

How To Make Money In The Clock Mounting Business

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How To Make Money In The Clock Mounting Business

Most successful clock making businesses started out as hobbies. This business involves buying (not manufacturing) clock works and mounting them in unique, attractive faces, holders and motifs that you create. Many different types and prices of clock works are available from various supply houses that you can fashion into works of art.

A clock can be mounted on any number of crafted or non-crafted items: burlwood, toys, funny faces, paintings, etched mirrors, souvenirs, marble slabs, sculptures, photographs, family keepsakes, or just about anything you can imagine.

In fact, you might well come up with a new idea. What about a large picture of your child, with a clock in one corner - or one on a picture of your mother-law (you're "on your own" on this one!).

One enterprising couple made clocks from used circular saw blades: the wife painted scenes and numbers: the husband applied a protective covering and mounted clock works on them.

You do not have to know about clocks or watch repair, or have any special talents. The clock works, whether electric or wind-up come complete, ready to mount.

The main thing is to space the numerals evenly so they look as if they are a part of the object. One technique is to arrange the face numbers on a attractive slab of wood. They can be "spaced" with a paper pattern.

Draw a circle the right size and use a compass to divide the circle into 12 equal parts of 30 degrees each. Center the numbers on the 12 dividing lines, with the bottoms just touching the circle. When properly placed, glue them lightly in place to keep them from slipping and apply your finish (usually resin on wood.

When the finish is thick enough and well cured, drill a hole at the center of the proposed dial circle and mount the clock from behind, letting the hands shaft project through the hole. Add the hands, and your clock is finished. Some hand-crafted clocks are really works of art and bring over \$100 apiece!

Prices for quartz (battery operated) clocks start at about \$3 each (even less in quantity), which means that your total materials cost to produce them is considerably lower than their potential value.. In most cases this business results in getting paid for both you time and a profit on the material.

Marketing hand-crafted clocks is worth a little extra effort because the difference in price realized can be significant. Since one of the main selling points is beauty, take some good pictures of your best clocks and mount them in a photo album (a good quality album with nothing but clocks in it). Use a good camera and get shots that show only the clocks with contrasting background.

For example, use a white sheet as a background for a dark clock; dark velvet or a plain, dark wall for a light colored one. Take pictures with negatives, which you can use to have a brochure printed.

Another technique is to set up a display of your clocks -- at your place, a rented display window, or in a store (on consignment).

The display should show off your clocks to their best advantage - good lighting, contrasting plain background, with no other distractions in the immediate area. They can be displayed in a dedicated section of shelves or a display case, or even in a suggested decor.

The main idea is to treat them as valuable items, which is how you want potential customers to see them!

To get started in the clock making business, send off for as many price lists as you can for works and mounts. Clock suppliers will provide you with detailed mounting instructions for their products.

In the meantime, experiment with finishing techniques - resin coating, painting, sand blasting or whatever your pleasure. When you have decided what kind of clocks you will start with, set up your working area and get the necessary tools and supplies.

For natural wood finishes, you will probably need things like stains, casting resin, cleaner, brushes, tin strips, wood finishing materials, clamps, saws, and glue.

To obtain an extra thick coat of resin, build a retaining wall (the tin strips) around the piece to form a reservoir. Pour in the resin and tap out any bubbles. When it has cured remove the walls, shape and apply resin to the edges. When satisfied with the thickness and uniformity, polish and assemble your finished clock.

Your first few projects will probably NOT be perfect -- in fact, they will probably include several "features" that you will have to learn NOT to do -- or at least to do better.

These efforts need not be losses, however. They can be sold for

reduced prices at flea markets, given to relatives (presents?), or sold to retail stores (even second hand stores, if necessary).

Do not show these first efforts to any store or customer that may later be a prospect for your best efforts (and higher prices). If you try to sell imperfect models today, you risk damaging your reputation before it ever gets started!

People who build successful businesses withhold their products and services until they are GOOD. From that point, they NEVER offer anything of lesser quality. This is why Marshall Fields can get ten times as much as KMart for an identical item!

