



THE COORDINATOR: Orlando, Florida

Orlando may be the house the mouse built, but a long stretch of intergovernmental and private cooperation is what turned the city into one of the most highly coordinated entrepreneurial engines in the country. The area sidestepped the development turf wars that often hobble other metro areas, instead relying on a strategy of enthusiastic cooperation to power growth. A lot of the heavy lifting is done by the Disney Entrepreneur Center, a one-stop shop where government and private agencies mentor budding small-business owners and direct them to the right resources. Over the next five years, Orlando is scheduled to pump \$1 billion into its downtown, an endeavor that's going to need many hands to feed it. But the city is ready for the challenge. "Our first ace is that we have civic leadership that is entrepreneurially supportive," says Jerry Ross, executive director of the Entrepreneur Center. "We have a digital media cluster starting downtown, a medical city that is taking shape—we're part of a high-tech corridor. We're not recruiting companies from out of state. We're engaged in economic gardening: We want to carefully grow what we already have."



Fleet of foot:
Redi Pedi Cab's
Catherine Ojeda

Catherine Ojeda, Redi Pedi Cab Co.

Catherine Ojeda was working in the accounting department of a time-share company and operating a pedicab

on the side when she realized that riding the three-wheeled bike was a lot more fun than sitting inside crunching numbers all day. So in 2006, she invested in three pedicabs, contracted two drivers, and

began offering rides on the grounds of Orlando's Orange County Convention Center (the country's second largest) and to surrounding hotels. "We give pedicab rides, but really we're a marketing company," says Ojeda, who now owns six pedicabs and contracts up to 10 drivers per event, even traveling to Jacksonville Jaguars games for special promotions. "People hire us to get their product out there; we put signage on our bikes and hand out promotional items," she says. "But most of our drivers give visitors word-of-mouth recommendations, which is very important." In the next year, Ojeda plans to buy more pedicabs and eventually wants a fleet for the popular International Drive district as well as a group of traveling cabs for special events. Orlando was the perfect spot for a novice entrepreneur to get her feet wet. "In the beginning, I didn't even have a computer. I had to use Excel at the business center," Ojeda says. "There are great small business resources here and a real community of small-business owners. If I run into hiccups, I can depend on other business owners to support me."

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