

Chapter 2

Working in the Television Production Industry



Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain how the responsibilities of each production staff position are dependent on the functions of other production staff positions.
- Identify the primary responsibilities of each production staff position.
- Recall the activities in each step of a production workflow.

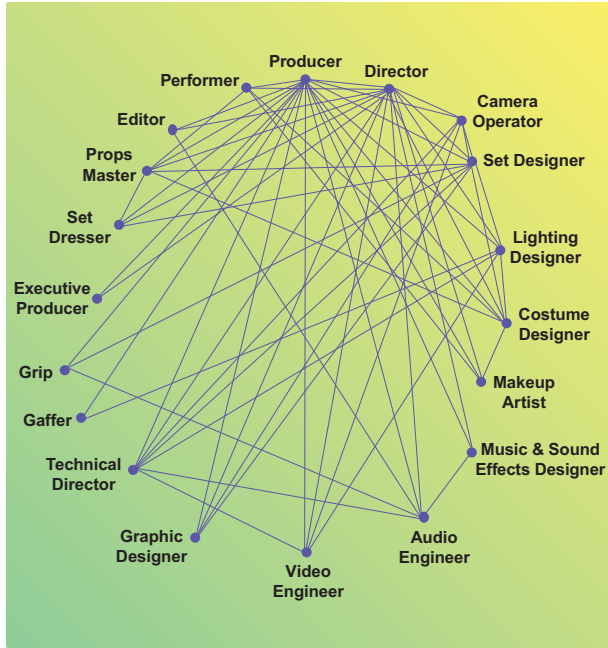
Introduction

To understand an individual role in the broadcasting industry, you must be familiar with all aspects of the production process. Each production area is interconnected to many others, with the interrelationships resembling a spider web, **Figure 2-1**. To learn proper camerawork, you must understand proper lighting technique. Proper lighting technique is dictated by the colors used on the set and on the costumes. The colors of the set and costumes directly affect the kind of special effects used in the program. Special effects are created in the special effects generator, but must be edited. Knowing the tools and techniques of editing is also required. To learn television production, you must have a solid understanding of all the contributing roles.

Professional Terms

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| anchor | makeup |
| assignment editor | makeup artist |
| assistant director (AD) | news director |
| audio | photographer (photog) |
| audio engineer | photojournalist |
| camera operator | post-production |
| cast | pre-production |
| CG operator | producer |
| content specialist | production |
| crew | production assistant (PA) |
| cue | production manager |
| director | production switching |
| distribution | production team |
| editing | production values |
| editor | reporter |
| executive producer (EP) | robo operator |
| floor director | scenery |
| floor manager | scriptwriter |
| frame | special effects |
| framing | staff |
| gaffer | talent |
| graphic artist | video |
| grip | video engineer |
| lighting director | VTR operator |
| maintenance engineer | video operator |

Figure 2-1. In order to do your job properly, you must know the jobs of others on your production staff. This illustration depicts the spider web of interrelationships between jobs on the production staff.



production team:

Everyone involved in the production, both staff and talent.

staff: Production personnel that work behind the scenes and generally includes management and designers.

crew: Production personnel that are normally not seen by the camera, which generally includes equipment operators.

talent: Anyone seen by the camera, whether or not they have a speaking or any other significant role in the program, as well as individuals who provide only their vocal skills to the production.

Dividing Up the Work

All television production organizations, from the largest to smallest, divide the production workload among the company's employees. In large production companies, a different individual may be assigned to each job title. In smaller production companies, however, it is not unusual for a single person to fill multiple jobs on the same production. Some jobs are easier to combine than others. For example, it is difficult to imagine acting in front of a camera when you must also fill the role of camera operator. On the other hand, the person who painted the set could certainly be an actor because these two jobs do not take place at the same time.

The following sections address many of the main jobs included in the collective term **production team**, also called **production staff**. All production personnel can be divided into three categories:

- The **staff** works behind the scenes. These individuals work in the more creative levels of production management.
- The **crew** are generally equipment operators. They are not normally seen by the camera, but are integral to the production.
- Anyone seen by the camera, whether or not they have a speaking or any other significant role in the program, is **talent**.

PRODUCTION NOTE

There are exceptions to the "not seen by the camera" criteria for staff and crew. At the opening or closing of many newscasts, for example, there is often a long shot of the studio. The audience may see a shot that includes the studio's camera operators. Camera operators and technicians are regularly seen on sports programs, such as on the sidelines of a football field. These types of production personnel, who may be seen by the viewer, are not considered talent—they are considered part of the production environment.



The talent hired for a production also includes the individuals who provide only their vocal skills to the production. These positions include the on-screen actors, cast of extras, the narrator, voiceover talent, and announcers. **Cast** is the collective name given to all the talent participating in a production. It is important to remember that a program's talent includes more than actors and on-screen personalities.

cast: The collective name given to all the talent participating in a production.

Talk the Talk

When referring to multiple individuals hired as talent for a production, the correct plural form of the term is "talent." It is incorrect and unprofessional to say "talents."