Although you will probably buy your initial supply of materials from your local hardware or hobby store (Walmart carries some good supplies), look for a good source to buy materials wholesale, or at a significant (20-40%) discount.

Experiment with the different materials and DO NOT overlook freebies, some of which might make fantastic clocks. Examples are: driftwood, used (weather beaten) lumber, slabs of native rock, magazine pictures (coated with resin), old shovels or radios.

Also, compare brands, prices and results of products to make sure you are using a \$65 per gallon resin when a \$15 would do just as well.

Other possibilities are custom clocks (made from a customer's materials, or idea), thematic (a pallet clock for an artist), nature (oak slab with acorns for numbers), and clocks for special uses (designed to fit on top of a computer, or on the dash of a motorhome).

When you stop and think about it, there must be millions of possibilities that have not yet been discovered -- is one of them yours?

Once you have the materials and skill to produce clocks, you will automatically have attained both the skills and the means to make many other products that can be used to augment your business.

For example, plastic [paperweights with imbedded acorns or pills or beautiful plastic coated and/or decorated jewelry and trinket boxes (some with music boxes) and whatnot shelves.

A word of caution about resins and finishes that are often used in clock making. Read the labels on the finishes, thinners, cleaning materials carefully. Most are highly flammable and many are toxic to breathe. Make sure your working area is adequately ventilated and have a fire extinguisher handy -- just in case!

BUSINESS SOURCES

INSTRUMENTS SERVICES, 433 S. Arch St., Janesville, WI 53545, 800/558-2674. Clock movements, quartz works and conversions, hands, auto clocks.

NAMES & NUMBERS, INC., 2235 16th Ave. North, St Petersburg, FL 33713, 813/323-4021. Wholesale clocks, parts, numbers, custom molding of dials.

VAN DOMMELEN CLOCKS, 9 A Church St., Lambertville, NJ 08530, 609/397-0554. Dutch clock kits; Zaanze weight driven, delft tiles; wall and mantle versions.

CAS-KER CO., Box 14069, Cincinnati, OH 45214, 513/241-7073. Clock parts for hobbyists and craftsmen.

TIC TOC ROCK CLOCK CO., Box 1038, Port Washington, NY 11030. Wholesale clocks mounted on Brazilian agate (from \$20).

TIMESAVERS, Box 171, Wheeling, IL 60090. Manufacturer of clock motors and hardware.

TIME AMERICA, Box 2288, Norcross, GA 30091. Manufacturer of clock works, motors, parts.

STEEBAR, Box 463, Andover, NJ 07821. Clock parts and mountings (oak cut-outs etc.).

I.C.I., Box 158, Intercession, FL 33848. Cypress slabs for clocks, furniture and craft work.

EXOLITE CORP., 806 1/2 16th St., Wheatland, WY 82201. Wholesale clock works, blanks, rockhound supplies, cut stones, etc.

KLOKIT, Box 542, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Claims to be #1 seller of quartz and mechanical movements for beginners and professionals - from \$14 to \$1500. Free catalog.

CASTOLITE, Box 391, Woodstock, IL 60098. Liquid resin and molding supplies for casting, coating, repairs, reproductions and crafts.

GREGORY MANUFACTURING CO., INC., Box 1303, Jackson, MS 39205, 800/647-7152. Wooden and marble plaques. Good supply of woods and marbles at excellent prices.

QUILL CORPORATION, 100 Schelter Rd., Lincolnshire, IL 60907-4700, 312/634-4800. Office supplies.

NEBS, 500 Main St., Groton, MA 04171, 800/225-6380. Office supplies.

SWEDCO, Box 29, Mooresville, NC 28115. Three line rubber stamps, business cards, etc.

IVEY PRINTING CO., Box 761, Meridan, TX 76665. Write for price list.

ZPS, Box 581, Libertyville, IL 60048---2556. Business cards and letterhead stationery. Will print your copy ready logo or design, even whole card.