

Ornelas Enterprises: a family business at heart

BY PHIL BUSSE

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When Tino Ornelas left Tektronix after 20 years working as a purchasing manager, he took with him an insight into the future of high-tech manufacturing.

He recognized that, more and more major companies like Tektronix and Intel would begin to contract out the labor necessary to build computer hardware and other high-tech circuit boards.

"We hocked our family belongings," he said, and with \$25,000 launched Ornelas Enterprises.

Nearly a decade later and with a diverse group of clients—from brand-name computer manufacturers to producers of circuit boards for vending machines—Ornelas now knows that he was right. His company boasts some big-name clients, including tech giants Tektronix, Intel, RadiSys Corp. and others.

Hillsboro-based Ornelas is a contract electronics manufacturing firm that

Creativity, individuality and such democracy where employees approve corporate policies often are at odds with cog-in-the-wheel assembly lines.

But Ornelas and his daughter, Nita Werner, who helps to manage the company, agree that such generosity from the management team fosters loyalty from the employees. Their beliefs are backed up by a negligible attrition rate, despite the fact that the company cannot pay as high of

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Tino Ornelas, the boss of Ornelas Enterprises, prides himself on his family-friendly business.

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 and have an open
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▼
TINO ORNELAS
 ORNELAS ENTERPRISES

posted 80 percent revenue growth in the past three years, from \$1 million in 1997 to \$1.9 million in 1999. The company ranks 27th on *The Business Journal's* Oregon Technology Fast 50 list.

The company is an assembly house that manufactures circuit boards, cables, wires, harnesses and other electronics equipment and currently has 35 employees.

What Ornelas took with him when he left Tektronix was an idea about how a company should treat its employees.

"None of our employees are numbers," he said. "I like to have fun and have an open work environment."

Ornelas, over the past nine years, has put together a workplace with subtle but important amenities that recognize that employees have lives outside the work place.

Employees, for example, receive paid days off on their birthdays. And, a few years ago, the employees opted for a 10-hour, four-day work-week. For Cinco de Mayo, the company sponsored a pinata party. These personal touches have been recognized by more than a dozen awards, including, most recently, the Families in Good Company award in the small-business category.

While casual and non-corporate work environments over the past 10 years have become commonplace with the twenty-something dot-com set, Ornelas Enterprises is, at its base, a manufacturing plant where workers have strict production goals.

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