



YESCO

A legacy of light

Travelers and tourists who have ever visited Las Vegas, Nevada, no doubt have been dazzled by the city's bright lights and flashy architecture. The Vegas Strip, with its many casinos and resort hotels, features an intense and original presentation of electrified color, with many one-of-a-kind signs and displays to attract and entice the crowds of sightseers and vacationers who flood "Glitter Gulch." Most of Las Vegas' most

iconic displays were designed, manufactured, and installed by YESCO, a 96 year-old, family-owned company. The list of hotels and casinos that feature YESCO signage in Las Vegas includes: the Boulder Club, Golden Nugget, Eldorado, Mint, Silver Slipper, Stardust, Venetian, the Wynn Las Vegas, Harrah's, the Sahara, Caesar's Palace, and the Rio— not to mention Vegas Vic, a 75-foot, six-ton, neon cowboy that was erected



AT A GLANCE

WHO: YESCO

WHAT: Designer, manufacturer, installer, and maintainer of custom signs and display systems

WHERE: Headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah

WEBSITE: www.yesco.com

sign painting business in Ogden, Utah, which, today, has grown to become one of the nation's recognized leaders in the fields of sign design, sign fabrication, sign installation, and ongoing sign service and maintenance. "My great grandfather was an artist," Young says. "He was an immigrant from England who came over to the United States with very little money. He borrowed \$300 from his father, who worked in the coalmines in England, to get the business off the ground. In those early years, it was mainly hand-painted signs, graphic lettering, golf-leaf window lettering, and coffin plates.

on the exterior of the Pioneer Club in 1951, and has since become the city's welcoming trademark.

Josh Young is YESCO's Vice President for Franchising. His great grandfather, Thomas Young, started the company in 1920. "The ownership transferred from my great grandfather to my grandfather. Current management and leadership of the company is in its third generation with my father and two uncles," Young relates. "I'm one of several fourth-generation that are currently working. They'll be several others who will likely join us down the road."

Young tells the story of how his great grandfather, Thomas, began a small advertising and commercial

"One of the opportunities that presented itself early on in the history of the company was for my great grandfather to acquire the license to produce neon. That license really propelled him into the electric sign business and, more importantly, into the Las Vegas market that was in its infancy. So, he took that license and technology and began producing the large, iconic signs in Las Vegas. And as history progressed, it was additional opportunities like that that presented themselves – much of which was driven by the rapid growth and aggressive nature of the Las Vegas market and the desire of the casino owners to do more to attract customers into their businesses. That drove our technological advances and need to improve, and to come up with different strategies and creative ways to con-

vey our customers' messages."

Over the course of the last half century, YESCO has continued to dominate the market in large, custom-made electric signs. The company has expanded its portfolio to include some of the country's biggest corporations for which it fabricates both one-of-a-kind

edge LCD video systems for theaters, restaurants, stadiums, and sports arenas.

"In the gaming industry, and increasingly in the arena space, we're at the top of the list," says Young. Meanwhile, the company solicits business owners of all sizes about providing them with sign manufactur-

ing solutions - especially when the need is for a large or particularly spectacular display. "We deal in custom signs, large signs, very creative signs, integrated LED displays into those signs, and that's fairly unique for us," he says. "We're able to differentiate ourselves as a sign manufacturer. The sign industry has been traditionally fragmented; you've got a lot of smaller sign companies throughout the United States. And a big reason for that is the cost to ship or transport a large sign is very prohibitive. You're better off working with a local or regional company to build the product rather than to ship it across the country. The exception comes when it's something so large that you can't find that capability at a local level. And that's when you go to a YESCO to have that large sign built."

YESCO has also grown over the years through the acquisition of smaller, regional sign companies, and by opening company offices with state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities throughout the western United States. Today, the company has over 1,000 employees working in 47 company locations west of Colorado.

In the early 2000s, YESCO began exploring the con



displays, such as Starbuck Coffee's corporate headquarters sign in Seattle, Washington and the NBC Experience "message globe" in New York City, as well as what Young calls "program work" - the replication of many signs for multi-location clients such as the Ford Motor Company, Bank of America, and McDonald's. YESCO has also designed signs, displays, and cutting

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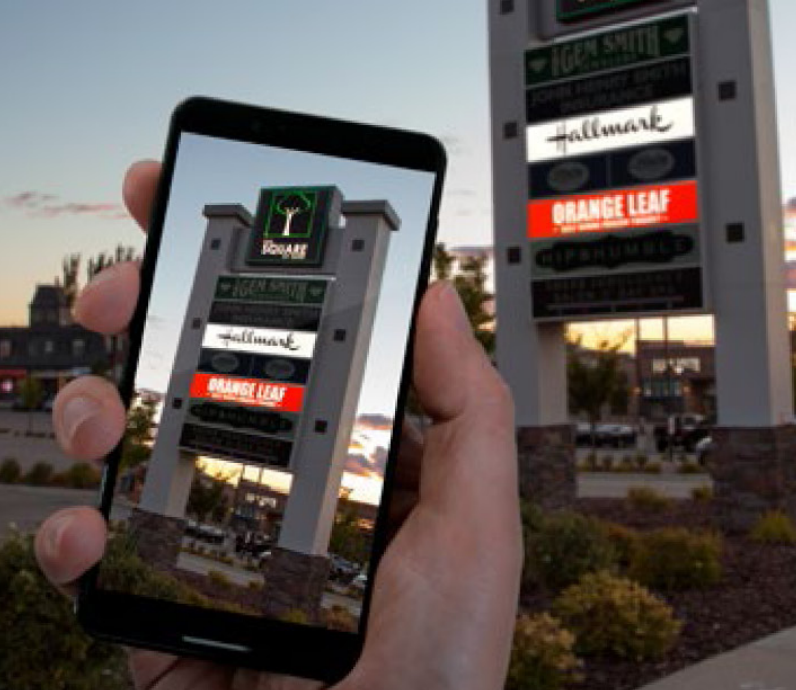


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cept of franchising its sign and lighting services. In early 2011, it had launched its first franchise location. Currently, the company has 45 franchisees, covering 80 territories in the United States and Canada. Young says the goal is to have 300 North American franchise territories open by 2019, with further plans to go international. "We're going to focus on English speaking countries to start," he says. "We're working on some potential deals in Australia and the United Kingdom and we'll get more aggressive with that development as time goes on."

