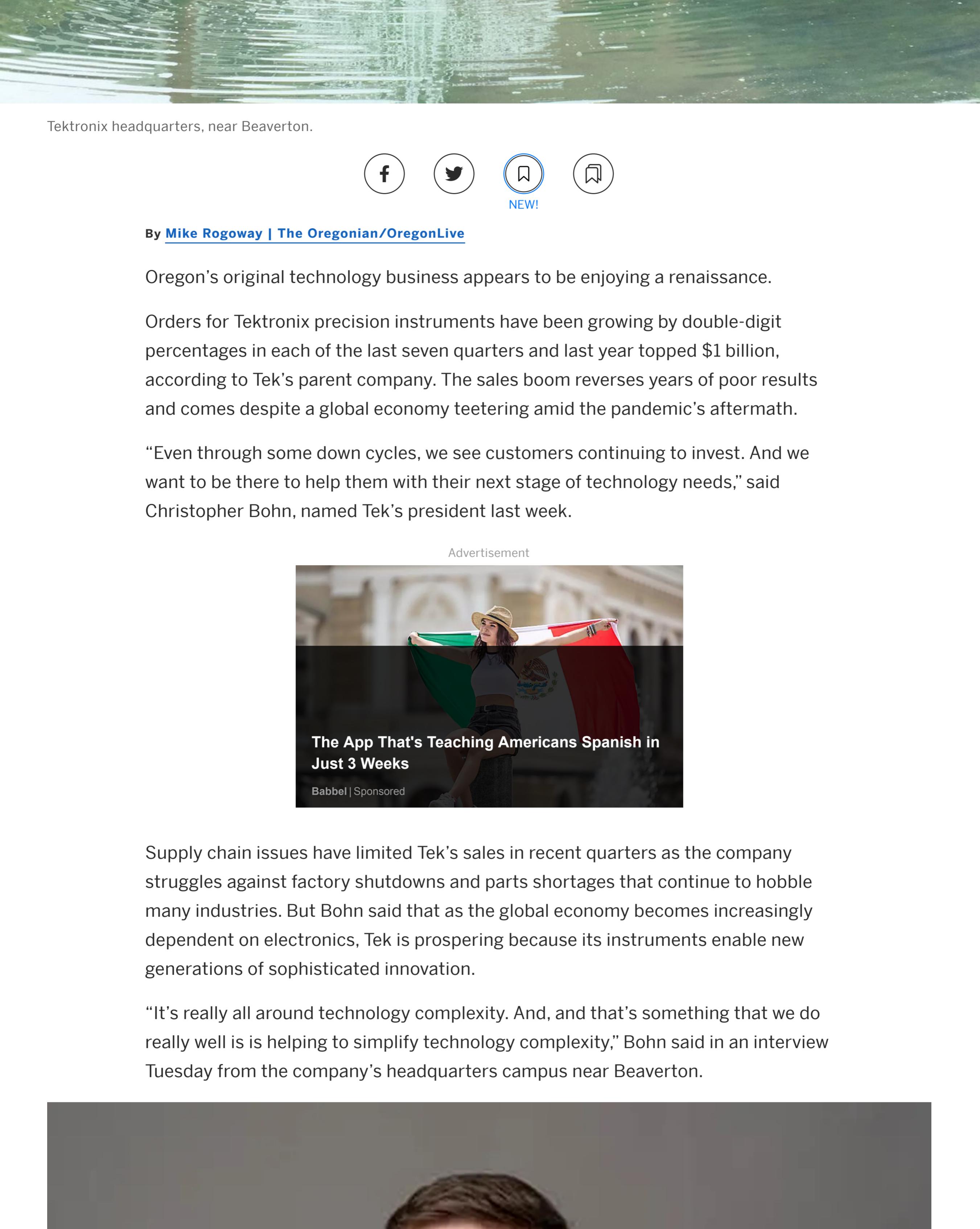


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Oregon Tech

New Tektronix president promises focused innovation: 'We're not spreading ourselves too thin'

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Tektronix headquarters, near Beaverton.

