

713

A Bakery Business Plan Built on
Hospitality, Dignity, and Hope



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Introduction + Chapter One

Niki Vu & Oscar Gutierrez Morales

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[THE713PROJECT.COM](https://the713project.com)

A NOTE BEFORE THE STORY

Why We Are Sharing This Plan

Most business plans are written for a small audience and kept behind closed doors. We chose to share ours because 713 is more than a financial proposal. It is a record of what we believe a hospitality business can become.

These pages bring together our history, our professional experience, the bakery we hope to build, and the systems intended to make that dream responsible. Some details will change as we learn more, find the right place in Turin, and test the plan against real conditions. The purpose should not.

We hope this book gives future partners a clear view of 713. We also hope it encourages other cooks, bakers, teachers, managers, and dreamers to imagine businesses where excellent work, fair employment, hospitality, and kindness strengthen one another.

This is not the story of a finished bakery. It is the story of a dream becoming specific enough to build.

— *Niki Vu and Oscar Gutierrez Morales*

PART I

The Story Behind 713

*Home, hospitality, and the experiences that shaped
the dream*

Chapter One

Why 713?

Every meaningful story begins somewhere, and ours begins in Houston, Texas.

To most people, 713 is simply an area code. It is a set of numbers attached to a place on a map. For us, it means home. It represents the city where Oscar and I grew up, where our lives were shaped, and where we first learned the meaning of hard work, generosity, resilience, and community. Houston gave us our beginning, but it also gave us something that would follow us long after we left: the instinct to welcome people, feed them well, and make them feel as though they belonged.

Our lives did not follow a straight path from Houston to 713. They carried us through different kitchens, dining rooms, businesses, cultures, and countries. We worked long hours, made mistakes, started over, and learned from people whose names may never appear in this book but whose influence remains in everything we do. Along the way, food became far more than a career. It became the language through which we connected with others.

Oscar's journey was built largely inside professional kitchens. He learned his craft through years of repetition, discipline, pressure, and curiosity. He worked his way through different positions, absorbing techniques and traditions wherever he went. His experience took him from Houston and San Antonio to Mexico City, Cabo San Lucas, and eventually Palermo. Each place added something new to his understanding of food. He learned that a kitchen can be

demanding without becoming cruel, that high standards do not require humiliation, and that leadership is strongest when people are taught, respected, and given the opportunity to grow.

My own journey began with food as well, but over time it expanded into something broader. I trained as a chef and pastry professional, opened and operated businesses, and spent years studying the details that turn a meal into an experience. Although I always remained connected to the kitchen, much of my career unfolded in the front of the house—as an owner, general manager, and host.

That was where I came to understand the real power of hospitality.

Hospitality is often confused with service, but they are not the same thing. Service is delivering the food, clearing the table, answering the question, or completing the transaction. Hospitality is the feeling that remains afterward. It is remembering someone's name, noticing when a guest seems uncomfortable, welcoming a person who arrives alone, or offering kindness without making a performance of it. It is creating a space where people feel seen.

Food may bring someone through the door, but hospitality is what tells them they are welcome to stay.

Throughout our careers, Oscar and I saw the very best of the restaurant industry. We witnessed extraordinary creativity, discipline, teamwork, and generosity. We also saw the parts of the industry that too many people have learned to accept as normal: exhaustion treated as commitment, fear mistaken for respect, and low wages justified by the idea that suffering is simply part of the profession.

We saw talented people give everything they had to businesses that never gave them security in return. We watched employees miss important moments with their families, work through illness, and remain trapped in positions that offered responsibility without stability. We saw workplaces celebrate hospitality for guests while offering very little compassion to the people responsible for creating it.

Those experiences stayed with us.

Over time, we began asking ourselves a question: What would happen if a hospitality business cared for its employees with the same intention it used to care for its guests?

That question became the beginning of 713.

At first, the idea was simple. We imagined a small artisanal bakery filled with the smell of fresh bread, butter, coffee, warm spices, and something just pulled from the oven. We imagined food made carefully and honestly, without unnecessary shortcuts or endless menus designed only to increase volume. We pictured a place where someone could stop for a loaf of sourdough, a pastry, or a drink and leave carrying something that felt personal.

But the more we talked about it, the more we realized that the bakery could not be the entire purpose. It could be the heart of the project, but it needed to stand for something larger.

We did not want to create another business that spoke beautifully about community while quietly depending on underpaid, exhausted workers. We wanted to build a place where fair wages, reasonable schedules, training, rest, and respect were not treated as rewards. They would be part of the

foundation. We wanted to prove that quality of life and quality of work could exist together—and that caring for employees could make a business stronger rather than weaker.

The people who work at 713 should be able to build lives outside of it. They should be able to rest, spend time with their families, learn new skills, and imagine futures of their own. They should never have to surrender their dignity to earn a living. If someone eventually leaves 713 for a better opportunity, we want to feel proud that their time with us helped prepare them for it.

This is also why the charitable and nonprofit purpose of 713 cannot be separated from the bakery. The 713 Smile Project grew from our belief that kindness does not have to be grand to be meaningful. Sometimes it is a small gift, a shared meal, a handwritten message, a class, a conversation, or the reminder that someone has not been forgotten.

Through the Smile Project, we hope to support mental well-being, community connection, education, culinary opportunity, animal welfare, and people who may simply need a little help finding their footing. We want the success of the bakery to create opportunities beyond its walls. The more the business grows, the more good it should be able to return.

This means 713 is not charity added to a business for appearance. Giving is part of the reason the business exists.

We are not building it because we believe we have all the answers. We are building it because we have spent decades learning what hospitality can be—and seeing what happens when it loses its humanity. We want to take the lessons we gathered in Houston, Hong Kong, Mexico City, Palermo, and

every kitchen and dining room in between and turn them into something useful.

Houston gave us the number. The world gave it meaning.

713 carries the memory of where we began, but it also holds the promise of what we still hope to build. It is a bakery, a social project, a workplace, a classroom, and a way of sharing our home with people who may never set foot in Texas. Every loaf, pastry, cup, class, charm, and act of kindness will carry a small piece of that story.

Perhaps that is the simplest answer to the question, “Why 713?”

Because home is not only the place where you were born. Home is something you can create for other people. It can be found in the smell of bread, in a warm welcome, in work that preserves dignity, and in the feeling that someone genuinely cares whether you are there.

That is the kind of home we want 713 to become.