C in BcDc Agricultural Products represent banana, calamansi, dalandan, and coconut, which are the ingredients Lurie uses in her products. The calamansi concentrate is their primary product, popularly known as Honey Man-C. From harvest to bottle, the calamansi contrate processing was done manually by members of the family.

It wasn't a prosperous business at the onset. It wasn't until a year later, when she was invited to exhibit her product at a local trade show in San Teodoro, that things started to make an upward turn.

They prepared one box of calamansi concentrate bottles for the event, and they were sold out in a matter of minutes! They even received positive feedback, inquiries for bulk orders, and questions on how to resell. This was the beginning of their business expansion.

As their company grew and her products became more in demand, Lurie's family decided to convert their old piggery building into a tiny processing plant. This was where the other BcDc products, such as raw wild honey, calamansi puree, Chilli Man-C, Ready-to-drink Honey Man-C, ginger powder, and turmeric powder, were prepared.

Lurie also started employing people from outside the family. To date, the business has 11 workers, most of whom come from Mangyan communities.

Aside from the jobs her business provided, BcDC was also able to help calamansi farmers by being a sure buyer.

"Maraming farmers dito ang dumadaing dahil sa mga calamansi nila na nabubulok at tinatapon na lamang," said Lurie. ("Many farmers



DTI Programs Available



DTI MIMAROPA
Naturally Agri-Trade
and Tourism Fair

Acquisition of
barcodes, nutritional
data, and assistance in
other laboratory tests



 DID YOU KNOW?

Calamansi is not a seasonal fruit-bearing tree, which means you can pick calamansi fruits all year-round!

A calamansi fruit doesn't just contain Vitamin C — it is also rich in vitamin A, calcium, and potassium.

Honey Man-C is a mix of pure calamansi extract, honey, ginger, and turmeric. It is rich in Vitamin C, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory properties.



here complain that their calamansi fruits end up rotting and getting thrown away,” said Lurie.)

With BcDc around, these farmers have found a sure buyer for their harvest.

How the DTI Sweetened BcDc’s Success

Lurie credits the DTI’s Kapatid Mentor ME Program for her company’s continued success. In 10 weeks, the mentors in the program taught her how to develop and expand her business with product development and innovation, advanced marketing, and overall operations management.

According to Lurie, she learned that it is not enough to have a capital investment. You need to know every aspect of the business, from production to marketing. You also need to know how to talk to your workers and customers.

She found that exposing your products to the market is essential, so she was frequently seen as an exhibitor at the MIMAROPA Naturally Agri-Trade and Tourism Fair.

Furthermore, Lurie sought DTI MIMAROPA’s help to acquire barcodes, nutritional data, and other laboratory tests. Due to these efforts, the business obtained a License To Operate (LTO) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Currently, Lurie is working on obtaining a Certificate of Product Registration (CPR) from the FDA to guarantee that her products are of high quality and safe to consume.

Ripe Opportunities During the Pandemic

While most of the businesses in the country nosedived during the pandemic, BcDc’s fortunes improved. This is because all of BcDc’s

Lurie Mary Grace Fajutag, a young entrepreneur in Oriental Mindoro, proves that succeeding in business doesn't require a certain age.

SCAN ME!



BcDc Agricultural Products



Juicy Outcome: Young Owner of BcDc Agricultural Products becomes a Role Model for MSMEs



Sa pag nenegosyo kailangan mo talagang mangarap, maniwala at magsikap. Wag mong hahayaan na ang pangarap mo ay hanggang pangarap nalang, maniwala kalang at pag sikapan mo itong makamtan.”

calamansi products are considered essential, and therefore, could be sold through a special permit by the IATF.

But the surge in demand also meant an increase in the need for production. One of their main concern is that the community quarantines made it difficult to acquire packaging materials from Metro Manila.

They had to look for alternative packaging resources available within the vicinity and found *nito* baskets and bags, which were weaved by members of the Mangyan communities. Thinking that they also had to do their part in helping their Mangyan workers earn more, BcDc also sold these items through their online channels.

To top it off, they gave back to their employees by providing them with groceries to help them get through the pandemic.

Towards a Fruitful Future

As the country slowly adapts to the new normal, Lurie is still finding ways to sustain the business. She has now expanded to online platforms; hence customers from other parts of the country can buy BcDc products through Lazada, Shopee, Instagram, and Facebook.

The young lady boss behind BcDc Agricultural Products embodies a go-getter spirit that entrepreneurs should look up to. Clearly, there is no stopping Lurie Mary Grace Fajutag from achieving her dreams for herself, her family, and the community.





K

Keep Educating Yourself

Sandria Cadusale's Side Hustle Come Full-Time Business

Who says that you cannot attend to your studies while earning money on the side? Sandria Cadusale did it effortlessly when she was just a teenager. Her tireless work ethic and dedication have paved the way for her to achieve great things that she now enjoys in her golden years, including her business Sandria's Delicious Concept.

A Hardworking History

When Sandria was still in her early teens, she sold sambag (tamarind) and yema (sweet custard) to her friends and classmates. Even after finishing school and while working as an accountant, she continued selling these two tasty treats as a side hustle.

When she decided to pursue graduate studies, one of the things that funded her education was *barquillos* — a delicacy she learned to make from her brother-in-law.

Sandria was relentless with her pursuit even with both work and studies to juggle, but she never got tired. She always loved what she does. After years of hard work with this endeavor, Sandria finally has a business she named after herself: Sandria's Delicious Concept.

From Side Hustle to Full-Fledged Business with DTI's Help

Sandria began her business venture with the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Kapatid Mentor ME Program in 2018. The program helped improve her product lineup while broadening her entrepreneurial reach.

In the KMME program, Sandria's classmates and mentors urged her to create ways to bring out new flavors in the classic Filipino desserts that she prepares. She followed their guidance and

improved her goods several times until she was able to bring out exciting new choices for her customers to enjoy.

Slowly but surely, Sandria was able to connect with local and international markets through continuous product improvement, eventually reaching Cebu's Pasalubong Centers. She has also improved the packaging and labeling of her goods using the One Town, One Product (OTOP) initiative and participated in trade shows.

The COVID-19 Effect on the Delicacies Industry

Sandria was at the peak of her success when the COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the world. Most of her customers who love her tasty products suddenly stopped coming due to the nationwide lockdowns. Her business took a severe hit as her sales significantly decreased.

But Sandria was a fighter. Despite the odds, she found ways to keep her business afloat. While the world was halted during the pandemic, Sandria's business was sustained as she diversified to packed food.

As a way of giving back, Sandria donated some unshipped products to the frontliners and hospitals as *Gutom Savers*.

LESSONS LEARNED



Learn to adapt to the times. Sandria switched to packed meals and frozen goods when the sale of her delicacies slowed down.

Improve continuously. While part of the KMME program, Sandria learned to diversify her products to attract more customers.



DTI Programs Available

An entrepreneur in Cebu proved that starting a business at a very young age while studying can become a main ingredient of a sweet thing called success.

SCAN ME!



Sandria's Delicious Concept



Keep Educating Yourself: Sandria Cadusale's Side Hustle Come Full-Time Business



True to the business' tag line "*Your Gutom Saver*," Sandria did not only fill the bellies of our *kababayans*, but she also extended her hand to our brave frontliners during the first wave of the pandemic.

Moving Forward

Sandria's story is a testament to the fact that even in the darkest times, there is always a way to succeed if you are willing to adapt.

Her business has since expanded to other specialties. Offering more food options helped her land deals with corporate businesses. Right now, she provides 500 meal packs daily to a major company in Cebu.

Moreover, Sandria's other products, including sandwiches, salad, breakfast, and frozen meals, are now displayed in a well-known convenience store in Visayas. Her famous delicacies *Barquiron* and *Barquillos* filled with *Polvoron* are also displayed in local malls and are even sold abroad.

Today, Sandria's business is doing better than ever. Thanks to her tireless efforts and dedication to her business, Sandria's Delicious Concept has been chosen for the 2021 Productivity Olympics (Micro Category) by the National Wages and Productivity Commission of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Sandria's passion is the secret ingredient to her success. She loves what she does, and it shows in her delicious meals and delicacies. Because of this secret ingredient, topped with a dose of hard work and dedication, Sandria Cadusale was able to turn her side hustle into a thriving business.

Lean to Lucrative

Prime Innov8's Thriving Legend

Celia Pajel was once a successful career woman, but she gave it all up to be with her family in the Philippines. The transition from busy professional to stay-at-home mother who focused on her children was not an easy one, and Celia quickly became restless.

Drawing on her background as a chemist, Celia started her own business venture. The road to success was filled with ups and downs, but Celia is a strong woman who persevered. What started as a backyard business became a booming enterprise, and this is the story of how it all happened.

How it All Began

Celia was motivated to start her own dishwashing liquid business when she saw that many housewives could not afford the branded products that dominated the market. With this in mind, Celia set out to manufacture a quality product at a more affordable price.

Celia started by producing dishwashing liquid in her backyard with just PVC pipes and plastic pails as tools. She achieved her goal of producing quality dishwashing products that were at par with the branded ones.

However, selling the product was another challenge. Except for a handful of friends and family who patronized her product, her neighbors were brand conscious and hesitant to shift, she had to find another way to sell her products.

When Celia sought the help of her neighbor who owned three grocery stores, she had no idea that her simple proposal would result in a partnership. Upon learning of Celia's background as a chemist, the neighbor immediately saw the potential for a

new business venture. And so, in November of 2008, AC Innov8 Manufacturing Co. was born.

In this partnership, Celia handled the manufacturing side while her neighbor took charge of the marketing. Her partner was very enthusiastic and utilized aggressive marketing tactics. They also applied for a loan with the Small Business Corporation (SB Corp) and the Foundation for a Sustainable Society, Inc. (FSSI) with the help of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Her partner hired sales managers, bought delivery vans, rented warehouses in provinces, and financed advertisements on local radio stations. The sales managers were offered various incentives, including new vehicles and some bonuses upon reaching the sales quota.

Apparently, their sales managers weren't working as expected and made up false orders while their actual products were left to expire. The cost of the marketing was higher than the actual sales, and debts were starting to pile up.

So after only three years in the business, Celia's business partner decided to leave after losing at least P10 million. Celia was left with unpaid loans and uncollected sales.



DTI Programs Available



SB Corp loan

FSSI loan

Special permits to operate during pandemic

Endorsement to DOST Set-up loan

Facilitated the IPO approval process

Tindahan ng Rizalenyong



CELIA PAJEL'S TIPS FOR THOSE STARTING OUT

Be passionate. Starting and maintaining a successful business is hard work.

Creating a business plan is a must. You can not rely on intuition alone.

Hire wisely and surround yourself with good people who have a deep concern for your success.

Set goals and work towards them. Do not depend on luck; you have to work hard to achieve your goal.



From the Ground Up

With over PhP2 million in outstanding loans, and without a partner to work out the marketing side of the business, Celia struggled to keep things afloat. Faced with the dilemma of whether to continue or give up on her business, Celia chose to persevere despite the challenges.

Thankfully, a friend from the US whom Celia reached out to was kind enough to send her USD \$2,000 to help her get back on her feet.

The company became a beneficiary of the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) Program and the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Next Generation Program, which were instrumental in helping Celia expand her understanding of the different aspects of business.

With some money and more knowledge at her disposal, Celia decided to shift her focus. Instead of competing with branded products in the retail market, she developed her own line of consumer products, including all-purpose cleaners, wax-based air fresheners, bleach, hand soaps, disinfectant, and detergents.

This decision proved to be successful and helped her get the business back on track. Celia was blown away when their client base increased over just three months.

They went from working with small businesses like janitorial and custodial service companies, commissaries, laundries, hospitals, and farms to partnering with distributors for car care services, hotels, resorts, and schools. But the moneymaker was the monthly disinfectants supply to slaughterhouses and poultry farms.

As demand for her products grew, she developed new formulations to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients. This eventually led to her filing a SEC withdrawal of partnership with her former business partner and changing the name to Prime Innov8 Manufacturing Company. Celia was finally achieving the success she has always hoped for.

Facing the Pandemic Head-on with the Help of DTI

When the Covid-19 crisis hit, the community was locked down, and workers could only report to work if they had special permits. Prices increased, and suppliers stopped delivering raw materials to the factory.

The company's senior citizens, including Celia, her husband, her brother, and the quality control chemist, had to work from home. Most of the company's clients shut down their operations, car care, janitorial, or hotel industries.

A businesswoman in Rodriguez, Rizal did not let the pandemic dilute her resolve. Instead, she used the situation to achieve the success she had always dreamed of.

SCAN ME!



Prime Innov8



Lean to Lucrative: Prime Innov8's Thriving Legend

To deal with these challenges, the company identified its products as essentials and requested special permits from IATF and DTI that would allow them to continue operating.

Only 50% of employees were allowed to work, but the company concentrated its operation on manufacturing disinfectants, alcohols, sanitizers, and sanitizing hand soaps.

As hospitals and government agencies scrambled to find ways to disinfect public areas and protect people from the virus, Prime Innov8's products became essential.

Fortunately, Celia was able to obtain the supplies the company needed, particularly alcohol, to meet the increased demand. While prices for these raw materials were high, so were the sales. In fact, the company registered its highest number of sales during the pandemic!

As a show of gratitude, Celia took steps to support her employees, providing them with rice and canned goods to help ensure that they could weather the crisis. Additionally, the company donated disinfectants to local government agencies for use in sanitizing public areas. Finally, they donated empty drums to the Rotary Club so that they could be used in hand-washing stations in crowded areas.

The DTI has been instrumental in the success of Prime Innov8 Manufacturing Company. Through its endorsement to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Prime Innov8 was able to avail of the set-up loan to purchase a fully automated machine amounting to Php2 million.

The agency also helped them get their FDA License To Operate (LTO), for both cosmetics and household/urban hazardous substances (HUHS). Just recently, DTI facilitated the IPO approval of their brand name. DTI is also promoting their products through the Tindahan ng Rizaleny.

From the End of the Crisis and Beyond

Celia Pajel's journey is one of enduring courage in the face of daunting odds. She has made significant sacrifices along the way, but her biggest triumph has been her willingness to start anew each time her business has faltered.

Celia is an inspiration to all who dream of starting their own business. She is a shining example of what is possible if you never give up on your dreams. Her story is proof that even the darkest of days can eventually give way to a bright and prosperous future.

Truly, Celia's willpower is legendary!





Melting Failure to Forge Success

The Story of MELTS Bakeshop

What does it take to succeed in business? Ask MELTS Bakeshop, and they will tell you that it takes a lot of hard work, dedication, and, most importantly, a burning passion to succeed.

This micro-enterprise started out as a small-scale cassava cake business in the SOCCSARGEN Region but quickly won the palate of the masses and gained the attention of the local business circle. It has also received recognitions from both the government and charitable institutions, proving it has made an impact not only on the local economy but also on other stakeholders, especially consumers and the community.

From a Kitchen-Based Business to a Thriving Enterprise

It was in the year 2019 when Southern Mindanao experienced a controversial financial crisis brought about by large-scale spurious investment schemes. Lennard Jan Ponce, the man behind MELTS, was among the victims.

Lennard was not one to be put down. Remembering the request of a former colleague to bake him a cassava cake, he decided to give it a try. With no prior experience in the food industry and only Php3,500 in his pocket, he started his business.

He began by baking cassava cakes in his own kitchen and selling them online via social media. As word of mouth about the deliciousness of his products spread, he soon had more customers than he could handle on his own. With just one high-quality product, Lennard's success became exponential!

Soon enough, he had to hire more staff, open up a physical store, and increase production to meet the demands of his rapidly growing customer base. Currently, MELTS has a core team of 29 employees.

It was not easy at first, but they were determined to succeed. And succeed, they did! Today, MELTS is one of the most popular bakeries in the region, with a wide array of delicious products that have won the hearts of consumers.

Government Support Through the DTI

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has been a big help to MELTS Bakeshop, providing them with training and access to resources that have allowed the company to improve its operations.

In its first three months alone, the business was noticed and invited to be a part of the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The micro-enterprise also took part in the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) Program, which helped MELTS reach other regions in Mindanao and the rest of the country.

Two MELTS Production Plants are currently in construction—the Southern Mindanao Production Plant in South Cotabato and the Northern Mindanao Production Plant in Cagayan de Oro City. With 18 MELTS outlets in operation, the company hopes to open more stores in the different strategic areas of the Philippines.

These accomplishments are a testament to MELTS' dedication to quality and safety, as well as their commitment to providing only the best products and services to their customers.

 SUCCESS TIPS



Create a quality product



Don't underestimate the power of word-of-mouth marketing and social media networking



Work with your community by searching for raw materials locally



Empower locals by providing training and livelihood



Utilize opportunities such as DTI training and other programs

Spearheading Economic Development in the Area

When Lennard first started his business, he never anticipated the overwhelming demand for his product. There were times when he was running out of cassava, his primary raw material. In order to keep up with demand, he encouraged farmers in the community to plant more cassava.

