

La Catrina Mexican Cuisine – Joliet, IL

La Catrina is a growing culinary and cultural concept that aims to establish itself in the historic Union Station in Downtown Joliet. This Mexican restaurant is the next evolution of a successful business model developed by Chef [Joaquín Anguiano](#) and his team, who have launched projects such as [Tequila C.J.](#) in Chicago, [Flor de Fuego](#) in Manhattan, IL, and an upcoming opening in Homewood.

La Catrina is designed to be a vibrant, inclusive, and family-friendly destination, attracting both local residents and visitors. The proposed location offers over 12,700 square feet of interior space and 3,500 square feet of patio, creating the ideal setting for memorable dining experiences and community-driven events. This proposal is not simply about leasing a space, but about contributing to the revitalization and cultural elevation of Downtown Joliet.

Vision:

To become the most representative and authentic Mexican restaurant in Joliet, promoting culture, flavor, and community.

Mission:

To provide a modern Mexican dining experience by blending tradition, hospitality, and social responsibility, through a professional team committed to local development, diversity, and service excellence.

Tequila C.J. began as a small business earning just \$500 a year and has grown into a restaurant generating over \$8 million annually. It now welcomes more than one million visitors per year and has received multiple awards as one of the best Mexican restaurants in the Chicago area. The leadership team has collaborated with industry figures such as Jorge Cueva ([Mr. Tempo](#)), participated in cultural festivals, and worked closely with community organizations.

La Catrina represents the next generation of this proven model, with expanded potential that includes a future in-house brewery. Our goal is not just to open a restaurant, but to build a strong brand with community responsibility, job creation, and economic impact in Joliet.

We are not just asking for a space—we are offering a committed partnership with the City of Joliet. As a gesture of transparency and professionalism, we request fair terms, including a 6 to 12-month rent-free period to allow for significant investment in site improvements. All funds will be invested directly by the ownership team. We invite Joliet's leadership to visit our most recent location, Flor de Fuego in Manhattan, IL—just 10 minutes away—to experience the quality, vision, and potential we bring.

Estimated Initial Investment

La Catrina plans to launch its operations with an estimated initial investment of approximately \$400,000 USD, distributed strategically as follows:

- \$150,000 allocated to inventory, food and beverage supplies, licensing, and additional kitchen equipment.
- \$90,000 reserved for staff payroll during the first months of operation.
- Up to \$100,000 for renovation, decoration, signage, and structural improvements (fully funded by the team).
- \$60,000+ reserved as operational backup, and for initial marketing, branding, and promotion efforts.

Facilities and Operational Potential

The available space at Union Station offers 12,700 square feet of interior space and 3,500 square feet of outdoor patio. This provides exceptional potential for diversified operations, including indoor dining, private events, and patio service.

The venue can accommodate up to 200 seated guests and up to 300 for cocktail-style events. It also includes built-in brewery infrastructure, which the team plans to develop into a future craft beer brand under the name 'La Catrina.' This will enhance brand value and open new revenue channels.

Local Job Creation and Inclusive Hiring

La Catrina expects to employ between 20 and 27 team members during its initial operational phase, broken down as follows:

- 8 to 10 kitchen and prep staff.
- 10 to 12 front-of-house staff, including servers, hosts, and bartenders.
- 3 to 5 team members in management, cleaning, and support roles.

The hiring process will prioritize local Joliet residents and foster an inclusive, diverse work environment. Opportunities will be open to all individuals regardless of language, background, or cultural identity. Bilingualism in English and Spanish will be considered a valuable asset for client-facing roles, given the restaurant's Mexican cultural theme, but it will not be a requirement for most positions.

La Catrina is fully committed to non-discrimination and to offering equal employment opportunities across all hiring and operations.

Marketing Strategy and Positioning

La Catrina will implement a comprehensive marketing strategy that leverages both digital and traditional methods to build brand visibility and attract a diverse customer base. Our branding will focus on culture, experience, and connection with the local community.

Key marketing initiatives include:

- Daily content across social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok).
- Targeted digital ads via Google and local news media.
- Email campaigns with loyalty promotions and seasonal offers.
- A fully responsive website with menu, reservations, and contact.
- Local flyers and collaborations with nearby businesses.
- Monthly themed events with live music, artists, and cultural showcases.

Community Engagement and Visibility

La Catrina aims to be a cultural hub in Downtown Joliet. Our leadership has a strong history of collaborating with nonprofit organizations, schools, and community events. We are committed to participating in local festivals, city-wide initiatives, and building relationships with Joliet's cultural and business community. The restaurant will also host artistic and culinary showcases that reflect our values of cultural pride and inclusion.

