

CUTTING EDGE PRODUCTIONS 2011 AGENCY OF THE YEAR

A successful agency, or any successful business for that matter, requires a certain level of both commitment and perseverance. It takes a creative mind and innovative spark to take that business to the top of its field. In this case we are discussing our 2011 Readers' Choice Award winner for Agency Of The Year.

Cutting Edge Productions or CEP has been serving the college market since 2005. Headed by Mike Seymore, they employ ten agents and up to twenty-six technicians who serve campuses all over the country. Though CEP has been in business since 2005, Mike has had a much longer run in the industry. "I've been in this field for 20 years and love it like I just began. I wish I could say that when I was in school I was part of a Campus Activities Board, but I have to say that I kinda envied those students."

Attending Davenport University where there was a pretty elaborate board, Mike was working two jobs and putting in about a 40 hours per week while in school and lacked the time for serving the board. "As I moved into the professional world I came across a company that was in the entertainment field and focused on college entertainment. I thought to myself, 'Wow! This could be an opportunity for me to do something that I didn't have the chance to in school, though I will be on the opposite side of the playing field. When I got into the industry I was amazed. I loved it."

CEP established a reputation early on as innovators. "You can count on seeing a new product from CEP every

year, if not every semester. The first new show I created for CEP was called the XJ5 which is a 360 degree interactive flight simulator that I actually patented and took into market and sold to museums. But my primary interest was bringing it to students and giving them an experience they had never had before."

While you may think this to be a glorified video game, it is all but that. A full 360 degree screen surrounds you as you are strapped into the XJ5. Then as you fly the craft the entire machine pivots and rolls giving the flyer the uber realistic experience of flying an aircraft.

While new concepts and ideas are always at the forefront at CEP, if it's the classics you are looking for then CEP has them as well. What's most important is knowing that when dealing with this company, quality is the key. CEP does about 500 dates a semester. With that amount of travel it can be difficult to keep equipment always looking new. That is why they receive so much of the praise they do. They maintain and or replace equipment as needed to ensure every school gets the same high quality entertainment. "I think the students deserve a quality high-end product, and we are there to provide just that."

In the college entertainment business it is important to understand that one of the most important things to do is build relationships with others in the marketplace. "We are dealing with young, up-and-coming professionals and in our industry it is all about relationships. Quite frankly, I don't care if you are at

the University of Tampa or Charleston Southern, everyone has a board. All these boards are students who want to be professionals, that's why they are in higher education. They are presenting in board meetings and leveraging their funds. I like to talk to the students about that. We are here to help those students become the professionals that they have set out to be. We can't do this by just simply selling them dates. Our agents are trained to interface and do business with directors, but also explain to them that we know what our role is. We are here to help and better the future professional lives of the students."

How does a currently successful business plan for the future? First, it is important to look back and see what has worked in the past. In the case of CEP there is an understanding that being innovative and creative ranks high on the list as is maintaining a level of quality equipment and service. But, for any business to function fully it always comes down to the staff. Mike also works with his brother Scott Seymore, as well as employing Mike Ursul. "Mike Ursul is our director of operations. He is solely responsible for hiring and firing every technician who executes a contract for us, then training those technicians. He is also responsible for making sure that all of the gear is well maintained and fully functioning. So he has a lot on his plate.



This guy really deserves a pat on the back because he has three kids and executes about 1000 dates a year and somehow finds time to coach three different softball teams. I'm proud to have him and everyone else on the team here."

Every business, no matter the size or field, will at some point face challenging obstacles and decisions. It's all part of the growing process. In a business built on solid relationships and trust, these sorts of hurdles can be overcome. "I think that everyone who owns a business has to overcome different hurdles. Regardless of what kind of business you're in, a business is a business and you have to have a good strategy. There is no such thing as waving a wand and having a successful business. I feel that the obstacles

that we have had to deal with in no way differ from the norm. It has been our goal to tackle these problems by maintaining the highest levels of quality, and continuing always to be innovative."

Innovative, reliable, and trustworthy are the remarks any business owner loves to hear from customers. CEP always exhibits these qualities striving for excellence.

To contact Cutting Edge Productions (CEP Inc) (866) 288-8126.