



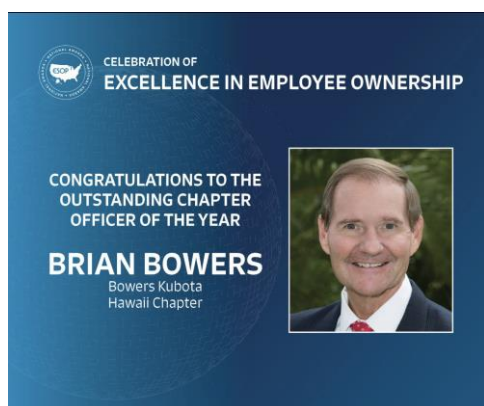
The Hawaii Chapter of The ESOP Association

-There Is No "I" In ESOP-

August 2023

Our Chapter stands tall this year -

- We have the highest rate of participation of any Chapter in the nation, with nearly 60% of all ESOPs in the state being a TEA member...and we added 2 additional members in the last 12 months!
- Our Chapter President, Brian Bowers, received the Chapter Officer of the Year Award at the ESOP National Conference in May!



Help us stand even TALLER!

- ESOPATHON is back! ESOPATHON is your chance to support and protect employee ownership in America. By helping raise funds for the Employee Ownership Foundation's critical mission, YOU can be the reason employee ownership grows and thrives in the U.S.
- Last year Hawaii members contributed \$3,343 during ESOPATHON—with 3 companies actually doing ESOPATHON activities. Our Fundraising Vice President Terrance Arashiro is confident we can do better this year and encourages ALL companies to participate. Go to this [link](#) to find out what YOUR company can do to support the EOF and have FUN at the same time!

Hawaii Chapter 2023 Annual Conference

- An entire day focusing on Employee-Owner Education, Engagement, and Communication -

October 25, 2023

8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

(Registration Check In 7:15 a.m.)

Generations Ballroom

Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii

Log in at this [link](#) for information and registration.

Register by October 2, 2023 for discounted registration rate.

Registration fee includes full day sessions, parking, lunch, and Pau Hana

You can now follow us on [LinkedIn](#)

Hawaii ESOP Chapter Officers

President – Brian Bowers	Executive Vice-President/President Elect – Sean Sugai
Vice-President/Communications - Keith Uemura	Vice President/Fundraising - Terrance Arashiro
Vice-President/Membership - Greg Hansen	Vice-President/Programs – Andrew Rocheleau
Chapter Executive - Jennifer Wood	Chapter Administrator - Ginny Wright

Every ESOP has a founder and a unique story to tell about its beginnings. This month we share the story of



From Home Garage to National Leader

- The story with a happy ending and an excellent future -

T&T Tinting's first location in 1982 was at 866 Iwilei Road with two employees. As a new entity in a new location, struggling to get cars in, a storm was brewing in the horizon.

A few months later, headlines hit the front page of the newspaper; "Auto Tinting Will Be Banned in Hawaii in January 1983". Business immediately dried up and T&T TINTING SPECIALISTS was only getting calls requesting tint *removals*.

Founder, Tommy Silva negotiated his way out of his shop lease, placed staff on unemployment, and moved business phone lines to his small 2-bedroom McCully apartment to get in whatever business he could. He bought a used Dodge Maxi Van as his rolling mobile tint shop and tinted cars in the basement of his apartment.

Silva then helped write a bill for a Tint Law and started meeting with Legislators to gain support. Diving in headfirst, Silva learned about the "political process" really quick. To make a long story short, it took then Governor George Ariyoshi riding around the block in Tommy's 35% tinted car to approve his window tint bill. On June 15, 1983, the Tint Law was signed and T&T Tinting Specialists was back in business.

In 1984 T&T operated out of a small shop on top of the McKesson Bldg. The next year, the shop was so busy they quickly outgrew the small space and opted for a larger 2,000 square foot shop in the same complex. Every few years the shops got bigger and bigger and additional locations popped up as well.

Finally in 2009, Silva found a huge 14,200 square foot showroom & warehouse on Koapaka Street that was occupied by longtime local company, Far Eastern Furnishings. The company was going out of business and the space would soon be available. Silva grabbed it.

They built offices, meeting rooms, expanded their Graphic Production area, finally built a real lunchroom for the crew, and a gym for their employees. This is where T&T Tinting's "Mega Tint Shop" is still located today, along with a second location in Kaka'ako.

