

Program coordinator has learned to say 'no'

By ROSE WEBER

Loretta Farris says no. Sweetly, charmingly, but definitely, no. That's her job. And it is quite a trick to say no without alienating clients.

As program coordinator of commercial videotape production for television station WXYZ-Channel Seven in Southfield, she sells time for all non-station produced material.

"But unfortunately for the last several months because of heavy local production we have not had the time or facilities available for outside clients," she explained.

She is not comfortable with the lack of time but as she tells the clients, in a couple of months things will be better.

She has squeezed in several public service spot announcements and other short spots into the schedule but the old days of telling a client to come in from midnight to 8 a.m. are just not in the picture now.

SHE MISSES the excitement of working around the clock, which her job used to require, but enjoys the peaceful weekends at her West Bloomfield home where the phone no longer rings with urgent problems to be solved.

Before the station became so heavily involved in local production, Mrs. Farris worked with people like former President Richard Nixon, Henry Ford II, former Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, former Gov. George Romney and movie personalities such as Dennis Day and Don Ameche.

As program coordinator she handles the scheduling of all personnel and equipment necessary to produce the client's film.

Based on the client's script, she costs out — on a per-hour basis — camera crew, director, set construction people and a host of details that would set the most detail-oriented mind spinning.

"I keep records for seven years of everything that is discussed and that happens. Sometimes clients have misplaced their records and call us for information," she explained.

And as those costs head for the ceiling when overtime is involved, she needs verification of client approval and details of the situation.

"WHEN WE ARE in trouble and they want the film completed,

they agree to anything but when they get the bill, ouch," she said with a grin.

Mrs. Farris is proof that hard work and perseverance can produce a satisfying career.

She and her husband agreed that as their daughters grew older, she could begin a career of her own. She worked parttime for a friend and had just about decided to return to school when the job at WXYZ turned up.

"I applied, lied in my teeth about experience, and worked my head off very happily at a most exciting job," she said.

She believes it is important for a woman to have something to do when her family leaves home. Married before she graduated from high school, Mrs. Farris faced that situation earlier than most of her friends.

"But if I wasn't working, I'd be a duplicate bridge bum. I just got back from a yearly jaunt up north with eight friends; we played eight hours a day for the entire time we are there," she said.

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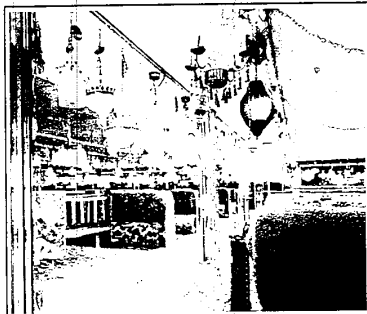
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