

HORHITOS MEXICAN CANTINA, INC. STACY SMITH

Anyone want to take a trip to Mexico? Well, a taste of Mexico is closer than you think. Horhitos Mexican Cantina is one of the cutest places I have ever seen. With authentic décor reminiscent of old Mexico and a menu that could not please your palette more, it makes me wish I lived on Maui.

Stacy Smith and Jorge Galaviz run Horhitos Mexican Cantina, Inc., together with Stacy's husband Gus Hoeft. The idea came from Jorge, a long time employee from Mexico who worked his way up from dishwasher to chef to the inspiration behind this fabulous restaurant.



Stacy Smith & the artist who painted the restaurant .



Sonia Isotov, The Painter & Stacy in front of the restaurant.

Stacy came to the Hawai'i SBDC Business Research Library and met with Sonia Isotov, a Research Assistant. Sonia assisted Stacy in the basic procedures in starting up a business. Together they were also able to problem solve the business structure.

After a kitchen fire provided them with an obstacle, they overcame it and are now able to focus on the success the restaurant is having. With their hours of operation from 5:00p to 1:00a, who would not want to hang out here until the wee hours?

TC KOKUA, LLC MAX TSAI



Max & his employee, Ali Johnson

Max Tsai's dream of owning a company like TC Kokua has been years in the making. Fed up with poor customer service, the idea for a customer contact service center was put into motion. He and his partner, Matt Cooley, now run TC Kokua, which provides customer service on behalf of other organizations. The ingenious thought process behind the business is to be able to provide outstanding customer service with the aloha spirit in a cost effective manner to the companies that outsource to TC Kokua.

The high tech, innovative services they provide are supported by a unique communications platform that includes phone, email, web chat and co-browsing methods of communication. TC Kokua agents use this platform via the internet to service inbound and outbound customers.

After two years in business, Max contacted Ruth Corn, the Library Director of the Hawai'i SBDC Business Research Library for information on what his competitors were doing. Through the HBRL's extensive capabilities, Ruth was able to provide Max with the information needed on other similar services in the state. When asked about the assistance received from the SBDC, Max said "The SBDC is there to research what you need, it really helped me to get a current understanding of the local market."

"We started [the company] during challenging economic times. We've had many challenges, but no regrets." Max said. Quality customer service with aloha spirit, what more can I say?