

HOW TO START AND OPERATE YOUR OWN VIDEO TAPING SERVICE

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This is a fabulously profitable business that's still in its infancy. And for sure, if you want a business that takes no special training, expensive office set-up or large investment -yet is capable of showing almost immediate profits - this is it!

Now is the ideal time to get started with your own Video Taping Service. Purchasing and learning how to operate, as well as maintain the necessary equipment is easy. The technological improvements built into the equipment, and the operating procedures have been so simplified that almost anyone with the ability to read, can study a video instruction manual for a couple of hours and immediately produce professional quality, highly marketable video tapes. Without a doubt, video tape technology has replaced Super 8 home movies as the most-desired memory-saving system.

One- and two-person video taping services around the country are reporting gross earnings of \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year. One operation we looked into, reported an income figure of \$800,000 during the preceding 12-month period. They were accepting taping jobs from all quarters and keeping 4-hired teams busy.

Marketing imagination, organization, and attention to detail are the keys to success in operating this business. Ideas and requests for new things or events to tape and preserve for later playback/viewing, are coming in faster than one can list. Then, there are so many things to remember and minor details to take care of, that the only way to operate successfully is with a series of checklists... for the person selling the service as well as the man or woman on the recording camera.

But don't let mentioning of details to remember, scare you off. On the contrary, you'll find video equipment easy and inexpensive to practice on, especially when compared to attaining a comparable degree of expertise with film. You can use the same tape over and over again, and this is definitely a business where the phrase "practice leads to perfection," applies without qualifications or reservations.

To start a video taping service, you'll need a video "porta-pack" recorder, and at least a half dozen tapes. Check around in your area. Start by "reading up" on all the available equipment used for video taping. A trip to your public library and a few hours browsing through the periodicals on video equipment should give you added interest and a basic indoctrination. Next, check out the suppliers listed in the yellow pages of your telephone directory. A few phone calls to those places listed, plus a few in-person visits, should supply you with enough catalogs and "idea material" to keep you plenty busy for a week or more. These elementary learning steps are necessary as the foundation of your business.

You should be able to buy a good quality video porta-pack recorder for about \$850, with blank tapes for \$20 or less. When you buy, always dicker with the dealer - explaining to him that you're in the process of establishing a video taping service, and if he will include a supply of tapes with the recorder, or at least give you an especially good price on them, you'll probably buy all your tapes from him. It may not be your regular way of buying things,

but when you're starting a business, every dollar counts, so always shop around for the best prices.

Once you have your video recorder, take it home and start practicing with it. Think of yourself as being on a job for a homeowner or an insurance company, taking a photographic inventory of the house and/or the occupant's possessions. Practice by making a tape record of your own household furnishings. Make a tape, then play it back and critique your work. Then do it again, and again, until you have a tape you can use in sales presentations to homeowners and insurance companies. Video tape recordings of this kind are becoming extremely popular with homeowners and insurance companies alike.

Then, look through your weekend newspaper and make a note of the girls announcing wedding dates. Open your telephone directory and call these girls on the phone. Ask them if they'd mind if you came to their wedding and made a video tape of it, without any obligation to them of course.

So you go to the wedding, introduce yourself and practice making a video tape of the wedding ceremony. Take the tape home and critique it. Keep this up until you have a tape you're reasonably proud of, and then call the bride. Ask to come over and let her see the tape. Explain to her that you're just getting started in the business, and you simply want her comments and suggestions. Chances are, when she sees the tape, she'll want to buy it.

While you're in this learning phase of your new business, visit an apartment building and arrange with the manager to make a video tape of her showing the apartment to you as a potential renter. Contact a couple of property management and real estate firms, and do the same thing with condominiums and houses for sale.

You might want to listen in on the police radio frequency, and make tapes of auto accidents, particularly those involving injuries. Another idea might be the taping of golfers practicing at the local driving ranges. Other ideas include any kind of sports practice session, birthday parties, special anniversaries, baptisms, bar mitzvah's, publicity stories, sales presentations, and "fireside chats" by company presidents or general managers.

These are just a few idea suggestions you might want to pursue. You may find a certain kind of video taping assignment especially enjoyable and want to specialize in that area. Or you may want to leave the door open for any kind of assignment and handle each as the opportunity presents itself.

Whatever you decide, there are a few "sure success" points to keep in mind as you begin to sell your services. Remember, the idea of having a video cassette system in one's home, is gaining in popularity every day. There are already some two-million video cassette recorders in American Homes, with an estimated 100,000 being sold to new customers every month. Further estimates indicate that by 1990, at least one half of all U.S. households will own either a videocassette recorder or a videodisc player. All of this means your market is growing and is expected to continue growing through the end of this decade.