Before MELTS, the cassava farmers in their community were barely scraping by. They had to sell their crops for next to nothing—somewhere from 50 centavos to PhP3 per kilo. But everything changed when MELTS came along. Suddenly, there was a demand for their crops and they could sell them for a fair price of PhP13 to PhP16 per kilo. This allowed them to focus on growing even more cassava, which in turn led to even more opportunities for business and employment in their town.

Lennard's partnership with the farmers was beneficial for both parties; the farmers were able to buy their own land and MELTS had a reliable source of cassava.

But the company didn't stop there; it also created employment opportunities by tapping into the local market for eggs, sugar, and other raw materials. As a result, MELTS is not only changing the

way we think about cassava cakes, but it is also spearheading a new era of economic development in their community.

MELTS Bakeshop Gives Back to Its Employees and the Community

MELTS is not only about making delicious cassava cakes; it is also about giving back to the community and its employees which helped the company thrive.

Since MELTS prioritizes the welfare of its employees, it gives its staff benefits like free stay-in accommodation, free meals, health insurance, and cash incentives when they hit the daily sales quota.

Right now, the company is finding new ways to sweeten the deal for those who resell its products. Trusted resellers who don't have enough capital are provided with free daily delivery services, helping them earn additional income. This is just one of the many promotions that the company has launched to aid low-income individuals who are willing to sell MELTS Bakeshop's products.

The company has also donated relief goods and water containers to a tribal community of more than 100 families in South Cotabato to help address the issue of potable water.



DTI Programs Availled



Faced with a financial crisis and with only Php3,500 in his pocket, Lennard Jan Ponce took matters into his own hands and built a bakeshop that had the makings of a small empire.

SCAN ME!



MELTS Bakeshop



TESTIMONIALS

 **Rolly Sarifa**

Perfect classic pinoy pasalubong and snack. I can imagine spoiling/surprising your loved ones with this. Must keep in your fridge for late night cravings lol.

 **Kenneth Duenas**

I ❤️ Melts
The taste still lingers on my tongue. This is one of my tasteful food experience,
I'm proud that is locally produced from my hometown.
I would definitely love to share this with my friends 😊



Melting Failure to Forge Success: The Story of MELTS Bakeshop

MELTS is not only about making delicious cassava cakes; it is also about giving back to the community and its employees which helped the company thrive.



Success Amidst the Pandemic

MELTS Bakeshop has been a pillar of strength for its employees and the community during the pandemic. When other businesses were forced to shut down, MELTS kept its doors open and continued to serve its customers.

The company went above and beyond to help its employees, giving them their 13th-month pay in advance and providing food supplies to those who were heavily affected by the lockdown. MELTS also donated food packs and multivitamins to the community, particularly the frontliners. Their employees even participated in the company's community outreach efforts by donating a portion of their salaries.

From humble beginnings, MELTS has become a thriving business that is making a positive impact on its community. It is an inspiring example of what can be achieved when passion and determination are combined with talent and hard work.

No Veggies Left Behind

The Heroic Adventures of KTCM Enterprise

When we were young, our parents told us not to waste the food on our table. But imagine seeing mountains upon mountains of wasted vegetables? For Rheina de Guzman, this thought was enough to start a movement that would help people access much-needed vegetables and teach people the real value of crops in our daily lives.

From trying to help in her own way to becoming the leader in ensuring that farmers' produce won't go to waste, Rheina is definitely doing her part in building a better and more sustainable future for us all.

A Shocking Revelation

Farmers have always been among the underpaid and overworked sectors in the country. They toil under the sun's heat just to grow crops that big companies and middle men would buy at a very low price. As a result, they cannot earn enough even during normal times. But think about the ordeal farmers had to go through during the pandemic.

The imposed lockdown due to the COVID-19 virus significantly affected the flow of vegetables from farms to markets due to severe travel limitations. Imagine tons and tons of bell pepper and whole tomatoes being abandoned or thrown away because there were no buyers. This was exactly what Rheina saw beside the Nueva Vizcaya Agricultural Terminal at the start of the pandemic.

She posted her sentiments regarding food wastage on Facebook, which gathered a lot of responses.

"Sinabi ng friend ko na may ipapamigay na isang truck ng gulay, kaya pinadala ko sa bahay. Ganoon ang naging sistema namin from that day

onwards. Kapag may mga ipinapahingi ang mga farmers, kinukuha namin kaysa itapon," said Rheina.

(My friend told me that a truck's worth of free vegetables would be given away that day, so I had them delivered to my home. That became our system from that day onwards. If the farmers are giving away their harvests, we gather them so it won't be thrown out instead," said Rheina.)

With her entrepreneurial mindset working, she immediately began turning farm products like sun-dried tomatoes into sauces and ingredients for pasta, among other things. She sold the products and shared all of this information on social media. Fortunately, food manufacturers looking for sources of raw materials contacted her and expressed interest in purchasing the produce.

Little did she know that this initiative would jumpstart something bigger.

KTCM Enterprises Collaborates with Various Organizations

But the enemy is bigger and fiercer than Rheina originally thought. She realized that she could not handle the endeavor alone. For this, she needed to gather allies who could help her in her glorious quest.



 RHEINA'S TIPS TO MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

Know your priorities

Manage your time

Accept challenges

Be adaptable to change

Be resourceful

Learn to share not just money but
your knowledge and skills



KTCM Enterprises rallied small farmers, cooperatives, and their logistics partners such as Mayani Ph and Rural Rising to form a collaborative group for the purchase and distribution of vegetables so that nothing would go to waste. Seeing the impact that this project can make on farmers and consumers alike, the DTI Food Development Program of Region 2 joined hands with the team to launch the *Walang Sayang* project.

The objective of the project was to help farmers move their produce unhampered and ensure a steady market in order to sustain their sources of livelihood. It also connected local farmers and fisher folk with food processors, food supply chains, retail chains, online stores, and the food service industry, including restaurants and food delivery services.

A partnership with DELIVER-e online marketing platform of The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was also made to link Filipino farmers with consumers through a farmer-to-market digital platform.

Rheina stated, “With our consolidation project, we were able to help a lot of farmers, even drivers, not only in Nueva Vizcaya and in Region 2, but also in other provinces.”

How the DTI Supercharged Rheina’s Entrepreneurial Skills
Rheina attributes her entrepreneurial skills and her project management expertise to the various DTI programs she became a part of. A single mother with four children, she started her business when their home mortgage was foreclosed. She had to strive to support her family.

“Yung business namin ay isang family business talaga,” said Rheina. *“Ang mga staff ko ay ang mga anak ko — si Karl, Theo, Christopher, at Mikael (KTCM). Yung mga natututunan ko sa mga trainings from DTI, itinuturo ko din sa mga anak ko.”*

(“Our business is actually a family business,” said Rheina. “My staff is composed of my kids — Karl, Theo, Christopher, and Mikael (KTCM). I taught my kids what I’ve learned from the DTI trainings.”)

Under the Food Connect program, Rheina obtained License to Operate (LTO) standard certification from the Food and Drug Authority (FDA) for KTCM Enterprises’ products, such as banana chips and peanuts. She further enlisted DTI’s assistance in getting a Certificate of Registration, a key requirement in their bid to penetrate larger markets.



DTI Programs Availled



Great Women Project 2

DTI Trade Fairs



A single mom's initiative helped address the problem of food wastage and lost revenue of farmers, prompting a region-wide collaboration.

SCAN ME!



KTCM Enterprise



Sa mga start-up na negosyante, you have to find your mentor. You have to surround yourself with positive people. Mas maganda kung ang mga kasama mo ay ang mga utak-negosyante.”



No Veggies Left Behind: The Heroic Adventures of KTCM Enterprise



She also participated in the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) program, which helped her have the right mindset to improve her business and adapt to the new normal.

Additionally, Rheina's involvement with the Great Women Project 2 helped her become an empowered woman entrepreneur and mover. She believes that she has improved as a leader who understands the importance of providing employment to those who want to better their lives.

Because of her perseverance and consistency in attending DTI programs and trade fairs, she was able to improve the quality of her products. This led DTI to include her micro-enterprise in the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Next Gen program.

The Aftermath of a Great Battle

Rheina's involvement in the *Walang Sayang* Project contributed to the program's accomplishments. As of June 2021, the project generated a total sales of approximately Php5 million, with 2,073 Farmers and 13 MSMEs assisted and 191.2 tons of vegetables moved.

She also has been tapped as a consolidator of the monthly Grand Bagsakan project of DTI Region 2 in partnership with the Bureau of Domestic Trade Promotion (BDTP) and Mayani.ph. In this project, they used e-commerce and e-payment platforms in bringing the region's products to NCR and other areas. The project generated a total sale of approximately Php4 million, with 1,742 Farmers and 6 MSMEs assisted with 187 tonnage of products moved.

The *Walang Sayang* Project still continues today, gaining more traction and attracting more groups. Clearly, with Rheina de Guzman's initiative, there have since been no veggies and no farmers left behind.



Online Presence

How Improving His Social Media Activity Helped Arnold Lasay's Business

Bicol is a region known for its unique and delicious cuisine. The food is spicy and flavorful, and it is made with ingredients indigenous to the area, such as chili peppers and gata (coconut milk). Bicolanos have the taste buds of a skilled chef!

Their food also says much about them as they have the ideal combination of toughness and calmness to confront any obstacles that may arise. These characteristics have been well embodied by a homegrown entrepreneur from Iriga City, Arnold M. Lasay of AM Lasay Food Industry.

From Nostalgia to Business

Growing up, Arnold found himself living in Manila for work and missing the flavors of his homeland. To ease his longing, he brought Bicolano food with him every time he visited the region. However, the food had to be consumed quickly, or it would spoil.

After coming across pickled peaches in bottles, Arnold realized there must be another way to make his food last longer. This sparked a business idea in this young man's mind. Why not sell easily accessible and longer-lasting Bicolano food to others who miss the flavors of home as much as he did? That's when AM Lasay Food Industry was born.

In 2017, Arnold finally launched two products that would eventually become his signature goods — bottled Santol sa Gata and Libas sa Gata. To date, these products have reached more than 50 cities in 21 countries around the world.

COVID-19 Pandemic Brings a Different Level of Spice to the Table

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Arnold knew he had to

make some changes. With people confined to their homes and businesses struggling to stay afloat, the company switched to ready-to-heat goods in microwaveable containers.

The response was immediate and overwhelmingly positive. People appreciated the convenience of being able to reheat a delicious meal in just minutes.

Arnold then decided to expand his menu to give people more meal choices. Among their new offerings were Dinuguan sa Gata, Pork Laing, and Tinuktuk.

Arnold has made the most of social media platforms and e-commerce to sell his products, ensuring that his business remains afloat amidst the chaos brought by COVID-19. By utilizing Facebook to raise awareness of his product, he has been able to reach a wider audience and sell more than he ever thought possible.

When lockdown measures began to ease, and people started returning to work, AM Lasay Foods decided to open its doors to resellers. It was a risky move, but one that paid off. In 2021, their signature products received FDA approval, and they debuted their third bottle, Laing a la Pobre.

DTI Contributes to AM Lasay's Growth

The assistance of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

AM LASAY’S MOST POPULAR PRODUCTS



Libas sa Gata

This local delicacy is a flavourful twist to Laing. Creamy with a hint of natural sour flavor because of the shredded plum leaves cooked with *gata* (coconut milk), shrimp, pork, garlic, chili, and lemongrass.



Santol sa Gata

Is Santol a fruit or a veggie? You’re about to find out with our Santol sa Gata, a favorite dish among Bicolanos with a bit of sweet and sour fruity taste. Made with santol, *gata* (coconut milk), shrimp, garlic, onion, lemongrass, and chilies, you can bring a taste of Bicol wherever you go.

has been crucial in the growth and success of Arnold’s venture. First, DTI assisted his enterprise through capability building and product analysis, including NUTRIFACTS, chemical analysis, and microbiological analysis. DTI also helped with the company’s Branding Registration and the collection of Documentary Requirements for its Certificate of Product Registration (CPR) application.

When it comes to marketing and promoting his products, DTI has helped him in a big way. By placing his products on the OMGainza application and website, he has reached a wider audience and generated more sales. Online Market ni Bishop Gainza (OMG) is a collaborative project of Caritas-Caceres, the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Aside from online marketing, the DTI has also assisted him in making physical market connections through trade fairs. Though these were temporarily halted due to health restrictions, they have since resumed, and he has participated in various events, such as the Bishop Francisco Gainza Trade Fair and an International Food Expo. Through these activities, he has gained exposure for his products and built important relationships with potential buyers.

Recently, a Shared Service Facility in Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges opened up, and AM Lasay Food Industry was among the first to be granted access.

Serving Delicious Meals in a Bottle

AM Lasay Food Industry is a food company that started with the intention of crafting Rinconada-Bicol food that can be enjoyed



DTI Programs Availled



Online Market in Bishop Gainza app and website

DTI trade fairs

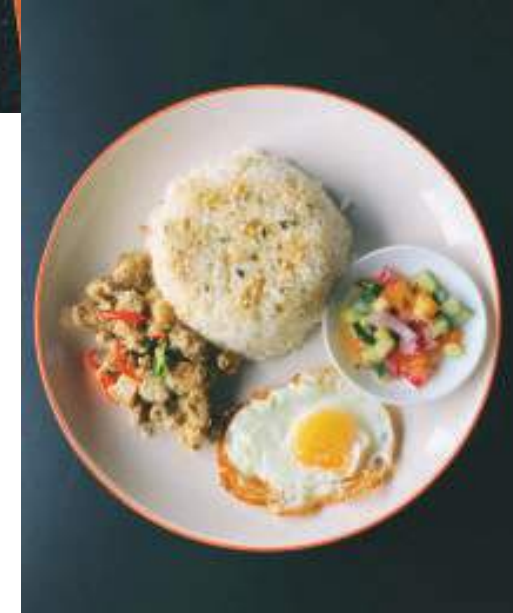


When it comes to food, there's no place like home. That's why one man decided to bring a taste of his home region to the rest of the world.

SCAN ME!



AM Lasay
Food Industry



Online Presence: How Improving His Social Media Activity Helped Arnold Lasay's Business



anytime, anywhere. Thanks to Arnold's unwavering belief in his products and the continued support of DTI, his business has been able to thrive and grow significantly.

Aside from online-based orders, Arnold's enterprise supplies their ready-to-eat products at grab-and-go stores and restaurants. They will soon open their first physical store in Iriga City.

The venture is poised to continue growing in the years to come. Who knows, maybe one day we'll see their products in supermarkets all over the country. Until then, we can always purchase their products online. Just Google "Natuk" and the first ones you find are Arnold Lasay's business and products — that's how well this entrepreneur utilized his online presence!

Prospering through Online Promotion

Binuhat Arts & Crafts' Woven Triumph

When the world is crumbling down, it's the entrepreneurs who pick themselves up and rebuild. Lynn Sheryl Reasol is one such entrepreneur. When the pandemic hit her hometown of Dinagat Islands, she was determined to keep her business going.

With a little creativity and resilience, she managed to use the internet to keep her business afloat. She even helped other women weavers on the island become entrepreneurs themselves! The story of Binuhat Arts & Crafts is one of triumph in the face of adversity.

A Prelude to Prosperity

When she was a child, Lynn's mother taught her how to weave. This made her familiar with the crafting trade's ins and outs. Growing up, she saw that this generated income amongst families in her province, so she took the risk to continue it with a bigger vision for their products.

Since she already had the skill and she knew others who do also, she started a micro business in 2005. With a capital of PhP5,000, she recruited five weavers to work alongside her. Back then the business was unable to make a profit, leaving Lynn with no choice but to close down, but this didn't discourage Lynn— she was determined to make it work.

In 2019, she decided to try again. This time, she invested PhP30,000 in what she calls a “gamble” to realize her bigger vision for Dinagat's handwoven rattan products.

Now known as Binuhat Arts & Crafts, her business offers a wide range of handwoven rattan products, including fashionable handbags, laundry baskets, tote bags, indoor flower pots, and food trays.

Slowly but surely, business started picking up.

DTI's Helpful Interventions

Entrepreneurship was a vague concept to Lynn until the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) established a provincial office in Dinagat Islands. Through DTI's programs, assistance, and seminars, Lynn learned more about entrepreneurship which opened up more opportunities for her business of handwoven products.

Lynn attributes much of her success to DTI Caraga's Physical Trade Shows which provided her with valuable marketing platforms to showcase her products. DTI helped not just Lynn but also other women weavers on the Island. With these trade shows, they were able to earn income, save money, and start their own businesses.

During this time, Lynn was at the top of the world. Her business was taking off, and she had formed strong relationships with the women weavers in Dinagat Islands. They trusted her to buy their handwoven products and sell them outside the province, and Lynn was more than happy to oblige. This arrangement guaranteed the income of the women weavers, and Lynn was proud to be playing a role in their success.

A Crisis That Caused One Hero to Rise

When the pandemic hit, and Lynn's world came crashing down. The demand for their products dried up overnight, and she was left scrambling to keep the business afloat.





DTI Programs Available



DTI Caraga's Physical Trade Shows

Product Development Program of the Negosyo Center



💡 DID YOU KNOW?



