MCSC Client Success Story
Updated January 2016

MercaMex Distributor Inc.
Gabriela Murguia
Delano, CA

Gabriela Murguia was born and raised in Zamora Michoacán and comes from a family of merchants. Her grandparents founded a small factory of religious articles, furniture, and interior decorations. By the time Gabriela was 16, she was participating in the family business, while going to school studying secretarial work and accounting. She continued to work in the family business for twelve years. When she was 21 she had her first baby, but continued working with her family until she was 29, contributing to its ongoing success. Eventually, she decided to take the biggest risk in her life, and move to another country – the United States!

She originally moved to Ontario, California but found it difficult to find viable work. She moved to Delano, and worked in the fields picking grapes, and in restaurants and a gas station to sustain her family. After a lot of hard work and dedication, she was promoted to full time at the gas station, with benefits and better pay. Meanwhile she was preparing herself for the field she liked most - sales!

On her days off, she began to learn sales from a company that distributed businesses supplies. She was eventually offered a position selling Mexican groceries to Latino and other markets on a route from Arvin to Fresno. By 2004, she was pregnant with her second baby, and after nine years of working and learning, Gabriela still had the dream to start her own business and decided to seek information and support on how to do that.

In 2014, Gabriela met Mission Community Services Corporation (MCSC) instructors and counselors Jesse and Clarita Portillo, who helped her enroll in MCSC’s Empezando Class that they taught at La Verne University in Bakersfield. Gabriela was excited to learn everything she needed to start her business: the responsibilities and requirements of owning a store, managing employees, financials, marketing, and other key information she needed to run a successful operation.

By April 2014, with the support of her instructors and one-on-one counseling, she got her fictitious business name: MercaMex. Her goal was to sell Mexican Candies to the businesses that she had established relationships with while driving her delivery route. The business community quickly supported her by buying her products, and her dedication paid off! She started to generate sales of $10 thousand a month and quickly grew out of her garage where she had been running her business. By November 2014, the demand for her products was so great that she established her new business entity, MercaMex Distributor, Inc.
In December 2014, with the corporation registered, she hired her two sons, Yeudiel and Gabriel, as her first employees. She was also able to buy two new vehicles: a van and a 26-foot truck. Her distribution route grew to the point that she was selling an average of $45 thousand dollars per month, and some months, double that!

When people from her neighborhood learned that she was distributing unique products at fair prices, they wanted to buy from her, and word quickly spread. Even though she didn’t originally want to own her own store, she saw a great opportunity to establish her own retail outlet and, by late June 2015, MercaMex Distributor Inc. started to grow again and opened Dulceria Alebrijes, in Delano.

Dulceria Alebrijes quickly became the place to go for Mexican candies, party favors and other products that her customers needed. The store has been such a big success that after less than a month, she was already in the planning process of opening a new store in another city!

**January 2016 Update.** By the end of January 2016, she opened the new retail store and distribution center warehouse in Bakersfield: also called Dulceria Alebrijes. With all the success from her stores and warehouses she has now created 10 jobs, both part-time and full-time. She also closed out last year with $1.1 M in sales.

Gabriela’s message to a new business owner who is thinking about opening a business: “As the years pass by, I’ve learned that the best way to be ready for life’s next adventure is to be prepared! Despite the years of experience I had of managing my family business; I realized that I still needed more. I encourage everyone to learn how to do their business plan, because without it you may have that dream in your head, but when you write it, it becomes a goal! Keep learning and practicing and you will be successful.”

“Thank you Jesse and Clarita and MCSC for helping me learn what I needed to be successful.”

Congratulations, Gabriela you are an inspiration to all of us!