Virtually everyone would like to see himself as a star in a home movie. Thus, when you show him a video tape of himself in the starring role, he'll either buy the tape on the spot or want you to make a similar tape for him. Regardless of false modesty, everyone likes to show pictures of

himself, and explain to his friends the different highlights of his or her life. With this understanding about your prospect in mind when you make a sales presentation, your closing rate should be quite close to 100 percent.

The best way to sell your services is to run a regular ad in your area newspapers. Such an ad might be similar to this one:

VIDEO TAPING SERVICES...

Whatever your idea or assignment, we can handle it for you! No job too large or too small! We're experts at taping weddings, anniversaries, birthday parties and other special occasions. Commercial assignments also welcomed. Your satisfaction is guaranteed, so give us a call - 123-4567, right now!

When you receive calls in response to this ad, your objective will be two-fold: Find out what kind of taping job they have in mind, and set up an appointment to show them an example of the kinds of tapes you can produce for them. Show them an example of your work. Once you've met with them, and shown them a demonstration tape, you should have the sale in your pocket.

Never meet with a prospect in a selling situation without some sort of demonstration tape to show him. Try to match the tape you show them, as closely to their wants and needs as possible. Wedding tapes you have made for prospective wedding clients, and shots of golf practice or instruction to golfing prospects.

Besides an ad in the newspaper, and the yellow pages of your telephone directory, make copies of the ad and get it up on the bulletin boards in your market area. Send news and publicity releases to all the media in your area, definitely whenever you've got an unusual or special kind of assignment.

Have some impressive business cards printed, and hand them out to whomever, and as often as you can. The slogan on your business card might read: Have Video Tape Recorder - Available for ANY kind of assignment - You name it and I'll tape it...

Radio and/or television advertising will probably be more expensive than the resulting job assignments will sustain, so be very cautious when considering this type of advertising. However, it will very definitely be advantageous for you to pursue guest interviews on just about any kind of broadcast talk show. Talk show appearances and free write-ups about your business in your local newspapers are promotional angles to reach for at every opportunity. Always be on the lookout for promotional ideas and gimmicks that will result in area-wide publicity for your services.

The bottom line is simply this: Don't be adverse to creating a story or set of circumstances if it results in a talk show appearance or newspaper write-up for you.

How much should you charge for your services? Basically, the going rate in most large metropolitan areas is about \$50 per hour you spend on the assignment. Thus, you're going to have to learn to estimate pretty accurately just how long each job is going to take you to produce a quality recording. It's always a good idea to check out what other video taping services in your area, or in a

comparably sized city in your neighboring states are charging. Newsletters and trade publications serving businesses of this type are available, however, we don't know of any that have attained national prominence as of the date of this report. Check with your equipment supplier on any that he might know of...

Success with a business of this kind does not require an office set-up or any special education or training. You can start it on a part-time basis from your home, and parlay it into a full time, very high profit profession. The prestige this business will afford you is similar to that of a doctor.

Starting with a young couple's wedding, if you follow up on each sale properly, you'll probably end up making tapes for the birthdays of each of their children, school graduations, anniversaries, more birthdays, family histories, last wills & testaments, and into a whole new cycle with each generation.

You will need imagination, an affinity for people and selling moxie. Imagination is important because in many instances, you'll have to suggest an idea for your taping services. Although just about everybody would like to have a taped record of some event or part of their life to pass along to future generations of their family, most will not be able to decide what to tape until you suggest something to them. You'll also find that almost no one is aware of even half your capabilities until you make suggestions.

Taking pictures of people requires an ability to get along well with people - get them to relax, and immediately feel comfortable in your presence. You've got to be persuasive while exercising a great deal of tact and diplomacy. Make friends easily and quickly. Be aware of, and understanding of wants, desires and ambitions.

Actually, selling and getting along with people, are almost synonymous. Life is an on-going program of selling yourself to achieve your own wants and ambitions. Read a few good books on the art of selling, such as: HOW TO SELL YOURSELF by Steve Girard; and HOW TO SELL ANYTHING TO ANYBODY by Tom Hopkins. Remember, selling is really just a matter of recognizing someone's needs and then satisfying those needs with a product or service.

Your customers will automatically accept it as fact, that you have the professional knowledge and equipment to fulfill their needs. All you have to do is reassure them, listen to their reasons for these needs, and in closing the sale, become a good friend to them.

And that's it - the plan that can enable you to get started with your own Video Taping Service. By following our suggestions, and with a bit of energy as well as persistence, you should be able to begin with very little start-up investment and quickly begin to realize the fruits of your own profitable business.

If you have any questions, or run into special problems, please feel free to call me or drop me a line. Having laid it all out for you, the rest is up to you - Your future is in your own hands...