

# Employment Opportunities in the Canadian Broadcasting and Affiliated Production Sector



CAB | ACR

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Canadian Association of Broadcasters  
L'Association canadienne des radiodiffuseurs

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) commissioned a research study on *The Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television Programming*. The study was part of a broader action plan designed by the CAB's Joint Societal Issues Committee to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the industry, and address issues of portrayal in programming.

Canada's private broadcasters are committed to bringing greater diversity to the broadcasting system, on-air and behind the scenes. This research provided a tremendous level of learning and exposure to the concerns of Canadians with disabilities.

The study included interviews with over 50 representatives from Canada's disability community, who brought forward their perspectives about barriers to participation in the broadcasting industry – whether in performing, production, administration or other roles.

At the present time, employees with disabilities comprise less than 2% of people working in the Canadian broadcasting and production industries, although persons with disabilities comprise 15% of the Canadian population.

Our research found several reasons for this, including a general lack of awareness on the part of educators and the disability community about the kinds of jobs that are available in the sector. This booklet is therefore designed as a guideline to the types of employment available in the broadcasting and affiliated production sector.

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

The Canadian broadcasting and production sectors are *growth* industries in the Canadian economy, providing employment for thousands of people in dozens of occupations that require a wide range of education, training and skill sets.

In 2005, there were over 45,000 jobs in Canadian television, radio and television distribution including cable and satellite companies – an 18% increase from 2001. More specifically, between 2001 and 2005, job growth in commercial radio was up by 3%, private conventional television increased by 6%, television distributors grew by 24% and pay and specialty television increased by 27%.

In addition, CBC/Radio-Canada radio and television experienced a 36% rise in jobs between 2001 and 2005.

Given this continuing growth and diversification of jobs, the broadcasting industry requires a deep pool of skill and talent. At the same time, the industry has expressed concern about the potential future shortage of skilled workers.

A parallel concern is that the number of persons with disabilities enrolled in broadcasting or production-related educational programs is extremely small – less than one percent. The low numbers in the education system coupled with on-going, significant demand for skilled employees means that persons with disabilities may represent a largely untapped pool of talent for the broadcasting and affiliated production sector.

## OCCUPATIONS IN BROADCASTING

The following presents an overview of occupations in the broadcasting industry, but is not an exhaustive list of all jobs available. For additional information, talk to your guidance or career counsellor, or contact your local broadcaster. Some references provided at the end of this booklet may also be helpful.

Most of the occupations identified involve full- and part-time employment at television and radio networks and individual stations; the industry also uses a significant number of contract or freelance employees, especially in the area of broadcast journalism.

Jobs at television and radio stations and networks generally fall into the categories of **News Production, Technical/Engineering, Program Production, Sales/Promotion/Marketing** and **General Administration/Management**. Occupations in the industry are being strongly influenced by the development of digital technologies such as High Definition (HD) television, which are opening new opportunities within the broadcasting sector while creating new and exciting challenges for station employees.

The level of education, training and experience required for jobs in broadcasting varies widely within each category and between each occupation and market. With advances in workplace accommodation, accessibility and assistive devices, there are a wide range of jobs in the broadcasting and affiliated production sectors that can be performed by people with disabilities.

And broadcasters are always looking for skilled people.

## NEWS PRODUCTION

The production of broadcast news for television and radio involves a wide array of on-screen, on-air and behind the scenes jobs.

**News Anchors** are senior professional journalists responsible for newsreading and news story/videotape segment introductions. Anchors are also engaged in the interpretation and analysis of news and can also double as **Senior News Editors** responsible for the selection of news stories and events.

**News Directors** have overall responsibility for a news team made up of reporters, writers, editors, and newscasters as well as studio and mobile unit production crews. News Directors usually determine what events to cover and the manner in which they will be presented in a newscast. **Assistant News Directors** supervise the newsroom, coordinate wire service reports as well as tape inserts in stories and stories from individual newswriters and reporters. **Assignment Editors** assign stories to news teams, sending the teams on location if necessary.

**Producers** hold a range of responsibilities, including the overall planning and development of a live newscast, selection/booking of outside experts or analysts, and a range of production elements.

**Writers** are responsible for writing and editing news stories from information collected and communicated by **Reporters**, who gather information from various sources, as well as analyze and prepare news stories from city where the station is located. Some reporters may eventually work as network **Correspondents** who collect and develop information and stories from international locations.

News programming also includes other on-air presenters, such as **Weather Reporters/Specialists** who are often trained meteorologists that develop weather information from a range of sources; **Sports Reporters** or **Sportscasters** who prepare and present stories on sports; and **Traffic Reporters** who communicate with local authorities and report on traffic flow and mishaps (often for larger stations).

Larger television stations with major news reporting facilities also have a range of other jobs, such as **Production Assistants** who fulfil a range of production support duties and **Researchers** who collect and check facts in support of news stories.

## TECHNICAL/ENGINEERING OCCUPATIONS

This is the side of the broadcasting industry that requires skilled individuals to operate and maintain the electronics, computers and digital technologies used to record and transmit radio and television programming.