Executive Producer

The **executive producer (EP)** provides the funding necessary to produce the program, but rarely steps foot on the set. There are times, however, when the EP is involved in every aspect of the production. The level of involvement varies from production to production. A single production may have several executive producers. The more expensive a program is to produce, the more likely it is to have multiple EPs. In some cases, an EP is merely an individual who invests a large sum of money in the program and, in return, is given a credit at the beginning of the program and portion of the profits generated by the sale of the program. The executive producer essentially puts the money for the production in the bank, hires a producer, and hands the bank account over to the producer.

executive producer (EP): The person, or people, who provides the funding necessary to produce the program.

Producer

The **producer** in a non-news environment purchases materials and services needed to create a finished program. The producer hires a director, designers, camera operators, a lighting director, sound engineer, and the talent. Materials purchased for the production include, but are not limited to, set construction items, costumes, and props. The producer also arranges travel plans, if necessary, for the staff and talent, including transportation, lodging, and meal catering. Because of the many facets of a producer's job, being successful requires extreme attention to detail and strong organizational skills. The producer is ultimately responsible for the program's successful completion.

The amount of input a producer has on creative decisions varies. Ideally, the producer hires a director with whom he works well. Together

producer: In a non-news environment, the producer purchases materials and services in the creation of a finished program. In a broadcast news facility, the producer coordinates the content and flow of a newscast.

the producer and director make the hiring decisions regarding the rest of the production team. As decisions are made, the producer and director must constantly be aware of the budget. Compromise is necessary to balance and successfully complete all aspects of the program production.

pre-production:

Any activity on a program that occurs prior to the time that the cameras begin rolling. This includes production meetings, set construction, costume design, music composition, scriptwriting, and location surveys.

production: The actual shooting of the program.

post-production:

Any of the activities performed after a program has been shot. This includes music beds, editing, audio overdubs, titles, and duplication.

distribution: The final phase of production, which includes DVD authoring, DVD/ videotape duplication, and distribution to the end user.

The producer interacts with a majority of the production staff on a day-to-day basis during all four phases of production—pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. **Pre-production** refers to any activity on the program that occurs prior to the time that the cameras begin recording. This includes production meetings, set construction, costume design, music composition (Figure 2-2), scriptwriting, and location surveys. **Production** refers to the actual shooting of the program. **Post-production** involves any activities done after the program has been shot until the finished program is completed, including music beds, editing, audio overdubs, and titles. **Distribution** is the final phase of production and includes DVD authoring, DVD/ videotape duplication, and distribution to the end user.

In a broadcast news facility, the producer coordinates the content and flow of a newscast and is very involved in the decision-making process during the daily morning production meetings. In a news environment, this is an extremely high-pressure, important position. Typically, a producer has earned this position by working for years as a reporter, and has a keenly developed “reporter’s sense.”

The producer is involved in deciding which stories will be aired, the order in which the stories will appear on the newscast, and in developing promotions and “ahead at 11” teasers for the upcoming newscast. The producer is the person who decides whether to interrupt a newscast in progress to report breaking news, and feeds the breaking news directly to the anchors through their earpieces.

A television newsroom may have several producers; reporters work for and report to their assigned producer. In the hierarchy of a television newsroom, the producers work for and answer to the news director, who makes the final determination on the content of the newscast.

Figure 2-2. Using a Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) computer program, a composer sends notes directly from the keyboard to the computer. The notes are placed on sheet music and can be printed, so the music can be performed, recorded, and placed into the soundtrack of the production.



News Director

The **news director** is responsible for the structure of the newsroom, for personnel matters (performance evaluations and hiring and firing employees), managing the budget, and the overall effectiveness of the newsroom. The news director’s involvement in the actual newscast varies from station to station. However, the news director is the final authority on which stories will air during the newscast.

PRODUCTION NOTE

In a broadcast journalism class, the role of news director is commonly held by the instructor. This is because the instructor is responsible for teaching journalistic principles and ethics, news judgment, and adhering to the objectives of the broadcast journalism course. The grade assigned to students’ work is equivalent to a performance evaluation in the broadcast journalism industry.



news director: The person responsible for the structure of the newsroom, for personnel matters (performance evaluations and hiring and firing employees), managing the budget, and the overall effectiveness of the newsroom. The news director is also the final authority on which stories will air during a news broadcast.

Director

The **director** is in charge of the creative aspects of the program and interacts with the entire staff. While directors are responsible for casting the program’s talent, sometimes they must concede to the EP or producer’s decisions. For example, casting Leonardo DiCaprio in a leading role and insisting on elaborate sets may exhaust the entire production budget on just those two items. The director must be willing to compromise for the sake of a successful and complete production.

The director reviews the program’s script and visualizes the entire production, **Figure 2-3**. Those ideas must then be communicated to the staff

director: The person who is in charge of the creative aspects of the program and interacts with the entire staff.

