

Charles Eide, CEO of Eidecom



WHAT'S THE POINT?

Video and event producer EideCom, Minneapolis, leads with, "Why?"

BY JOHN P. PALEN

PHOTOS BY JOEL SCHNELL

In our CEO roundtable groups, we often discuss why leaders aren't making progress toward their goals — and this question comes up. Getting to the *why* of a business goal seems simple, but the distractions of sales and production and employees can bury this message. There is no point in a business if no one wants what you're selling.

Younger people are forcing company leaders to define their why. They have a natural desire to make a difference, growing up more connected and informed than ever before. For young entrepreneurs who already lead companies, the why always comes first.

Practically a prodigy

Charles Eide started working on events when he was 14, and then learned the art of video production. He would borrow the family stereo

BIZ BRIEFING

EIDECOM CREATIVE AGENCY

LOCATION: Minneapolis with Denver satellite

PROJ. REVENUE: \$3 million

INCEPTION: 2003

EMPLOYEES: 10 full-time employees with many contracted specialists

LEADERSHIP: Charles Eide, CEO; Mike Danielson, Vice President and COO

DESCRIPTION: Creating inspiring and motivating experiences through video production and full-service, multi-media event production

WEB: eidecom.com

system and goad Mike, his best friend from next door, to help him. Little did he know that by 2016 his company would be working in Poland for the Pope's World Youth Day on behalf of the Knights of Columbus.

These days, anybody and their brother can produce a video with a mobile phone. Eide's own daughter, at 6, is more tech-savvy than seems possible. The software necessary for production can be acquired for less than \$50 a month, which makes this field extremely competitive. Knowing that gear and technology are not the why of their business, Charles and his team at EideCom have focused on helping clients figure out their why. With the right why in mind, they can create an environment that leads to a distraction-free and immersive visual feast for the senses — moving the audience to feel, connect and act.

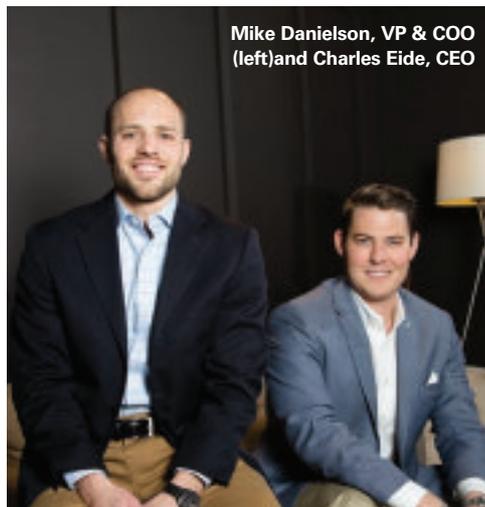
The audience experience

Which leads to "haze." It's that smoky substance that helps theatrical lighting glow. EideCom argued for the use of haze in Poland, even though the fire authorities were against it. "We found out that Justin Bieber would perform at that same facility in a month and we told them, 'He's going to have haze, so we can figure out a way to have haze,'" Eide recounts. "If the sound and lighting and effects aren't right, it distracts rather than amps up the experience. Haze was a small detail we couldn't overlook if we wanted the desired effect."

And sometimes, the desired effect requires taking things away — like words. For Children's Cancer Research Fund, EideCom created a video that only shows a young girl and her family moving through the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Viewers don't hear from doctors or executives. They watch the emotion play out while very little is spoken.

"It was a risk," Eide says. "They had to trust us."

Trust comes from a deeper place than making a strategic recommendation for a video. Eide and his longtime business partner, Mike Danielson (best friend turned vice president), ask themselves why they want to work with a client. The answer has to be because they believe in the client's mission. Whether it's children's cancer research or innovative



Mike Danielson, VP & COO (left) and Charles Eide, CEO

LESSONS IN COMMUNICATING WHY

1. Get clear on why you need to promote a message.
2. Select experts who are excited about your message and will push you creatively.
3. Balance budget with the desired outcome.
4. Focus on the desired experience more than the marketing vehicle.

aircraft (both are pilots), these leaders are willing to immerse and invest themselves in their clients' goals.

Purpose is the point

After more than a decade, EideCom is still a very small business by revenue standards. Eide acknowledges that most potential clients are driven by the bottom line and don't discern differences when comparing creative portfolios. Sometimes companies win with this mindset and sometimes they waste thousands of dollars on a production that doesn't work, he says.

A longer growth curve doesn't worry Eide. Purpose helps him sleep at night, be a good dad and enjoy the trip.

What is the point? Ask yourself that question and you may get unstuck. ▶



JOHN P. PALEN is CEO of Allied Executives and works with CEOs, business owners and executive leaders on leadership and business performance through peer groups, coaching and educational workshops. alliedexecutives.com

Manufacturers Alliance
www.mfrall.com

"Company Membership with the Manufacturers Alliance is great for improving company performance."

Brian Norton
Continuous Improvement

"I recommend Company Membership because of the excellent local manufacturing specific training and resources."

Kara Sime
HR Director
Agropur, Inc.

Sharing
Education &
Resources
Peer-to-Peer