

THE VICTOR CORNELIUS COMPANY:

FROM 'NAP-ADS' TO ALPHAGRAPHS, STILL THE SAME...

by Cary M. Meeks



Cary Meeks, President of Victor Cornelius, Inc. & "Owner" of AlphaGraphics

Funny, I keep bumping into my late grandfather.

In 1936 Victor Cornelius started a nationwide theatrical advertising business in little Eastland, Texas.

Victor was my grandfather.

Though it was the depths of "The Great Depression", Eastland was busier then. Oil was King. Conrad Hilton had already moved on from his first hotel, the Mobley, down the street in Cisco. Victor Cornelius was just beginning his rise.

As a young sign painter, Victor travelled from one West Texas boom town to the next hand lettering signs and outdoor advertising. Then, early in the 1930's, he put away his sable brush and brought the first "nickelodeon" jukeboxes to West Texas. Victor had an instinct for opportunity.

To display the playlist for these "nickelodeons", he and a local garage mechanic beat a metal frame out of some scrap tin and attached it to the side

of a café napkin holder.

The Victor Cornelius "NAP-AD" was born.

Victor quickly recognized the "NAP-AD" had a much better potential in advertising than as a playlist holder. He followed the money. Using referrals, direct mail, and his own shoe leather, he parlayed the NAP-AD into a nationwide subscription theatrical advertising business in a few short years. Victor knew that his success hinged on helping others to grow their own success stories. He knew the value of the "value proposition".

"NAP-ADS mean more business for your theatre"

In the 1950's and 1960's Victor leveraged his theatrical advertising business to become one of the nation's largest menu printing companies. The VC menu logo appeared on tens of thousands of menus across the country. And again in the 1980's to become a premier supplier of printed nursing home products.

He managed the day-to-day and grew his business until his passing at age 87.

That's where I came in. Since 1993 I've been President of Victor Cornelius, Inc. Despite questionable brilliance on my part, I've perpetuated the business that my grandfather started.

Victor Cornelius
1924



Brilliance?

Every time I think we're breaking new ground, I find evidence that Victor was already there. That's where I bump into Victor.

In 2007 we converted the local "job" printing segment of our business into an AlphaGraphics franchise center. The driver for this conversion was the need to tighten up our processes in the quick print area and AlphaGraphics' focus on relationship marketing. At AlphaGraphics "We work with people to design, produce, and manage their visual communications, enabling them to achieve their goals more effectively and confidently."

The technology has changed. Deep down inside though, seventy five years later, we're still saying and doing the same thing: growing our business by helping our customers to grow theirs.

I guess we came by it honestly enough. (Thanks Victor.)



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