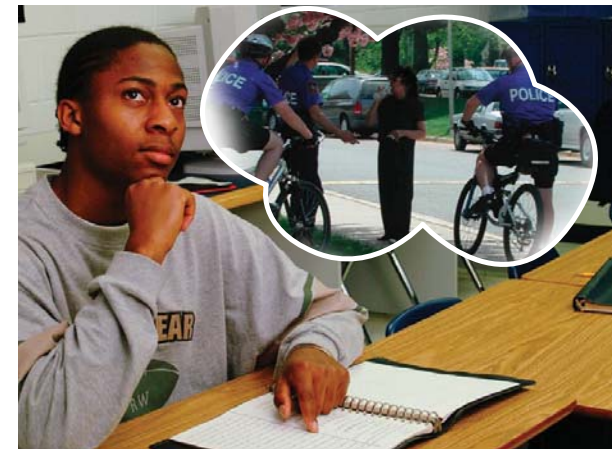


Figure 2-3 The director reads a script and envisions the way the program’s scenes should appear.

and talent. The director guides their performance to create an acceptable representation of his vision. During production, the director must coordinate and manage the staff and cast to keep to the production schedule and to ensure that all of the program's elements are properly incorporated.

Very few people begin their career as a director. Becoming a good director requires extensive experience. Most directors have worked their way up from a production assistant and, therefore, know each job on the staff quite well. That knowledge is key to communication with the staff and crew.

Production Manager

production manager:

The person who handles the business portion of the production by negotiating the fees for goods, services, and other contracts and by determining the staffing requirements based on the needs of each production.

production assistant (PA):

The person who provides general assistance around the studio or production facility. The PA is commonly hired to fill a variety of positions when key personnel are sick, out of town, working on another project, or otherwise unavailable. In many facilities, the production assistant position is synonymous with the *assistant director (AD)* position.

The *production manager* handles the business portion of the production by negotiating the fees for goods, services, and other contracts, and by determining the staffing requirements based on the needs of each production. An additional responsibility is to ensure that programs and scripts conform to established broadcast standards. The production manager contributes to the successful completion of a production by managing the budget and available resources.

Production Assistant

In many television production companies, the titles *production assistant (PA)* and *assistant director (AD)* are interchangeable. However, these position titles are *not* interchangeable in the film industry. The PA serves as a jack-of-all-trades, but is a master of none. In some facilities, the PA is merely a “gofer.” In most facilities, however, the PA is hired to fill a variety of positions when key personnel are sick, out of town, working on another project, or otherwise unavailable. Most people begin their career as a PA. From the PA position, motivated individuals can rise through the ranks of a facility until achieving the position they want.

On a daily basis, the PA provides general assistance around the studio or production facility. On the occasion that a staff position needs to be temporarily filled, an ambitious PA should offer to perform the tasks of that job. Competent performance will be noted by the production team and remembered for subsequent opportunities.

PRODUCTION NOTE

If there are several PAs in the company, it is vital that you volunteer before someone else and take an active part in the advancement of your career. A passive individual does not last long in a PA position—you must be active and aggressive. When a qualified person is in front of an employer eagerly saying, “I am qualified. I want to do the work. Give me a chance to prove it,” why would the employer offer the position to a wallflower who is too shy to speak up? Aggressive, energetic, and enthusiastic go-getters populate this industry.



Instead of waiting long periods of time for a promotion at a company, PAs who have acquired significant skills and experience typically choose to move from company to company. This is the most common way to move up

the ranks within production teams in the industry. Most professionals in this industry change companies 7 or 8 times within their first 10 years of working. Choosing to stay with one company comes with the risk of waiting years for someone above you to retire, transfer to another company, or otherwise leave the position. Although promotions do occur within companies, it is more likely to happen when moving laterally from one company to another.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Because changing companies is so common in the television production industry, it is strongly recommended that you maintain your own investment/retirement accounts. Starting an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) right out of college is one of the smartest and least expensive things you can do for your own future.



In addition to proven knowledge and skills, an important key to employment in this industry is networking. Job openings in television production are rarely found in the want ads of the local newspaper. Consider the following scenario: Bill has been an assistant camera operator for a significant amount of time at the XYZ Production Company. He feels he has developed the skills to become a camera operator and wants to move up to that position. However, there are three other people that hold the three camera operator positions in the company, and none of them has indicated a desire to retire or leave the company. Bill's prospects of advancement at his current company are slim, so he begins networking by telling virtually everyone he knows in the industry that he is looking for a camera operator position. Eventually, someone who knows of an opening hears that a talented guy is looking for a job as a camera operator. That person contacts Bill through the network to let him know that he should apply for the position. Nearly everyone in the industry maneuvers from job to job using this networking technique, and most people are willing to help other professionals advance.

Floor Manager

The *floor manager*, or *floor director*, is the director's “eyes and ears” in the studio. The floor manager wears a headset and relays the director's commands to all studio personnel, except the camera operators. The camera operators are usually in direct communication with the director via their headset intercoms. The floor manager is the only person in the studio who may say, “Cut,” other than the director. When the floor manager says, “Cut,” it is usually because the director has instructed them to do so.

floor manager: The person who is the director's “eyes and ears” in the studio. The floor manager relays the director's commands to the studio personnel. Also commonly called *floor director*.

PRODUCTION NOTE

In larger studios, the headset communication system has multiple channels so that the director can speak just to the camera operators, just to the floor manager, or to everyone at once.



The floor manager is responsible for making sure the set is ready for production, for initiating the program countdown, and for giving various cues to the talent. A *cue* is a signal that implies something specific is to happen. One familiar cue is the “cut” signal. The floor manager makes a cutting motion with his hand across his neck. There are many other hand signals and cues that are standard within the industry. The signals can be any action that the production team agrees upon and understands, **Figure 2-4**.

cue: A signal that directs something specific to happen.