Handwoven rattan products are sustainably sourced as the rattan trees grow quickly and does not require chemicals to thrive. Rattan is also one of the strongest natural materials, making it perfect for sturdy yet stylish furniture or bag.



But she refused to give up, and she continued to work tirelessly to support the women weavers of Dinagat Islands. The weight of knowing that the business puts food on the table of the families of weavers in Dinagat Islands fueled Lynn to continue to innovate and adapt to the trying times.

“When the pandemic started, that’s when online selling came into the picture, I studied how it can help my business,” Lynn shared.

She emphasized how the webinars initiated by DTI helped her learn more about the new online venture. She opened several business pages on Facebook and Instagram, where she promoted the products and interacted with customers. She also established a website where customers can buy directly.

Lynn’s hard work paid off, and she eventually got the business back on its feet. Now, they even ventured beyond bags and baskets and have started to produce hats, indoor flower pots, food and fruit trays, storage boxes, and laundry baskets.

Life after COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic has been a trying time for Lynn and her business, but it has also given her a new perspective on what’s important. She doubled her effort in promoting and marketing their products because the more she could sell, the more she could help the women weavers in her home province. To date, Lynn has helped 28 weavers and their families in Dinagat Islands.

An entrepreneur from Dinagat Islands proves that anyone can overcome any obstacle as long as you have the right mindset.

SCAN ME!



Binuhat
Arts & Crafts



I thought to myself: if DTI helped someone like me whom they do not know personally, why wouldn't I help my community who I have seen striving since the early 1990s through weaving?"



Prospering through Online Promotion: Binuhat Arts & Crafts' Woven Triumph



Owing to Lynn's efforts, Binuhat Arts & Crafts has been recognized as Dinagat Island's Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSMEs) One Town One Product (OTOP), for providing growth and resilience to the industry by providing online market access and without the need for physical trade shows.

"The help DTI extended to me became the engine that made me realize how wonderful it is when we help other people," expressed Lynn Sheryl Reasol.

So if you're interested in purchasing any of Binuhat Arts & Crafts to own high-quality local products and help women weavers from Dinagat Islands, you know what to do, they have a strong online presence!



Padayon!

How Mama Da's Legacy Combined Tradition with Fashion

What do you do when you and your community face challenges that threaten to hinder your progress? You don't stop — you continue on. As they say in Waray — padayon.

And that is what Padayon Handicrafts Production did. They continue to provide sustainable livelihood to the community of mothers-slash-weavers from 2008 until today.

The Start of the Family Business

Padayon Handicrafts Production is a family-owned and managed enterprise based in Catarman, Northern Samar. It specializes in native materials — *tikog*, *takay* and *romblon* — which are available in the locality. They transform these raw materials into fashionable bags and accessories at affordable prices.

Their products showcase the versatility of local materials; departing from its traditional use of *banig* as a sleeping mat to becoming stylish bags and accessories.

Before Padayon came into existence, the enterprise was first established and operated in 2008 under the name of “Gilda’s Creations” by Mama Da.

Guided by her wisdom and burning passion for bags and handicrafts, she spearheaded the transformation of the locally known wild grass — *tikog* — into premium quality and affordable bags and handicrafts.

In 2009, Gilda’s Creations was passed on to Mama Ding. Under her management, she made sure that the production would rise up to the standards of bag making. She was personally trained by the late fashion designer and bag maker Atty. Cora Jacobs.

With the insights and techniques she learned, Mama Ding showcased Northern Samar’s native materials and, at the same time, provided a sustainable livelihood for mothers and young women.

DTI Supports the Enterprise

As the business promotes locally-made products, it was inevitably chosen for the Department of Trade and Industry’s (DTI) One Town, One Product (OTOP) program.

The enterprise, now called Padayon Handicrafts Production, actively participated in various trade fairs like Bahandi Eastern Visayas Trade Fair, One Town, One Product Virtual Trade Fair, Manila FAME, and many others. It was also featured in Living Asia Channel for its quality and affordability.

Padayon likewise received grants, advertisements, and sponsorships from multiple government agencies, including DTI, Department of Science and Technology, and the Provincial Livelihood Development Office of Northern Samar.

In 2017, the torch was passed on to the new generation within the family in order to continue the legacy, the passion, and the social undertaking that the enterprise had embarked upon.

A Socially Responsible Business

Beauty and social responsibility — these are two words that Padayon Handicrafts Production lives by.

 DID YOU KNOW?

Padayon Handicrafts Production's name originated from the Waray language – padayon – which means “to continue.”



DTI Programs Available



Virtual trade fairs
(Bahandi Eastern
Visayas Trade Fair,
OTOP Virtual Trade Fair,
Manila FAME)

A business continues its legacy of providing sustainable livelihood by passing the torch from one family matriarch to the next.

SCAN ME!



Padayon Handicrafts
Production



We're proud of every product we make. We only make timeless, high-quality pieces."



Padayon! How Mama Da's Legacy Combined Tradition with Fashion



During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company manufactured and gave away custom-made face masks for barangay health workers, barangay tanods, and pedicab drivers in Catarman, Northern Samar.

They braved the pandemic by attending virtual trade fairs and promoting their goods through social media and other online platforms. Amidst the chaos, they did their best to stay afloat.

This enterprise vows to continue providing sustainable livelihood to the community of "Nanays" who manufacture their products. So when you purchase a Padayon Handicraft, you're not just getting a quality product — you're supporting a community of women who weave and sew these beautiful items.

Quintessential Creations

Rolling The Mat For Basey Association for Native Industry Growth (BANIG)

The *banig* industry is a long-standing tradition in the Philippines, with roots dating back centuries. However, this industry in Basey has been struggling to stay afloat as weavers and farmers barely earn enough from *tikog banig* production to help them get by.

All seemed a lost cause until the Basey Narrative Industry for Growth (BANIG) was formed. BANIG is a federation of *tikog banig* stakeholders who took it upon themselves to rise above the challenges and make banig weaving more than just a tradition, but a flourishing industry.

How BANIG Was Woven into Existence

Basey is a municipality in Samar known for its weaving of traditional mats called *banig* out of *tikog*, a special reed grass that grows prominently in the area.

Despite the banig industry's economic vibrancy, socio-economic growth was not at all inclusive in the past. Those at the bottom of the value chain, such as the *tikog* farmers and weavers, barely felt any improvement in their livelihood. Their products were bought at very low prices by private traders. A single mat fetched a measly Php 18!

Then came Basey Narrative Industry for Growth (BANIG). This organization stemmed from the Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK), a post-Yolanda recovery and rehabilitation effort in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – Samar Provincial Office in 2014.

BANIG is a federation made up of 28 associations of weavers, embroidery, sewers, and *tikog* farmers in Basey. Its goal is to address the socio-economic problems within their industry by

creating programs that would uplift the lives of everyone in their community. It is currently headed by Anita Mendova Ogrimen.

The Power of Collective Action

Together with the DTI, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) Philippines, and other stakeholders, BANIG pursued the Tikog Banig Industry Development Plan. The objective of the plan is to address issues in relation to raw material sourcing, production efficiency, market matching, and the preservation of the culture of *tikog banig* weaving.

In 2018, DTI provided the federation with a Shared Service Facility which helped fast-track the production process. The three high-speed sewing machines, a long flattening machine, and an edger machine helped the group make quality weaves. Even when incorporating textiles into the product's design, the output was of superior quality.

DTI also trained the federation on different weaving and dyeing techniques while introducing various mat patterns that both weavers and embroiderers could incorporate into their craft. As a result of this assistance, the *Tikog Banig* industry has been able to improve in terms of quality and efficiency.

Before the introduction of the development plan, raw materials and wages were very low, making it difficult for those at the bottom of the chain to make a decent living. Presently, raw



DTI Programs Availd



Tikog Banig Industry Development Plan

Training on various weaving and dyeing techniques

Promotion via online platforms



 DID YOU KNOW?



In September 29, 2000, the weavers of Basey created and paraded a one-kilometer long, one-meter wide *tikog banig* to promote the industry during their Banigan-Kawayan Festival.

materials and wages have been increased, so that those involved in the production of *tikog banig* can earn a fair wage.

The result is that women producers are now able to sell their mats for a much higher price, and embroiderers and sewers can charge more for their labor. From Php18 for a single mat, the price has now increased to Php500. This has had a positive impact on the Tikog industry as a whole, as it allowed workers to improve their standard of living.

With the popularity of the pliant but durable tikog material, other *tikog*-based products were introduced to the market.

Slippers, sandals, and tote bags of the same make were made available in Shangri-la Manila, Davao, Palawan, and different hotel chains around the country.

The same products were a hit in various trade fairs like Bahandi, Manila FAME, and the National Trade Fair. With the help of Congresswoman Ann Tan and the Samar Provincial Tourism Office, the LARA brand was born. LARA caters to the high-end market, which caused sales of their *tikog*-based products to soar.

With the increase in demand, simply waiting for the weeds to grow was not enough — the Provincial Agriculturist’s Office had

Together we stand, divided we fall — this is the story of how an organization worked hand-in-hand with the government to uplift the lives of everyone in their community, ensuring no one is left behind.

SCAN ME!



BANIG



Quintessential Creations: Rolling The Mat For Basey Association for Native Industry Growth (BANIG)



The quintessential skill that Basaynon's have passed through the generations will not come to naught, and with it, the pride of becoming the Banig Capital of the Philippines."

to purposely create tikog plantations. This domino effect did not just lead to higher pay, but more jobs as well.

Weaving a More Prosperous Future

Just like its meticulously and colorfully embroidered designs, the tikog banig industry has flourished over the years. The recent COVID-19 pandemic may have caused it to slow down, but the crisis has not stopped them from striving for success.

They found new customers with the help of the Provincial Government of Samar and DTI-Samar, which introduced their products to the public through various online platforms. The community is also assured that the tradition of tikog banig weaving will live on, as the government is working on including this tradition in the Junior/Senior High School curriculum for Basey.

The collective effort and determination of the *tikog* farmers, weavers, and stakeholders have helped them achieve what seemed impossible before — improving their socio-economic conditions and making sure everyone in their community benefits from it.

BANIG's journey shows us that when people come together for a common cause, great things can happen.





Road to Fame

Adjie Dajac's All-Terrain Sandals Weathers the Pandemic

The pandemic brought a lot of changes to the way we live our lives. Businesses had to close down, people had to stay at home, and social interactions were reduced significantly. One business model managed to thrive amid all this chaos: online businesses.

In this article, we will talk about one entrepreneur who used the knowledge he learned from a DTI seminar on e-commerce to keep his business afloat during the pandemic; and his name is Adjie Dajac of Abby's Shoes.

The Shoemaker's Origins

Adjie arrived in Marikina, the shoe capital of the Philippines, with big dreams and high hopes. He had heard tales of the city's thriving footwear industry and was eager to get a piece of the action.

However, his lack of experience in the shoe-making trade proved to be a hindrance. Adjie recalls how he applied to a few of the big manufacturers in the city, but they all turned him down because he didn't have any experience in this industry.

But Adjie is not the type of person to give up easily. Despite the setbacks, he was determined to find a way to break into the industry. In a stroke of luck, Adjie found a short course on shoe pattern making offered by the government. He saw this as a window of opportunity and decided to take a gamble by enrolling in the course.

And it paid off fast. Just a week after finishing the course, he landed a job as a pattern maker in a major company in the footwear industry. This stint in the footwear company served him well, and he soon had enough experience to venture out on his own.

Although he was short on capital, he enlisted the help of his siblings, and they were able to raise Php 100,000.00, which they used as seed money for the business.

A business which he now calls Abby's Shoes.

No Elves But DTI Support and Some Trusted Tambays

It wasn't easy to shift from being an employee to starting your own business, but Adjie was determined to make it work. He started his entrepreneurship journey with the help of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

He participated in the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) Program and benefitted from the Shared Service Facility (SSF). He also took part in trade fairs to help boost his products' presence.

These DTI programs gave him a foundation and access to resources that helped him slowly gain footing in this business.

And when the time to hire employees came, Adjie made it a priority to give jobs to the *tambays* — something that not everyone agreed with. When most people think of *tambays*, they think of lazy good-for-nothings who are more likely to steal your wallet than hold down a job.

"I wanted to give them the opportunity to change their lives," quipped Adjie.



Luckily, his gamble paid off — the *tambays* he hired turned out to be some of his most reliable employees.

As with any business, Adjie experienced multiple ups and downs. But none of them compares to the loss of his mother.

“The death of my mother devastated me. It caused me to lose my direction, and, as a result, my business suffered. It was only after my wife talked some sense into me that I realized that there are now other people who have a stake in my success—my family and my employees”, said Adjie.

So the owner of Abby’s Shoes picked himself up and started working again. They succeeded in some aspects and failed in other endeavors, but through this, Adjie realized one thing: they needed

to differentiate their products if they wanted a chance at surpassing their competitors.

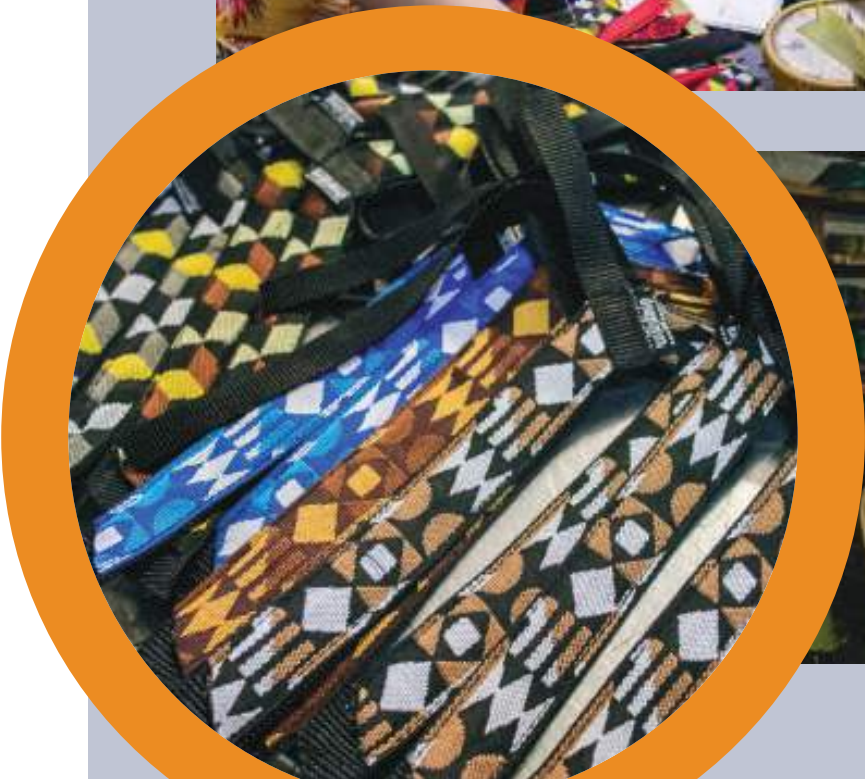
A Sudden Change in Fortune During the Pandemic
Our savvy shoemaker decided to utilize used truck tires as material for their sandals. This move not only helped him differentiate his shoemaking line but also helped the environment, which is part of his business philosophy.

“It’s a win-win situation. We get to help the environment while still providing quality products to our customers,” he said.

Adjie had big plans for his business and the new line of sandals he was producing — the Roadtrip Sandals.



DTI Programs Available



There are always opportunities to be seized, even in the darkest of times — and that is exactly what this shoemaker has found in the midst of the pandemic.

SCAN ME!



Abby Shoes
Manufacturing

TESTIMONIALS

Cielo Villanueva Salud

Sobrang ganda ng product hindi kayo magsisisi, sulit ang price sa quality, napakabait pa kausap ng seller, mabilis magreply. Smooth ang transaction. Highly recommended ko talaga product nila.

Richard Arevalo Tarroza

Sulit talaga yung pera ko dito. Ang ganda tapos sakto lang talaga sa paa ko. Hindi malaki yung lagpas ng tsinelas, sa ibang brand kasi na same size ubod ng laki nang sobra. Ito talagang sakto at maganda. Gustung-gusto ko yung goma ng gulong, pwedeng panampal sa mga barumbado. Satisfied naman ako. Salamat po.

Rosetth Taguibao Corpuz

Ang gaganda at mukhang matitibay. Malambot din po pag suot. Thank you, Roadtrip Sandals! More sales.

Road to Fame: Adjie Dajac's All-Terrain Sandals Weathers the Pandemic



With the help of social media, I was able to not only expand the reach of my product, but also increase my revenues, and most importantly, inspire other people to venture into business.”

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic hit his business hard. As they are not considered essential goods, they have to stop operations. This brought his business to a grinding halt affecting not only his livelihood but also those people depending on him.

But Adjie is a shrewd businessman who knows how to seize the opportunity.

When the pandemic struck, he quickly jumped into e-commerce. Using what he learned from the DTI programs he attended, Adjie was able to utilize social media in the best way possible. Not only did he expand the reach of his product, but he also increased his revenues.

Walking The Road to Success

Now that Adjie is one of the most successful footwear manufacturers in the Philippines, he wants to give back to the community that has helped him achieve his dream.

