



Flavors and a tradition, from the mountain to your table

La Montaña: Sofrito de Puerto Rico

The flavors of La Montaña (“The Mountain”): Sofrito de Puerto Rico awaken the senses and a longing for Puerto Rican cuisine in those who taste this traditional seasoning. Prepared in the village of Barranquitas, in the central mountain range of the island, this sofrito combines a colorfulness and freshness of the vegetables harvested daily by farmers in the region.

More than 20 years ago, the Vazquez family started selling this homemade, family sofrito in the small business located on their property. Over the years, the popularity of this product reached different parts of the island. It attracted visitors to travel to Barranquitas, specifically to purchase their creation.

The young daughter of the family, who had just earned her Natural Sciences degree, was motivated. Dorianyeli registered the brand in 2017 and marketed her product to distributors and Puerto Rican supermarket chains. However, an already challenge-filled plan was abruptly interrupted by the arrival of Hurricane Maria in September of that year. The category five hurricane wiped out crops, destroyed production, and critically impacted the island's economy.

"UPS's customer service has been second to none. UPS has guided me step by step to help me position my product and increase my sales. I have complete confidence in them as a business ally. UPS drivers share in my excitement when they see that our shipments have increased, and my customers know that if I'm shipping my products via UPS, they'll arrive well and on time."





"Usually as women, we have many self-destructive beliefs that we somehow learn as children. We grow up thinking that there are some jobs that are better for men than they are for women. We need to change that narrative and visualize ourselves as leaders. Only in this way can we be in charge of our destiny and our success. We have to learn to believe in ourselves so that we can achieve our dreams."

Dorianyeli Vázquez, President of La Montaña: Sofrito de Puerto Rico.

Take a Breath, Resume and Persevere

It took the small business about a year to recover from the impact that Hurricane Maria left in its wake. Slowly, they began visiting distributors and local retail stores to promote their product.

"Initially it was very difficult for us to position our products on the shelves of local businesses, mainly because in Puerto Rico there is a wide variety of sofritos available for sale. But ours is a quality product that stands out from all others. I know that La Montaña: Sofrito de Puerto Rico has the potential to be in all supermarkets and popular business chains, both in and outside of Puerto Rico."

Dorianyeli went door-to-door visiting potential buyers, promoting her brand and the quality of her product. At the same time, she was responsible for the negotiation and distribution of all orders. It was a very slow process that gradually yielded results.

"Barranquitas is in a remote and difficult-to-reach village and even more so, due to road and traffic conditions. I knew that UPS could provide me with the reliable service I needed. What I didn't know is that they could also offer me a strategy to help me grow my business much more than I had anticipated."

A Crisis, An Opportunity

At the beginning of 2020 companies, and in particular small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), globally faced a never-before-seen challenge caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many businesses that were considered non-essential were forced to close their doors and limit their operations and service hours. This caused a slowdown in the local expansion planned for La Montaña: Sofrito de Puerto Rico.

Weeks went by and the business and economic consequences of the pandemic would be seen in time. Dorianyeli had to get creative and began promoting her product through different avenues and in new markets. Social media was the way to go. Her goal was to promote her sofrito within the Puerto Rican communities located in the United States, and she did it!





UPS Boosts Business Delivering Flavors and Tradition

This SMB was pleased when potential buyers in the United States began to show interest in their product. They were very drawn to the product's quality that was being promoted in social media. The fact that the sofrito is prepared with fresh mountain vegetables and free of processed chemicals made this an attractive option. The challenge was in shipping the product and at the same time, maintaining its quality and freshness -- from Barranquitas to any destination.

This business is now shipping their product to customers in the United States using [UPS Next Day Air®](#). This service guarantees that customers receive a quality product which is fresh and ready to be served the day after ordering.

Grateful for the expansion of her entrepreneurial business, and aware of Barranquitas' economic needs, Doriányeli now has a new project. She has added to her website hand-made products from the region, providing local entrepreneurs with the opportunity to sell their products which are aligned to La Montaña: Sofrito de Puerto Rico's brand. She firmly believes in supporting Puerto Rico's economy with a 100% Puerto Rican product -- from packaging, to labels -- everything is manufactured on the island.

