


# VIDEO PRODUCERS, Customer Segment Story: VIDEO PRODUCTION HOUSES

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Now, more than ever, organizations of all types are using video technology to bring their messages to their various audiences. The video production industry came into being in the mid-1970s when the portable video camera was introduced.

Producing videos for corporations and consumers can be a great business to be in. For example, a single 20-minute corporate training video can cost \$20,000, and go up from there. Video producers also increase their revenue by offering “a la carte” production services, such as sound-stage rentals, editing services and duplication services.

One especially lucrative extra service that customers are increasingly demanding is off-site, long-term and archival storage of master and backup copies of tapes and discs. This demand is understandable – once a client invests many thousands of dollars to produce content, they will want to ensure that a master copy is in a safe, accessible place in the event that copies of the tapes or discs are destroyed.

Horror stories abound about irreplaceable master tapes, discs and production footage being destroyed in fires. These can range in scale from over 1,000 original prints of old Indian movies (some the only copies) destroyed by fire at the Film and Television Institute of India, to the devastating loss of irreplaceable videotapes of deceased family members in an arson fire, as happened to Larry and Don Widner, of La Grande, Oregon.

The insurance company Atlantic Mutual recommends that photo negatives and videotapes be safely stored in a fireproof safe or container. “Damage to photos or videotapes representing important life events can be devastating and painful when these items are deemed irreplaceable,” commented Theodore Henke, Atlantic Mutual senior vice president, claims services division. “By securing duplicate copies of photo negatives and videotapes, the precious images of your child’s first steps, your parents’ 50th wedding anniversary and your graduation can then be easily replaced.”

For video producers who are interested in selling off-site, long-term and archival storage to their customers, there are a few key facts to consider.

Standard filing equipment will definitely NOT provide the necessary protection from fire or water damage. Even a “fireproof” cabinet will not protect media contained on video tape or digital disc. It is necessary to use a container specifically designed to protect electronic media.

Since tape and disc media begins to degrade at temperatures of 125° F or humidity over 85%, production houses must use equipment that has been tested by Underwriters Laboratory (UL)\* and rated to remain at or below 125° F for at least 2 hours when exposed to fire (as per the Standard Time Temperature Curve) up to 1850° F. Proper protection from internal humidity increases must also be attained, as water from fire hoses, sprinklers and burst pipes can cause the humidity to rise.

The top suppliers in the industry offer well-designed, attractive media-rated safes, fire resistant file cabinets and fire safes for onsite records protection. You can readily find this equipment at your local office products dealer, in most office products catalogs, or increasingly, on the Internet.

Other things to emphasize would be the storage room environment, (which should be climate controlled at 63° F and 35% relative humidity) and physical security, with restricted access measures that ensure the room where the container(s) are kept only be accessed upon proper authority and supervision.

The bottom line is, offering long term and archival storage to clients can be a cash cow for video production houses. All that is needed is the space – and the right equipment.

*\*It is absolutely 100% imperative to use products that are tested by Underwriters' Laboratory (UL).  
Avoid equipment with “manufacturers” or non-independent ratings at all costs.*

By Rock Stamberg  
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