



Thomas' Video has grown in leaps and bounds from a part-time basement business to a network of franchises across southern Ontario. Acton's office employs more than a half dozen people, including (from top) Verna Harrison, Lynda Richards, Ray Ingleson, Janet Britton and Jackie Higgins.

Success story

Six months after birth stretch across province

A business which started in the basement of Dave Watson's Acton home six months ago is stretching right across southern Ontario.

It's a real business success story. Thomas' Video grew from a germ of an idea in the back of Watson's mind last year to a 28-outlet franchise in only months. And the growth potential seems endless.

Watson had given up finding an interesting, challenging business venture to get into when he happened to hit upon the video idea. Little did he know at that time how far this idea would go.

"I had worked in banking for nine years, then gotten involved in other businesses for a few years. When I sold out last year, I did nothing for a few months. I couldn't think of any business I wanted to get into. So I went back to banking."

After only two weeks back at the bank, he stumbled into video discs. The potential was there, he could see. But just how much he had no idea.

He and his wife Brenda began distributing video discs as a part-time business, with a dozen discs. In January they opened the Acton store and two weeks later, one in Milton as well. A Georgetown outlet opened a month later. They had originally drawn up a three-year plan to build a franchise network in southern Ontario. Already, only five months later, Thomas' Video has done two years worth of expanding.

From 12 video discs rented out twice a week, the business quickly grew to 28 franchises. Watson expects there will be 50 Thomas' Video franchises throughout southern Ontario by fall, and 100 by the end of next January. Of course, his outlook could change. "The business has expanded three

times faster than we had originally thought," he said with a grin. "We have to keep re-budgetting and rescheduling."

He is proud of the fact that the success ratio of his franchise is 100 per cent. No stores are failing, and they're all making decent profits for the franchise owners. Some are planning to expand their franchises, opening additional outlets in nearby communities. Watson keeps holding them back, waiting for the summer slow season to begin. So far, nothing has slowed down.

Under the franchise system, distributors pay Watson a fee to use the Thomas' Video name and an additional fee for access to the video movie disc titles—about 1,073 of them—supplied by the head office. Distributors in franchise outlets keep the profits.

It isn't as profitable for the franchiser as it is for the franchisee, at the moment," Watson explained. "However, now that the network is almost in place, future franchises will not be as inexpensive to get."

Although Thomas' Video hasn't made Watson a rich man, he is proud of its fast growth. So sure is he of the future in video disc sales that he has also become involved in the wholesale distributorship of discs for RCA. Smithsonian Wholesalers is a subsidiary of Thomas' Video which opened in February, working out of a rear warehouse behind the Mill St. store. From there, 2,000 discs are distributed to video disc outlets throughout Ontario. Business is competitive, but there seems to be room for competition.

Although he expects there will be some technological changes over the next few years, Watson is certain video discs are here to stay.

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PIONEER DAYS

JUNE 16, 17, 18

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 16th		Saturday, June 18th	
P.M.	A.M.	A.M.	
2:00-4:00	8:00	8:00	Lions Pancake Breakfast
6:30	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	Children's Games, Antique Show & Sale, Arts & Crafts Show & Sale, Pony Rides
7:30			Optimal BMX Bike Races
8:30		11:00	
Friday, June 17th		Saturday, June 18th	
P.M.	P.M.		
3:00-7:00	12:00-1:00	1:00	Bike Parade
4:30-8:30	1:30	2:00-5:00	Old Fashioned Costume Contest & Fashion Show
7:00	2:00-5:00	2:00-5:00	Historical Walking Tour
8:30	3:00-7:00	3:00-7:00	Horicultural Show & Strawberry Social
	8:30		Dr. Bandok's Good Time
			Travelling Band
			Garden Patio and Entertainment

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