Figure 2-4. The floor manager gives silent signals, or cues, to the talent.



“You’re on!”



“Look at the camera I’m pointing to.”



“Speak louder.”



“Wrap it up.”



“Cut!”



“Speak softer.”



“Stretch what you’re saying—you’re going too fast!”



“Speed up your speaking—time is running out.”

Camera Operator

The *camera operator* runs the piece of equipment that captures the video images of the program, **Figure 2-5**. Camera operators are responsible for framing shots that are visually pleasing to the viewers. The director may often call for a particular shot—the camera operator must not only provide the shot requested, but must frame the shot so that annoying or inappropriate background information does not detract from the image.

camera operator: The person who runs the piece of equipment that captures the video images of the program.

Photographer

The *photographer*, often called *photog* or “shooter,” is the cameraperson who goes into the field on location with a reporter in a news operation. The photog’s responsibilities include all things technical—transporting the camera, tripod, mic, all the cabling, and any batteries necessary. While shooting, the photog monitors the audio of both the reporter and the interviewee through headphones. Setting up and tearing down the equipment is also the responsibility of the photog (reporters often help, but these tasks officially fall to the photog).

photographer: The cameraperson in the field, on location with a reporter in a news operation. Also commonly called *photog* or *shooter*.

Photojournalist

The *photojournalist* is a photographer who regularly performs duties of both the photographer, as well as the reporter. A photojournalist is a one-man band. It is a good idea for anyone who wants to be a reporter to also obtain

photojournalist: A photographer who regularly performs duties of both the photographer, as well as the reporter.



Figure 2-5. The camera operator captures the shots that the director requires. Camera operators never sit down when operating a camera mounted on a tripod and never let go of the pan handles without making certain the camera is locked and stable.

the skills to be a photog. When applying for a job in the news industry, the ability to successfully perform both reporter and photog roles provides an advantage over those who are unable to wear more than one hat.

Reporter

reporter: The individual responsible for gathering information from many sources, including research and interviews, for writing news stories, and often editing their own stories.

Reporters are responsible for gathering information from many sources, including research and interviews, for writing news stories, and often editing their own stories. The role of a reporter can vary from station to station, or even story to story. Sometimes reporters are on-screen throughout their story, but it is also common to see the reporter only during the introduction and closing of stories. Some stories include the reporter's voiceover throughout the story, in addition to other audio, with the story footage, but the reporter may never be seen on screen. A reporter may write a story and be present for shooting and editing the story, but an anchor may end up reading the script of a story written by the reporter. Reporters often find that the job entails erratic work hours—some days may require far more than the typical eight hours. The job of a reporter is physically and emotionally demanding.

Assignment Editor

assignment editor:

The person who schedules necessary equipment and personnel to cover the stories for the day's newscast.

During the morning meeting, decisions are made regarding which stories reporters will undertake for the day's newscast. When the stories are chosen, the **assignment editor** schedules the equipment and personnel to cover the stories. The assignment editor pairs reporters and photogs, and schedules photojournalists if there are more stories to cover than available reporters and photogs. Typically, the assignment editor assigns each reporter two stories per day. Exceptions are made, however, when major news events occur.

Anchor

anchor: The person who delivers the news from the news desk set in a studio.

The **anchor** delivers the news from the news desk set in the studio. Delivering the news involves reading the news content displayed on a teleprompter, providing the intro and closing of taped stories that are inserted into a live telecast, and conducting conversations with reporters in the field reporting live. The greatest expectation of an anchor is to accurately read and relay the news and related information.

Video Engineer

video engineer: The person who manages the video equipment and is ultimately responsible for the technical quality of the video signal.

The **video engineer** is ultimately responsible for the technical quality of the video signal, **Figure 2-6**. A video engineer has extensive schooling in the electronics of video production and must keep current with the technology and changes in the video industry. This member of the production team is greatly valued and highly compensated in any production facility. In a studio environment, one of the video engineer's responsibilities is to ensure that the images captured by each of the studio cameras match exactly. This consistency is important when, for example, the director cuts from one camera to another. The video engineer's skills ensure that an actor's skin color does not change from normal, to pinkish, to greenish when cutting between cameras.



Figure 2-6. The video engineer uses specialized test equipment to examine and maintain consistent picture quality.

Audio Engineer

The **audio engineer** is responsible for the audio/sound quality on the production. The audio engineer often operates the microphone mixer, as well as the music and sound effects recorders/players, **Figure 2-7**. The audio engineer mics the talent and is responsible for maintaining the overall audio levels on the studio's master recorder.

audio engineer: The person responsible for the audio/sound quality on the production and related equipment.



Figure 2-7. The audio engineer maintains the quality and volume of the sound, so that viewers never have to adjust the volume on their television sets.

lighting director: The person who decides the placement of lighting instruments, the appropriate color of light to use, and which lamps should be used in the instruments.

gaffer: The lighting director's assistant who often does the actual hauling of heavy instruments up and down ladders.

scriptwriter: The person responsible for placing the entire production on paper.

