

Friday, May 22, 2009

Women in Business

Woman to watch: Elise Hernandez

Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal

With more than 20 years of technology sales and management experience, Elise Hernandez has grown Ideal System Solutions Inc. into a \$30 million-a-year business providing information-technology products and professional services across the United States. Hernandez founded Ideal in the late 1990s after she got tired of thinking up ideas to make her previous employer more profitable — and not being able to act on them. That isn't a problem any more for Hernandez, whose business now has branch offices in Maryland, New Mexico, South Carolina and California. It reached \$30 million in sales in 2006. The U.S. Small Business Administration named Hernandez its Minnesota Minority Small Business Person of the Year in 2007. The Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal honored her last year as a top minority business owner. She now has a new business venture — information technology, engineering and telecommunications staffing firm EngageIT Resources Inc.

Continuing education: B.A. in psychology and Spanish from University of Minnesota; MBA from Metropolitan State University

What was the single most defining moment in your career?

Arriving at the decision to leave my successful sales career to launch Ideal.