Proposal and Request to the City of Joliet

We respectfully propose the following agreement to establish La Catrina at Union Station:

- Monthly rent: \$6,000.
- Requesting a rent-free grace period of 6 to 12 months to allow full investment into renovations, staffing, inventory, and operations.
- All renovations and improvements will be funded entirely by our team—no capital investment is requested from the City.
- Full commitment to high standards of cleanliness, service, safety, and cultural contribution.

To build trust and transparency, we extend a formal invitation to Joliet city officials to visit our newest restaurant, Flor de Fuego, located just 10 minutes away in Manhattan, IL. This visit will allow them to experience firsthand the quality, professionalism, and community value that La Catrina will bring to Joliet.

Closing Statement

La Catrina is more than a restaurant—it is an economic, cultural, and community investment. With a leadership team that has proven success, a clear growth vision, and a passion for inclusive hospitality, we are prepared to become a vibrant part of Joliet's downtown and support the city's development goals.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to partner in building something special for the people of Joliet.

1. Inventory Use:

We plan to utilize the majority of the equipment provided in the MyGrain inventory. Any unused items will be properly stored in a designated area of the restaurant.

2. Hours of Operation:

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Monday to Thursday: 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM

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Friday and Saturday: 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM

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Sunday: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM

These hours may be adjusted slightly depending on customer demand during our first few months of operation.

3. Completed Sources and Uses Form:

Attached is the finalized “Sources and Uses” spreadsheet. The breakdown of our \$400,000 investment is as follows:

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\$150,000 – Food & liquor inventory

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\$100,000 – Renovations & additional kitchen equipment

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\$100,000 – Payroll and rent (first 3 months)

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\$42,500 – Contingency reserve

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\$7,500 – Marketing (15% of the reserve)

All funds will be deposited into the business bank account and are sourced from previous business ventures and investments made by the ownership team.

Ownership will be distributed as:

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Joaquín Anguiano – 33%

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José Manuel Vázquez – 33%

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Ángel Alberto Zamudio – 34%

ANGEL ALBERTO ZAMUDIO

EDUCATION

Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL

Bachelor of Arts: Economics, May 2005

Minor: Business Administration

EXPERIENCE

Culichitown Restaurant / Stone Park, IL October 2017- Present

Owner

- Coordinated daily restaurant management operations.
- Recruiting, training, managing and developing a team.
- Constantly made effort to promote the restaurant name and mission in local community and related events.
- Ensuring the highest standards of foods and service.
- Ensured compliance with health and safety regulations while developing effective in-store marketing strategies.
- Analyzed profitability measures to drive strategic planning and operational improvements.
- Negotiated vendor contracts to secure favorable pricing and quality supplies.

Volaris Airlines June 2011- June 2017

–Sales Representative

- Responsible for achieving revenue, profitability and productivity through marketing, sales and branding effectiveness.
- Developed, managed and maintained sales territory through travel agencies and direct to consumer events.
- Penetrated corporate sales to generate new business for the airline.
- Worked with internal departments on implementing revenue generating strategies, monitoring and evaluating competitive tactics and the impact on sales.
- Promoted new markets to ensure branding recognition through sales blitz, activations and sponsorships.
- Maintained relationships with travel agents and assisted with reservation issues, waivers and policy implementations.
- Negotiated sponsorship/advertising contracts with advertising agencies, radio stations and newspapers.
- Participated in weekly conference calls to discuss route trend and implement prompt strategies as needed to maintain load factor and profitability.

J & J International Distributor, Crest Hill, IL Dec. 2008- Jun. 2011

Tequila Don Ramon –Sales Representative

- Aggressively prospected new leads to introduce product to the market while achieving a sales goal.
- Responsible for identifying new potential customers through networking events.
- Developed promotional sales and strategies to encourage an increase in volume such as salesperson spiffs and advertising accrual plans.
- Worked independently from home handling business situations in a timely, professional manner while gaining respect through superior service.

Enlace Travel & Services, Inc., Joliet, IL

Nov. 2007 – Present

Manager

- Oversee daily functions of travel agency and ensure that business transactions are done properly.
- Responsible for delegating daily activities of three employees to achieve weekly sales goals.

- Reconcile daily cash and credit card transactions.
- Develop budget for advertising and sponsorships campaigns.
- Assist travel agents with customer complaints due to travel interruption, schedule changes, etc.

American General Financial Services, Joliet, IL May 2006 – Nov. 2007

Financial Representative

- Established client relations with potential customers by assisting in the loan process.
- Forecasted client risk and made credit decisions based on analysis obtained.
- Responsible for daily deposits with an average of \$15,000.