Lighting Director

The **lighting director** decides the placement of lighting instruments, the appropriate color of light to use, and which lamps should be used in the instruments. In a television studio, as on the stage in a high school auditorium, there are an amazing number of lights hanging overhead from pipes on the ceiling. The lights are purposefully aimed in various directions with varying degrees of brightness and color. Determining the placement of the lighting instruments is the lighting director's job. The lighting director's assistant, a **gaffer**, often does the actual hauling of heavy instruments up and down ladders, **Figure 2-8**.

Scriptwriter

The **scriptwriter** is responsible for placing the entire production on paper. The script must meet the objectives of the producer and the message to the viewer must be clear. However, the scriptwriter is not often an acknowledged expert in the program's subject matter. Because of this, a content specialist is

Figure 2-8. The lighting designer tells the gaffer (on ladder) where to aim the lighting instruments.



usually hired to work with the scriptwriter. The **content specialist** is a person considered to be an expert on the program's subject.

Content specialists from the military are commonly hired to help scriptwriters and directors create authentic action scenes in movies with military action or plot lines. A content specialist would also assist a scriptwriter in writing the script for an instructional program detailing techniques of a new and innovative heart transplant technique. To ensure accurate information, the content specialist in this scenario would likely be the doctor who invented the technique. The content specialist reviews the entire script before production begins and is, ideally, present for the shooting and post-production to keep everything accurate.

Graphic Artist

The **graphic artist** is responsible for all the artwork required for the production. This includes computer graphics, traditional works of art, charts, and graphs. The graphic artist is usually very well versed in computer graphics applications, from the amazing animations seen in modern films to the charts and graphs included in an economics program.

VTR Operator

The **VTR operator** is in charge of recording the program onto videotape by correctly operating the VTR equipment, **Figure 2-9**. Producing a recording of the program with quality video and audio is an immense responsibility. The VTR operator must take every precaution to ensure that each piece of equipment is functioning properly to produce a quality recording of every scene.

Many newer television facilities have eliminated the use of videotape entirely, and record onto DVDs or directly to a hard drive. The job title "VTR operator" no longer applies in these facilities. In a tapeless environment, this job function is performed by the **video operator**.

content specialist: A person who works with the scriptwriter and is considered to be an expert in the program's subject matter.

graphic artist: The person responsible for all the artwork required for the production. This includes computer graphics, traditional works of art, charts, and graphs.

VTR operator: The person in charge of recording the program onto videotape by correctly operating the VTR equipment.

video operator: The individual responsible for recording the master video file in a tapeless television production environment.



Figure 2-9. The VTR operator places the entire program on the master videotape.

robo operator: The person who remotely operates all of the cameras and the robotic camera mounts from a single location in the studio or control room.

editor: The person responsible for putting the various pieces of the entire program together. The editor removes all the mistakes and bad takes, leaving only the best version of each scene, and arranges the individual scenes into the proper order.

Figure 2-10. A robotic camera in use on a production studio set. A—A traditional video camera and teleprompter are attached to the robotic mount. B—Away from the studio floor, the robo operator remotely controls the robotic camera equipment from a control panel with joystick controls. (Photos courtesy of Brian Franco)



A



B

Robo Operator

Some television production environments have eliminated the job of an in-studio camera operator. Cameras are placed on remote-controlled robotic camera mounts. All of the cameras are controlled by the **robo operator** from one location in the studio or control room, **Figure 2-10**.

Editor

The **editor** puts the various pieces of the entire program together. Individual scenes are arranged into the proper order, with all the mistakes and bad takes removed, leaving only the best version of each scene. The editor must be aware of the psychological effects involved with the theory of movement and passage of time, as different angles of the same person or scene are cut together. For example, a skilled editor makes two sides of a conversation, which were shot during two different recording sessions at different locations, flow together into a natural sounding conversation on one recording.

Talk the Talk

“Editor” is a television production term with dual definitions. This chapter addresses the person, called an editor, who arranges the individual pieces of a program to produce a complete product. To do this, the editor uses a machine that is also called an “editor,” which is discussed in Chapter 24, *Video Editing*.



Makeup Artist

The **makeup artist** applies cosmetics to the face and body of talent, giving them the intended appearance in front of the camera, **Figure 2-11**. The cosmetics used may enhance facial features or change the talent’s appearance entirely, as necessary to convincingly portray a particular character.

makeup artist: The person responsible for applying cosmetics to the talent’s face and body, giving them the intended appearance in front of the camera.

CG Operator

The **CG operator** creates the program titles using a character generator, **Figure 2-12**. Titles include the credits that appear before and after a movie

CG operator: The person who creates the titles for the program using a character generator.



Figure 2-11. The makeup artist ensures that performers look natural under the bright studio lights.



Figure 2-12. The CG operator types the titles for the program.

or television show, as well as a news flash that crawls across the bottom of the television screen. The titles may be a single page, scrolling, or have animated letters. The CG operator must create titles that are accurate and appropriate for the program, and ensure that they are legible to viewers.

Grip

grip: A person who moves the equipment, scenery, and props on a studio set.