He is currently serving as the head of the Social Media Committee for the Philippine Footwear Federation Inc. (PFFI), where he is helping other footwear manufacturers discover the power of social media.

Adjie Dajac's story is one of resilience and determination in the face of adversity. It is also a reminder that there are always opportunities to be seized, even in the darkest of times. With his passion for giving back and his wealth of experience in the footwear industry, there's no doubt that the rise of Abby's Shoes will continue to be a success story for years to come.



Sweet Success

The Story of JBM Food Products' Premium Goal

A family-owned establishment, JBM Food Products has always been concerned with the well-being of its staff and the people they work with. Owned and managed by Jose and Lydia Morante, this business served as a link between calamansi producers and consumers, giving residents of Cabatuan and Isabela much-needed jobs and market linkages.

But more than that, this business is an inspiration that proved itself to be a vital part of the community it belonged to.

Healthy History

JBM Food Products is a family-owned and operated business that produces all-natural and healthy calamansi drinks. The business was set up in 2007 when the Morante couple worked together to help and support the families who relied on them at that time.

One of its main products is the Mighty Green 7-in-1 Calamansi Herbal Drink, which quickly became a popular choice among locals in Isabela.

But before it was successful, Lydia and Jose had to listen to what critics had to say. And the fiercest critic that the couple had to face was none other than their daughter.

“You can do better than this,” she said after tasting the product.

It may have seemed harsh, but the couple considered their daughter’s comment encouraging. They used this as a motivation to make premium juice products.

Lydia, who formulated the juice drink, shared how the words of their daughter helped them come up with the best formula to attract more buyers and make their customers come back for more.

Giving Back to the Community

JBM Foods is a strong advocate of giving back, which is why they have committed a fraction of their sales to the Philippine Children’s Medical Center and other individuals in need of medical assistance.

Aside from continuing to support local farmers and partnering with government and non-government agencies, the company also opened up opportunities for differently-abled persons.

As dedicated parents, Jose and Lydia have always been inclined to share their blessings and pave opportunities for the differently abled sector — especially because it hits so close to home. They have a child who is likewise differently abled. Realizing how difficult it is for this sector to get access to basic needs or even jobs, the couple was resolute in making a difference.

JBM Foods and DTI’s Sweet Partnership

The Morantes couple has been working with DTI for a long time. The business joined many of the agency’s programs, and in return, the company gave back through DTI’s mentoring and outreach projects.

JBM was part of the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Next Gen Product Development Program and the OTOPreneurs Design program, which helped improve their product design and the product itself.



DTI Programs Available



OTOPreneurs Design Assessment, Consultation and Triage (ACT) Session

I-CARE Project



DTI trade fairs including OTOP Virtual National Expo, the Hybrid National Food Fair 2021, and the National Food Fair (NFF) Digital Mall



In 2017, the Department of Trade and Industry invited Jose to become a mentor in KMME or Kapatid Mentor ME Program. Through this program, he shared his business knowledge and experience with starting entrepreneurs.

As a way of giving back, the Morantes couple also contributed to the DTI-Isabela's I-CARE project, where the company donated cash and several boxes of their calamansi drinks to more than 400 families in the provinces of Cagayan and Isabela.

In 2020, JBM Foods were able to secure a loan from the DTI through the P3 Loan (Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-Asenso). The

Php 250,000 loan they secured was used to further improve the products and expand the business.

The company is considered one of the most active MSMEs in Region 2. In fact, it is a regular participant in provincial, regional, and national Trade Fairs conducted by the DTI, including the OTOP Virtual National Expo, the Hybrid National Food Fair 2021, and the National Food Fair (NFF) Digital Mall.

Still pursuing its goal of becoming a premium juice manufacturer, JBM Food Products enrolled for Halal Certification in March

By definition, a premium means higher product value. But for Jose and Lydia Morante, providing a premium means providing better service to the community.

SCAN ME!



JBM
Food Products



Always continue. Sometimes, you may feel hopeless, and things may not always go the way [you] planned, but you need to continue. At the right time, you'll eventually reap what your heart desires and will be on the right track."



Sweet Success: The Story of JBM Food Products' Premium Goal

2020. By June 2020, Mighty Green 7-in-1 Calamansi Herbal Juice Drink was declared Halal Certified.

No Pandemic Can Dampen JBM's Progress

The COVID-19 pandemic spread like wildfire. The implementation of the nationwide quarantine put a damper on the progress of every business, one of which was JBM Food Products.

But the Morantes couple did not lose hope. The pandemic may have negatively impacted businesses, but JBM Food Products continued to provide premium products across the regions. With the increasing risks to health, people turned to healthy options like the Mighty Green 7-in-1 Calamansi Herbal Drink to boost their immunity.

With the growth in sales, JBM Food Products had to recruit 14 additional employees. They chose to hire students and laborers who were severely affected by the lockdowns. The couple worked tirelessly and doubled their effort to continue their business operations during the pandemic to improve productivity and meet the growing market.

Ultimately, the demand became so high that they had to release 300 to 500 boxes of their famed calamansi juice drink on a daily basis.

Yet the company didn't hesitate to help out during the crisis. They donated cash to DTI Isabela's I-CARE Project to help fund the purchase of equipment for healthcare facilities in Isabela and other provinces. They also distributed calamansi juice products to frontliners in Isabela who were working tirelessly to keep the community safe.

Moving Forward

Despite the pandemic, Jose and Lydia Morante of JBM Food Products continued to provide quality products across the region. Their company's flagship calamansi juice product is consistently patronized by locals all throughout the entire Cagayan Valley.

The Morantes couple kept pushing on to provide a premium product. "Always continue," says Jose. "There will be times that you may feel hopeless, and things may not always go the way as planned, but you need to continue. At the right time, you'll eventually reap what your heart desires and will be on the right track."

The Morantes couple's resilience is an inspiration to other Isabelinos who are struggling during the pandemic. They are living proof that anything is possible with hard work and determination.



Seamless Triumph

How the SAMAPA Producers Cooperative Reached Success One Stitch at a Time

What do you do when your business venture fails? Do you quit? For Veronica “Vicky” C. Tejido, quitting is definitely not an option. When her first endeavor failed, Vicky tried again, even when the odds didn’t seem to be in her favor.

A Little Fabric of History

In 1995, Vicky launched a garment-making production group composed of 43 seamstresses in her modest home in Pagsanjan, Laguna. Their first major project was being a subcontractor for the production of undergarments, which were sold to Europe. Unfortunately, this project was halted owing to transportation difficulties in 2013, resulting in numerous people losing their jobs.

The group’s spirit, however, did not wane. With the aid of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), 18 women led by Vicky were able to reestablish their association as a cooperative under the name “Samahan ng Mananahi sa Pagsanjan Producers Cooperative” or SAMAPA on March 20, 2014.

The cooperative aims to satisfy its clients’ demands by utilizing the best methods for developing local materials, which they hope would help reduce pollution. They are dedicated to producing unique, high-quality products through top-notch workmanship and developing competent employees.

The cooperative established its market and collaborated with various government agencies and the private sector as a cooperative. SAMAPA produced curtains, pillow cases, bed linens, foot rags, children’s clothes, bags, barongs, belts, t-shirts, and chair and table covers utilizing readily available materials from their

store. From then on, the cooperative’s venture provided out-of-school-youths and mothers employment opportunities.

Little by little, the cooperative’s job orders increased. However, it came to a point where it could no longer satisfy clients’ demands and purchases on time due to its outdated equipment.

DTI Fast-Tracks SAMAPA’s Success

But the problem they were facing is what we call a “happy problem” in the industry. To cope with the increasing demand for their products, the cooperative turned to DTI for help.

And DTI responded without skipping a beat. The group was given access to machines they needed to manufacture garments via the Shared Service Facility (SSF) program. This aims to enhance micro, small, and medium company competitiveness by providing them with machinery, equipment, tools, systems, skills, and knowledge under a shared system.

The agency gave SAMAPA a bar tacking machine, a t-shirt decorating machine, high-speed sewing machines, an embroidery stitch sewing machine, and stitching and cutting equipment worth PhP1,002,500 in 2016.

The equipment provided by DTI aided Vicky and the members of the cooperative in meeting their delivery targets and deadlines. Mass production of bulk orders became possible without issues.

 TIPS TO THRIVE IN TOUGH TIMES

If at first you don't succeed, try and try again.

Turn every problem into an opportunity. If you can't sell clothes, make a facemask or PPE!

Remember the welfare of the people you work with. Keep them safe while ensuring they still have jobs to support their families.



But DTI did not stop there. The agency also offered them funding for growth and encouraged them to attend seminars and training sessions geared especially toward MSMEs.

SAMAPA has been involved in several bazaars and festivals where their handcrafted items were displayed and marketed. From these trade fairs, SAMAPA acquired customers from various private companies and affiliates, including Isuzu Philippines, government agencies like the DTI, Department of Interior and Local Government, Cooperative Development Authority, and PhilGEPS. Even the Municipal Office of Pagsanjan became their regular customer. It was a great time for the cooperative.

The Pandemic Cuts SAMAPA's Progress

The COVID-19 pandemic struck while the group was still flooded with orders. Vicky and the cooperative's workers found it difficult

to go to work because of the quarantine. Seeing as this is their livelihood, they worked hard to keep the business afloat and win new clients.

Since garments were not an essential product, demand became almost non-existent. But Vicky is not about to give up when faced with a crisis such as this. There were some essential products that we never knew we needed but something her team could provide: face masks and Personal Protective Equipment or PPEs.

They quickly adapted to the times and studied how to create face masks and PPEs. While their skills were honed, they faced another challenge: sourcing raw materials.

Vicky expressed, *"Hindi po kami makapunta sa Divisoria para makapamili ng mga tela, kaya nagkaroon po kami ng ideya na gumawa*



DTI Programs Available



Assistance in Establishing a Cooperative



Loans and Seminars



For Veronica “Vicky” Tejido, the pandemic is not the end of everything. She saw this bleak prospect as a golden opportunity.

SCAN ME!



SAMAPA Producers
Cooperative



Seamless Triumph: How the SAMAPA Producers Cooperative Reached Success One Stitch at a Time



Nang dahil po sa SSF ng DTI, nagkaroon kami ng mga bagong machines. Naging mas madali sa amin ang paggawa ng mga clothings at mas napabilis pa. Naging tuloy-tuloy din po ang aming production.”



ng mga face masks at personal protective equipment (PPE) galing sa mga relaso.”

(We cannot go to Divisoria to purchase materials; thus, we came up with the idea to turn scraps into face masks and PPE or personal protective equipment.)

As the pandemic worsened, the cooperative had to think of ways to provide jobs while keeping themselves safe. Their solution: they taught women, out-of-school youths, students, and disabled persons (PWD) to sew; and then housed them during productions to keep everyone safe from the COVID-19 threat. This allowed their workers and their families to make ends meet.

SAMAPA's initial clients included Isuzu Philippines, the municipality of Pagsanjan, and locals.

“Dahil tuloy-tuloy po ang mga orders at nagkaroon pa po kami ng additional clients gaya sa Baclaran, Parañaque, nagkaroon po kami ng kakayahang na mag-expand at magkaroon ng karagdagang mga alok sa trabaho,” added Ms. Vicky.

(Because of the continuous orders we receive aside from the ones we have from Baclaran, Parañaque, we became confident to expand our business and offer more jobs.)

SAMAPA Waves the Flag of Success

Vicky and the members of SAMAPA have stood the test of time and continue to produce cutting-edge goods, print, and embroidery. As a result, the cooperative's members saved enough money for their daily needs while sending their children to school. Today, their children have finished their education and are now professionals in various disciplines.

The cooperative has grown in size and professionalism as an organization, evidenced by its continued success in garment production, member development, economic empowerment for women, enhanced livelihood prospects, and capability enhancement programs to empower women.

In the middle of the crisis, SAMAPA managed to adapt to the needs of the time and even thrived. They were able to hire new seamstresses and expanded their market reach. This is, truly, an inspiring tale of triumph.

Thriving with Tasty Treats

Golden Treats' Gold Standard of Entrepreneurship

They say that gold is the metal of kings. But for Joahna and Lester Delfin, the owners of Golden Treats, gold is and should be the standard of bakers. It symbolizes their hard work, dedication, and passion for their craft. And it is this standard that has made them one of the most successful businesses in Pavia, Iloilo.

Tasty Tale of Tasty Treats

Having a background in nursing, Joahna decided to turn her attention toward developing food products. With an entrepreneurial spirit and love for cooking herself, she had always wanted to make something that would be appreciated by the people of her dear hometown! With the help of her husband Lester, they established a small business that would later become a household name in Pavia, Iloilo.

When the couple started their small business, they had one dish on the menu: a delicious buko pie. Because of this, they called their small enterprise Golden Buko Pie. But as time went by and with success in hand — due largely to sweet-toothed customers — new items were added such as mouthwatering maja blanca desserts and cakes.

At some point, the couple decided to rebrand their business to appeal to a wider range of customers. Joahna and Lester said they wanted their bakery to be known for more than just buko pies and cakes.

“We want our customers to know that they can always find something new and delicious at our bakery,” Lester said. “We’re always trying out new recipes and ideas.”

The result is Golden Treats — a now booming Iloilo-based bakery specializing in Filipino-based desserts and treats.

When asked about the origin of the name of the business, Joahna said that they chose the word ‘Golden’ to emphasize the quality of their goods. Meanwhile, they chose ‘Treats’ because their products can be something that can be given or can be received like a gift.

DTI Helping Set the “Gold” Standard

Joahna and Lester attended the Department of Trade and Industry’s (DTI) trainings on accounting, pricing, product presentation, packaging, concept development, and contingency planning through Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading (SET-UP) Program. After the trainings, they gradually put what they have learned into practice.

They encountered problems with preservation because their main product is perishable, especially since buko (coconut) is one of the ingredients. It spoils quickly because of the tropical weather.

The couple said that approximately 30% of the ingredients go to waste. This was why they sought advice from DTI and DOST on how to increase their products’ shelf life without relying on excessive preservatives.



 RHEINA'S TIPS TO MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

Know your priorities

Manage your time

Accept challenges

Be adaptable to change

Be resourceful

Learn to share not just money but
your knowledge and skills



Joahna and Lester worked on finding the right ingredients, proportions, and packaging that would make their product last longer. They also made sure to have a good stock management system. With the two government agencies' assistance and the couple's perseverance, they were able to improve the quality of their product.

The DTI's programs and assistance helped Joahna and Lester gain more confidence in running their business. The couple also established a good relationship with their customers and suppliers, which is important in any business venture.

The Pandemic Presents a Sweet Opportunity

The couple were at the cusp of success when the global pandemic happened. Most people were told to stay at home to prevent getting the dreaded coronavirus, causing the business to lose its walk-in customers.

The pandemic presented a mountain of challenges to Joahna and Lester's business. But instead of losing hope, they kept their focus and tried to stay on top of the situation.

When the lockdown began, the couple recognized the people's need for comfort food. Seeing the opportunity, they quickly offered their products for takeout. To add variation, they included *crema de fruta* and *cassava* cake, two well-known Filipino desserts on the menu.

Even though hesitant to introduce new products in an uncertain market, Joahna and Lester pushed for it. They were surprised that the new cakes were well received by the general public. As a result, their sales rose to 20% higher as compared to their pre-pandemic sales.

Despite the pandemic, one thing customers liked about Golden Tasty Treats was the steady price of the baked goods. While most businesses increased their prices to keep up with the sudden loss of customers, Joahna and Lester kept the price of their products at a reasonable level.

Aside from keeping the price of their goods mostly the same, Joahna and Lester said they standardized their recipes. This way, the customers will always get the same quality of treats every time they order from them.



DTI Programs Availled



Endorsement to DOST
SET-UP Program

Gold is born under intense heat and pressure — just like the emergence of Golden Treats in Iloilo, now a household name.

SCAN ME!



Golden Treats
Pasalubong Center



Thriving with Tasty Treats: Golden Treats' Gold Standard of Entrepreneurship



Sa mga start-up na negosyante, you have to find your mentor. You have to surround yourself with positive people. Mas maganda kung ang mga kasama mo ay ang mga utak-negosyante.”

“It’s really important to us that our customers can rely on us to provide them with consistent, delicious food,” Joahna said. “We want them to know they can always count on us for a great experience.”

On the marketing side, Joahna and Lester’s bakeshop grew. Before the pandemic, their target consumers were individuals aged 40 and above, but now, younger generations also started to inquire when they began utilizing free online platforms like Facebook.

When asked about their secret, the couple said they don’t go for likes or comments on their online postings; rather, they just want their goods to be seen online so they may have a larger audience.

Getting the Gold

After almost getting decimated by the pandemic, Joahna and Lester continued doing what they do best — make people happy with their food.

“It’s been a tough year for everyone, but we’re happy that we can still bring some joy into people’s lives,” Joahna said.

This just goes to show where Joahna and Lester Delfin get their strength and inspiration from. With this kind of mindset, they could surely find a solution to any problem that come their way, allowing them to evolve their business to a higher level.

