

# MVD's Ed Seaman Relishes Running and Expanding the Family Business

Q & A



Ed Seaman

**MVD**  
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

**E**d Seaman is chief operating officer of MVD Entertainment Group, a leading independent distributor of filmed content in a variety of genres, from horror to documentary, with a special emphasis on music.

“Serving artists and audiences” is MVD Entertainment’s purpose statement and has served as a guiding light for Seaman throughout his career. Starting with MVD in 1989, Ed Seaman joined the family business started in 1987 by his father, longtime industry veteran Tom Seaman.

Having learned every aspect of the business, by the early 2000s Ed Seaman was running MVD, and transformed it from being primarily a wholesale entity for music videotapes to a traditional full-service audio and video distribution firm, and exponentially grew the business.

Today, MVD exclusively represents a vast catalog of audio and visual content on DVD, Blu-ray, CD, vinyl and digital rights, worldwide. MVD’s customer base consists of major retail chains and digital platforms, along with a strong commitment to independent retailers and digital sites.

*Media Play News* asked Seaman about MVD’s origins, its footprint in the industry and trends in home entertainment, as part an ongoing series of conversations with home entertainment leaders past, present — and future.

**MPN: Tell us about the genesis of MVD and what the company has been known for over the years.**

**Seaman:** MVD is a true “mom and pop” story; my parents started it in their family room in the mid-1980s. My father was in the music business his whole life, and he launched MVD as a wholesaler for music videotapes. My sister Eve Edwards joined in 1988, and I came on board in 1989. In the late 1990s we converted a number of wholesale relationships to exclusive DVD licensing and distribution deals, and we started seeing real growth, acting at that time as part self-distributed label, and part wholesaler. By the early 2000s we started offering non-music films, which was a big departure for us — and very early on acquired a strong catalog of digital rights on our content. And by 2006 we entered the audio distribution business — selling both physically and digitally.

**MPN: What’s MVD up to now? How does MVD acquire product?**

**Seaman:** Within the last 10 years we’ve grown dramatically; our main focus is exclusively distributing great video and audio labels. We are really proud of our representation of great brands like Arrow Films, Blue Underground, Severin, Synapse, and many more from the film side. We continue to sign content to our own brands (MVD Rewind, MVD Marquee), with our video specialist Eric Wilkinson scouring the Earth to

find hidden gems. On the music side, it is a similar focus; we have great record labels like Time Life, Bear Family, Made in Germany, and much more. We’ve never lost our interest in music-related films too — it is where we come from and will always hold a special place for us.

**MPN: How many titles do you have in your catalog and how many do you generally release each year?**

**Seaman:** A lot ... I’d say we release around 75 titles per month on film, and another 150 or so on audio. Our team does a great job evaluating and attacking the opportunities on each release, and focusing on the biggest and best opportunities. We have excellent data systems that help illuminate and execute those opportunities, and we’ve got an amazing dedicated team, many of whom have spent their entire career at MVD.

**MPN: What is MVD’s footprint in the digital marketplace on streaming services or digital purchase and rental?**

**Seaman:** We’ve been very progressive all along in the digital landscape with a vast catalog of exclusively distributed content. We have great direct relationships with all the major platforms, both for film and for music, and we are aggressive when it comes to working with new and upcoming services, provided they have a sound model and sound finances. MVD built its own delivery systems for digital video, meaning we don’t go through a lab to get our goods delivered to the vast majority of streaming services. That saves our content providers a lot of resources, and allows us to try out some of the newer services without as much start-up risk.

**MPN: How many video labels do you distribute and are you looking for more? What can you offer a label?**

**Seaman:** We have around 30 active video labels — and yes we are ready to welcome more. MVD brings a lot to the table — quick responses and great advice, monthly reliable payments, transparent accounting, including massive visibility through our b2b site, marketing services (which we don’t mark up), possible manufacturing through our replicators (not marked up), and more. Overall, we strive for trade partnerships in our relationships. Our trade partners tell it better than I can at [MVDentertainment.com/why-mvd](http://MVDentertainment.com/why-mvd).

**MPN: What are the trends you are seeing in physical media? What’s the format breakdown?**

**Seaman:** Collectible products given the deluxe treatment is the strongest trend we see. It has to be the right type of film of course with cult-like status, but labels that painstakingly transfer, clean and correct old film to 4K, create and add new content, and beautifully package these films see some great rewards. So, yes, UHD is doing really well, in some cases outselling their Blu-ray companions. The collectors are clearly hungry for well-done UHD.

— STEPHANIE PRANGE