

PROFILE

October 2, 2009 | NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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A CONVERSATION WITH | ARNIE MALHAM, CJ ADVERTISING

Serial entrepreneur Arnie Malham founded cj Advertising in 1994 and has seen the company grow significantly over the past decade. Since 2000 the company's billings have rose 423 percent — from \$4.6 million to \$24.1 million. In that time, Malham has also founded two other Nashville-area companies.

WHAT IS THE MOST OUTSIDE-THE-BOX IDEA YOU HAVE EVER HAD IN YOUR CAREER? There are a couple: One is setting up a library of management and self-help books at our company and then paying employees to read them. The other is conducting an employee morale survey and posting the results for everyone to see, as well as publicly addressing and documenting every anonymously submitted concern. The whole process is very transparent. Everybody can see the good, the bad and the ugly about working here.

WHAT WAS THE RESULT? The book club produces more confidence and open thinking than any other initiative we've undertaken. The open morale survey has led us to the highest morale ever documented at the agency.

WHAT DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE IN THE WORKS FOR 2010? I think the focus will be "leverage." We will be looking for the breakout idea that will further leverage our capabilities, contacts and niche knowledge so that we are even more of a vital partner to our clients. This means going beyond traditional ad agency services, which we are already doing, to helping our clients be the best they can be.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS YOU MAKE AS A LEADER IN YOUR ORGANIZATION? Visioning. Setting goals for my team without really knowing how to get there. That is their job.

WHAT WORD BEST DESCRIBES YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE? I wish it were a "style." My leadership method has changed over the years as we have grown and started new companies. I am working to get from, "I've really worked hard on this, so don't mess it up," to "This is where we want to go, take us there." Oh ... did you say one word? My team would probably say, "bi-polar."

GOAL YET TO BE ACHIEVED? A 40-hour work-week and a true vacation.

PROFESSIONAL PET PEEVE? Weakness of spirit — typically communicated in the words, "I can't."

WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT? Lease or buy? Hire or fire? Launch or hold? Preach or listen? Family time vs. work time? Do I look fat? How was my speech? Was too hard on that employee? What was that guy's name I saw this morning? Did I hear a cough from one of my



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kids? What can I get my wife for our anniversary? Actually, this stuff keeps me up all day... I sleep pretty well at night.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELIEVE STRESS? Two things ... I run with my dog. Three to five miles is a good distance for us. Secondly... I get a little crazy at the [Nashville Predators] games. I yell a lot and sometimes get in shouting matches with opposing fans. It's silly, but boy, it's fun to shout at the top of your lungs every once in a while.

WHAT IS THE SIMPLEST THING YOU HAVE NEVER LEARNED TO DO? Throw a football with a tight spiral ... I just can't do it, but I was a very good lineman.

FAVORITE HOBBIES? I probably enjoy sitting on my porch with my dog, with a cigar and/or a scotch about as much as anything in the world. Not sure it is a hobby, but I am pretty good at it.

PETS? My border mix/mutt, Katy. I love that dog.

WHAT SKILL WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO IMPROVE? Listening.

WHAT TRAITS DO YOU VALUE MOST IN FRIENDS? Full disclosure with zero judgment.

PERSON OUTSIDE YOUR FAMILY YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEND TIME WITH ON AN ISLAND? I think Joe Paterno would be a cool date. He has

BACKGROUND

NAME: Arnie Malham

AGE: 42

TITLE: President

COMPANY: cj Advertising, Legal Intake Professionals, Med-View Services

ADDRESS: 209 10th Avenue South, Ste. 500, Nashville 37203

WEB SITES: cjadvertising.com
legalintake.com
medviewservices.com

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 150

MOST RECENTLY READ BOOK: "The Art of Racing in the Rain," "Born to Run," "Outliers" and "Twenty Ads that Shook the World"

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in banking and finance and managerial finance at the University of Mississippi

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Camels with a Cause, our in-house community fundraising organization

seen a lot, done a lot, found success and has seen his share of defeat ... yet he is still "the man."

YOU'VE JUST BEEN GIVEN \$100,000 TO DONATE TO CHARITY. WHERE WOULD YOU GIVE IT AND WHY? I support children's hospitals, dog shelters and several "search for a cure" organizations. I suppose I would divvy up the loot accordingly.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CROSS OFF YOUR "BUCKET LIST" NEXT? A few years ago, my

wife and I started going to one away Preds game each year as an "extended getaway." Thus far, we have Detroit, Toronto, and Philly under our belt. This year, the Preds swing through New York and have the Islanders, the Rangers and Devils on nearly consecutive nights. I need to be there.

WHAT LINE OF WORK WOULD YOU PURSUE IF YOU COULDN'T WORK IN YOUR PRESENT ONE? I would love to be a sports coach.

WHAT IS THERE ABOUT YOU THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN? I have zero facial recognition recall. Voices and stories trigger names for me, but faces typically just panic me, because remembering names based on visual clues alone is extremely difficult for me.

BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL MISTAKE AND HOW YOU OVERCAME IT? I got fired for doing consulting work on the side while employed at a local television station. I started my own agency, and turned my side business into my career.

THEY ARE MAKING A MOVIE OF YOUR LIFE. IS IT A DRAMA OR A COMEDY AND WHO PLAYS YOU. It is a dramatic comedy like *The World According to Garp*, and my role is played by David Blaine, because he looks like me, or Will Ferrell, because ... well ... you have to admit ... he did one heck of a job as Ricky Bobby in *Talladega Nights*. I guess it would depend on the slant of the movie.