



Reel Connections - Issue #6

Reflecting on Twenty Years in Business

A Weekly Sunday Newsletter from Stilson Video Services

There is a beautiful oak tree that sits next to my office building. It is estimated to be 300 years old. It is hard to believe this tree is older than our country! When you let that sink in, 20 years in business doesn't seem so remarkable.

However, this week Stilson Video Services turns 20. I normally don't take the time to reflect on such things, as every day brings tasks and challenges which seem more deserving of my time. Still, this is a fairly rare achievement, as these facts suggest:

- 50% of companies fail within the first 5 years
- 65-70% are gone by year 10
- 80-85% disappear by year 20
- And, while there is no data to support this, I think I can safely say that essentially 100% of the other trees in my town aren't 300 years old

That oak tree has stood through centuries of change, storms, and progress. In a much smaller way, that's how I think about this business—adapting, improving, but staying rooted in what matters.

Technology has impacted the business over the years as far as the tools we have at our disposal. It allows us to do more in less time and be more efficient in our work flows. AI promises to continue that trend.

However, the constant that hasn't changed is the care and effort our team puts forth on every project. Occasionally, we are tempted to cut corners, but that won't happen because our whole identity is based on the quality work we produce.

So what does this mean for me, and more importantly, for our customers?

It might be fair to say the company survived this long because I'm too stubborn to give up and walk away. There were some pretty lean years where that would have been justified, but I believe in what we do and want to keep making a positive difference for people now and in the future.

None of this would be possible without the trust our customers place in us every day.

Our customers can rest assured I'm going to continue doing this as long as I can. Also, the experience factor is key in this business. We've perfected processes over the years that I feel serve our customers the best way possible.

So while I personally think our tree's 300 years is more impressive than my 20, we will still be celebrating with our customers throughout the year. Who knows, maybe we'll hold a customer appreciation event under the old oak tree. Stay tuned...

Lives are important.

Our mission is to connect them to future generations the best way possible.

Finally, if you have a topic you'd like me to write about, let me know at stilson@stilson.com and I'll add it to the list.

— Bill Stilson
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