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their trendy, renovated Goldfarb Weber Creative Media office in the Caxton building in downtown Cleveland, Ron Goldfarb and Tony Weber share the story of how a chance meeting 30 years ago led to a lifelong friendship and careers they never dreamed of.

The business partners laugh as they set the scene of when they first met in 1986. It was the year the Cleveland State men's basketball team made it to the Sweet Sixteen for the first time in school history. Goldfarb was a keyboardist who was renting a house with his band mates. They were the only friends he had in Cleveland at the time, since he had just moved to the city a year before.

Weber, a 1980 Gilmour Academy graduate, was a Highland Heights native who loved everything Cleveland — including its bands, culture and sports teams. He worked as a clerk at a law firm with one of Goldfarb's band mates, and he was a fan of their band, "The Silence."

While watching CSU's game at the band's house, Weber jumped up on a coffee table and started cheering on the Vikings. That's when Goldfarb, whose first love was music, and not sports, met Weber for the first time.

Luckily for the City of Cleveland, Goldfarb's dream of becoming a musician was never fulfilled, and Weber's career path did not end at a law firm.

Instead, the duo put their passion into marketing and produced hundreds of videos that have highlighted Cleveland's resurgence from a forgotten town that wasn't very hip to one that won its first championship in 52 years and recently hosted the Republican National Convention.

In fact, Goldfarb and Weber created the pitch video Cleveland used to land the RNC. Once Cleveland was named host, they went on to make more than 40 video modules for the RNC host committee that showcased what Cleveland and the surrounding region has to offer. "It's a blessing that we actually fell into this situation," says Goldfarb, who



Tony Weber (left) and Ron Goldfarb (right) turned their passion for selling the city into a successful business.

Selling the Spirit of the City

The creative minds at Goldfarb Weber put their passion into marketing through videos.

BY THERESA NEUHOFF



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years. The Cleveland native is confident the duo will deliver on the message she is trying to convey. She appreciates the extensive video archive they own and from which they are able to draw. She says the company knows how to highlight the best Cleveland has to offer through not

only video, but narration and music.

"I know it's good when my heart-beat increases during the video," Jones says. "By the end, I am feeling a sense of excitement. There is a moment where there is a crescendo. The video makes its point. It's hard to describe, but as you are watching a mood video, you should absolutely feel a sense of excitement."

That excitement is always present for Goldfarb and Weber, who are passionate about what they do. When asked if expanding their business to other major cities in the country is in their future, they agree it probably isn't. They are committed to Cleveland and the deep relationships they've been cultivating with their clients for years. Their entire business is based upon those relationships.

"We live and die for the region and what goes on here," Weber says. "A huge commitment would have to be made (to expand) because we are so engrained in this community, our relationships and networking. We take pride in solving communications challenges with high-end media. They call us with the challenge, and we come up with a creative solution."

Just as Goldfarb and Weber continue to work with every major nonprofit in the region, they're also working with every major company, including Avery Dennison, Henkel, the J.M. Smucker Co., Lincoln Electric, Lubrizol, Parker Hannifin, Philips Healthcare and Sherwin-Williams.

When Parker Hannifin opened its European headquarters in Switzerland in 2010, Goldfarb and Weber were hired to produce all the interactive video elements at the location. They are working on a long-term project with Sherwin-Williams.

Ellen Stephens, vice president of human resources for Sherwin-Williams, has worked with Goldfarb and Weber for 10 years. What she finds appealing about the company is its ability to articulate Sherwin-Williams' rich history and culture. Through their videos, the company strives to tell the story of the people behind the paint company, which

was founded in Cleveland in 1866.

"Ron and his team bring a level of emotion that is sometimes not told in black and white," Stephens says. "It's highly visual. It helps to tell our story through pictures, sounds and the voices of our employees. They capture the energy, dedication, loyalty and commitment our employees have."

Stephens views Goldfarb and Weber not only as video partners, but business partners who help Sherwin-Williams solve some of its most complex business problems.

"They help us craft the message for our employee engagement," she says. "They tell the story of our mission, our goals and the vision of our future so our employees can buy into that and be successful."

Three years ago when Goldfarb and Weber shed its old name (Glazen Creative Studios) for a new one, they were considering numerous ideas. They went as far as assigning a team to manage the change because they were determined to devise the catchiest name possible.

In the middle of the process, they realized they built their business up through their reputations and relationships. So why not stick with what has worked for them from the start?

"When people hear our names, they know they can trust us," Goldfarb says. "We always deliver. We always have an idea. We will come up with some kind of idea and get to the finish line. That's the bottom line. That's our job, to figure out a creative solution."

Although their jobs have changed drastically from those they had three decades ago, the friendship between Goldfarb and Weber remains the same. Their passions for anything Cleveland shine through in the work they do — including a few videos on display at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Nowhere in the videos will you see footage of Goldfarb playing the keyboard or Weber jumping on a coffee table as he cheers on a Cleveland sports team. But their voices will be heard through the creative ways they tell a story. ■

graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1982 with a degree in radio, television and film. “Every day, I feel like I have to create something. That’s just how it is, we make hundreds of videos here. All of those videos have to get shaped, figured out, shot, edited and delivered.

“To me, it’s like if you are a songwriter, that’s what you do is you write songs every day. This is almost exactly like making songs. It’s the same process. You work with a collection of people that, when you all get your heads in the same spot together, you make something that’s bigger and better than anything one person could have ever made by himself. That is the reward.”

When asked how the duo, who have 12 employees, manage to stay grounded and not get caught up in their successes, the men provide similar answers. They share the same tastes in many things, including music, restaurants, attractions and ideals.

“What makes both of us so excited every day is the positive change we have helped make in this community,” says Weber, who graduated from Denison University in 1984 with a degree in history and a speech communications minor. “It’s amazing. We come in here every day, and we are moving the needle in this community forward. We are a part of it. We are so involved in it. That’s what our employees tell us — they like making an impact and actually being able to see the work we are doing.”

More than 50 percent of the work Goldfarb and Weber do is for nonprofit agencies. Some of their major clients include Cuyahoga Community College, Destination Cleveland, Greater Cleveland Partnership, The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, MetroHealth, Achievement Centers for Children and United Way of Greater Cleveland.

“We are so into social justice,” explains Weber, who sits on the board of the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio. “That’s who we are as people. We also have civic pride. We love this region. We want to help bring it up.”



An example of Goldfarb and Weber’s commitment to bettering the community is its anti-racism, anti-bullying video called #RethinkLabels, which was released last November. They produced it for the Diversity Center. In the video, teenagers are asked to share the worst and best names they’ve ever been called. Some break down into tears. The video is raw and real, and it evokes emotion — elements for which Goldfarb and Weber strive in most videos.

“There is no use in producing a video unless you are going to evoke emotion,” Weber says.

Goldfarb agrees: “You are trying to reach something inside of somebody. That’s why using video is so good. If you aren’t interested in that, just make a brochure, don’t make a video, because a video is trying to touch people.”

Colette Jones, vice president of marketing for Destination Cleveland, has worked with Goldfarb and Weber for five