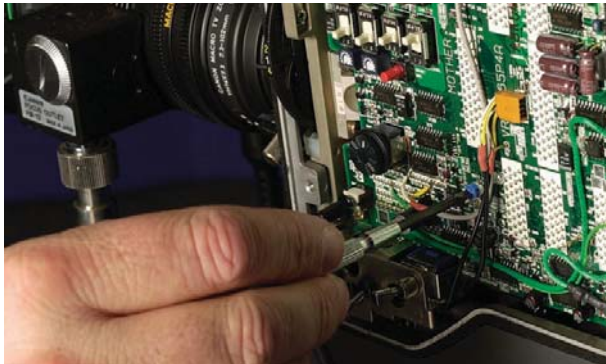
maintenance engineer: The person who keeps all the production equipment functioning at its optimum performance level.

The **grip** is a person who moves the equipment, scenery, and props on a studio set. In theater productions, a grip is called a stagehand. Perhaps the job title comes from the fact that one must have a good grip in order to move anything large!

Maintenance Engineer

The **maintenance engineer** keeps all the production equipment working according to “factory specifications.” The maintenance engineer is not a repairperson, but may assist in troubleshooting if problems arise. The primary responsibility of this position is to ensure that each piece of production equipment functions at its optimum performance level, **Figure 2-13**.

Figure 2-13. The maintenance engineer keeps equipment running in top performance.



Program Production Workflow

The following is a general overview of the steps involved in producing a program. The timeframe to complete each step depends on the type of production. Completing most of the steps to produce a public service announcement, for example, would likely take considerably less time than to produce a one-hour, prime-time drama. One of the best ways to create a successful program is to have excellent production values in the program.

production values: The general aesthetics of the show.

Production values are the general aesthetics of a show. Most of this book aims to show you how to attain these high production values.

Various terms are presented in the sections that follow, as well as in the preceding chapters. Many of the terms have commonly known “consumer” definitions. Some words used in this business, just as in the English

language, have multiple definitions. Memorize the professional definitions of terms and learn the difference between those with multiple meanings. Use the terms appropriately during class to help you get in the habit of using them correctly when working in the television industry.

Program Proposals

The first step in producing a program is to develop a program proposal (discussed in Chapter 8, *Scriptwriting*). This is a plan that includes the basic idea of the program, the program’s format, intended audience, budget considerations, location information, and a rough shooting schedule. The program proposal is reviewed by investors and production companies for financing considerations and overall project approval.

Scriptwriting

Before a script is written for the program, a script outline is created. This outline contains comments noting the direction of the program and varies depending on the program format (drama, panel discussion, interview, or music video). Television scripts are usually written in a two-column format. The left column contains video/technical information and the right column contains audio and stage direction.

Producing

The day-to-day activities involved in producing a program ensure that the production process runs as smoothly as possible. Important decisions that affect the program’s ultimate success are made throughout the production process, including coordinating schedules, acquiring the necessary resources, monitoring the activity and progress of various production teams, and weighing budgetary considerations.

Directing

Directing involves shaping the creative aspects of a program and interacting with the entire staff and cast to realize the director’s vision of the production. In addition to verbally providing direction during production, many important pre- and post-production directing activities contribute to a program’s success.

Lighting

When planning the lighting for a production, there should be sufficient light to meet the technical requirements of the camera and to produce an acceptable picture on the screen. Various lighting techniques are also used to meet the aesthetic requirements of the director. Accurate lighting in a program is necessary to create the desired mood, appearance, and setting. Most importantly, proper placement of lighting instruments contributes to creating three-dimensionality on a flat television screen.

Scenery, Set Dressing, and Props

Careful planning and consideration when choosing scenery, set dressings, and props helps create a believable environment for the program.

Figure 2-14. Scenery is anything, other than people, that appears behind the main object of the picture.



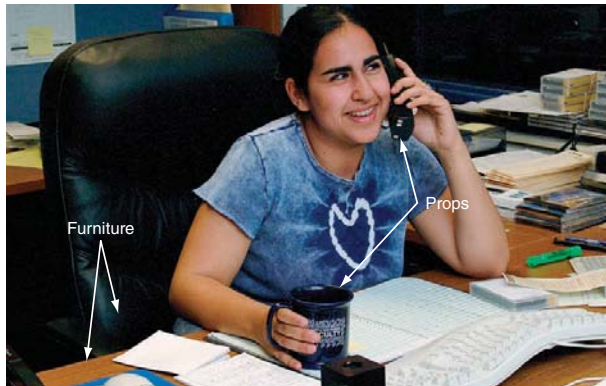
scenery: Anything placed on a set that stops the distant view of the camera. Outside the studio, scenery may be a tree, building, or the horizon.

The placement of these items on a set also contributes to creating three-dimensionality on a flat television screen. **Scenery** is something that stops the distant view of the camera (further discussed in Chapter 18, *Props, Set Dressing, and Scenery*). In a studio, the scenery may be fake walls, set furniture, or a curtain. Outside the studio, it may be a tree, building, or the horizon. The scenery is nearly everything behind the main object of the shot, **Figure 2-14**. Set dressing includes all the visual and design elements of a set, such as rugs, lamps, wall coverings, curtains, and room accent accessories. Props are any of the items handled by the performers, excluding furniture, **Figure 2-15**. Furniture may be a prop if used for something other than its apparent and intended use.

