

“Jack was always oriented toward the customer’s viewpoint, and toward the ideal of service. Both these characteristics were transmitted to Tektronix, when it was founded in 1946. He is responsible for first-name salutations, for our disregard of status symbols and for many other ways we have come to behave toward one another, and toward our customers.

He led by setting an example. Despite his achievements, he was a humble man, without pretense. For many years our general manager, Jack was responsible for Tek’s then-innovative “personnel policies” (although we didn’t call them anything so formal then), most of which continue today.

But his biggest contribution was as the key Tektronix organizer. He was the person with enough business experience and contacts that the rest of us felt the thing would “go”. Without his leadership, I think none of us – even though by then we could build a superior product – would have felt comfortable starting such an enterprise.

Jack was deeply involved with the mental-health and human-relation aspects of industry, also with the study of semantics. He always felt that knowledge was the key to solving any problem, and that if you knew enough about it you could arrive at the appropriate solution.

- Howard Vollum, excerpt of the letter to Tektronix employees after the death of Jack Murdock in May 1971.



Jack Murdock at his desk in the Sunset Plant, around 1952

“After leaving high school and establishing a business of my own, I intend to go further into the study of radio phenomena. I would like to learn all there is to know about radio, if it is possible. I shall probably carry on many experiments in this field, and also, possibly some other branches of science. If I do all that I hope to do, I shall probably make some inventions. I have at present several ideas for inventions, which if put to use would be of great benefit to the people of the world ... I believe that the possibilities of radio are unlimited, and that the majority of the people have no idea of what radio's future holds in store.”

- Jack Murdock, Age 16. “Autobiography,” Written March 23, 1934. Full transcript at vintagetek.org.

“Besides work, play and the pursuit of knowledge, the fourth area of human need is to create.

While there are infinite opportunities for creativity expression in the fields of music, art, improved design of housing, transportation, all kinds of tools and equipment, probably the greatest opportunity of all is in the field of figuring out how we humans can survive a little bit more constructively.

Our primary task then is to unleash the creative forces in man rather than those of destruction and despair.”

- Jack Murdock, “Work and Human Satisfaction” Excerpted from a speech presented to the Portland Chamber of Commerce, 1966. Audio at vintagetek.org.

Tektronix Spirit

At its core, it is respect for the dignity of the individual.

- Everyone was on a first name basis, including with the senior managers. Not “Mr. Murdock” or “Mr. Vollum” – they were “Jack” and “Howard.”
- There were no reserved parking spaces.
- Generous profit share was established in 1949, and there was equity sharing through stock options and outright stock purchase programs.
- Tek had a progressive education system.
 - Employees could receive technical training, a B.S., or an advanced degree without leaving the Beaverton campus. Professors came to Tektronix.
- There were no time clocks. People were trusted.
- Employee longevity was celebrated.
 - By 1978 there were over 1,000 employees with 20 years of service.
- Tek offered great working conditions: the Beaverton and Wilsonville facilities resembled college campuses.



Tektronix®



Jack Murdock and Howard Vollum examining a Tektronix Type 546 Oscilloscope, around 1964

Tektronix Summary

- Tektronix was founded in Portland in 1946 by Jack Murdock, Howard Vollum, Miles Tippery and Glenn McDowell. Miles Tippery and Glenn McDowell left the company by 1953.
 - 2026 is Tek's 80th anniversary.
- By 1955 Tektronix was the leading manufacturer of oscilloscopes in the world. This leadership was maintained through the 1990s.
 - Oscilloscopes are precision instruments, tools used by engineers to design electronic products and by scientists to study high speed physical phenomena.
- Tektronix has been a key contributor to the rise of television, computers, telecommunications, computer graphics, and medical and military technology during the meteoric rise of electronics in the second half of the 20th Century.
- Growth: from annual revenue at \$257k in 1950 to >\$1B in 1981
- Tektronix was the Oregon's largest private employer in the late 1970s and 1980s.
- Tektronix established facilities in the Portland Metro area in Beaverton, Portland, Wilsonville, Vancouver and Hillsboro. Overseas Tek has had manufacturing facilities in the UK, The Netherlands, the Island of Guernsey, Japan and China.
- In 2007, Tektronix was purchased by the Danaher Corporation.
- The Tektronix Creed, initiated in 1950:

OUR CONTINUING CREED

is that of serving Tektronix customers with products and policies that are unexcelled in the electronics industry and limited only by the current state of the art.



Tektronix[®]