



RICHARD MONTAÑEZ

THE "GODFATHER OF LATINO MARKETING": FROM MOP TO BUSINESS MOGUL

Richard P. Montañez is an American businessman, motivational speaker, and author.

One of ten siblings, he was raised in a migrant labor camp in the community of Guasti, outside of Los Angeles. After dropping out of school, Richard worked as a laborer before being hired in 1976, at the age of eighteen, as a janitor for Frito-Lay at its Rancho Cucamonga factory.

When a Cheetos machine broke down in the factory, Richard took home a batch of the unflavored snacks and seasoned them with spices typically used on Mexican street corn.

Richard pitched his spicy recipe to CEO Roger Enrico over the phone and was invited to deliver an in-person presentation, which he prepared for by researching at the public library how to deliver a marketing presentation.

And the rest is history. Richard rose up the corporate ladder to become one of PepsiCo's vice presidents, in charge of multicultural sales and community promotions before retiring in March of 2019.

Richard is known today as the "*Godfather of Latino Marketing*." His amazing advancement, which served as the basis for the 2023 film *Flamin' Hot*, was driven by his passion and a quest for purpose that would go on to not only spur a revolution in snack foods, but forever change corporate America's protocol, empowering frontline workers, middle managers, and CEOs alike.

The end result would be the birth of a billion-dollar brand, also known as America's favorite snacks: *Flamin' Hot Cheetos*, *Hot Fritos*, *Hot Doritos*, *Hot Cheeto Puffs*, *Hot Funyuns*, *Hot Popcorn*, *Cinnamon Doritos*, and many more products that can be found throughout PepsiCo's family of businesses that saw collaborations with companies like Taco Bell, KFC, and Pizza Hut.

Aside from being a sought after keynote speaker, Richard is the author of numerous books:

- *A Boy, a Burrito, and a Cookie: From Janitor to Executive*
- *Flamin' Hot: The Incredible True Story of One Man's Rise from Janitor to Top Executive*
- *How to Create Wealth in a World Led by Greed*

Flamin' Hot Faith

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I want to talk to you for a moment—not as a bestselling author, keynote speaker, or successful businessman, but as someone who has lived a journey I can't fully explain without acknowledging God.

I started out working at the very bottom. I was cleaning floors—doing jobs where no one expected me to lead, create, or influence anything beyond my basic assignment. There was no advantage, no special access, or roadmap that said I would one day sit in rooms with other Fortune 50 executives, speak across the world, or meet presidents. If anyone looked at my starting point, nothing about my future would make any sense, but I guess God had a plan.

In the middle of that limited environment, God began to shift how I saw things. I started seeing ideas that weren't in the system. Ideas that didn't come from boardrooms, data analysis, or my simple job description. Yet they worked. And one of them turned into a movement that changed an entire product category and reached around the world.

So I had to ask myself: where did that come from? Because I know what I had access to—and it wasn't that. But God did.

You can call one moment luck, or one opportunity timing. But when it happens over and over again—when your life becomes a pattern of things working that shouldn't, doors opening that you didn't knock on, and opportunities finding you when you weren't even looking—you have to start asking deeper questions.

Because I didn't just move up—God positioned me.

I've been invited into rooms I didn't qualify for on paper. I've had conversations I wasn't trained for. I've stood on stages I never imagined. And through it all, there was a consistency—not just in what was happening around me, but in what was happening within me.

Because the greatest change wasn't just my environment but in my thinking. God changed how I see. God changed what I believe. God gave me vision before there was evidence. I began to see before things existed. I began to believe beyond what I was told. I began to operate with a confidence that didn't come from where I started. And I can tell you this—money doesn't do that. Titles don't do that. Opportunity alone doesn't do that. That kind of unimaginable transformation comes from God.

So, when people ask me if I believe in God, I don't go into theory. I present the evidence. My life is confirmation of God's existence. Not because everything was easy—but because everything consistently broke the limits of where I came from. At some point, you have to be honest. When your life goes beyond what your environment could produce, when your ideas go beyond what your position could access, and when your doors open beyond what your network could create—you're no longer dealing with luck. You're dealing with God. And I don't call that coincidence. I call that proof of God.