Costumes and Makeup

Costumes and makeup enable actors to look like the characters they portray. Even news anchors and other on-screen personalities who are not

Figure 2-15. Props are items, other than furniture, that are handled by performers.



“acting” wear makeup and have their wardrobe selected to ensure the best possible appearance on the television screen.

Costume selection is dependent on many existing factors, including plot, setting, set dressing, program format, and lighting arrangement. **Makeup** is any of the cosmetics applied to a performer’s skin to change or enhance their appearance. The makeup may create a drastic change, such as aging, alien appearance, or injuries, or it may simply enhance the talent’s natural features while in front of a camera.

makeup: Any of the cosmetics applied to a performer’s skin to change or enhance their appearance.

Graphics

Graphics are all of the artwork seen in a program, including computer graphics, traditional works of art, charts, and graphs (discussed in Chapter 14, *Image Display*). When choosing or creating graphics for television, pay particular attention to the amount of detail in a graphic. Losing the fine detail in images is natural in the process of creating an analog television picture (digital technology is continually evolving and changing this limitation). For example, a beautifully detailed title font of medieval style writing may look wonderful on a computer screen, but will likely dissolve into mush on a television screen. The television screen requires bolder images than a computer screen. If the audience is unable to read what is written on the screen or cannot clearly see the information presented in a chart, then you are not effectively communicating.

Camera Operation

The portion of the program that you can see is called **video**. The camera operator is responsible for capturing the program images with a video camera.

video: The portion of the program that you can see.

Talk the Talk

The term “video” has different consumer and professional definitions. Consumers often use “video” to refer to the tape or the DVD you rent or purchase for viewing at home. Television production professionals use “video” to refer to the visual portion of a program; the part that is seen by the audience.



A **frame** is the actual edge of the video picture; the edge of the picture on all four sides, **Figure 2-16**. **Framing** a shot is the camera operator’s responsibility and involves placing items in the picture by operating the camera and tripod. Shooting a vase of flowers sitting on a table seems simple until you realize there are an infinite number of ways to shoot it (long shot, close-up, from a side angle, from below, from above, zoom in, or zoom out). A good camera operator has the ability to frame shots effectively for the audience.

frame: The actual edge of the video picture; the edge of the picture on all four sides.

framing: Involves placing items in the camera’s frame by operating the camera and tripod.

We have all seen home movies taken of someone else’s family. Home movies are usually not tolerable to watch for long periods of time. One reason is camerawork—it is generally shaky and out of focus, **Figure 2-17**. An important production value is quality camerawork. Put the camera on

Figure 2-16. The edge of a picture on all four sides is the frame. An operator frames a shot by determining exactly what to include in the frame.



a tripod for stability and frame the shots correctly. Make sure that people in the video do not have oddly cut off body parts, **Figure 2-18**.

audio: The portion of a program that you can hear. Audio includes narration, spoken lines, sound effects, and background music.

Audio Recording

Audio is the portion of a program that you can hear. Audio includes narration, spoken lines of dialog, sound effects, background music, and all other aspects of a program that are heard by the audience.

Figure 2-17. An out-of-focus shot has poor production value.

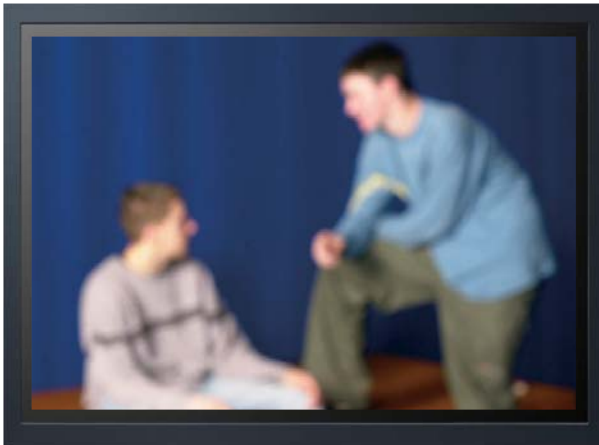
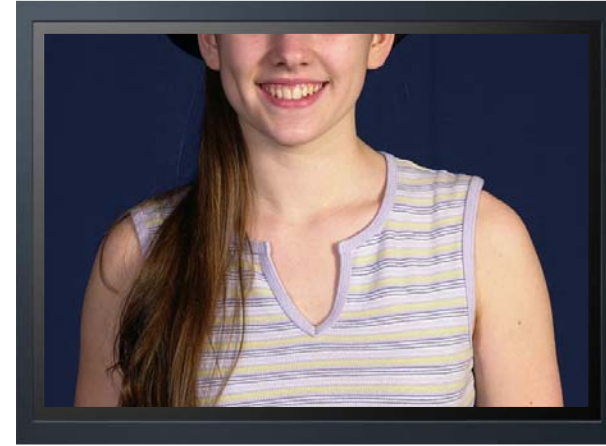


Figure 2-18. A shot of a person "missing" important parts of the body is considered a poor production value.



Production Switching

When shooting in a studio, there may be three cameras shooting a scene from three different angles. Each of the cameras captures a different picture:

- Camera 1 is on one news anchor in a close-up.
- Camera 2 has a two shot of both anchors.
- Camera 3 is on the other news anchor in a close-up.

All three of these cameras connect to a production switcher, **Figure 2-19**. A cable coming from the switcher connects to a video recorder. By pressing buttons marked "1," "2," and "3," the picture from different cameras can be sent to the recorder. The process of cutting between cameras (from camera 1, to camera 3, to camera 2, and back to camera 1) is called **production switching**.

production switching: The process of cutting between cameras.



Figure 2-19. The production switcher allows the operator to send pictures from different cameras to the video recorder, simply by pushing a button or pulling a lever.

Special Effects

An entire book could be written on special effects alone. In simplest terms, *special effects* are anything the audience sees in a video picture that did not really happen the way it appears on the screen. Special effects alter the reality perceived by the viewer.

special effects:

Anything the audience sees in a video picture that did not really happen in the way it appears on the screen.

PRODUCTION NOTE

One of the cardinal rules of television production and filmmaking: "It does not have to be, it only has to appear to be!"



Editing

Placing the individual scenes in logical order on another tape is called *editing* (discussed in Chapter 24, *Video Editing*). When writing a research paper, you make notes on note cards. One of the next tasks in the process is to arrange the note cards in an order that makes the paper flow logically. The process of arranging note cards corresponds to editing a video program.

editing: The process of placing individual recorded scenes in logical order.

The scenes of a program are not usually shot in the order seen in the finished product. All the scenes that take place in one location are shot at the same time, even if they appear at different times in the finished program. Imagine that scenes 25, 41, and 97 of a movie take place in Egypt at the Sphinx, and scenes 24, 40, and 98 take place at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France. To shoot the scenes in chronological order, all the people and equipment would need to be transported back and forth three times between these distant locations. The increased production cost in providing such travel arrangements is unreasonable and, most often, not possible. Setting up once at each location to shoot all the necessary scenes requires that the scenes be edited together in the proper order in post-production.

Duplication and Distribution

A master program is copied to multiple media formats, such as tape or DVD, for distribution and viewing. The programs may be individually sold by a retailer, used as informational material for a specific workforce or company, cablecast, or be broadcast and viewed on televisions in millions of homes. Programs may also be streamed and downloaded using the Internet. The finished product is viewed on millions of televisions and computer screens around the world almost instantly.

ASSISTANT ACTIVITY

- Watch 20 minutes of the local or national news with the sound turned off. Can you still follow what the newscasters are communicating? Why?
- Watch 10 minutes of a sitcom with the sound turned off. Can you still follow the storyline?
- Try watching a commercial that you have never seen before with the sound turned off. What is the commercial trying to tell you about the product? Can you figure it out without the audio?

Be prepared to discuss your experience with each of these scenarios.



Wrapping Up

The academic aspects of TV production must be learned to understand how all the elements of production fit together. Everyone needs to understand everyone else's job in order to fit into the matrix of production. There are hundreds of factors to consider when producing a television program, and this chapter presents only a few of the main jobs involved. An enormous number of people are typically involved, from the beginning to the end of a production. Remember that this text is an introduction to television production and broadcast journalism. It is not intended to be the end of your learning, rather just the beginning.

The approach this text uses to teach this complex subject is a vocabulary-based, progressive method. Concentrate on learning the industry terminology, and understanding the principles behind those terms should come naturally. The content touches every topic briefly at first and, as the chapters progress, continues to address the topics in increasing depth and detail. Progressive learning means that each day of class builds on a foundation created by all previous days and lessons—you cannot forget what has come before. If your brain is a hard drive, for example, you have one file called "Television Production" and you keep adding more information to that one file. Nothing can be deleted!

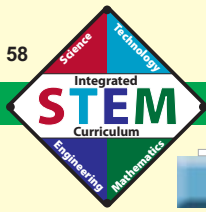
Review Questions

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Do not write in this book.






1. Explain the difference between the *talent* and the *staff* of a production.
2. What are the four phases of program production?
3. Describe how the director interacts with the program's producer.
4. What are the typical responsibilities of a photog?
5. What information is included in a program proposal?
6. What is the *frame* of a video picture?
7. Explain the process of production switching.
8. Why is it usually impractical to shoot all the scenes of a program in sequential order?

Activities

1. Record the final credits of your favorite television show. Play the credits back slowly and notice all the job titles listed. List any of the titles that are unfamiliar to you and research the responsibilities of each job. Be prepared to present this information in class.
2. Research basic hand signals used by floor managers on a production set by searching the Internet, checking reference material at the library or, best of all, by visiting a local TV station and interviewing a floor manager. Make an illustrated poster of the new signals you learn.



STEM and Academic Activities

-  1. Identify the positions on a production crew that have changed dramatically with technological advancements. Identify production crew positions that have changed little, or not at all, despite technological advancements in television production.
-  2. Create a flowchart that depicts the television production process from beginning to end. Include the titles of staff, crew, and talent involved in each part of the process.
-  3. Calculate how much money you will accrue after 30 years if you invest \$4500 every year into a retirement fund with 8% interest compounded annually.
-  4. Develop an idea for a new prime-time reality television show. Write a program proposal to pitch your program idea to the executive producers.
-  5. In television, the four phases of production are pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. Relate these phases to your life. Assign each of the activities you perform to complete a specific task or goal to one of these four phases.