Sam Fisher is YESCO's Vice President for Business Development. He is focused on building the sector's largest, self-performing network of sign and lighting services, so any one of the company-owned locations or its franchises can respond to a client's needs. "It's a YESCO employee, it's a YESCO uniform, it's a YESCO

truck, doing it the YESCO way," Fisher says. "We are completely unique. No one else is doing what YESCO is doing. On the sign lighting service side, we break our efforts into two components. We've got the local business opportunity - repairing the local sign owners, like McDonalds, which is a franchisee, or a mom and pop shop - and then we've got a national component and we enter into contracts in that venue, where we'll take care of a thousand Bank of Americas, or six hundred Star Bucks locations, and we'll utilize our company locations and our franchise locations to handle that sign and lighting repair."

Fisher says that YESCO considers itself more of a "peripheral player" in the franchise space - it's not fast food, or retail, or quick serve - and it mostly finds its franchisees within the existing sign and lighting industry. "We gravitate toward folks or organizations com-

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ing out of the sign industry because they gain synergy by having the service component along with their fabrication division. We look for people who have good business sense, who appreciate our model, and are looking to develop a business-to-business service organization. We don't have people calling us all day long; we do more outreach, looking for people who have the financial wherewithal, as well as the business acumen, to be successful in running this business."

Young elaborates upon YESCO's franchise-awarding methods, "Because a lot of our focus has been on small sign companies, we have the ability to naturally select. There are about 20,000 shops in the world, whether they're doing electrical or the vinyl print and that kind of thing. We've focused more on the electrical and folks that we either have relationships with, through the utilization of resources with one of our oth-

er companies, like manufacturing, or that are tied to the two key industry associations that naturally attract those who are truly interested. So, it's kind of a natural selection process of whittling that 20,000 down. We have a qualification process, which is typical of a franchisor. We've got our net worth requirements; we have a discovery day requirement where we met them face-to-face; and a couple of additional components: credit, background check, and a lot of gut feel. There's not a lot that go through that process that we turn away – there are some, but probably 85 or 90 percent of them make it through or they weed themselves out before they even get to that process."

Fisher believes that YESCO brings a great deal of value to its franchisees. "First of all, a fool-proof business model," he states. "We have 47 company locations and have deployed this service model and demon-



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strated that it works. We have the most service locations in the country and we've got the best way to do it, using our technology and our proactive approach." Company trucks even go out on patrols at night, driving routes and looking for outages. "That's a huge deal that we bring to the market."



"In addition, we bring our purchasing power," Fisher says. "So, as you interact with our suppliers and vendors, you're going to find that we have exceptional pricing because of the leverage and volume that we have. The other advantage that we have is the training and support we can give because of our industry knowledge and because of our history, our 96 plus years

in the sign industry. We can train even someone who doesn't come with any sign industry experience, and get them to the point where they're running a successful sign lighting and service business."

YESCO's network also provides benefits to the companies it services. "If you are a large company, if you're Starbucks, you're trying to service all of your signage in your network and one way you can do that is by contracting it out to several organizations," Fisher explains. "Well, what we're building is a network where



you're just dealing with YESCO. We're going to get the job done and it's going to be uniform, across the board, instead of having twenty different ways of doing it."

In the end, the fourth generation Young is bullish on the future of the almost 100 year-old company. "As we begin to increase our critical mass across the country, in our ability to self-perform sign and lighting service, we are already seeing an increased growth in that business that we've never seen before," he exults. "Because of our history and the brand recognition, there are a lot of regional and national-type customers that want to have a single point of contact for their sign and lighting service needs. And so, it's getting people in place so that we can truly see the revenue growth potential of each of our individual offices expand, accordingly."

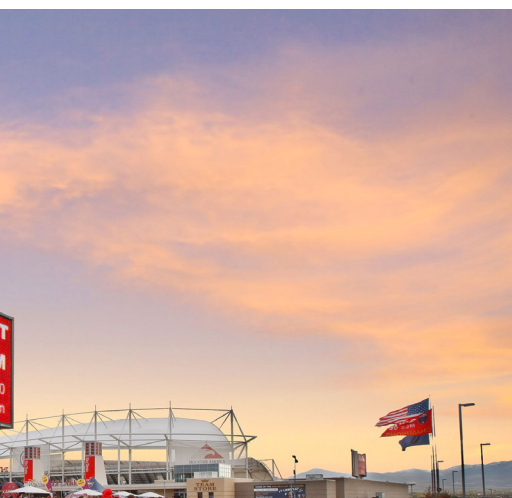


From its humble beginnings in Ogden, Utah to Las Vegas' Glitter Gulch and beyond, the YESCO brand continues its century-long tradition of advancing the science and design of lighting and sign making by tackling ever larger and more complex projects. At the same time, this iconic American company provides the ongoing

maintenance services that keep its customers' signs and displays on and in excellent working condition.

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