A LOCAL PRODUCTION

Helbrook Media Productions Started Out Of The Conviction That Local Work Was As Good As anyone's.

A man's heritage is gold. You can't find a man under him that may never be extricated.

In 1990 the Helbrook and a local radio station manager were at a station listening to a jingle that had been produced by an out-of-state company for a local client. Though he had never written or produced a jingle, Helbrook was a music man, had become interested in jingles and figured he knew enough to offer his opinion.

So he told the manager, who was also from this area, that he thought the jingle was masterful. For the client and that the out-of-state company didn’t have a grip of what would sell here.

His friend’s answer? Clients are too stupid to produce jingles as good as that produced in Nashville or Detroit.

"This was the first that got me going," Helbrook says. "Even though my last name is Helbrook, I was born and raised in the area and have Cajun heritage."

"I went out the next day and said I’d come over and a client and I’m gonna get some of the musicians I know to work with me."

Within a few days he had hired Mike Legnano, a musician, and within two weeks he had a client. Only a week later, he said Legnano produced a jingle package for the Albert’s Fresh Chicken line was used last about 15 years. "We made sure that everything was just right,” Helbrook says.

And for the last 10 years, Helbrook, 34, and his company Helbrook Media Productions have been doing a "Just right" for several clients and is now a full scale video, film and audio production house.

After Helbrook and Legnano completed 15 Albert’s jingle, they set up a partnership with Helbrook’s longtime friend, keyboardist Tim G"nois. Know as "Just Us Productions," based in New Bern, the company, or rather the partnership, dissolved in 1994 as G"nois launched off to medical school and Legnano became involved in other projects.

So Helbrook just had the company’s name, took over all its responsibilities and moved to Jefferson. "We continued to grow as a jingle company and recording studio," he says. Some of the jingles he wrote and produced 15 years ago are still being used today.

About 10 years ago Kim, his wife and the company’s vice president, suggested he branch into video. "We saw that the needs—audio, video, and film—were coming together," Helbrook says. He began taking on small videos into big videos and says his big break came from Jan Barone, then at KLXY, 101.9, and Maria Paez, who still works with the station.

Jim Barone, Helbrook says, told him if he could do as well in video as he did with jingles, that he’d definitely succeed.

Helbrook was hired by KLXY. He eventually produced features for several area towns and went different musical arrangements of the "Hello America" theme. Most notable was his work with Ravenst and Paez in 1992 on the "Wheatmeal's Child" program. He drew up the formulas, wrote Legnano to write a theme song, play the keyboard, the setting and the song and produced a total of 31 segments. Recording the third segment, Helbrook says, "We are there and worked it. Within minutes the phones were ringing. More than 200 people called the station responding to the adoption segment which features a kidnapped child."

In 1993 Helbrook began doing more of his own television commercials and was contracted out by local advertising agencies. He even bought a radio station in Franklin. Meanwhile, Helbrook says, "The jingle business continued to snowball on us."

About 2-1/2 years ago Helbrook Media moved to Lafayette. The business now takes up the bottom floor of the building at 108 Exchange Plaza, and Helbrook has five full-time employees, three interns and one contract writer.

"I pity those who fail to realize that South Louisiana is a great place to live and do business," Helbrook says.