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GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA



Gerald W. Chamales

What is the likelihood of someone who is homeless and a substance and alcohol abuser turning his life around and creating a dynamic company that employs more than 250? Not likely unless you're Jerry Chamales. From a childhood bouncing from one foster home to another, minor brushes with the law and a tailspin of substance abuse, Chamales pulled himself together in his twenties and rebuilt his life.

In the early 1980s, he became a top salesman of computer products and recognized several industry trends: the widespread adoption of computer technology, the heightened awareness of recycling, and the increasing demand for remanufactured computer consumables. In 1982, he launched Omni Computer Products from his apartment and developed it into the \$28 million company it is today.

Omni Computer Products is a leading manufacturer and supplier of recycled computer imaging supplies. They are sold nationwide to a diverse client base, ranging from small retail end-users to Fortune 500 companies. As a pioneer of telemarketing, the company has built one of the most successful direct marketing organizations in the industry through a well-trained 120-per-

son telemarketing staff.

One of the keys to the success of the operation has been Chamales' ability to create a responsive organization that could quickly anticipate and meet the market's needs. By 1986, Omni started its own manufacturing capability and recently launched its first national branded product, Rhinotek. A percentage of the proceeds is donated by the company to the Save the Rhino Foundation and the Lewa Conservancy in Kenya.

In the works are plans to build a new call center with up to 300 additional telemarketers.

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Chamales has set goals to recruit a seasoned management team to transition Omni from a start-up mode to a professionally managed company, acquire state-of-the-art information systems to streamline operations and double the manufacturing capacity.

The foundation of the business, however, is to continue providing opportunities for employees. Omni has a history of hiring individuals who are down on their luck or are recovering from substance abuse. These recruits are professionally trained and provided with the opportunity to succeed—many members of the management team started at entry-level positions. To retain employees and keep them motivated, Chamales imbues his staff with a can-do attitude, the same attitude that turned an idea into a thriving business and encourages people to become all they can be.

Omni Computer Products

Role

President and Chief Executive Officer. Founded company in 1982.

Company Description

Manufacturer and supplier of recycled computer imaging supplies.

Location

Carson

Major Innovation

Telemarketing to the niche market of recycled computer consumables.

Future Plans

Significantly increase revenue through internal and external growth, streamline operations and redesign the manufacturing facility.

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