

## Dan Schwarzblat (Grinberg)

Chilim Balam



“ I saw an opportunity to create the first candy franchise in Mexico. ”

<b>COUNTRY</b>	Mexico
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	Consumer
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	403
<b>YEAR SELECTED</b>	2005
<b>PARTNER</b>	Enrique Osoviecki
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.chilimbalam.com/">www.chilimbalam.com/</a>

## **COMPANY SNAPSHOT**

Salsa Verde flavored corn chips, dehydrated tamarind and mango slices covered in chili powder, sugar and lime. These are the tastes that Mexicans of all ages and classes relish.

Dan recognized these tastes and saw an opportunity in a neglected market. He formed Chilim Balam along with his cousin and business partner Enrique. Their idea was to enter the confectionary market from the retail side, and ever since Chilim Balam opened its first store in the Interlomas Mall of Mexico City, the company has changed the way Mexicans buy candy. As the first retail (and franchise) candy store chain in Mexico, Chilim Balam offers more than 500 varieties of chocolates, sweet snacks and other Mexican delicacies sold at commercial centers and malls.

The company's name Chilim Balam is designed to reflect pre-Hispanic culture in Mexico. Chilim Balam is a play on the title of a Mayan Book of poems, "Chilam Balam". They chose a jaguar as their logo ("Balam" means jaguar in Maya) and changed "Chilam" to "Chilim" to evoke Mexicans' taste for spicy and chili-infused candies.

Traditionally, Mexicans have had to search for these kinds of snacks and candies from small, mom-and-pop candy producers or informal street vendors who offer only a handful of choices. Chilim Balam offers a standardized variety of candy under one roof and in multiple locations. The company also has its own line of Mexican candies produced by Dan's distinct batch of original recipes at the company's factory.

Dan, a self described "sweet aficionado" began testing new tastes to tempt the Mexican palate and perfecting his business model at the age of 22 upon graduating from college. The path he chose has not always been easy. In 1998, Dan had to close a store in Cancun because of Mexico's slow recovery from the 1995 financial crisis. Undeterred, Dan opened a third store in 2000. He also obtained a line of credit to open a centralized warehouse, purchase a cargo truck, and establish a logistics and distribution department. Since then, the company has grown steadily and is now thriving.

Chilim Balam was given the seal of approval by the international organization Great Place To Work. Dan now has over 12 stores and 65 employees.

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## **ENDEAVOR AND CHILIM BALAM**

Dan has benefited from a local advisory board, which helped set aggressive growth goals (which he's hit), and received mentorship primarily in the areas of HR and PR. He has also worked with a consultant from Deloitte, and participated in various strategy events and an Immersion Tour. He has also benefited from the Ernst & Young Fellows program.

Dan frequently speaks on behalf of Endeavor in the media.