SKILLS

- Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, SPSS, Sabre and Amadeus

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

- Fluent in oral and written Spanish

ACTIVITIES

- **President of Caminos de Guanajuato A.C.**, 2007-Present.
- **Treasurer of Federación Mexicana de Charrería de IL**, 2015- 2022
 - Responsible for the annual budget of \$50,000 for its 384 members.
- **Treasurer of Caminos de Guanajuato A.C.**, 2002-2004.
 - Raised funds to cover team's expenses and sought sponsors for annual banquet.
- **Member of Sigma Pi Fraternity International**, 2000 - Present.
 - Organized community service events.



Executive Chef & Culinary Entrepreneur

Location: Chicago, IL
Origin: Aguascalientes, Mexico

Professional Profile

Chef with over 25 years of experience in traditional Mexican cuisine, healthy food, seafood, and premium meat cuts prepared to all doneness levels. Expert in handling and preparing high-quality proteins, fresh seafood, and authentic regional Mexican dishes. Visionary entrepreneur with a strong track record in creating, developing, and expanding successful restaurants in Chicago. Currently leads a marketing and tech team focused on developing POS solutions tailored for Mexican restaurants. Also building a personal brand to share experiences, connect with other entrepreneurs, and continue growing professionally.

Professional Experience

- Founder & Executive Chef – Tequila CJ – Chicago, IL (2014 – Present)
- Founder of one of Chicago's most recognized Mexican restaurants.
- First location with 90-seat capacity and 14 staff members, generating \$1.7 million in annual revenue.
- Second location with 275-seat capacity and over 65 staff members, reaching \$7.6 million in annual revenue by 2024.
- Responsible for concept development, premium meat-based menu, mixology, branding, and operations.
- Scaled the business through pandemic challenges, establishing it as a staple of Mexican cuisine in Chicago.
- Seafood Chef – Mi Lindo Bucerías – Bucerías, Mexico (2013)
- Specialized in Nayarit-style seafood.
- Mastery of seafood preparation and cooking techniques.
- Line Cook – Nuevo León – Pilsen, Chicago, IL (2007 – 2013)
- Worked in a traditional Mexican kitchen.
- Supported meat and grill stations.
- Cook – Mi Tierra Restaurante – La Villita, Chicago, IL (2000 – 2002)
- Prepared Mexican dishes, seafood, and premium meat cuts to order.
- Healthy Food Cook – Cafetería Benito Juárez – Aguascalientes, Mexico (1997 – 2000)

Education

Business Administration – Tecnológico de Aguascalientes, Mexico (2003 – 2007)

Current Projects

Tequila Raíces – Homewood, IL

Upcoming restaurant concept (estimated opening July 2026)

– Projected investment: \$5 million

– Location: 18138 Dixie Highway

– Supported by Homewood Mayor Richard Hofeld

Development of specialized POS software for Mexican restaurants

– Designed to optimize operations, menu management, and order tracking

– Created in collaboration with his in-house marketing and tech team

Entrepreneurial Initiative & Personal Brand

– Active sales of exclusive dry seasoning blends to restaurants

– Upcoming retail launch of dry seasonings and traditional wet sauces

– The personal brand aims to share knowledge, inspire collaboration, and promote continuous growth in the culinary and business community



joaquinanguiano.com



5750 S Archer Ave, Chicago, IL 60638,



Jose Manuel Vazquez



[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Dynamic manager with a proven track record at Midway Food & Liquors, excelling in customer relations and financial management. Enhanced operational efficiency and employee development, achieving significant cost reductions. Skilled in relationship building and strategic planning, fostering a collaborative culture that drives business growth and maximizes performance.

SKILLS

- Customer relations
- Small business operations
- Relationship building
- Verbal and written communication
- Business management
- Operations management
- Financial management
- Staff hiring
- Sales leadership
- Employee development
- Administrative oversight
- Financial planning
- Cost reduction

WORK HISTORY

MANAGER

07/2012 to 10/2017

Midway Food & Liquors | Chicago Heights, IL

- Managed and motivated employees to be productive and engaged in work.
- Accomplished multiple tasks within established timeframes.
- Maintained professional, organized, and safe environment for employees and patrons.
- Enhanced customer satisfaction by resolving disputes promptly, maintaining open lines of communication, and ensuring high-quality service delivery.
- Maximized performance by monitoring daily activities and mentoring team members.
- Resolved staff member conflicts, actively listening to concerns and finding appropriate middle ground.
- Controlled costs to keep business operating within budget and increase profits.
- Cross-trained existing employees to maximize team agility and performance.
- Improved safety procedures to create safe working conditions for workers.
- Developed a strong company culture focused on employee engagement, collaboration, and continuous learning opportunities.

