



Understanding Markets & Customers with Edward Garza



“It’s not the big companies that eat the small companies — it’s the fast companies that eat the slow ones.”

- Edward Garza
CEO, El Popular

EARLY LESSONS & INSPIRATION



Answer the following questions based on what you learned from the video. Be as specific as possible.

1 EARLY LESSONS & INSPIRATION

What was Edward’s earliest memory of El Popular, and did he ever imagine leading the company one day?

Answer (0:00-2:00):

Edward started working at El Popular when he was only nine years old, blending the secret spice mix for the family’s famous chorizo. At that age, he never dreamed he’d one day become CEO — he just wanted to earn a little money.

► Hint: Early experiences can shape future goals — even if you don’t see it yet.

2 GROWTH & FOCUS

When Edward became CEO, how did he decide it was time to evolve El Popular’s strategy?

Answer (3:00-4:20):

After earning his MBA, Edward analyzed the business and realized it was stretched too thin with 500 products. He reduced the line to 10 key items — focusing on chorizo — and used that clarity to expand nationally and into Canada.

► Hint: Focus on what works best and let that lead your growth.

3 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

How did partnerships help El Popular grow beyond local markets?

Answer (4:30-6:00):

A meeting with a buyer at Eagle Foods changed everything: instead of five stores, she offered Edward 115 stores and warehouse distribution. That leap from local delivery to large-scale logistics opened doors to major retailers.

► Hint: The right partnership can take your business further than you could go alone.

4 UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMERS & INNOVATION

How does Edward decide which new products to develop?

Answer (7:00-11:00):

He watches how customers cook and what they need. Building on El Popular's chorizo heritage, he experiments with new flavors and protein types (pork, beef, chicken, and now plant-based) while keeping convenience and authentic taste at the core.

► Hint: Pay attention to what your customers want — that's where innovation starts.

DISCUSSION-BASED QUESTIONS



Reflect on your personal thoughts and write your answers below.

1 PERSONAL CONNECTION

What part of Edward's story stood out to you the most? Why?

2 BIGGEST TAKEAWAY

What is your biggest takeaway from Edward's story about understanding customers and adapting a business to their needs? How can this apply to your own goals?

3 APPLYING LESSONS

Edward said, “It’s not the big companies that eat the small companies — it’s the fast companies that eat the slow ones.” Think about a situation where being flexible or acting quickly helped you succeed. What did you learn about decision-making from that experience?

4 INSPIRATION

Edward balances tradition and innovation by listening to customers and honoring his family’s recipes. Who inspires you to balance your own values with growth and change? How can you stay true to what matters while still evolving?

! Use your creativity to complete the following activity.

1 COOK UP A CUSTOMER-INSPIRED PRODUCT

Edward Garza grew El Popular by listening closely to customers and adapting products to fit how people actually cook and shop.

In this activity, imagine you're launching a new food product. Your goal is to design it around *real customer needs*, just like Edward did.

Know Your Customer Think of one customer group (students, athletes, busy parents, teachers, etc.). Who are they, and what do they need in their everyday life?

Create Your Product Imagine you're launching a new food product for them. Give it a name and describe what makes it unique.

Product Name:

What makes it special?

Package It Draw or describe your packaging. What colors, words, or designs would attract your customer? (Use this space to sketch or write!)



2 FEEDBACK LOOP

Edward built El Popular by listening closely to customers. Write one question you would ask your customers to improve your product.



GREAT WORK!

You're one step closer to thinking like an entrepreneur. Keep exploring, learning, and dreaming big!