The gold in their business name is not just a name; it is a symbol and testament to their dedication to their craft. And that is the kind of standard entrepreneurs should definitely strive for.



Unwavering Determination

Health 100 & 101 Restoreants' Invigorating Achievement

It's not easy to be a pioneer. When Igorot restaurateur Elmer Macalingay decided to open a vegetarian restaurant in Baguio City, he knew that he was taking a chance, after all, Baguio is a city where a vegetarian diet is almost non-existent.

But Elmer was determined to show people that delicious meals, being health-conscious and, environment-friendly, can go hand in hand—and his hard work has paid off! Health 100 and Health 101 Restoreants are now two of the most popular restaurants in Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet.

How It All Started

Elmer was an insurance agent when the insurance industry nosedived in 2008. He realized that it was high time to get started with his dream business — a restaurant for vegetarians and health-conscious individuals like himself. Starting with half a million-peso capital, with two of his friends, Elmer put the pedal to the metal.

It wasn't an easy ride, though, he almost declared bankruptcy in 2011 because of poor financial management. To prevent this from happening, he worked extra hard, so hard that he even called it his kayod kalabaw years.

"Literal na nangayayat ako. I (had to) work for 18 hours a day because I had to pay debts here and there," he quipped.

Elmer did more than what a typical restaurant owner does — he served as the team leader, waiter, and delivery driver all in one. Because of his impressive work ethic and by learning from his past mistakes, he was eventually free of debt by 2014.

Due to the popularity of Elmer's unique menu, many government offices and events firms adopted his vegetarian and healthy cuisine and became frequent clients. Customers praised Health 100 for its healthy meal options, such as salads, pasta, vegetarian meats, sandwiches, and fresh juices.

Elmer banked on word-of-mouth to boost the restaurants' popularity. The restaurant became sought-after that even the local government utilized Elmer's catering services when they hold gatherings and conferences. It was indeed a successful time for Elmer's business.

How DTI Nurtured Health 100 & Health 101 Restoreants

Despite the popularity that Elmer's vegetarian restaurant enjoyed, he felt that there was still room for improvement. For an upgrade to happen, he felt he needed more training to achieve his goals.

His entrepreneurship skills improved significantly after he attended the pilot program of Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) of DTI-CAR in 2016. The program paired him with experienced mentor entrepreneurs who taught him valuable business skills and guided him as he applied them to his own business.

He attended several other trainings as the DTI office in Region 2 was practically his neighbor. Through these programs, Elmer was able to tap into new markets and serve more customers.

☑ **ELMER MACALINGAY'S BUSINESS SURVIVAL GUIDE**

You have to adapt to changes quickly.

Learn from experts by attending DTI trainings and reading success-oriented books.

Find your niche!

Handle your finances well.

Focus on your mission.

Recommended Reading:
Rich Dad, Poor Dad
by Robert Kiyosaki

The Cash Flow Quadrant
by Robert Kiyosaki



He was also inspired to franchise his business so that he could share his vision with more people. From a single diner, his restaurant became a well-known vegetarian food chain.

The Shadow of the Pandemic

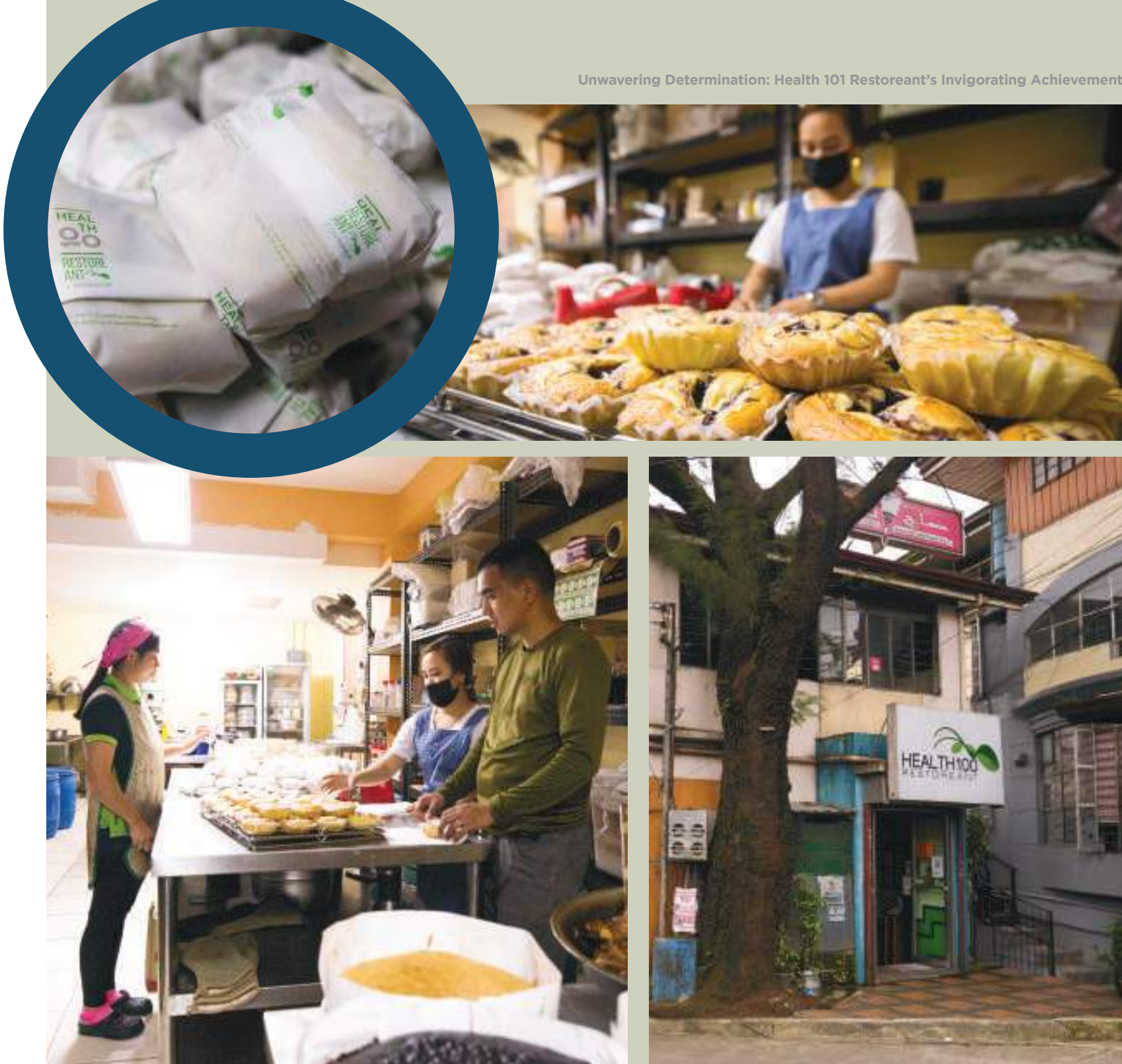
One of the challenges that spoiled Elmer's delicious success is the announcement of quarantine lockdowns due to rapidly increasing cases of COVID-19. Just like other entrepreneurs all over the world, Elmer thought that the COVID-19 global pandemic would not stay for long. But boy, was he wrong!

To ease the effects of the pandemic on his employees, Elmer gave the kitchen staff Php5,000 cash advances against their

13th-month pay. As the pandemic went on, he was forced to let go of certain employees who had gone home to their respective provinces.

Elmer decided to offer his culinary services to the frontline workers during this challenging time by converting one of his restaurants into a community kitchen — the La Trinidad version of Bayanihan Kitchen.

He used the remaining supplies from his La Trinidad restaurant and even called for donations when stocks ran out. They were able to run the community kitchen for frontline workers for two whole months.



A young Igorot in Baguio City took a chance and started a vegetarian restaurant in a place where a vegetarian diet is almost non-existent.

SCAN ME!



Health 100 & 101
Restoreant

Unwavering Determination: Health 101 Restoreant’s Invigorating Achievement



As a business owner, you should master all corners and aspects of your business, so in case of emergencies, your business will still operate.”

Unique Menu for Success

Because Elmer’s restaurants have a unique yet delicious menu, they easily stand out from others. The restaurateur owes it all to word-of-mouth. Elmer recalls that there were days when lines formed outside his restaurants, and they had to borrow extra chairs from their church just to accommodate customers!

Elmer has recently expanded his business to include a farm and agri-tourism enterprise, which offers organically grown food supplies like rice, vegetables, and free-range chickens, among others. He envisions this farm as a venue for celebrating joyous occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and seminars, or even for glamping.

Due to his impressive performance during the pandemic coupled with his business’ triumphs, Health 100 and 101 Restoreants were shortlisted for DTI’s Zero to Hero program.

The DTI’s Zero to Hero program aims to showcase selected micro-small entrepreneurs (MSMEs) from 16 regions who embody and manifests how one can rise up from relative inexperience (Zero) into a full-fledged enterprise that touches other lives for the better (Hero).

As far as we’ve seen, Elmer Macalingay and his team indeed embody what it means to rise from zero and become a hero. Well done, Elmer!



☆☆☆ **TESTIMONIALS**



Mark Ordiz



When you’re on a good and healthy diet, this is among those go-to place in Baguio. Friendly staff and very tasteful viands selection.



Jane Abao



I love their meals. Preparation is done with artistry and passion, yet with prices that are affordable. Their juices? Nothing can compare. And we know, all their ingredients are natural and therefore healthy. I’d love to go back there again and again.



Esther Balaodan



Delicious, nutritious food and very good service, the staff are smiling from their hearts!



V

aluing Loyalty

Estela Robles-Villareal's Commitment to Her Employees

In a world where businesses come and go, one bakery has managed to stand the test of time and crisis. Estela Robles-Villareal's Bantay Bread has been providing quality bread and pastries to her community for more than a decade, but there's something more to this business that sets it apart.

Estela values her employees' loyalty above profit. She believes that if her employees are taken care of, they will likewise take care of her customers and deliver high-quality products. This commitment to her employees has helped make Bantay Bread endure the harshest crisis the country has ever faced — the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delicious Debut

It was a small bakery, just starting out. Estela and her family had opened up Bantay Bread in 2009 as an additional source of income for the college education of her children studying in Metro Manila. The bakery was named after the town and its historical landmark close to the business — the Bantay Bell Tower Church.

The modest bakery sold the usual pandesal, bread loaf, and their best-selling hopia and pianono in the community. The presence of competitors motivated Bantay Bread to strive more. For Estela, it meant there was a bigger demand for the product — so she got creative. They started to diversify by selling other kinds of bread, such as crinkles, brownies, and a lot more.

The bakery soon became known for its delicious and affordable treats. To keep up with the demand, they opened two branches: one near the tourist spot in Vigan City — the Heritage Village — and another located at the National Highway that served as a pasalubong pitstop for travelers heading North.

Things were going well for Bantay Bread — so well that Estela had extra money to open a different kind of business.

This savvy entrepreneur ventured into the beauty business and opened two branches of Villareal Salon and Spa. With her passion coupled with hard work, all her businesses operated very smoothly. The salon and spa became an instant hit, earning way more than the bakery. Everything was on the rise.

But then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and everything changed.

A Crisis That Shook The Country — Including Villareal Salon and Spa

The pandemic has been a tough time for businesses all over the world. But in the Philippines, it has been especially hard. With strict lockdown measures in place, many businesses have had to close their doors indefinitely.

Bantay Bread continued its operations. Being in the food industry means it is an essential business. Hoping to help even for a bit, Estela provided free bakery products to frontliners within the municipality of Bantay.

However, her salon business was not spared from the crisis. As it was not an essential service, they were forced to close down the two branches. It was a difficult time for everyone involved.





DTI Programs Available








LESSONS LEARNED



There will be times when you'll want to give up, but if you persevere and keep working hard, you'll eventually find success.

Remember, trials and tribulations are just part of the journey. They're there to help you become a better entrepreneur.

So don't give up when things get tough. Persevere and keep hustling towards your goals. You'll get there eventually!



Employees should not be the only ones devoted to a business; the business owner must likewise show the same dedication to her people. Entrepreneur Estela Villareal demonstrated how doing so can help improve people’s lives.

SCAN ME!



Bantay Bread



TESTIMONIALS



Guada Mariae Celedonio



The pianono and kakabayan were so fluffy yet so fulfilling. But my fave would have to be the Hopia Baboy, chewy and flavorful making this my perfect merienda together with my 2nd cup of coffee.



Claire Destinie



First time ko makatikim ng mga breads ng Ilocos, na-enjoy ko, ang sarap.



Misty Anicker



I highly recommend Bantay Bread, grabe I am from Manila pa then yung na-deliver sa’kin na bread (since I missed Ilocos ah) fresh pa, and sobrang linamnam. Favorite ko hopia baboy nila, pianono, kababayan, actually lahat.



Dahil sa mga tulong ng DTI, hindi lang lumago ang negosyo namin, nagkaroon pa ako ng pamilya sa DTI. Ganyan sila mag-alaga sa mga MSMEs.”



Valuing Loyalty: Estela Robles-Villareal’s Commitment to Her Employees

But Ms. Villareal did not give up on her business — or her employees.

DTI’s Trainings Put to Good Use

Estela realized that this was the perfect time to implement all the learnings she got from joining DTI Ilocos Sur’s Kapatid Mentor Micro Enterprise (KMME) Program.

The KMME program is a government initiative that provides training and mentorship to micro and small businesses. Through this program, Estela learned how to diversify her products and services, as well as how to market her business online — skills that would come in handy during the pandemic.

Estela knew she had to do something to help her employees. With the help of her children, they strategized their business operations. The increasing demand for bakery products during the pandemic paved the way to save the employees of Villareal Salon and Spa from being jobless.

Estela expanded the operation of Bantay Bread and moved the ten employees of the salon into the bread shop’s operations. These workers were hired as resellers and helpers in the bakery. By doing this, she was able to keep everyone employed and help them earn a living.

They ramped up their game plan and changed the packaging style into something more modern and sleek. They also started selling bread by the box instead of per piece and delivered it door to door for free.

Estela quickly realized the power of internet technology and how it could be leveraged as a marketing tool. She hired a food vlogger to help her produce engaging content that would reach a wide audience. As a result, she was able to boost her sales significantly and build a successful business.

A Commitment to Her Employees that Paid Off

For Estela Villareal, her employees are like family. So when she saw that they were struggling, she did everything she could to help them.

This commitment to her employees paid off in the end. Not only was she able to keep her business afloat, but she was also able to help her employees overcome a difficult time.

This just goes to show that when times are tough, businesses need to be there for their employees — and Estela Villareal is a prime example of that.



Victorious Designs

The Evolution of Marianito Jojo Vito's Art Pieces

Marianito “Jojo” Vito is not your average jack-of-all-trades. He is a teacher, blogger, plantito, and artist-slash-entrepreneur. His business — Vito's Prints and Pieces (now known as Jojo Vito Designs Gallery and Garden) — is a flourishing arts and crafts company in Bacolod City that has been around for over 26 years.

The business wasn't always as prosperous as it is now. It went through a series of ups and downs that can cause any regular person to just throw in the towel. But Jojo isn't one to give up that easily.

Jojo Vito's Life Journey

In the late 1990s, Jojo lost his job as a Human Resources Manager at a navigation firm in Negros Occidental. Unsure of what to do next, he and his friends started their own business — a printing press. However, given the high competition for the same service in Bacolod City and their subsequent narrow profit margin, his pals abandoned the venture after just a few years.

But it was not the investors who were severely affected by the printing press' low-profit turnout — it was their employees.

When Jojo saw how bad his employees' situation was, he decided to keep the business going. As an artist and entrepreneur, Jojo searched for a creative and environment-friendly way to reuse his printing press's scratch papers.

After thorough research and experimentation, he came up with the concept of transforming waste paper into paper mache masks to sell at the MassKara Festival, an annual festival in Bacolod City. The paper mache masks and headdresses were an instant hit among locals and tourists.

This prompted him to launch his crafty enterprise: Vito's Prints and Pieces.

Crisis as a Catalyst for Change

Everything was going well until the pandemic came and crushed almost every business in the country. Like many other entrepreneurs, Jojo had no choice but to shut his business down. He had to close for three months or risk losing more and prolonging the closure.

However, he was very concerned about the welfare of his employees. How can they survive? Jojo and many others then turned to the “barter system.” With this form of trade, people would exchange goods and services instead of cash.

So in exchange for food and other necessities, Jojo bartered the products in his gallery. He gave the goods he acquired to his employees. It was a tough time, but he managed to get by.

“I believe that charity begins at home,” Jojo expressed, “so I prioritized my staff, whom I considered family. During the pandemic, I didn't intend to make much money. My goal is to simply stay afloat.”

But Jojo saw a glimmer of hope that could help him weather the global crisis of COVID-19. While casually browsing social media

one day, he observed that people sell almost anything on Facebook. He followed suit and began to post on social media platforms like Facebook. With the positive response he received, he began to look into other aspects of social media promotion, including live selling.

But he encountered another problem: how can he make his live selling more creative and unique?