OWNER

10/2017 to CURRENT

Midway Food & Liquors | Chicago, IL

- Managed day-to-day business operations.
- Developed and maintained strong relationships with clients, resulting in repeat business and referrals.
- Oversaw daily operations, ensuring all tasks were completed accurately and efficiently by team members.
- Increased customer satisfaction by implementing efficient business processes and providing exceptional service.
- Managed financial aspects of the business, including budgeting, financial reporting, and tax preparation.
- Consulted with customers to assess needs and propose optimal solutions.
- Trained and motivated employees to perform daily business functions.
- Hired trained, and managed a high-performing team of employees dedicated to achieving company goals.
- Implemented marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and attract new customers.
- Established a positive workplace culture that fostered employee engagement, collaboration, and loyalty.
- Established foundational processes for business operations.
- Achieved financial growth with strategic planning, cost control measures, and targeted marketing efforts.
- Enhanced operational efficiency and productivity by managing budgets, accounts, and costs.
- Evaluated industry competition regularly to maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.
- Monitored market conditions to set accurate product pricing and take advantage of emerging trends.
- Ensured regulatory compliance by staying abreast of industry-related changes and implementing necessary policies or procedures as needed.
- Generated revenues yearly and effectively capitalized on industry growth.

FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

03/2019 to 07/2023

CULICHITOWN

- Oversaw all aspects of the month-end close process, ensuring timely completion of accurate financial statements for executive review.
- Managed payroll data entry and processing for **Number** employees to comply with predetermined company guidelines.
- Maintained strong relationships with external auditors, facilitating smooth annual audit processes and addressing any concerns promptly.
- Reduced operating costs through meticulous budget management and cost analysis.
- Improved financial reporting accuracy by streamlining processes and implementing efficient financial controls.
- Planned budgets, authorized expenditures, monitored accounting processes, established service rates and coordinated financial reporting to oversee all fiscal procedures.

- Prepared accurate financial reports and monthly statements for accounts receivable.
- Enhanced cash flow management with timely accounts receivable monitoring and collections efforts.
- Identified areas for operational improvement through detailed financial analysis, leading to increased profitability and reduced expenses.
- Led organizational cash flow and cash flow forecasting initiatives.
- Assisted in the preparation of annual tax filings, ensuring full compliance with local, state, and federal regulations while minimizing tax liabilities where possible.
- Optimized working capital availability by proactively managing inventory levels, accounts receivable balances, vendor payment terms negotiation.
- Followed up with delinquent accounts to obtain funds and reduce aging balances.
- Prepared balance sheets, cash flow reports and income statements.
- Provided treasury and cash management by overseeing reconciliation of banking activity, credit card processing, and sales tax returns.
- Completed journal entries, reconciliations, and account analysis to prepare quarterly financial documents and general account management.
- Accurately completed financial statement audits and thoroughly reviewed results.
- Managed daily financial functions in collaboration with accounting and payroll personnel.
- Managed budgets, assets, portfolios, accounts payable, and receivable and general financial reporting procedures.
- Oversaw accounts payable and receivable operations for **Type** business with \$**Amount** in monthly expenses.

OWNER

10/2023 to CURRENT

El Don Pollo Y Carne Al Carbon

- Negotiated contracts with suppliers for better pricing and terms, reducing overall costs for the business.
- Organized and attended trade shows and special events to showcase products, network with other businesses and attract new customers.
- Successfully navigated challenging economic conditions by making informed decisions that protected the business's financial stability.
- Mentored staff members on best practices in customer service and sales techniques, leading to increased performance levels.
- Achieved significant cost savings by implementing energy-efficient solutions across company facilities.
- Developed and implemented strategic plans for revenue growth, focusing on diversification and market expansion.
- Fostered strong relationships with clients to boost retention rates, conducting regular feedback sessions.
- Expanded business into new markets, cond

- Elevated brand awareness with targeted marketing campaigns, leveraging social media and digital platforms.
- Managed purchasing, sales, marketing and customer account operations efficiently.
- Assisted in recruiting, hiring and training of team members.
- Scheduled employees for shifts, taking into account customer traffic and employee strengths.
- Recruited, hired, and trained initial personnel, working to establish key internal functions and outline scope of positions for new organization.

EDUCATION



High School Diploma

05/2009

Brother Rice HighSchool, Chicago, IL