Today, T&T's Residential & Commercial Tint Division is ranked among the top 10 in the Nation. T&T Tinting Specialists now has an extensive reference list of completed jobs over the past 4 decades with more on the horizon. It is also earning Energy Rebates for their clients while energy costs continue to rise.

The T&T Tinting Specialists Glass Graphics Division has a 2 full time Graphic Designers. Many local Architects and Interior Designers are now specifying T&T's Glass Graphic work into their plans.

T&T's Automotive Division continues to break records. T&T installs tint on over 500 vehicles monthly. This Division has been ranked #1 nationally for auto tinting volume, quality, and consistency for over 10 years.

In 2020, after 43 years in the window tinting industry, Silva turned 60. He knew it was time to plan his exit from the business.

Following the advice of a consultant, they first explored an "outside third-party" sale. After meeting with 2 different interested parties, Silva knew that was **not** going to be the direction he was going to go. *Both* parties had plans that included replacing long-time staff as well as changing the brands of films that T&T has represented for over 40 years leaving hundreds of thousands of past customers with no warranties.

Silva was then asked "Have you ever heard of an ESOP?" He replied that he had but did not know anything about how they worked. After weeks of meetings and consulting, Silva was positive that the ESOP was the only exit strategy for him, his loyal staff, vendors, landlords and over 40 years of customers...





What T&T Employee-Owners Have to Say About THEIR ESOP

Jessicah Hokoana, Customer Sales Representative, employee since 2022: Growing up I remember seeing the T&T Tinting locations, to seeing the TV commercials. Little did I know I would be blessed to be a part of this company and that it is now an ESOP that will help my future for myself and Ohana. It feels more like a family unit instead of work. Tommy and Kyle make sure to instill in every one of us employees to keep pushing forward and to continue to work as a team since we are now owners.

Jen Ahuna, CFO, employed since 2021: With being a part of a 100% Employee-Owned company, it is with sincere gratitude for the decision our Founders made to essentially hand over the company and give a *slice of the pie* to each of its employees. The obvious benefits are gaining significant retirement assets once fully vested, feeling more engaged and committed to T&T's success, and the sense of job security with the satisfaction of loyalty and commitment from being a part of an ESOP. The ESOP transition has also created a stronger company culture that will help the future sustainability of the company. As an Employee-Owner, I am proud to continue Tommy Silva's legacy and remain committed in the future success of T&T.

Kui Loo, Glass Graphics Designer, employed 18 years: Under Tommy's direction T&T has always taken care of its employees. When he announced he was going to be stepping back from actively running the company, and that he'd be converting T&T to an ESOP, I was excited, but not surprised. Amongst the staff there is generally a greater sense of duty to provide the highest quality service.

Arianna Santiago, Customer Sales Representative, employee since 2000: As an ESOP employee I feel that this opportunity gives us a sense of pride not only in ourselves as an individual but as an "Employee Owner". It is a great responsibility to be a part of an ESOP company. When you can say you have part ownership in something this successful, it will hopefully make you feel like you are a worthy worker/individual and it will show in your performance on and off the job!

Pete Soriano, Automotive Tint Manager, employed 10 years: It's great to be part of a company that's Employee Owned. I always read about ESOP's and hoped to be part of an employee-owned company one day. It's very rewarding to be a part of a group where everyone takes pride in what they do to. When the announcement came out, I was in shock, like "wow it really happened to me, being part owner of the largest window tinting company in Hawaii!" It's a great feeling to have our guests recognize that I'm an *owner* when I greet them or in public from friends and family.

Tracy Rodrigues, President, employed 16 years: Being part of an Employee-Owned company is a gift and a true privilege. People can only dream of having an opportunity to own their own company, but rarely have a chance to make that dream come true. It allows us employee-owners to take control of our retirement and have actual financial incentives beyond just a paycheck or 401K. I am very grateful to our Founder Tommy Silva for entrusting us with his successful business that he built from the ground up; giving us the opportunity to continue his legacy.

Kyle Horimoto, CEO, employed 25 years: Growing up in Hawaii, T&T Tinting has always been a household name from as long as I can remember. Not only did T&T have the best reputation but they stood by their motto "You Got a Friend in the Business". When I first joined the company in 1997 it was clear that Tommy had created a unique and special culture that made each employee feel like Ohana and each customer feel like a long-time friend. It has been such an incredible journey and now 40 years later, we're 100% Employee Owned and continuing the legacy of treating each employee owner as Ohana. However, we did update our motto to "You **Still** Got a Friend in the Business!"