He had a spark of idea that could help him stand out from the competition: naming the pots after select individuals. Jojo named over 50 pots and jars after his friends and other people he admired. He then created social media cards that displayed the faces of his friends whose names he borrowed for the pots.

“My friends were good enough to lend me their faces on social media so that the pots have an identity. Previously, I only thought

 SUCCESS TIPS

Don't be embarrassed to use social media to promote your business.

Stand out from your competition by being creative and unique.

Be adaptable to change. If you don't innovate, you will get left behind.



 DID YOU KNOW?



The term MassKara is actually a combination of two words: “mass” meaning crowd, and “cara” meaning face.

that online live selling was a theory, but soon I realized how effective it was,” remarked Jojo.

With the sales gradually picking up, Jojo contacted some of his former employees to get them back to work. They were back to a 7-day work week, with some of the staff even working overtime to meet the growing demand.

DTI Helps Expand Jojo's Network
Because of this arts and crafts business, Jojo became a well-known personality in Negros Occidental. He gained friends from all walks of life and was even able to partner with government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).



DTI Programs Availled



Social Media
Management Training

Jojo Vito of Negros Occidental has proven that becoming a jack-of-all-trades is a necessary evolution process to survive and thrive in these uncertain times.

SCAN ME!



Jojo Vito Designs
Gallery and Garden



In every catastrophe, there is always an opportunity waiting for every entrepreneur who is willing to take the risk and daring enough to take it.”



Victorious Designs: The Evolution of Marianito Jojo Vito's Art Pieces

That friendship allowed Jojo to be invited as a mentor in DTI's Kapatid Mentor ME Program, where he coached other micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises on improving their business.

Aside from gaining more networking opportunities, Jojo was able to promote his business to other participants.

He also attended the DTI training on social media marketing so he could utilize the platform more effectively.

“Previously, you would have to pay thousands of pesos for advertisements on television and in newspapers; now, you can reach a larger audience for as little as PhP50 per day by using social media,” said Jojo.

Although the sales of his masks and headdresses were booming, products made out of paper mache are susceptible to molds, so Jojo had to look for a different raw material. His friends from DTI suggested making pots out of fiberglass since home gardening suddenly became in demand during the pandemic.

“Fiberglass is quite expensive, labor-extensive, but a very versatile material, upon using it, I realized that we can make a lot of products with it,” said Jojo.

Jojo then started to expand his product line, crafting items like mirrors, luminaries, and furnishings. The public response during trade fairs was pretty good that he is now considering exporting his products.

Towards a More Creative and Expansive Future

Now that tourism activities are slowly returning, Jojo is focusing on expanding his home décor lines. He is also experimenting with other souvenirs and mask designs. They are now producing pots of varying sizes and styles meant for big houses, hotels, resorts, and condominiums.

Thanks to Jojo's courage and ingenuity, he has not only survived but thrived in the ever-changing landscape of business. His story is a reminder that we should always be open to new opportunities and be willing to adapt to the times.

While others see live selling as an embarrassing form of marketing, our mentor-entrepreneur was undaunted. When asked about this, Marianito “Jojo” Vito responded, “Nothing is shameful nor embarrassing by earning decent money through selling.”

Hands down, we definitely agree.

W

ork from Home

Mori Creation's Unique Impact

In these uncertain times, many people are working from home for the first time. For some, this is a new and exciting experience. For others, like Mori Creations and its founder Mitzi Uy-Chan, it is a way of life.

Mori Creations has been advocating for working from home since its inception, as Mitzi believes that it empowers women and helps them stay closer to their families. When the pandemic hit, this unique production philosophy turned out to be one of the company's strengths.

The Origin of Mori's Creation

The company started as a small backyard enterprise.

Fresh from quitting her dream job in marketing, Mitzi found herself entering what she called the "University of Life." In this phase of her life, she ventured on a journey of self-discovery. While she knows that she wants to do something more meaningful, she doesn't know what.

Diffident yet charming, Mitzi struggled to find her place in the corporate world.

"I wanted to discover what my purpose really is," recalled Mitzi. "I realized that the best way to know one's purpose is to get to know your creator because he alone knows your purpose the most," she continued.

For three years, the young entrepreneur would continue with her soul searching — hoping and praying that she would eventually find her role in the world. It was in those three long years of introspection that God would finally lead her to her calling.

"Mori, in Hebrew, means God is my teacher. It was him who led me to this mission and business," she said.

Confident that God wanted her to use her creativity to effect change, she thought of selling journals. Initially, she made just 50 pieces with the assistance of their house help.

To their surprise, it turned out that there was a huge demand for these items. "We sold more than a hundred pieces in a single month. I realized, then, that this product has potential", Mitzi shared.

In 2011, at just 25 years old, Mitzi officially started her Mori Creations.

Expanding Social Enterprise

Community empowerment, especially for mothers, has always been the company's raison d'être. Mitzi considered it her God-given mission to uplift the plight of women who had no source of livelihood.

She recalled how she came to the realization that mothers need not be separated from their children just to earn a decent living. From there began her quest to provide a home-based livelihood to mothers from all walks of life.



DTI Programs Availd



Trade Fairs





Through the help of her local government unit, Mitzi was able to connect with a local women's group. The women were put into two categories, one of which was tasked with the cover and the other with hand stitching of the paper.

However, it was not all rainbows and butterflies. The new firm, like any other business, went through a period of suffering.

"At the start of this business, I borrowed Php 60,000.00 from my mom. Banks require a maintaining balance of Php 20,000.00, so we only had about Php 40,000.00 as our capital," shared Mitzi.

In addition, they discovered that their product is a seasonal one. Although journals have a demand, it is only confined to specific times of the year.

These challenges, however, did not deter the young entrepreneur. Instead, she used the experience as a learning process.

"The challenge is also fun because you are getting closer to your vision," she quipped.

To help with her entrepreneurial journey, Mitzi joined the Department of Trade and Industry's Go Lokal program.

Launched in collaboration with select retail partners, Go Lokal! provides market access and brand management assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) like Mitzi's. Through the program, she was introduced to potential clients and received help with merchandise development, ultimately resulting in commercially viable products.

Apart from Go Lokal, Mitzi was also a product of the Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) program and a participant in the regional trade fair, which helped her in growing her business. The Kapatid Mentor ME program pairs aspiring entrepreneurs with established mentors in their field, while the trade fair allowed her to showcase her products to a wider audience.

Mori's Creations experienced incredible growth in a short period of time, thanks to the dedication and hard work of its partners. With revenue increasing at a rapid pace and demand for the products constantly growing, the company was able to recruit even

One woman’s vision turned out to be a godsend solution when the pandemic came.

☆☆☆ **TESTIMONIALS**

 **Maria Rowena Acacio** ...

I love the masks as they are super comfortable and stylish as well. Same goes for their dual zip pouch. Very helpful at this time. Kudos to Mori Notes for making high quality products while helping communities thrive. God bless.

 **Caryl Raene Manal** ...

The product itself was indeed within its quality and design and also the seller was very approachable and will help you create masks upon your demand. Great store!

 **Christabel Corpuz** ...

I was done with Shopee face masks and looked for high quality masks, that’s how I got here. True enough, the masks are so beautiful and in super high quality like they are branded and imported. They also have sizes and you can adjust garter which is good. Happy customer here.

 **Jenevieve Ong** ...

My first Mori Notes product was actually their Pursebook. Until now, I still use one as my office notebook. I use the purse as a storage for business cards. It’s very convenient especially during client meetings since I only have to bring the Pursebook with me, nothing else. I also love the idea how purchasing their products extends help to household moms . It makes me feel as if I am a part of a good cause.



SCAN ME!



Mori Notes



Challenges are also fun because you get closer to your vision.”



more partners. Eventually, Mori’s Creations was able to establish production hubs in Rizal, Bulacan, and Quezon City — all of which employed women partners.

A Rainbow through the Storm

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a trying time for businesses all over the world. With the lockdown in effect and people confined to their homes, many businesses have been forced to close down or severely scale back their operations.

While Mori’s Creations was not immune to the effects of the pandemic, Mitzi is grateful that the company has been able to weather the storm.

“We were producing a lot of products for some major retail channels. But because of the pandemic, these orders got canceled, and we had a lot of stocks,” said Mitzi. “We did not know what to do.”

Thankfully, the company was able to pivot. Mitzi found that denim and canvas were the best materials for face masks, which were essential during the COVID-19 outbreak. These happened to be the same materials they used for their journals. And so they quickly got to work making face masks and were able to stay afloat during the pandemic.

Just like an answered prayer, Mori’s Creations’ unique production philosophy turned out to be its unexpected strength. Because their partners were already working from home, they need not leave their residences for production to continue. This means the workers didn’t need to leave their homes, and the company didn’t have to source special permits to continue with production.

Mori’s Creation’s Biggest Impact

Without a doubt, Mori’s Creation’s biggest impact is on the Nanays they employ — by helping them earn while still being with their families during these trying times.

The pandemic has taken its toll not just on finances but also on the emotional well-being of many families. Having a parent at home during this time of crisis can make all the difference for some families, and Mitzi is proud to be able to provide this service through her business.

Ultimately, Mitzi Uy-Chan believes this is her greatest contribution to the communities they operate in, and we cannot help but agree.



X-*Factor of the YAMmy Ube Cake*

Julieto Mendoza's Secrets to Prevailing through the Pandemic

Julieto 'Oyos' Mendoza knew that he had to act fast when the pandemic hit. His business, Purple Yam Homemade Cakes & Pastries, was deemed an essential service, which meant that he could stay open during the height of the pandemic.

However, he also knew that many other businesses were not so lucky. Oyos decided to use this opportunity to not only keep his business afloat but to also give back to his community by giving jobs to disenfranchised workers in his hometown.

YAMmy Yesterday

It began in the four corners of Oyos's boarding house in Ozamiz City. After attempting to finish an engineering course at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, he went back to his hometown and transferred to Misamis University (MU).

Oyos grew up selling delectables made by his mother. In fact, his family strongly influenced him to embrace baking or cooking. But because he remained unsure of his life, baking did not yet come to his mind.

Now back in his hometown, Oyos decided to use his mom's unused baking equipment. He first tried his luck with making a chocolate cake and selling it in a tiny canteen outside MU. He was greatly astonished when the chocolate cake sold out, prompting him to bake and sell cakes on a regular basis. He did everything by himself, including the menial tasks such as cooking, washing, and purchasing supplies.

From supplying a small canteen, Oyos' small business evolved to baking cakes and delivering them to major shopping malls and other school canteens around Misamis. He then attempted mixing

different cake flavors, resulting in various menus that he offered for birthdays, baptisms, and weddings.

How DTI Brought Out the X-Factor to Oyos' Business

Oyos realized that out of his creations, the ube cake was a favorite. Seeing its potential, Oyos registered his business in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2013 and opened Purple Yam Homemade Cakes & Pastries.

But he also knew what he needed to learn more about business management. He is a baker, not an entrepreneur, so he must train and upgrade his skills to succeed in this business.

Oyos trained under DTI's Kapatid Mentor ME Program in 2019 to further hone his entrepreneurial skills. The program helped him understand the market, learn the ropes of the food business, and manage his finances.

Most importantly, the mentors taught him the significance of strengthening his brand to set him apart from his competitors. In addition, DTI introduced him to intervention programs of other national government agencies to scale up his equipment. This helped ease the production of his famed ube cakes.

Now, Oyos is on his way to growing his business. He has started selling online and has even participated in bazaars and food fairs.



With the knowledge and skills he gained from the program, he is confident he can take his business to new heights.

The Pandemic Providence

In 2020, the pandemic swept the whole country like a storm. People from all walks of life were forced to retreat inside the safety of their homes to prevent getting the deadly coronavirus. While the majority of businesses were forced to close down or lay off people, Oyos’ Purple Yam Homemade Cakes & Pastries thrived and boomed.

In a span of six months, Oyos has established 12 branches and six outlets of Purple Yam in Surigao, Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan, City, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Dipolog City.

Oyos considers it pure luck that his business was not severely affected by the current pandemic. As a matter of fact, there was not a single day when his stores were closed.

“*Nagpadayon mi* despite everything (We continued despite everything),” Oyos quipped.

Sharing His Sweet Success

Despite the growing success of Purple Yam Homemade Cakes & Pastries, Oyos never forgot to recognize the strong support system he had, including the farmers.

“The best thing about having this business,” shared Oyos, “is I help a lot of ube farmers.”



DTI Programs Available



Bazaars and Trade Fairs

Purple Yam

A businessman in Ozamiz City learned that when it comes to business, you should strike while the iron is hot.

SCAN ME!



Purple Yam Home Made
Cakes and Pastries

TESTIMONIAL

 **Missche Concepcion**

Super yummy inyung cake my whole family very like it ang bilis naubos sa wala pa nakatitawilaw na ninyu guys



Always bear in mind that if you go into business, it's not only for your self cause. Provide kaayohan sa imo palibot (provide goodness around you) — workers, community, and people who helped achieve your goals."

From renting a *habal-habal*, one farmer who delivers his crops straight to Oyos' store progressed to renting a multicab because of the growing number of orders. Eventually, the farmer earned enough to buy his own multicab! This anecdote shows how much Oyos' bakeshop helps farmers elevate their lives, too.

And the positive effect of Oyos' business does not revolve around farmers alone but on the store's other employees, too. As of June of 2021, the bakeshop and its branches have 94 workers and 12 business partners. Oyos is proud to provide a positive impact on the community.

An Appetizing Ambition

And yet, this accidental entrepreneur has no plans of stopping. The second wave of his goal includes launching 12 branches in other major cities such as Davao, Tagum, Digos, and Butuan. The more he expands, the more job opportunities he can provide.

Aside from branch expansion, he also aims to widen his menu. He is in the process of developing new products, including Brazo de ube, ube ensaymada, and more cakes made with natural ube.

Through it all, Julieta Mendoza has proven that it was not sugar, milk, or cream that could be considered the X-factor of Purple Yam Homemade Cakes & Pastries — it was the right timing and the right attitude to fulfill his goals.



Yardstick of Sustainable Fashion

The Rise of MUSA Fabric from a Simple Project to an International Brand

Who would've thought that a graduation project would become an opportunity to shed light on someone else's life? Gleizl Joy Soo, also known as Joy to her friends and peers, combined her love for fashion and her search for her life's purpose in her small enterprise, Musa Fabric.

From Fashion to Passion

On December 8, 2019, while praying on the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem, Israel, Joy saw a vision of her life's purpose.

"The Musa Fabric started as a 3-year longing of life's purpose, which I asked and prayed for... That moment was the ultimate pouring of the favor I have been asking God for a long time," she shared.

Joy was a graduating fashion design student at that time. As part of her graduation project, she searched high and low for a special kind of fabric. That was when a friend who was working for Department of Labor and Employment introduced to her the possibilities of utilizing banana fibers in textiles.

Seeing its potential, she sought out people who were trained in the production of such fabric. She found such a group in the unlikeliest of places — the Provincial Jail of Davao del Norte.

Joy was instantly captivated by the inmates' life stories. She spent days socializing with them until she realized that her prayers had been answered — this was her calling.

With a renewed sense of purpose, she established a textile company, which she called Musa Fabric.

"Musa in Hebrew is Moshe which means 'drawn out of the water.' And true to what Jesus said, I am here to call not the righteous

but the sinners. Yes, the main weavers of the Musa Fabric are the prisoners who were drowned in sin in their past lives but are now drawn from that sinfulness and found new hope and life with The Musa Advocacy," said Joy.

With a capital of PhP200,000, a layout artist for digital marketing, and three seamstresses, Joy began to market her products to her friends and students in school who were enrolled in modeling.

Learning the Ropes in Running a Business

By 2020, Joy enrolled in the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Kapatid Mentor ME (KMME) Project. The program gave her the opportunity to be mentored by some of the most successful entrepreneurs in the country.

Through the mentorship, Joy was able to gain invaluable insights and knowledge that she would not have otherwise been able to get. The mentorship also helped Joy to weave together her goals with her business strategies.

With the KMME program's help, Musa Fabric grew and developed her product line from apparel to handbags and other accessories. Things were starting to look up for the business.

COVID-19 Closes the Catwalk

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, put the nation into a state of emergency, causing Musa's progress to be halted suddenly.



FASHIONABLE APPROACH TO FORTUNE

Always value people, give what is due to them, and extend beyond what the law dictates.

When a door closes, explore other options.



As citizens were compelled to remain at home because of the lockdown, events were canceled, businesses and companies closed down, and many people were left unemployed. Schools also had to switch from in-person instruction to virtual learning due to the crisis.

The Philippine Gala, which was supposed to feature designs by fashion students like Joy, was ultimately canceled. While these events might crush anyone’s optimism, Joy instead chose to focus on her graduation project as an opportunity that would ultimately become her advocacy.

Working from home gave her time to improve the company’s digital marketing by utilizing social media sites to reach consumers not only in the Philippines but all over the globe. Joy also increased the quality of their textiles and created the so-called “Musa Fabric Umbrella,” a group that produces all of its clothing and handbags in collaboration with highly skilled artisans from Davao del Norte.

