

## The Business of Carving:

"Before we use any power tools, let's take a moment to talk about shop safety. Be sure to read, understand, and follow all the safety rules that come with your power tools. Knowing how to use your power tools properly will greatly reduce the risk of personal injury. And remember this: there is no more important safety rule than to wear these — safety glasses." [*He points at his aviator-style prescription glasses.*] **Norm Abrams**

Many successful people who have started their own business have simply turned their hobby into a career.

### ❖ **Ever Heard of a guy named Norm?**

❖ **Early career...** After college, Norm Abram worked for three years as a site supervisor for a multimillion-dollar New England-based construction firm. In 1976, Abram then went into business for himself, founding the general contracting firm Integrated Structures Inc.

❖ **This Old House...** In 1979, Abram took a construction job building a small barn in the backyard of the television producer Russell Morash, the creator of public television's This Old House. Impressed by Abram's small scrap pile and efficient work habits, Morash invited Abram to help with the renovation of a rundown Victorian house in Boston's historic Dorchester section, with a WGBH camera crew recording the process for the first This Old House project with host Bob Vila. Morash then approached Abram with the idea of Norm the carpenter appearing as a regular on the This Old House series, and Norm has been a fixture on the show ever since.

❖ **The New Yankee Workshop...** In 1988, Russell Morash planned to launch a spinoff of This Old House called The New Yankee Workshop, and he needed a convenient place to videotape so they used the shop in the small barn that Abram built in 1979 in Morash's backyard. The shop's layout and equipment were mostly Abram's preferences. The New Yankee Workshop first aired in 1989 with Abram as the host. The New Yankee workshop showcased a furniture or other project over the course of one or more episodes, and emphasized the use of power tools and equipment. The show aired for 21 seasons on PBS.

A wood carving career is no different than someone who sells a one-of-a-kind product. Making a business out of wood carving can be done and there are many ways to market your product, get your name out into the world, and start making sales one wood carving by one wood carving.

## Decide On Your Product ... What is Your Specialty?

You have to decide what you are going to specialize in and research it, the Carvewright Forum is a great source of information for this ...

- A. You have to decide what your niche is.
  - a. Lithopanes
  - b. Name plates
  - c. House Numbers
  - d. 3d Carvings
  - e. Christmas Ornaments
- B. Think about what your hobbies are
  - a. Fishing
  - b. Hunting
  - c. Racing
- C. Maybe it is something that you are already doing

I spent about 5 years trying to do it all ... all that does is spread your resources way to thin.

### **Decide on a Plan**

Before you go blindly into turning your wood carving hobby into a business of selling your wood carving creations, you may want to know how you'll begin getting the word out. The first plan of action should be to create a website that showcases some of your work, tells a little bit about yourself and how long you've been in the wood carving/working business, and also it should give example prices of your products. Creating a website will also help you get more organized for when you put your name out into the world, also.

- A. GoDaddy
- B. HyperMart
- C. Intuit
- D. If you have no ability for building a website there a lot of services available on line

### **Decide on a Theme**

Continuity is important ... Your wood carving website can also be a basis for brochures, business cards, flyers, banners and all manner of things.

- A. VistaPrint – [www.VistaPrint.com](http://www.VistaPrint.com)
- B. Office Max – Walk In
- C. Sams
- D. Local Print Shop – it is always nice to try to support your neighbors and you might get an order

### **Free Advertising**

After you've made brochures or business cards, many stores and businesses will allow you to post your work and business card on public notice boards that hang on the wall.

- A. Hobby Lobby
- B. AC Moore
- C. Where you buy your materials
- D. Where you buy your tools
- E. Stickers on your own vehicle
- F. A sign on your shop or in your front yard ... Hang Out Your Shingle

### **Social Networking ... what is social networking?**

A social network is a social structure made up of individuals (or organizations), which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, knowledge or prestige.

Social network analysis views social relationships in terms of network theory consisting of nodes and ties (also called edges, links, or connections). Research in a number of academic fields has shown that social networks operate on many levels, from families up to the level of nations, and play a critical role in determining the way problems are solved, organizations are run, and the degree to which individuals succeed in achieving their goals.

- A. The CarveWright Forum
- B. CNC Art Guild of America Forum
- C. LumberJocks.com
- D. FaceBook
- E. MySpace
- F. Join the Forum that is associated with your favorite Woodworking magazine

### **Word of Mouth – Donations**

Try making a sign or plaque and donating to a local Social group ... this will generate business and afford you an opportunity to get some free exposure and sometimes a free meal.

- A. Fire Department
- B. Police Department
- C. Boy Scouts
- D. Girls Scouts
- E. Delta Waterfowl
- F. Ducks Unlimited

## Filling Orders

Another thing to think about when it comes to receiving wood carving orders is how you'll fill those orders.

- A. Will you create your wood carvings on an order by order basis, allowing 1 to 2 weeks for delivery?
- B. Or will you pre-carve some common wood carvings so that you'll be able to market and sell those right from the beginning?
- C. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions, but being prepared to tackle them when wood carving orders start rolling in would be beneficial.

If you're careful and know what you're doing, getting started turning your wood carving business into a hobby should not prove to be very difficult. Of course, finding that first sale for any business is the most difficult. But the more orders that come in and the more requests for wood carvings that you get will allow you to take a deep breath, relax, and watch your wood carving business grow!

## What tools do I need to Compliment my CarveWright?

- A. Simplicity is the key to making this work.
- B. It is also the key to making money.
- C. Having a full blown woodshop is Really nice but in no way a necessity ... I know this for a fact.
- D. If you buy your materials pre-cut then the CarveWright is the only tool you need.
- E. I am currently using a chop saw some paint brushes and jigs.

## What is Working for Me?

**The birth of the Carved Sign Factory ...** I Decided late last year to do a festival known as "The Spoon River Drive" ... my friends had some left over space and made me a deal. The Drive is set up on 2 consecutive weekends in the late fall and draws a lot of people to the small towns along the Spoon River.

- A. The first weekend I took signs and carvings that I had premade
  - a. Man Cave
  - b. Military
  - c. Wine Festival
  - d. Christmas Ornaments
- B. I thought the weekend was a success ... I made almost 2 hundred dollars ( covered my expenses)

- C. As the 5 days between the weekends went on my wife just kept saying ... “ you should take the CarveWright machine with you and do carvings while people wait”
- D. Easier said than done ...right.
  - a. You need a table
  - b. A power source and Extension Cords
  - c. Computer, Memory Card and Card Reader
  - d. Substrate to carve on
  - e. A tent or indoor structure
  - f. Something to haul it all in
  - g. And the list goes on
- E. Well she won ... So as I was getting ready to leave the next weekend I loaded the CW and some spare sign blanks that were laying around the shop
  - a. So guess what happened? It rained and the crowd wasn't all that good ...
  - b. I ended up making more than 40 signs
  - c. For a total of over \$600 in sales
- F. The key was the short cuts that I have learned over the past 4 or 5 years
  - a. Discuss my masking and paint process
  - b. Standard sign sizes and colors
  - c. Yes we can do those custom colors and carvings but we will have to ship them
  - d. Simplicity is really the key