

From Rice Bran to Wellness Brand

Oryspa Spa Solutions

A fast-growing micro enterprise in the wellness industry was about to gain a foothold in the export market when it suffered a serious setback from low-cost Chinese imports. Weakened but not disheartened, the enterprise moved on with new products to make it even bigger than it had ever been before.



HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
Sherill Quintana started with a capital of Php 5,000, and has now built Oryspa Solutions Inc. into a medium-sized company.



DID YOU KNOW?

National Rice Awareness Month is celebrated in November. National Brown Rice Day is celebrated on November 15. Rice is prominent in many wedding traditions even centuries ago. In pre-colonial period, sacks of rice are exchanged between families of the newlyweds. Back then, rice determined social status.

In her aim to come up with a truly Filipino product, Sherill R. Quintana searched far and wide only to stumble upon the nation's staple crop—rice. Its bran has all the makings of a global health and wellness brand.

The rice bran, or *larak* in Filipino, is now the base ingredient of the beauty products under Oryspa Solutions Inc. formed by Sherill in 2008, after more than eight years of dabbling in aromatherapy.

With its bran-based products, Oryspa has been reaping critical acclaim and recognition, including the Most Promising Franchise at the 2015 Franchise Excellence Awards.

The rice bran's oil extract, as Sherill's research reveals, is rich in vitamins A and E for skin renewal, and contains oryzanol, an antioxidant that suppresses skin aging. Thus, her company's name was derived from *Oryza sativa*, the scientific name for rice.

Sherill's success, though, did not come without difficulties. A complicated pregnancy in 2000 made her quit doing social work for the United States Agency for International Development and the

World Wildlife Fund, and put up instead a micro enterprise in her kitchen with just a Php 5,000 capital.

As early as 2001, Sherill was already exhibiting her aromatherapy candles and beauty products at the Bazarakan trade fair organized by the Department of Trade Industry (DTI). She went into exports in 2002 when her products found their way into the shelves of Macy's in New York. By 2007, she had her own stall branded *Kutitap* in a mall in Laguna, but was practically priced out by the very competitive products of China.

Disheartened but undaunted, she went back to the drawing board and discovered the unique properties of rice bran. Her agriculturist husband joined her at that eureka moment in starting up Oryspa after having learned from a study that Japanese workers in a sake wine factory gained fair and smooth skin simply from the vapor of the fermenting rice bran.

A lot cheaper than her previous imported raw materials—grapeseed and almond oils—rice bran is available locally but is more associated with poultry and livestock feeds than anything else.

DTI'S HELP

"You have to build a relationship with your local DTI because from the moment you register your business, you have to ask which DTI programs are applicable to you," Sherill says of how the agency has supported her entrepreneurial journey from a micro enterprise to becoming a small, and now a medium enterprise.

DTI also made sure that she got all her business patents, which took two years. Upon securing the International patent in the United States, Sherill launched Oryspa commercially in 2010 and began franchising in 2011.

