Christian Cortés

CORBAC Foods

“ I saw an opportunity to transform the R&D food industry. ”

COUNTRY	Chile
INDUSTRY	Consumer
EMPLOYEES	35
YEAR SELECTED	2004
WEBSITE	www.corbac.cl

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

It all started in a kitchen. In 1995, Christian had an instinct that he could dehydrate beef, so he turned on the oven and began experimenting. Today, his company Corbac is transforming the R&D food-industry with a focus on the manufacture of dehydrated beef, seafood and legumes. It provides its products to institutional and industrial clients including Nestle and Knorr. It also boasts a proprietary R&D laboratory and a young staff that develops new dehydration processes and breakthrough-products applicable to all production stages in the food industry. Since selection, the company has expanded its sales presence to Peru and Central America, and has potential to further internationalize.

Christian was born and raised without any excesses in northern, rural Chile, to a policeman and an entrepreneur (his mother owns a transportation business). While the family struggled to get by, Christian soared to the top of his classes and in 1982 obtained the 3rd best scholastic aptitude test score. Eager to continue learning, he studied nutritional engineering at La Serena University, funding his tuition with work at a tourist company. In only a few years, he had reached a managerial position within the company. Christian felt his entrepreneurial spirit flicker during his last year at university when he looked into starting a papaya and maracuya sub-product processing business. A new marriage and new responsibilities, however, convinced him to start working as a quality control manager for the Santiago protean pet food company that owned the MasterDog pet brand. Within months he had become the company's business development manager. When the company successfully sold the brand to a large local enterprise, Christian saw it as his chance to carve out his own entrepreneurial path.

While working along with his wife as a rice distributor for hospitals and other institutional clients, Christian noticed a niche for dehydrated beef as an alternative to the expensive imports that flooded the industrial segment. At this point, Christian's kitchen had become his office. In 1997, almost penniless after many trials and errors, Christian acquired an industrial oven left to rust by a defunct company. In a factory space, he began conducting his own large-scale beef dehydration processes and set up Corbac's first production line. Today, Corbac products are the best in the local market. In addition, Corbac is on the cusp of expansion and aims to enter new markets in a sustainable fashion.

ENDEAVOR AND CORBAC FOODS

Endeavor continues to provide support to Corbac: in 2007, an Endeavor contact helped Christian reach the Colombian market.

In addition to mentorship, Christian has benefited from the eMBA program (which strengthened internal corporate strategy), Entrepreneur Summit, and local Endeavor Forum. Meanwhile, VentureCorps support helped to professionalize financial, accounting, patenting process, and capital structure, and BCG consultants redesigned cost structure and analyzed new business opportunities. Endeavor also helped structure the company's first Executive Board of Advisors.

Christian is a frequent speaker at Endeavor events, and has provided mentorship to fellow Endeavor Entrepreneurs.