Framing MUSA’s Fabulous Future
In place of fashion shows and gatherings that were not feasible owing to health restrictions, Joy turned to online platforms. She reached out to several organizers of international shows to bring her business into the global spotlight.

Musa Fabric has then been invited to present at multiple fashion shows, including the Europe Fashion Week 2022 in September, and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Fashion Week 2022 in October. On top of this, Joy will also be debuting in the Musa Fashion Show in Tokyo in November 2022.

With each success, Musa Fabric grows its modest origins while extending them both locally and internationally. The brand has already established Musa Ambassadors and Ambassadors in cities like Manila and Zamboanga, as well as in other countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Germany, Morocco, and Singapore. Soon, they will also launch in Thailand, Dubai, Israel, and Turkey.



DTI Programs Aailed


KIDNEY OF MUSA FABRIC KIDNEY OF MUSA FABRIC


Kapatid



Gleizl Joy Soo, a fashion fanatic in Davao del Norte, has turned her passion into an advocacy by giving detainees a new lease on life.

SCAN ME!



MUSA Fabric



TESTIMONIAL

 **Gaia Aala**

The Musa Fabric is the first banana fiber fabric made in Davao Del Norte. This is an advocacy program by Ms Joy Soo and I am so honored to be part of this. In these uncertain times, I am deeply inspired by this advocacy because in every purchase of Musa product, we can make a difference in the lives of many.



Yardstick of Sustainable Fashion: The Rise of MUSA Fabric from a Simple Project to an International Brand



Work with dedication and make your employee the center of your business and as they are the reason why you are working.”

Right now, the project runs on a workforce of 12 seamstresses, 32 weavers from Davao Penal Farm and Colony, 20 from Correctional Institute for Women, ten from Davao del Norte Provincial Jail, eight from Ata Manobo Tribe, two layout artists, and a personal assistant. Her business is now close to becoming a Medium Enterprise based on the number of employees she has.

Musa Fabrics also received numerous awards and recognitions from different organizations that acknowledged its contributions to society, including one from the City of Tagum. The award bestowed by Tagum is said to be the “Highest Recognition to a Tagumenyo as an advocate of women empowerment, and cultivator of skills and talents in promoting local products.”

But Joy does not plan to stop there. Her goals have grown bigger and more ambitious. She plans on expanding her business even further to reach more customers both locally and internationally.

Joy is also working on expanding Musa’s monthly outreach project called “CARE FOR MUSA” by partnering with private sectors. This outreach project started last September 2020 and aims to assist the children of the Indigenous Tribes of Davao del Norte with their needs.

With these goals in mind, Joy is set on sewing together an even brighter future for her company. For Gleizl Joy Soo, Musa Fabric is more than just a clothing label; it’s a story of hard work, resilience, and hope. It is an inspiring story of following your dreams and giving hope to others — no matter how tough things get.





Z *Zealous Mission*

Rem Herceda's Revival of a Family Business

In the Philippines, calamansi juice is a staple beverage. It is refreshing and flavorful, and it's packed with Vitamin C — making it a great choice for boosting your immune system. It's the kind of thing that would be in demand during a health crisis. Owing to its popularity and the partial palate of Filipinos to calamansi juice, it has been the banner product of RJH Food Products.

RJH Food Products has been producing quality calamansi juice for over 30 years, and while it closed down at some point, its founders' family members would not give up on it. This is the inspiring story of how one company became a family's legacy.

Fruitful Beginnings

Rem Floyd Herceda is the current owner of RJH Food Products in General Santos City. His family is known for its juice brand — the REMA House of Calamansi. The business was originally established by his grandmother, Emma “Mommy Ems” Herceda” in 1983.

The brand REMA is the combination of his grandparents' names: RE from Remberito and MA from Emma. Sadly, Mommy Ems failing health caused her to stop the business in 2005. As the eldest grandchild and having seen the great potential of the calamansi juice business, Rem revived his grandmother's business right after he finished his studies in 2010.

With a starting capital of just five hundred pesos, Rem started his business using the REMA name as a banner brand. As an amateur entrepreneur, he juggled his time managing his business and working as a job order government employee. His officemates then were among his first clients who loved his calamansi concoction.

A Sweet Turnaround with the Help of DTI

The business was not an overnight success. In fact, it took a lot of hard work, dedication, and tenacity to get where they are today.

Having undergone the Assessment, Consultation, and Triage (ACT) session under the One Town, One Product (OTOP) program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Rem maximized all the possible assistance of the program to improve his product and enhance his business operations.

Rem was among the first batch of Region 12's mentees of the Kapatid Mentor ME program when it was rolled out in 2016. The training assistance and the marketing exposure given by DTI were of great help as REMA was able to penetrate the bigger market.

This entrepreneur also participated in several local, regional, and national trade fairs. In fact, among the prestigious trade fairs he has attended were the International Food Expo (IFEX) and the National Food Fair.

Having been identified as among the successful home-grown entrepreneurs in General Santos City, Rem was given several recognitions for his outstanding product and promising business.



He was also entrusted with the operations of the One Town, One Product (OTOP) Hub in one of the major malls in the city. Through the OTOP Hub, developed and market-ready products of DTI-assisted Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are displayed and marketed as premium pasalubong products.

Calamansi Juice as a Way to Fight Off COVID-19

Like any successful entrepreneur, Rem has also gone through difficult times. One of the hurdles he encountered was the COVID-19 pandemic. At the height of the crisis, he was faced with

the dilemma of whether to continue or close his business. They observed that the OTOP Hub customers were dwindling one by one because of the lockdown.

With a heavy heart, Rem decided to stop the OTOP Hubs’ operation. While the hub was not operational, Rem devoted his time and energy to his first passion — calamansi juice production.

People were wary about their health at that time; after all, the COVID-19 virus’s effect seem to be heavier on those with weak



DTI Programs Availled



National Food Fair

OTOP Hub

Growing up to see his grandparents’ business, one man from General Santos City took it upon himself to revive his family’s legacy.

SCAN ME!



REMA House of Calamansi



Zealous Mission: Rem Herceda’s Revival of a Family Business



When there is a problem like this pandemic, there is always an opportunity disguised as a solution.”

immune systems. As such, the demand for immunity-boosting food and drinks, such as calamansi juice, was high. Rem took this as an opportunity to pivot his business and expand his market.

People then started to patronize their products more because of the nutritional benefits that calamansi juice can bring. True enough, with the power of the mighty Vitamin C, RJH Food Products’ production and market distribution expanded throughout the different areas in Mindanao.

To give back to the community who has been avidly supporting their product, Rem donated calamansi juice to frontliners, especially in the hospitals, border patrols, and other frontline government offices.

Moving Forward from the Pandemic

In March of 2021, Rem reopened the OTOP Hub. The business has been smooth sailing ever since. The pandemic may have brought with it a multitude of problems, but it has also tested the perseverance and fortitude of many businesses, including Rem’s.

According to him, problems are inevitable when you are in the business, be it with people, products, or marketing strategy; it is part of your life. What is important is your ability to be flexible when the situation calls for it.

Rem Floyd Herceda’s advice to all entrepreneurs is to trust and fear God, take calculated risks and always persevere.

“When there is a problem like this pandemic, there is always an opportunity disguised as a solution,” he added.

No truer words were ever spoken.



MSMEs in the Philippines

The Philippines is a country that is highly dependent on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). They are an important sector of the Philippine economy as they provide goods and services to meet local needs, generate incomes, create jobs, and promote entrepreneurship.

These businesses make up 99.51% of all registered businesses in the country, according to the 2020 report of the Philippine Statistics Authority. Micro enterprises constitute 88.77% (850,127) of total MSME establishments, followed by small enterprises at 10.25% (98,126) and medium enterprises at 0.49% (4,716).

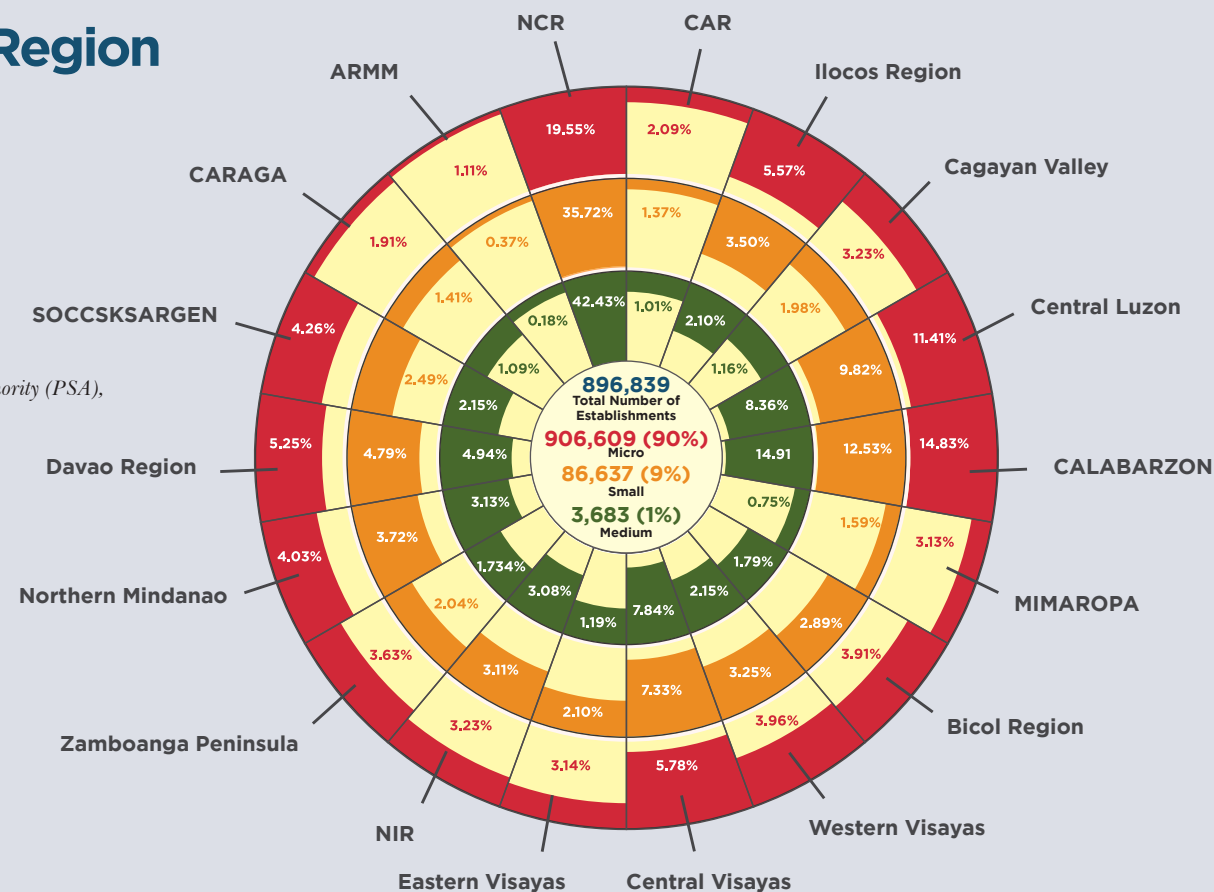
The economic activity and population size of regions contribute to the high concentrations of MSMEs in the area and vice versa. The majority of the MSMEs can be found in the National Capital Region (NCR), which houses 21.10% of the country's MSMEs, followed by Region 4-A (CALABARZON) with 14.62%, Region 3 (Central Luzon) with 11.68%, Region 7 (Central Visayas) with 6.89%, and Region 6 (Western Visayas) with 6.03%.

MSMEs helped spur economic growth by providing employment to around 5.38 million Filipinos, which is equivalent to a 62.66% share of the country's total.

MSMEs by Region

- Micro
- Small
- Medium

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), MSME Statistics 2020)



The top five regions when it comes to jobs generated by MSMEs are National Capital Region (NCR) with 1,531,256 jobs; followed by Region 4-A (CALABARZON) with 773,668; Region 3 (Central Luzon) with 574,709; Region 7 (Central Visayas) with 415,273; and Davao Region with 294,191 jobs.

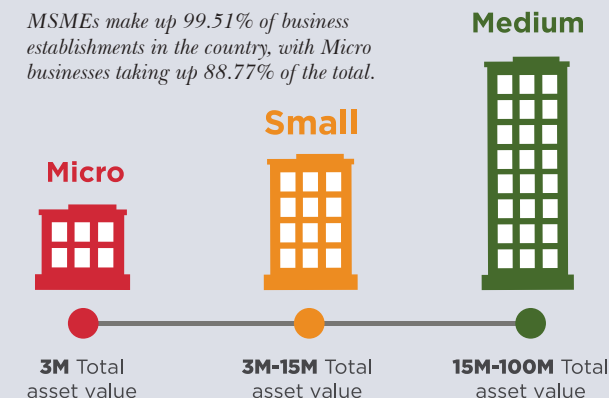
The Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles continues to be the top business industry, taking up 46.74% of all MSMEs nationwide. It is followed, with a wide gap, by Accommodation and Food Service Activities at 14.07%, and Manufacturing at 11.64%.

During the pandemic, MSMEs were among the hardest hit businesses. However, these businesses have shown great resilience and have been quick to adapt to the new normal. For example, many MSMEs have pivoted to online platforms in order to continue operating. Some food businesses have started offering delivery or Take-Out options to customers who could not dine in due to COVID-19 restrictions. Others have begun producing essential goods and services that are in high demand during the pandemic. As a result, MSMEs helped keep the economy afloat and played a key role in the country's recovery.

Looking towards the future, there is great potential for MSMEs to continue driving economic growth in the Philippines. The DTI has put in place various initiatives to support these businesses, and there is increasing recognition of the importance of MSMEs in the country's development. With the right support, MSMEs can help propel the Philippines forward and lead the way towards a prosperous future.

Establishments by Enterprise Size

MSMEs make up 99.51% of business establishments in the country, with Micro businesses taking up 88.77% of the total.



Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are categorized based on their asset size.

Economic Contribution of MSMEs



61.6%
Portion of the total workforce MSME employ



35.7%
Total value added tax contributed by MSME

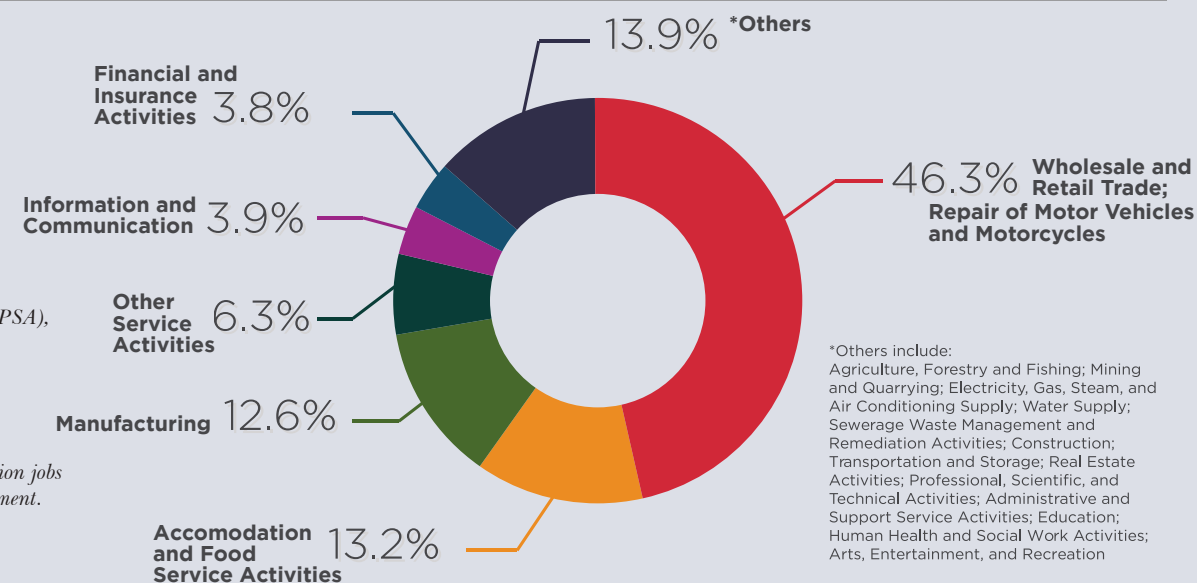


60%
Percentage of all exporters in the MSME tier

MSMEs by Industry

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), MSME Statistics 2020)

MSMEs generated more than 5.38 million jobs or 62.66% of the country's total employment.





The DTI in the Context of MSME Development

Previous and current administrations have all set the goal of ensuring inclusive growth and addressing income inequality. A key part of achieving this goal is empowering the marginalized sectors with the right mindset and know-how to improve the quality of their lives.

The DTI is the government agency entrusted with the task not just of promoting economic growth and development in the Philippines, but also of providing those at the base of the economic pyramid with the opportunity to start their own businesses.

This task equates to helping MSMEs prosper. After all, MSMEs have been proven to be one of the biggest drivers of economic growth with their more than 62% employment share across the country.

In pursuit of such a mandate, the DTI has implemented various programs and projects to ensure the efficient delivery of business development services nationwide, especially during the onset of the pandemic in 2020. The DTI has put together specific interventions to help mitigate the impact and risks of COVID-19 to its stakeholders, particularly MSMEs.