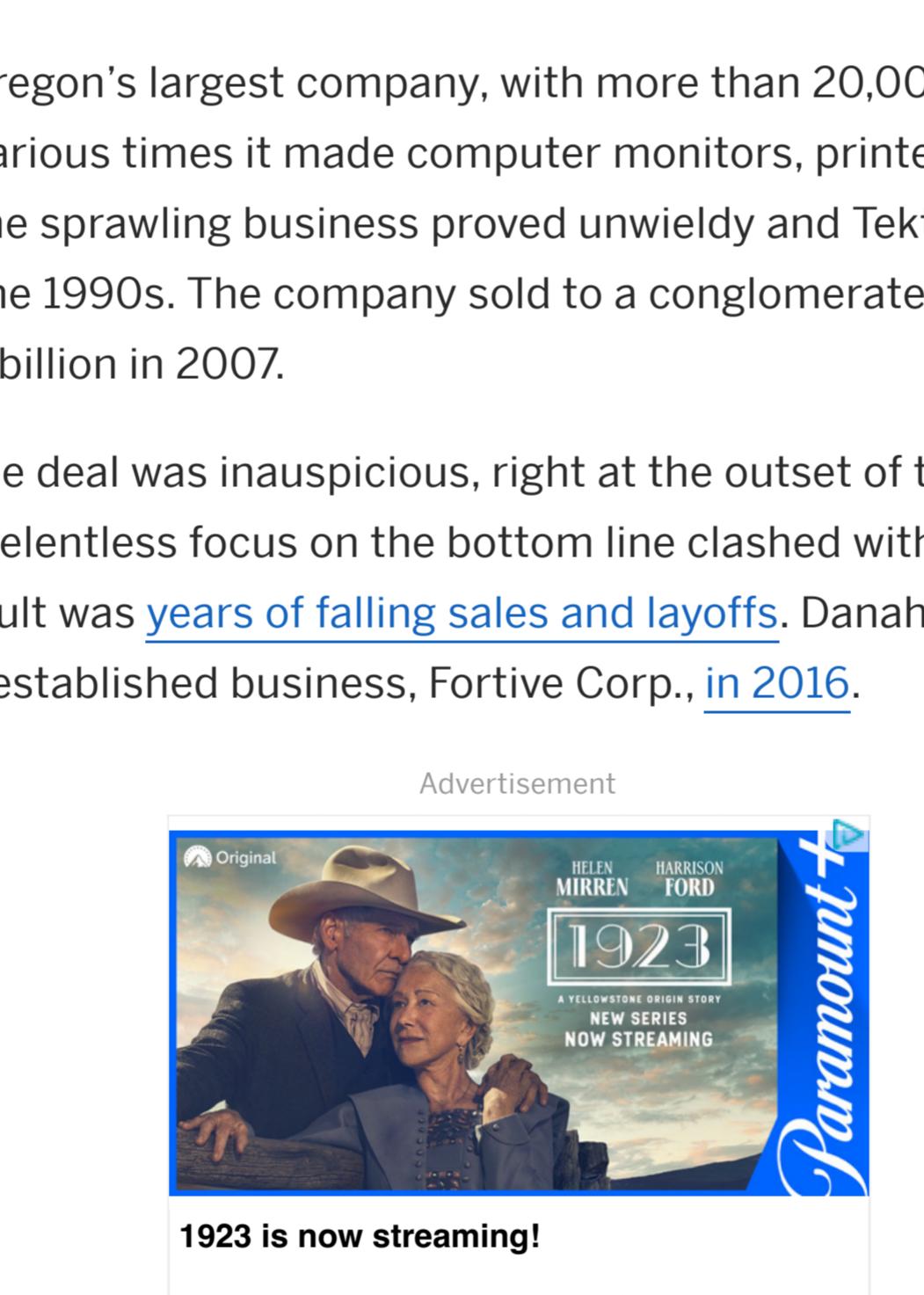


By [Mike Rogoway | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

Oregon's original technology business appears to be enjoying a renaissance.

