

Production Manager

This is one of a series of job profiles within the **Television** sector developed by industry experts to help industry newcomers understand the different job roles and the skills required in order to succeed. We aim to keep this information as current as possible and would welcome any comments to help us improve this profile; please e-mail us on: jobprofile@skillset.org. All job profiles can be downloaded and printed from our website www.skillset.org.

Production Managers work across all genres in television production including documentaries, current affairs, light entertainment or children's programmes, situation comedies, soaps or serial dramas, or one off dramas. They are responsible for all the organisational aspects of production scheduling and budgeting. They assist Producers to interpret and realise the Directors' vision, both financially and logistically. Production Managers may be employed by production companies or broadcasters, or work on a freelance basis.

What is the job?

Production Managers prepare production schedules or script breakdowns to confirm that sufficient time has been allocated for all aspects of the production process, and to verify Producers' budgets and schedules. On drama productions they use Movie Magic (a specialist scheduling and budgeting software package) which provides logistical breakdowns of scripts, detailing all aspects of production requirements. These include: how many and which actors are needed on which days; what locations are required each day; crewing requirements etc.

The Production Manager, as the key person in the Production department, must liaise closely with all other Heads of Department to ensure that productions run smoothly, meet deadlines, and stay within budgets. Production Managers closely monitor schedules and budgets throughout shoots, preparing daily report sheets for Producers, detailing all aspects of each day's shoot. Production Managers must be able to deal with any contingencies during pre-production and shooting, and prepare workable alternative plans. They oversee all aspects of the day to day running of shoots, from contract preparation to all Health and Safety requirements, and work closely with members of all other production departments, actors, and other contributors. They report directly to Producers.

On drama productions, Production Managers oversee 1st Assistant Directors' (1at ADs) preparation of daily call sheets for actors and crew members. They must ensure that all cast and crew members' conditions of work are in compliance with the relevant local agreements and regulations. When unforeseen problems arise, such as rain or illnesses, they liaise closely with Producers, Directors and 1st ADs to re-schedule shooting sequences.

Typical career routes

Production Managers are usually experienced production personnel, who may have previously progressed from 3rd, to 2nd to 1st ADs or from Assistant Floor Managers, to Floor Managers, to Location Managers, or they may have worked as Script Supervisors, Production Assistants, Production Accountants. Non-media accountants with suitable training may also transfer to this role. Some Production Managers may become Line Producers or Directors.

Essential knowledge and skills

Production Managers must have highly developed communication skills, and be able to work effectively with all members of the production team, and with actors, other contributors, and members of the public. They need to understand the technical processes involved in television production, including camera,

lighting, sound and editing. They should know how to ensure that all the necessary licences and clearances have been obtained, and how to comply with regulations relating to liability and indemnity when shooting at different locations.

Production Managers should have up-to-date working knowledge of the relevant UK union and/or broadcaster regulations and agreements, e.g. [PACT/Equity](#), [PACT/Musician's Union](#), [PACT/BECTU](#), and the legal requirements regarding working hours and the duty of care towards personnel. They should also know how to access information about, and comply with, corresponding regulations and agreements in other countries. **Key Skills include:**

- initiative and problem solving skills;
- diplomacy and sensitivity;
- resourcefulness and the ability to troubleshoot;
- advanced analytical skills;
- budgeting and financial skills;
- excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- precise attention to detail and methodical approach to work;
- excellent organisational abilities;
- ability to conceptualise ideas;
- IT skills, and knowledge of the relevant computer packages;
- current knowledge of the relevant legislation, regulations, and associated procedures, including Copyright, Data Protection, Public Liability, etc. and how to comply with regulatory requirements;
- knowledge of the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation and procedures.

Training and qualifications

Current Health & Safety and First Aid qualifications are essential for the role of Production Manager. Although no other specific educational or training qualifications are required for this role, a degree in a media related or specialist subject may provide some useful background information. Wide experience in, and knowledge of, the production process is essential. Successful completion of specialist courses in Production Management, and in relevant IT software, e.g. *Movie Magic* is useful when working on drama productions.

Where to go for more information

Skillset is *the Sector Skills Council for the audio visual industries*. The first sources of information for all jobs in the industry are the [National Occupational Standards](#). Browse Skillset's website for links to our network of training partners, information about training and access to the comprehensive [Skillset/BFI course database](#). Finally, **Skillset Careers** is *UK's only specialist media careers advice service*; for detailed media careers information and advice, visit www.skillset.org/careers.

Websites

- **Production Guild**; www.productionguild.com
- **Production Managers Association**; www.pma.org.uk
- **BECTU**, the trade union represents production personnel; www.bectu.org.uk
- **Equity** is the trade union representing artists across the whole spectrum of arts and entertainment; www.equity.org.uk
- **Musicians' Union (MU)** represents musicians working in all sectors of the music business; www.musiciansunion.org.uk
- National Film and Television School; www.nfts-tv.ac.uk
- BBC Training; www.bbctraining.com

Publications

- *Film Production Management and Coordination 101: The Complete Guide to Production Management for Film and TV* – D. Patz – **ISBN** - 0941188450
- *Production Management for Film and Video* – R. Gates – **ISBN** – 0240515536
- *Broadcast*, the weekly newspaper for the UK TV and Radio industry; www.broadcastnow.co.uk
- *Television*, the business magazine for the broadcast and production industry; www.television.com

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