

# Franchise players: how i opened 20 jersey mike's subs in three years



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*Franchise Players is Entrepreneur; s Q; A interview column that puts the spotlight on franchisees. If you're a franchisee with advice and tips to share, email ; .*

Alvaro Garcia moved to the U. S. from Nicaragua when he was 16. He got his start working in the restaurant chain business as a Domino's driver and became a manager at age 18. While he's still in the restaurant business, today his job is much more extensive than delivering pizzas: Garcia owns 20 Jersey Mike's Subs locations in Southern California, with plenty more on the way. In 10 years, his goal is 70 locations.

Here's what he has learned. Name: Alvaro Garcia Franchise owned: 20 Southern California Jersey Mike; s Subs locations in Rancho Cucamonga, Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa, La Verne, Glendora, Upland, Marina del Rey, Long Beach, Culver City, Santa Ana, Santa Monica, San Dimas, Chino, Rosemead, Montebello and Pico Rivera. How long have you owned a franchise? I opened my first Jersey Mike; s location in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., in June 2011. Why franchising? ; ; I came from a country (Nicaragua) where there was not a lot of opportunity.; In the U.

S., it is clear that if you work hard for something, you can make it happen. I knew that working in franchising would be hard work but I could also see that if I was willing to put the work in and do it right, the opportunity was there for me and my family. Related;; What were you doing before you became a franchise owner? I came to the U. S. at age 16, and started working as a Domino; s Pizza driver at 18 years old.

That same year, I became a store manager in Alhambra, Calif. I; ve been in the restaurant business ever since. Why did you choose this particular franchise? I chose Jersey Mike; s Subs because it is a quality company that is ; A Sub Above; in the business. I fell in love with Jersey Mike; s authentic fresh-sliced subs made the way they do it at the Jersey Shore;;; with the juice: red wine vinegar and olive oil blended to; perfection. I also admire the company; s commitment to the communities it serves by supporting local organizations and charities. In the 3-plus years I have been doing this, my team has given away more than 36, 000 subs and raised nearly \$350, 000 dollars for community organizations.

; Peter Cancro, the company; s founder and CEO shares many of the same business values and the same work ethic as I do ; he started the company when he was 17 years old and has built it to 1, 300 locations open and in development nationwide. Despite all that growth, he has remained true to his commitment to giving back ; and so it has been a good fit. Jersey Mike; s offers the right kind of support and we have a great partnership.; How much would you estimate you spent before you were officially open for business?

An approximate breakdown is:

- Legal/Permits \$20, 000
- Equipment/Buildout;; \$275, 000

Where did you get most of your advice/do most of your research? Jersey Mike; s provided a lot of background.

Additionally, I spoke with 15 existing franchisees to learn more about the business in addition to talking with corporate. Related;; What were the most

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unexpected challenges of opening your franchise? Fortunately, we didn't face any real challenges. I am a very organized guy so everything moved according to plan from construction through opening day. Jersey Mike's team offered great support. I had my own ideas on marketing and Jersey Mike's allowed me to try those out, even though they were different from their standard program. Now they are borrowing ideas for other locations.

What advice do you have for individuals who want to own their own franchise? My advice is very simple: Work hard and work smart, be honest and act with integrity.; Be willing to take risks. Lead by example, encourage employees to be their very best regardless of their position. Finally, delegate! What's next for you and your business? I'm on track to open 10 new Jersey Mike's locations this year.; By 2020, I expect to have opened 45 locations and in 10 years I plan to have opened 70 Jersey Mike's restaurants in Southern California. Related: