

IN THE NEWS:

COMPANY DIGS UP EXCESS (AND OLD) INVENTORY AND SELLS IT IN BARGAIN BINS

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Admit it. You've been at the drugstore or a big box store or maybe even a truck stop out on the highway and have found yourself rifling through those bargain bins filled with old music cassettes and obscure VHS and DVD titles.

Who knows? You might find a little gold among the dross.

Ryan J. Kugler already has.

Kugler is the CEO of Distribution Video and Audio. His California-based company is one of the world's largest resellers of excess entertainment inventory.

"We're the ones who supply and stock those bins filled with tapes and discs," Kugler said in a recent telephone conversation.

"We like to say we're in the business of life after death. We take products that the manufacturer can no longer sell and market them through secondary locations. I'm talking about everything from truck stops to flea markets to car washes. Chains like Dollar General and Big Lots. Grocery chains ... mom-and-pop stores all over the planet.

"We pretty much sell anywhere and everywhere."

VHS tapes have been nudged aside by DVDs. But big home entertainment conglomerates still have millions of unsold VHS tapes sitting in warehouses.

And then there are the manufacturers of HD DVDs who lost in the format war to Blu-ray. They need to unload hundreds of thousands of movies in the now-obsolete format.

Heck, there are still unsold 20-year-old laser discs taking up storage space.

Business is booming. The 20-year-old company sells more than 15 million DVDs and audio CDs every year.

"We give life to formats that have gone away," he said. "We're helping the people who made them — they're making some money — and it keeps them from going into a landfill. It's a very green thing.

"And by reselling these items at affordable prices, we're serving customers who might not be doing so well financially, people for whom a premium-priced DVD release may be too expensive."

And it's not just audio cassettes, VHS tapes and DVDs. Distribution Video and Audio also handles video games, books, toys and other consumer products.

Fans looking for obscure titles can check the company's inventory at www.dva.com.

The company even carries old vinyl records. But something weird has happened in that market, Kugler said.

"Vinyl is coming back. For years nobody was interested, but now it's back to being a primary market rather than a secondary one."