

# HISPANIC BUSINESS<sup>®</sup>

## THE 500

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GC  
Micro  
Corp.

#159

1995  
Revenues:  
\$17.8 million

Belinda  
Guadarrama,  
CEO  
Novato,  
CA

Industry:  
Wholesale

**T**here's one problem when you sell technology. The product keeps changing so fast that if you look away for more than a moment, the stuff on your shelf gets as stale as seven-day-old bread.

For Belinda Guadarrama it's a familiar challenge. Her company, GC Micro Corp. of Novato, California, is a hardware and software re-seller. About 60 percent of its business comes from computer hardware and the balance from software. Ms. Guadarrama's customers are mainly *Fortune* 500 companies, with 20 percent of sales going to local companies and another 10 percent to federal agencies.

Starting a decade ago with an investment of \$20,000 from the sale of her house, Ms. Guadarrama has managed the company's growth curve. In 1995, GC Micro racked up sales of \$17.8 million, up from \$13.1 million just two years before.

The key to this growth spurt is tight inventory control in order to avoid the stale bread syndrome. The company sells products with a typical inventory of \$200,000. Ms. Guadarrama's strategy relies on software that forecasts customer demand and on delaying the purchase of inventory until the customer actually needs it. "We

work with our suppliers on a just-in-time basis," Ms. Guadarrama explains. "It took us years to put that in place, but with technology changing so quickly it was the only way."

Her methodology works for her customers, according to Marvin Smith, manager of the business affirmative

action and vendor assessment office of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California.

"I don't think they are a good company," Mr. Smith begins. "They are a *great* company."

He remembers an instance about five years ago when someone at the laboratory ordered a copier, but provided the wrong model number. "Belinda took it back and absorbed all of the costs, even after I tried to talk her out of it," Mr. Smith marvels.

Now, Ms. Guadarrama is ready for a new high-tech challenge. "We are looking at the Internet," she says, "to see how we are going to integrate it into the services we offer our customers."



Belinda Guadarrama wants to push the high-tech envelope by going on the Internet.

By Rick Mendosa