

VALLEY'S SMALL BUSINESSES: THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Tireless Leader Grows Firm Rapidly in Peripherals Field

By SLAV KANDYBA
Staff Reporter

THE voice greeting on Marx Acosta-Rubio's office line at Chatsworth's **One Stop Shop** says a lot about the man – his endless energy, to be exact.

The president of the computer peripherals firm is an aficionado of personal growth and motivation tapes, and has applied the teachings to his job. The return has been pretty good.

The 6-year-old company clocked in \$6 million in sales of printer toner cartridges and other supplies and Acosta-Rubio estimates the firm will sell \$12 million worth this year. Sales have jumped 50 percent since the beginning of the year, compared with the same time period last year.

Acosta-Rubio, 34, came to U.S. from Venezuela in 1974 and graduated from UCLA in 1992. He went to law school, but dropped out, opting to become an entrepreneur.

He used \$70,000 from his mother's life savings and started One Stop, where he has applied the skills acquired from the personal growth CDs and tapes. He has instilled the company with his energy, and employees and clients alike have responded well.

"What would make us unique is the culture of personal growth we have in our company," Acosta-Rubio said. "We encourage our employees to listen to tapes and books on personal growth."

Acosta-Rubio also treats his employees well. So well, in fact, that some employees recommend their kin to work at One Stop.

Acosta-Rubio said his reason for being successful is "developing people first, strat-

egy second." He further described himself as a "good boss because I help people see themselves."

Employee gifts

It's also not uncommon for One Stop employees to be treated to trips to Vegas and other tokens of appreciation for a job well done.

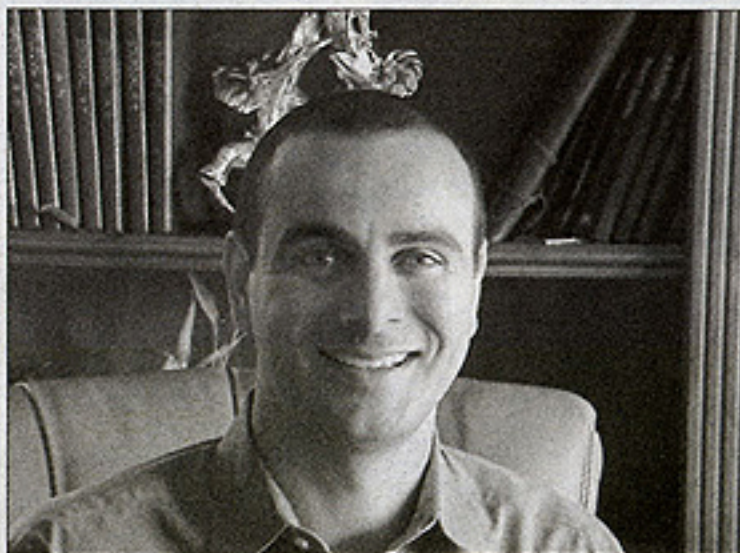
One of Acosta-Rubio's 18 employees, Jenni Hurley, had just begun working for One Stop and was working extra hours to learn the job, she said.

One day, Acosta-Rubio gave her a gift certificate for \$50 to Marmalade Café and two movie tickets, along with a handwritten note of appreciation.

"Those little things surprise you and make you feel special," Hurley said. "It was something nice and he (shows) that he appreciates his employees."

Soon, Hurley's husband applied and got a job in sales at One Stop. He came from Costco, where he had spent nine years.

Bishara: 'He's got unbelievable passion and drive to succeed and surrounds himself with really top people.'



Motivated: Acosta-Rubio puts emphasis on personal growth.

BEST SMALL BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

Marx Acosta-Rubio

"I was coming home every night happy and he saw that I changed my whole attitude – and he wasn't very happy at the time," Hurley said of her husband. "(Now) he's just loving it."

Hurley has also picked up on Acosta-

Rubio's recommendation to read and listen to motivational and personal growth books and tapes.

"I've been picking up a couple of books, things like affirmation and positive thinking and always believing that you can achieve anything," Hurley said.

"And that's what Marx believes – and it shows."

Mark Bishara, a manager at Woodland Hills-based Venbrook Insurance, is a client of Acosta-Rubio.

"He's a superb guy, as good as it gets," Bishara said. "He's got unbelievable passion and drive to succeed and surrounds himself with really top people. As far as the reason we repeat with him is (that) he delivers on his commitment."

Business relationships

Part of Acosta-Rubio's growth is attributed to business-referral partnerships with several companies in the Valley, formed in the past year. Among the firms that partnered with One Stop is **On-Site Laser-medie** in Chatsworth, also a computer peripherals company, and **Faye-Pollack & Associates**, an IT company in Encino.

The success of One Stop Shop has allowed Acosta-Rubio and his wife to establish a charity. Through the Acosta-Rubio Family Foundation, Acosta-Rubio and his wife contribute to a number of charities, including Heal the Children.

"We understand that our company is nothing more than the collective common purpose of the people that work there," Acosta-Rubio said. "If you take care of them, you are feeding your company the energy it needs to provide value to our clients as well as each other."