

From Artist Kid to Advertising Innovator

By: Marina Mendez

TAMPA, Fla. (April 2, 2015)—Carl Vervisch, president and creative director of Social Forces, knew that in an industry as innovative and fast paced as advertising, it is crucial to take chances. That's exactly what he did when he started his own agency.

Diving into the world of social media while the networks were still completely foreign to the world of advertising was a big leap to take, but for Vervisch and his business partner, it was time to act.

“There's a famous quote that says ‘The best way to predict the future is to create it,’ and I think we really espouse that,” Vervisch said. “We felt like our industry was about to hit this iceberg of not knowing what to do with itself, and we decided we'd rather be in a kayak than a cruise ship so we could navigate that with more speed and agility.”

Six years later, the Social Forces team considers themselves the world experts in their “social shopper marketing.” They are focused on helping consumer brands and retailers sell their products with social-driven campaigns in a way that is unlike any typical agency.

The agency is made up of a 10 person team and works with billion dollar brands such as Pepsi, M&M's, Monster Energy, and Planters. National retailers like Circle K, 7-Eleven, and Speedway are also on the client list.

“When it comes to this niche, we're in a class of our own in terms of experience, strategy, and ability—we're always pushing things forward,” Vervisch said.

Getting to this level, however, wasn't always easy. Vervisch graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Michigan State University with a concentration in graphic design. His entire education focused on art and he excelled in design. Vervisch was published in two design magazines and

won a National ADDY from the American Advertising Federation while in college, but things didn't come so easily in the real world.

“It probably didn't help that I moved 1,100 miles from home, but basically the ego I'd built up as a student was completely deflated within a couple months,” Vervisch said.

In an attempt to stand out in the competitive world of advertising, Vervisch made himself into a product in order to brand himself for a job. He marketed himself as “The Carl: A living, breathing, designing thing,” and had an entire sales catalog created to demonstrate his features and benefits.

“I had a lot of fun building it, and it was contagious,” Vervisch said.

His level of creative energy and passion for learning, when combined with his determination to do something that has never been done before, makes Vervisch a successful president and creative director.

“There are always new challenges and opportunities to stretch your mind, learn something new, and develop creative solutions,” Vervisch said. “I love growing and learning and creating, and advertising requires all of that daily.”