The DTI provided a wide range of services and programs to support MSMEs, from business registration and permits, to training and capacity building, to business mentorship and counseling, to financing and market access. In addition, the DTI worked on initiatives to help MSMEs transition to online platforms and continue operating during the pandemic.

The agency's efforts are crucial in ensuring that MSMEs survive and thrive during these difficult times. By providing the necessary support and assistance, the DTI is helping to ensure that MSMEs remain an important engine of economic growth in the Philippines.

DTI's Zero to Hero Program



Zero to Hero is the Department of Trade and Industry's program that encourages young entrepreneurs to turn their business dreams into reality. The program shares the stories of 32 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises around the country and how they rose from level Zero (in terms of finance and business knowledge) into Hero.

But we don't just collect and share success stories — we were a part of it, too. DTI was there to help propel these entrepreneurs forward through a wide range of resources, including financial assistance, mentorship, and training opportunities.

The Zero to Hero community is also a great source of inspiration and motivation. Seeing other entrepreneurs achieve success can be a powerful motivator for young entrepreneurs who are just starting out. The program has already helped hundreds of young entrepreneurs achieve their dreams of starting a successful business. And with the continued support of the Department of Trade and Industry, it is poised to help even more in the years to come.

The following are a few of DTI's programs that helped MSMEs succeed in their endeavors:

ON IMPROVING BUSINESS CLIMATE



Negosyo Centers

Negosyo Centers act as one-stop shops for entrepreneurs who need help with things like business registration, financing, marketing, and more. They provide information and services related to training, management guidance and assistance, financing and grants, marketing, and market linkages.

Negosyo Centers also coordinate with the local government units (LGUs) to help process the forms submitted by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Lastly, they support the development of youth and women entrepreneurship by coordinating with schools and concerned organizations.



Negosyo Center Online Portal (NCOP)

In light of COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to promote the digitalization of our MSMEs, the **Negosyo Center Online Portal (NCOP)** was officially launched last June 01, 2021. It is envisioned to bring to all the services of a Negosyo Center in a digital platform. With the same function as the physical version of the Negosyo Center, MSMEs can now visit the NCOP site thru <https://dtinegosyocenter.online/> and avail of all the business assistance they need.

Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002

The **BMBEs Act** encourages the formation and growth of micro-enterprises by granting them income tax exemptions, social security, and priority access to financing. The act also helps BMBEs with technology transfer, production training, and marketing assistance programs. These benefits help micro-enterprises get established and provide much-needed goods and services to their communities.



Enhanced Business Name Registration System (EBNRS)

The **BNRS** is an online portal that makes business registration more convenient for applicants. It was also launched to provide a central repository for information about registered business names. Other services include e-filing, online payment, and online submission of supporting documents.

Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2017

The act is a much-needed piece of legislation that aims to streamline the current systems and procedures of government services. By simplifying government processes and making it easier to do business in the Philippines, this law will help to attract individuals to become entrepreneurs.

ON IMPROVING ACCESS TO FINANCE



Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso (P3)

Many small businesses struggle to get funding due to the high-interest rates charged by microfinance institutions. The **P3 Program** seeks to provide entrepreneurs access to credit at more affordable rates, giving small businesses the boost they need to succeed.



P3 Bayanihan CARES

The Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2 has directed SB Corp to expand its existing loan programs for MSMEs, cooperatives, hospitals, tourism, and OFWs affected by Covid-19 pandemic and by other socio-economic reversals. Loan proceeds are allowed to be utilized for: payroll cost; materials and suppliers; mortgage payments; rent; utilities, including fuel and storage; creation of new supportive businesses; re-purposing of existing business capital; any other business debt obligations that were incurred before the covered period; or acquisition of new technologies and systems to adjust business processes for resiliency.



Resilient, Innovative and Sustainable Enterprises, Unleash your Powers (RISE UP) Loan Program

RISE UP is a loan program that aims to sustain the gains of MSMEs that have survived the past two years of crisis, by providing multi-purpose loans that have soft terms and can be easily accessed. The financing programs under RISE UP are the RISE UP Turismo, RISE UP Multi-purpose loan, and RISE Tindahan.

ON ENHANCING MANAGEMENT AND LABOR CAPACITIES



Kapatid Mentor ME (Micro Enterprise) Program

KMME is a mentorship program where mentors passionately help their mentees grow and achieve their fullest business potential. They provide guidance and advice on everything from marketing and sales to product development and financial management. It also provides a supportive community of like-minded entrepreneurs who are eager to help each other succeed.



Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP)

YEP is a nationwide program to help young Filipinos develop their entrepreneurial skills by offering them a comprehensive package of interventions. With its official tagline, "Harnessing Our Own Resources for the Advancement of the Youth!" (HOORAY!), YEP supports the government's growth agenda of doubling the number of entrepreneurs in the country by 2022 which will in turn broaden the gains of economic development, address inequality, and uplift the quality of life of Filipinos, particularly the youth. With the end goal of improving national development, YEP components encourage upbeat actions towards strengthening economic independence among individuals and communities.



SME Roving Academy (SMERA)

SMERA is a regional roadshow that aims to bring together national government and private sector institutions whose programs are designed to promote entrepreneurship, improve access to credit and markets, and increase the productivity and efficiency of MSMEs.

The caravans are undertaken to improve access of MSMEs to government and private sector services, particularly in areas where the provision of business development services may be limited.



Philippine Trade Training Center-Global MSME Academy (PTTC-GMEA)

The **PTTC Academy** is a one-stop multi-platform online learning and information resource which aims to provide training and mentorship to enhance ASEAN SMEs capabilities to grow and compete regionally and internationally.

The Academy offers around 50 training courses in finance/accounting, management, marketing, operation, technology, and trade/logistics. About 350 relevant links to business information and access to a directory of service providers to whom SMEs can reach out for financial advice, corporate programs, and networking are also available through www.asean-sme-academy.org, with links at the PTTC's website, www.pttc.gov.ph.



Livelihood Seeding Program-Negosyo Serbisyo sa Barangay

Through the Livelihood Seeding Program, DTI provides start-up capital in the form of livelihood starter kits, and Basic Entrepreneurship and Basic Management Training to micro and small entrepreneurs in vulnerable areas such as those affected by disasters, calamities, and crises.



Pangkabuhayan sa Pagbangon at Ginhawa (PPG)

PPG is a livelihood seeding and entrepreneurship development program for microenterprises with priority in areas affected by fire incidents and other calamities including armed conflicts and health disasters like epidemic and pandemic, and avalees of the Balik Probinsya Program. Together with other government agencies such as but not limited to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Local Government Units (LGUs), and the National Task Force to End Local Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), etc., the program aims to help microenterprises of families/ individuals affected by fire incidents and other calamities, restart their economic activities, and to provide livelihood opportunities for identified beneficiaries in areas considered as priorities of the national government such as KIA-WIA and NTF-ELCAC.



Rural Agro-Industrial Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID GROWTH)

RAPID Growth project aims to propel agriculture-based processing enterprises and entrepreneurial communities to become innovative, productive, and competitive so that they will be capacitated in meeting the challenges of the global market. Specifically, this project aims to provide focused, firm-level, value chain-based, and climate-smart assistance and financing program to micro and small businesses, through enabling sectoral and trade policies which are designed to provide enhanced access to institutional, regional, and world markets.

Comprehensive Agrarian Reform (CARP) Program

It's primary agenda is to promote and develop MSMEs in the countryside. All of the initiatives under CARP are intended to contribute to the government's thrust for economic development and poverty alleviation.

Strengthening MSME Disaster Resilience Project

It aims to build disaster-resilient businesses nationwide, by undertaking the following activities: Identifying actions to strengthen resilience MSMEs); and Providing technical assistance in strengthening resilience to selected MSMEs on a demand-driven basis. This project aims to engage different stakeholders in supporting the development and implementation of policies, strategies, programs and activities to carry out a roadmap for MSME Disaster Resilience.

Promotion of Green Economic Development (ProGED)

ProGED is focused in helping MSMEs become climate smart and environment-friendly to enhance their local and regional competitiveness. The project was piloted in Cebu City and Bohol, and has been replicated and adopted to 27 provinces nationwide. Following the success of ProGED in the country, the Acceleration of Green Economic Development (AccGED) was then implemented which aims to capacitate regional GED focal persons and business counsellors on the positive results of the project.



CTRL + BIZ Reboot Now!

It is a program which offers a series of free webinars that are targeted to MSMEs who need to transform their business digitally. Enablers across the entire e-commerce ecosystem will provide their expertise and experiences on how to take advantage of the digital space. This is part of the "Reboot

Package for Online Enterprises," a flagship program of the DTI for the promotion of e-commerce. This promotes online business from traditional way of doing business in order to increase the number of online merchants and ecommerce shoppers.

ON IMPROVING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



Shared Service Facilities (SSFs)

The **SSF Project** is all about helping MSMEs access better technology and production centers so they can upgrade their competitiveness and graduate to the next level. The project is implemented in partnership with cooperatives, NGOs, LGUs, and state universities and colleges, who all share a commitment to seeing MSMEs succeed. With the help of the SSFs Project, MSMEs will be able to tap into a wider range of markets and be integrated into the global supply chain.



Techtools for MSMEs

The **Techtools for MSMEs** site was developed to help MSMEs cope with the challenges and disruptions brought on by the community quarantine. The site provides information on different technology tools, applications, platforms, and resources that MSMEs can use in various areas such as e-commerce, e-payment, digital marketing, logistics, work-from-home collaboration tools, productivity tools, webinars, finding an expert, and government resources.

The tools are categorized based on functionality so that MSMEs can easily find what they need. With this site, MSMEs can have access to the information and resources they need to continue operating during turbulent economic times.

Industry Cluster Enhancement (ICE) Program

Under the **ICE Program**, the growth of the country's priority industries is facilitated. This program is an effective strategy towards inclusive growth as it provides answers to key questions, such as how micro and small enterprises can co-exist with medium and large enterprises, and how the same micro and small enterprises can contribute to the production and manufacturing of end-products that cater to the global market. The eight (8) priority industry clusters are rubber, bamboo, coffee, cacao, processed fruits and nuts, wearables and homestyle, palm oil, and coco coir.

ON IMPROVING ACCESSING TO MARKET



One Town, One Product (OTOP) Philippines Hub

The program is designed to help micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) grow and prosper by supporting and promoting products or services that are rooted in local culture and community resources.

As the program's name implies, each locality or community is encouraged to develop and promote its own unique product or service — something that it can be best at or best known for.



Go Lokal! / Buy Local, Go Lokal

This project is a retail concept store showcasing quality and innovative Philippine products crafted, designed, and produced by the country's MSMEs.

It serves as a marketing platform for our MSMEs to gain access to the lucrative local consumer market and, ultimately, to the global export market. It is an excellent marketing avenue provided for free by the DTI and its retail partners for MSME incubation, marketing, and branding.



Diskwento Caravan

Series of **Diskwento Caravan** are being conducted, some of which are done jointly with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and local government units in cooperation with MSME suppliers, to ensure supply of basic necessities priced in accordance with, or lower than the suggested retail prices. These also provide markets for our MSME manufacturers of basic necessities to sell their products as well as assisting our consumers by providing them products at discounted prices.



Bagsakan Project

The **Bagsakan Special Project** was created as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It allows for the direct selling of goods from MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) to buyers and consumers. This results in lower prices for consumers and instant revenue for MSMEs.

The project utilized digital solutions such as social media marketing, online order-taking, contactless payment and delivery, and organizing safe selling activities. Using these methods, the DTI-BDTP (Department of Trade and Industry-Bureau of Domestic Trade Promotions) was able to connect people with businesses while keeping everyone safe during the pandemic.



Regional Interactive Platform for Philippine Exporters (RIPPLES) Plus Program

This program is designed to expand the supply base of globally-competitive Philippine products and services and increase international market shares by extending strategic company-level interventions such as capacity-building trainings, product development, market information, and global product trends to participating companies to make them export-ready, and to enhance their export capacity and competitiveness.

NCR
Mori's Creations
Journals, Office Supplies, Pouches, Face Masks
Barangay Apolonio Samson,
Kaingin Road, Quezon City, Philippines
Phone: **(0917) 771 0402**
Website: **http://www.morinotes.com**

Abby Shoes Manufacturing
Heavy Duty Outdoor Sandals and Slippers Manufacturer
91 E dela Paz St. San Roque
1801 Marikina City, Philippines
Phone: **(0935) 012 4558**
Email: **sapateroabby@gmail.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/roadtripsandalz**

CAR
PRAJ Gift Shop Center
Cultural Gift Store
Provincial Road, Purok 4 Bulanao,
Tabuk, 3800
Phone: **(0917) 118 4091**
Email: **prajmadio@gmail.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/prajpasalubong**

Health 101 Restoreant
Vegan Restaurant
Adelaida Buliwan
350 Magsaysay Ave. corner Private Rd.,
Baguio City, Philippines
Phone: **(0947) 462 9985**
Email: **health100resto@yahoo.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064148463053**

REGION 1
BAGNOS Multipurpose Cooperative
Banna Blend Rice Coffee and Other Products
Estela Robles-Villareal
Laoag City
Phone: **(0926) 655 4059**
Email: **ameliabautista916@gmail.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/bagnoscooperative**

Bantay Bread
Timeless Classic Pinoy Pastries
Buquig, National Hi-way, Bantay, Ilocos Sur
Phone: **(0917) 700 7696**
Email: **bantaybread12@gmail.com**
Website: **https://www.bantaybread.com**

REGION 2
KTCM Enterprise
Pasalubong Distributor and Farm Produce Processor
Nueva Vizcaya
Phone: **(0910) 694 3149**
Email: **kctm.enterprise@gmail.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/kctmenterprise2017**

JBM Food Products
Maker of All-Natural Tropical Fruit Beverages, Artisanal Wines and Vinegars
Magdalena, Cabatuan, Isabela
Phone: **(0917) 564 9868**
Email: **jbmfoodproducts@yahoo.com**
Website: **https://jbmfoodproducts.linker.store/**

REGION 3
JCS Beatus Trading, Inc.
Handicrafts
Brgy. Sta. Lucia, Victoria, Tarlac
Phone: **(0920) 946 5515**
Email: **primamacrame@gmail.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/primabeadstarlac**

Jedidiah Food Industry
Turmeric Tea and Salabat
Pulilan, Bulacan
Phone: **(0923) 470 1304**
Email: **jedidiahfoods@yahoo.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100054560764064**

REGION 4A
Prime Innov8
High-quality Cleaning and Laundry Products
Block 3 Lot 1 Samat St. Montana Village,
Burgos, Montalban, Rizal
Phone: **(02) 8941 4524**
Website: **https://primeinnov8.wixsite.com/primeinnov8**

SAMAPA
Summer Bags, Read-to-Wear Apparel, Belts and Other Made-to-order Items
P. Caballes St., Barangay Uno,
Pagsanjan, Laguna
Phone: **(049) 500 9660**
Email: **tejidoveronica@yahoo.com**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/samapa.pc/**

REGION 4B
BcDc Agricultural Products
Agricultural Products (Calamansi Juice)
Brgy. Bigaan, San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro
Email: **fajutagagrofarm@yahoo.com.ph**
FB: **https://www.facebook.com/bcdcacagri/**

Rejano's Bakery
Premium Arrowroot Cookies
Bonifacio St., Brgy. Banahaw,
Sta. Cruz, Marinduque
Phone: **(042) 704 5062**
Website: **https://rejanosbakery.linker.store/**

REGION 5
AM Lasay Food Industry
Bring Anywhere Bicolano Specialties (Laing, Santol sa Gata, Garlic Fried Bibi)
Santa Cruz, Iriga City, Camarines Sur
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Email: **natukbicol@gmail.com**
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BUREAUS
BDTP Bureau of Domestic Trade Promotion
BIS Bureau of Import Services
BITR Bureau of International Trade Relations
BPS Bureau of Philippine Standards
BSMED Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development
BTIPR Bureau of Trade and Industrial Policy Research
CB Competitiveness Bureau
CPAB Consumer Protection and Advocacy Bureau
EMB Export Marketing Bureau
FTEB Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau
PAB Philippine AccreditationBureau
STMO Strategic Trade Management Office

OFFICES
FS Finance Service
HRAS Human Resource and Administrative Service
FTSC Foreign Trade Service Corps
IAS Internal Audit Service
SMS Information Systems Management Service
KMIS Knowledge Management and Information Service
LS Legal Service
PMS Planning and Management Service
RGMS Resource Generation and Management Service

ATTACHED AGENCIES
BOI Board of Investments
CDA Cooperative Development Authority
CIAP Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines
DCP Design Center of the Philippines
PTTC Philippine Trade Training Center
TESDA Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
FDCP Film Development Council of the Philippines

CORPORATIONS
CITEM Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions
IPOPHL Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines
NDC National Development Company
PEZA Philippine Economic Zone Authority
PITC Philippine International Trading Corporation
PPPI Philippine Pharma Procurement Incorporated
SB Corp.Small Business Corporation

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