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ERIC KAYNE PHOTOS: CHRONICLE

**ZOOMING IN:** Isabelle MacCrimmon, multimedia director of Legacy Multimedia, captures company founder Stefani Twyford with her camcorder. The small operation experienced dramatic growth between 2004 and 2007.

Digital storytelling business had a rocky start, but owners say they're confident that they have discovered their direction

# Media company finds its focus

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**ONLINE:** Listen to Stefani Twyford talk about her business Legacy Multimedia. [chron.com/business](http://chron.com/business)

By **RACHAEL GLEASON**  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

**L**EGACY Multimedia thinks it's found a way to write its own script. Offering just a few services at first, it has grown into a multitier digital storytelling business that creates multimedia projects for individuals, families and companies.

The small operation saw steady growth between 2004 and 2007 — its first three years — but Stefani Twyford, president and founder of Legacy, said it took time for her business to find its place.

"The first few years were rocky because there was no listing for a business like ours," she said. "It took a while to figure out what our niche was and where we were going."

Irwin Miller, a counselor for the Service Corps of Retired Executives, said some small businesses develop their forte before they even start. Others have to discover what their customers want before they find their spot.

Either way, a business has to find it in order to be successful, he said.

#### Preserving history

Twyford and Isabelle MacCrimmon, director of multimedia, established the business in late 2003 after working together for a women's media and digital technology organization.

The business grew from the idea that history should be preserved and passed on to future generations.

"We're living in a digital society, yet all of our history is in hard-copy media," Twyford said. "The business was started as a way to transition to the digital age."

The Legacy team, which



**FUTURE-MINDED:** Twyford started the company to help preserve history in a digital age.

consists only of Twyford, MacCrimmon, one other employee and the occasional intern, has completed more than 200 projects since the business was established.

Working mainly out of home offices, Twyford and

MacCrimmon offer a variety of services, including creating biographical DVDs for individuals and companies, compiling photo DVDs, restoring and archiving photos and converting film to one format. But they didn't always have this many services.

As they experimented with their different skill sets, the services they offered evolved and expanded. They eventually started applying their services to companies.

Twyford said Legacy's growth was organic. The business, unlike some that seek out loans to expand, runs only off the profit it makes, she said.

"Over the years, the quality of our service and products went up," Twyford said. "The depth of what we were able to do increased."

#### Having a plan

Like its services, Legacy Multimedia's business planning has evolved.

Twyford said in the beginning, business and marketing plans weren't as important as they are now. She said planning became more

important as Legacy found its direction.

Miller said this is common for small businesses at first and pressed the importance of developing a business plan.

"Most businesses don't really know where their clients are coming from — that evolves," he said. "You need to have a good plan. And be realistic about what it's going to take."

Twyford and MacCrimmon rely on their business Web site, [www.legacymultimedia.com](http://www.legacymultimedia.com), and a regularly updated blog to draw in customers.

MacCrimmon said it's important for clients to be able to look at previous projects.

Small, creative businesses get the most out of information networking, according to Miller. He said developing champions, contacts who will freely recommend the business, and testimonials is crucial.

"There are a couple of things you can do to make people recommend you," he said. "Underpromise and over-deliver, and always give something extra."

Miller also said it's good that Legacy has an informative Web site and blog.

"That is their face to the public," he said.

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