

PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

CEO Profile

Personal information

Name: Jeffrey Berry

Title: President and CEO

Company: SBK Pictures Inc.

Type of company: Film production company in Ardmore specializing in television commercials, IMAX films and corporate media.

Education: B.A. in German, University of Florida.

First job: I worked summers for a stock brokerage firm in Center City throughout high school.

Little known fact: [I received an] athletic scholarship for track and field to the University of Florida [and] played basketball for the University of Freiburg in Germany.

Home: Bryn Mawr

Business philosophy

Essential business philosophy: Think forward. Ask questions. Have courage to try something different. Give more than take. Seek clarity of expectations.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Stay curious. Be open to new ways of thinking. Don't gloat on your successes. Learn from your mistakes. Surround yourself with energetic, independent people.

Yardstick of success: When your clients feel they received more than they paid for and your employees feel they are working for the best company in the market ... and, of course, when your profits exceed your expenses.

Goal yet to be achieved: After directing five short IMAX films, I'm ready to direct a feature length IMAX film for worldwide distribution.

Judgement calls

Best decision: I decided from the beginning that I wanted to build the best film production company ever in Philadelphia. So at 25, without knowledge or fear, I started my own company. 27 years later, the

Jeffrey Berry



definition of "best ever" continues to evolve, as does SBK.

Worst decision: Our company identified a niche market, which turned into a significant business opportunity with rapid growth. We formed a second company, but I was not wise enough to know how to integrate two groups with different agendas and personalities. Fifteen years later, we're all still friends, but tough lessons [were] learned.

Mentor: You can learn from everyone around you, but I've learned most from my parents that you are responsible for pursuing your own ideas.

True confessions

Word that best describes you: Optimistic.

Like best about your job: That it never feels like a job. Actually being paid to imagine and visualize ideas that tell a story on film.

Like least about your job: The unpredictable business model of a creative service business.

Most important lesson learned: Business, like life, is about people ... their ideas and their expectations. Leading a group effort is an art form that requires vision, energy, patience and grace.

Life motto: Under-promise ... over-deliver.

Greatest fear: Getting stuck in the same gear and not moving forward.

Person most interested in meeting: Thomas Edison for his relentless curiosity, Steven Spielberg for his fluid balance of creativity and business.

First choice for a new career: Teaching film and media to college students. Mentoring and dialoguing with young adults about how to get new ideas produced.

Greatest extravagance: Four guitars.

Etc.

Award/honor most proud of: One wife, two daughters, two sons, two dogs. My family is the best award/reward you could ever imagine.

Most influential book: "The Entertainment Economy," by Michael J. Wolf.

Favorite movie: Too many to list.

Favorite restaurant: This year, Carmine's.

Favorite vacation spot: St. John in the Virgin Islands.

Favorite way to spend free time: Relaxing back at the pool with my wife, my kids and their cousins; playing guitar.

Automobile: 2001 Audi Allroad. •

— Madlen Read