FROM MICRO TO MEDIUM

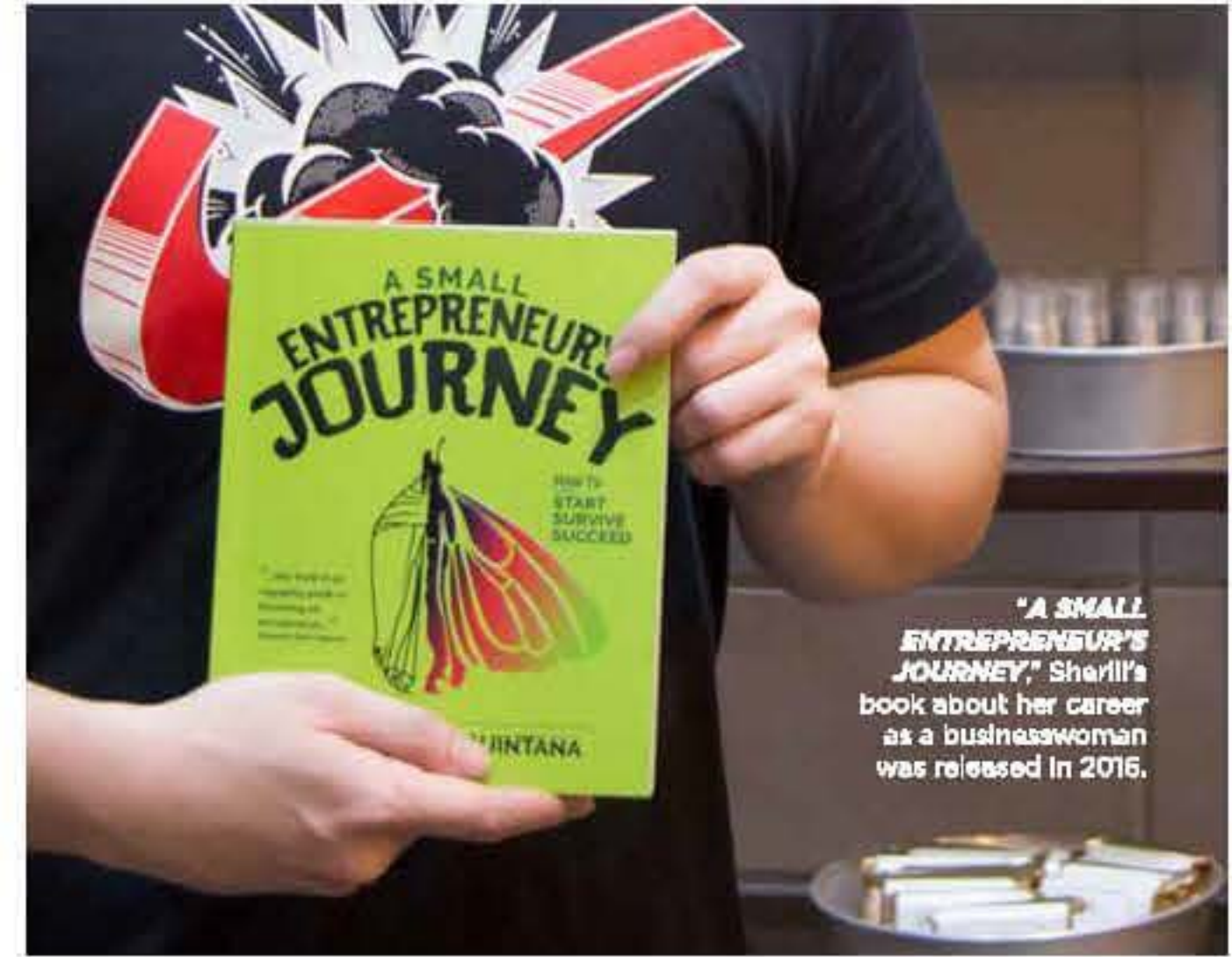
Barely seven years since its launch, Oryspa Solutions now makes Php 35 million in annual income, with investors keen on buying into the company for its globally expanding operations.

Oryspa has 30 branches nationwide and a distribution network spanning the United States, Singapore, the Middle East, Russia, Poland, and other European countries.

That certainly is no mean feat for a Php 5,000 start-up company incubated in her home in Calamba, Laguna, and now envisioned to become the international Filipino brand of choice in Asia.

HOW DTI HELPED

Sherill was able to showcase and promote her rice bran products at the *Banukalan*, a DTI-sponsored trade show for the Southern Tagalog region and at the *Silang Pilipino* trade fair. She also obtained patents for Oryspa both in the Philippines and in the United States with the help of DTI.



"A SMALL ENTREPRENEUR'S JOURNEY," Sherill's book about her career as a businesswoman was released in 2016.



MENTORING OTHERS
As a key speaker in DTI's Mentor ME program, Sherill shares lessons and values she has learned over the years to budding entrepreneurs.



AWARDS

- 2015**
DTI Most Innovative Product (non-food category, Region 4-A)
PCCI Outstanding Young Entrepreneur, South Luzon
Most Promising Franchise, Franchise Excellence Awards
- 2016**
Meralco Biz Partners Entrepreneur of the Year,
 ASIA CEO Awards
ASEAN Business Awards for Excellence in Healthcare, ASEAN Business Summit in Vientiane, Laos
"ASEAN Woman Entrepreneur" in Hanoi, Vietnam
"Most Inspiring Filipino" awardee, Go Negosyo