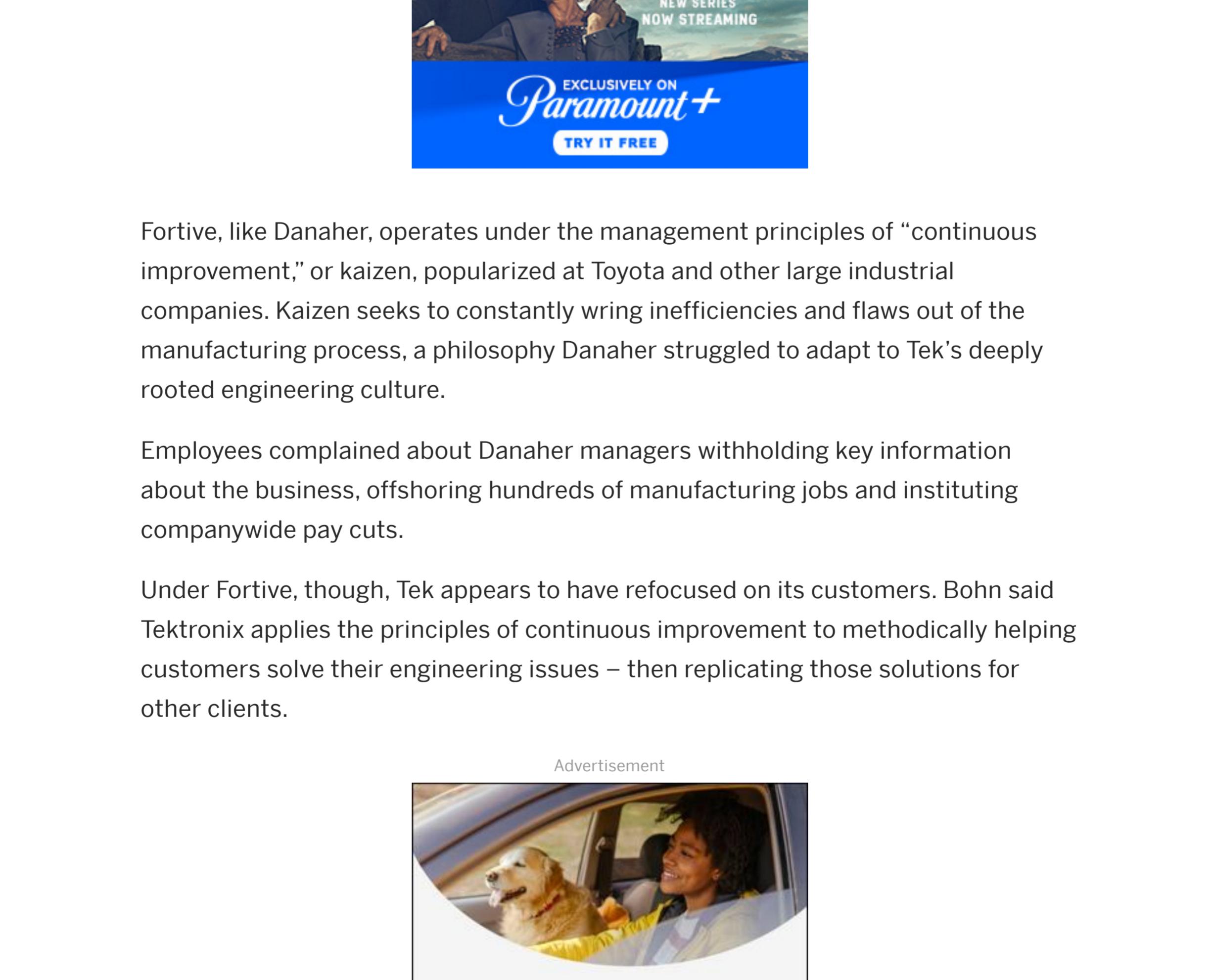
Orders for Tektronix precision instruments have been growing by double-digit percentages in each of the last seven quarters and last year topped \$1 billion, according to Tek's parent company. The sales boom reverses years of poor results and comes despite a global economy teetering amid the pandemic's aftermath.

"Even through some down cycles, we see customers continuing to invest. And we want to be there to help them with their next stage of technology needs," said Christopher Bohn, named Tek's president last week.



