

Steve Cheshire Reflects on Cheshire's 25th Anniversary



Steve Cheshire is proud to have founded Cheshire Audio Visual 25 years ago.

He first got interested in the Audiovisual field while attending Edison Tech, where he studied lithography and photography. After serving in the armed forces, Steve returned home to Rochester and secured a degree from MCC in order to become part of an elite group of four guys who composed Kodak's audiovisual team, serving 18 different business units at Kodak.

When asked about the changes he's seen in the past 25 years, Steve shared, "In the early days at Kodak, whatever equipment I wanted, I could get. We started out with slides, then began mixing slides and video. I got in touch with SONY, and we bought six of the first SONY video projectors ever made."

When asked what aspect of the industry he liked best, there was no hesitation.

"Designing the shows from the ground up. I loved the challenge of making everything come together. I've always enjoyed the corporate side of the business."

As time passed, budgets at Kodak got slimmer and slimmer, and Steve saw the writing on the wall, so he decided to launch his own company.

"In those days, there was no bidding on shows. Now, it's much tougher. You have to fight for the business. Back then, Kodak was our primary client giving us 80% of our business, so when they went bankrupt, we had to reinvent ourselves."

He talks about how, during those lean times, his sons developed their own customers, building up different markets such as trade shows and pharmaceuticals to put the company back on solid ground.

As Steve reflects on the changes he's experienced, he talks about the challenge of staying ahead of the curve.

"You can never completely keep up, but you still have to stay ahead on technology and purchases. You have to replenish the equipment each year and keep it in good shape. It's very difficult to make decisions on what new technology to purchase, because it's always changing, which makes investing in it risky. The best way to make a decision on what equipment to purchase is to always keep an eye on cross-rentals."

He went on to explain that if you're having to rent a particular type of equipment from other sources frequently, in order to fulfill customer demand, that's the technology in which you should invest.

Above all, Steve has a tremendous amount of pride in his sons.

"I left in 2012. While I laid down the groundwork, they rebuilt the company and brought us through the tough times. They adopted my philosophy that the customer always comes first, and you don't quit until the job's done. I am so proud of how they've brought us so far."