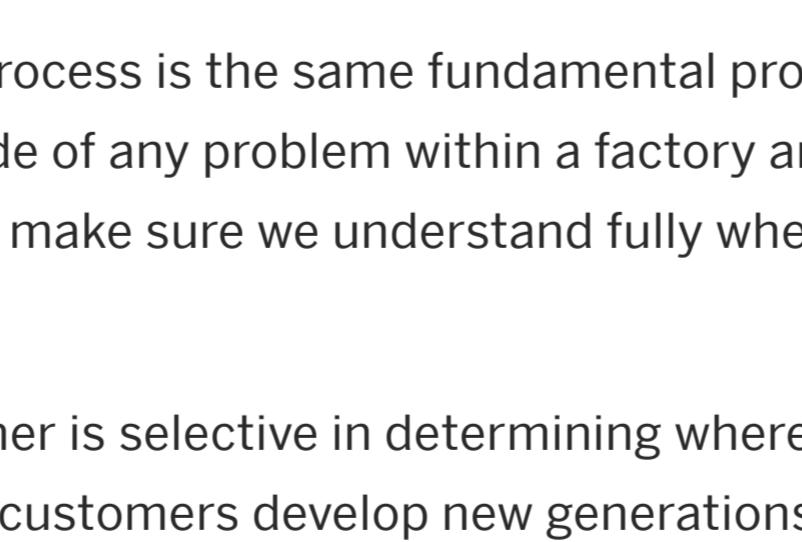
Supply chain issues have limited Tek's sales in recent quarters as the company struggles against factory shutdowns and parts shortages that continue to hobble many industries. But Bohn said that as the global economy becomes increasingly dependent on electronics, Tek is prospering because its instruments enable new generations of sophisticated innovation.

"It's really all around technology complexity. And, and that's something that we do really well is helping to simplify technology complexity," Bohn said in an interview Tuesday from the company's headquarters campus near Beaverton.



Tektronix President Christopher Bohn Tektronix photo

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Founded in 1946, Tektronix laid the foundation for Oregon's technology industry. Engineers use its oscilloscopes and other instruments to measure the performance of electronic devices, helping enable new computer designs, communications networks and power-efficient vehicles.

Tek was once Oregon's largest company, with more than 20,000 employees worldwide. At various times it made computer monitors, printers – even office furniture. But the sprawling business proved unwieldy and Tektronix began downsizing in the 1990s. The company sold to a conglomerate called Danaher Corp. for \$2.85 billion in 2007.

The timing of the deal was inauspicious, right at the outset of the Great Recession, and Danaher's relentless focus on the bottom line clashed with Tek's freewheeling culture. The result was [years of falling sales and layoffs](#). Danaher spun Tek off as part of a newly established business, Fortive Corp., in 2016.

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Fortive, based in Everett, Washington, doesn't report detailed financial results for its operating companies. But in recent investor calls, Fortive executives have indicated Tek is faring much better than it did under Danaher, with robust orders and a business less vulnerable to economic cycles.

Tektronix is benefitting from the "explosion of electronic devices, really everywhere," Bohn said. Electric vehicles and a broader demand for power-efficient electronics is a big part of the company's growth, he said, since Tek's instruments can help engineers maximize the performance of their own devices.

Before joining Tek last year as a vice president, Bohn, 44, spent a decade at another Fortive business, Fluke Corp. He succeeds Tami Newcombe, who now runs Fortive's broader precision instruments business.

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Employees complained about Danaher managers withholding key information about the business, offshoring hundreds of manufacturing jobs and instituting companywide pay cuts.

Under Fortive, though, Tek appears to have refocused on its customers. Bohn said Tektronix applies the principles of continuous improvement to methodically helping customers solve their engineering issues – then replicating those solutions for other clients.

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That fundamental process is the same fundamental process that we use in problem-solving inside of any problem within a factory and other process," Bohn said. "We're trying to make sure we understand fully where that customer is getting stuck."

And Bohn said Danaher is selective in determining where it can make the biggest difference in helping customers develop new generations of technology.

"We're not trying to do too many things," he said. "We're not spreading ourselves too thin."

Tektronix now employs about 3,000 people worldwide and says more than half of them work in the U.S. It's not clear how many of those work in Oregon.

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The company only occupies a portion of its sprawling, 250-acre campus west of Oregon 217, though. And with more employees working remotely since the pandemic, Tek said last year that [it plans to sell or lease a portion of the property](#).

It's a huge site that could conceivably host an office park or housing development, another company's factories or even a ballpark. But the commercial property market remains in upheaval, and Tek's property has been on the market for nearly eight months. Bohn indicated Tektronix feels no urgency to find a tenant or a buyer and said the company is still in the "evaluation phase."

"It's not something that you want to make a knee jerk reaction around," he said.

"You want to weigh all you weigh all of our options."

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