The terminology for these occupations varies, but the titles of ‘technician’, ‘engineer’ and ‘operator’ are generally applied to mean the same thing.

**Broadcast Technicians** set up and maintain electronic broadcasting equipment. This work often involves activities outside of the station, when set up of portable transmitting equipment or maintenance of towers is required.

**Station Technicians** or **Engineers** manage equipment that regulates the signal strength, clarity, and range of sounds and colours of broadcasts. They also monitor and log outgoing signals and operate transmitters.

**Audio and Video Recording Technicians** operate equipment to record, mix and edit sound, music and videotape – for television, radio and motion picture productions. They also work in the studio to regulate the volume, sound quality, and visual quality of a broadcast.

**Television, Film, Video and HD Camera Operators** set up and operate cameras that are used in the television studio, as well as electronic news gathering or ENG cameras – which are mobile and for use outside the studio when a news team is pursuing a story on location. Camera operators usually require training in video production as well as some experience in television production; television broadcasters also have a growing need for skills in other areas of HD production with the move from analog to digital.

**Master Control Operators** ensure that all of the radio or television station's scheduled program elements, such as on-location feeds, prerecorded segments, and commercials, are smoothly transmitted.

**Technical Directors** direct the studio and control room technical staff during the production of a program. This position requires very thorough knowledge of all production and technical elements of a broadcast, and previous experience as a **Lighting Director** or **Camera Operator**, or in another technical production area.

**Network and Computer Systems Administrators** and **Network Systems/Data Communications Analysts** perform the types of duties required from computer specialists in other industries: they design, set up, and maintain systems of computer servers. These servers store recorded programs, advertisements, and news clips, and are pivotal to radio and television broadcasting operations for both the storage of production and for regulatory compliance.

**Chief Engineers** or **Directors of Engineering** are responsible for all of a station's technical facilities and services. These employees usually require an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering, additional technical training in broadcast engineering, and years of broadcast engineering experience.

## PROGRAM PRODUCTION AND INTERACTIVE CONTENT

Television and radio stations often produce programs 'in-house', such as news programming, programs of local interest, documentaries and other content. Positions in **Program Production** can therefore overlap those occupations in **News Programming** described earlier.

**Producers** plan and develop live or taped productions, and design how a program will look and sound. As the head of the production team, they select the script, talent, sets, props, lighting, and other production elements. Producers also have responsibility for the overall coordination of on-air personalities, production staff, and other personnel.

**Traffic/Scheduling Coordinators** are responsible for entering sales and programming contracts into the system of a radio or television station, reconciling program logs for accounting and CRTC reporting purposes, and liaising with sales, programming and master control.

Television and radio stations also employ **Announcers** to read news items and provide other voice-over information for viewers and listeners, such as program schedules and public service announcements (PSAs).

More specific to television, **Video Editors** select and assemble pretaped video to create a finished program, applying sound and special effects with the aid of assistants as necessary. Computerized editing facilities allow an editor to electronically cut and paste video segments.

**Production Assistants (or P.A.'s)** look after numerous program details, including program timing, communicating with and guiding studio guests, gathering and organizing cue sheets, and maintaining a flow of information to producers and directors.

There are also a number of occupations within a television network or station's *Programming* activities, including **Production Executives**, **Program Schedulers**, and **Program Acquisitions**. **Programming Coordinators** fulfil a range of responsibilities. They assist senior programming personnel with program acquisition and scheduling, distribute program information internally and handle enquiries from producers and program suppliers.

More specific to radio, **Disc Jockeys** host programs, playing recorded music, taking requests from listeners, interviewing guests and in-studio performers, commenting on the music, weather, or traffic and perform other duties. Most radio stations have placed their programming — ads, sound bites, sound effects, music — on a computer, which is used to select and play, or edit the programming. Technological advances have simplified the monitoring and adjusting of the transmitter, leaving disc jockeys capable of performing many of the duties required to keep a station on the air.

**Program Directors** are in charge of on-air programming in radio stations. Program directors decide what type of music will be played, supervise on-air personnel, and often select the songs and the order in which they will be played to create a specific sound for the station according to the station's format (or predominant music category).

**Music Directors** are responsible for selecting the bank of music available to a radio station for airplay, and have the important task of selecting new music for a station that fits that station's format – requiring a broad knowledge of music and a good ear for the type of song that fits a station's sound.

Larger stations may also have roles for **Assistant Program Directors** and/or **Assistant Music Directors** which are stepping stones to more senior roles in radio stations. Given the relatively limited number of senior program occupations in radio stations, it is not unusual for employees to relocate as a way of advancing their careers.

Broadcasting companies employ an increasing number of people in their *Interactive Services/Divisions* as well, from senior executives and business unit leaders to computer graphics specialists and software programmers or technicians – all of whom are dedicated to the development and marketing of on-line content.

For example, **Multimedia Artists/Graphic Artists and Designers** and **Illustrators/Animators** require creative abilities in working with digital technologies to develop content for both conventional broadcasting and interactive services. **Web Developers** plan, develop, code and maintain user-accessible broadcaster websites, while **Website Component Developers** create supporting databases and interfaces. **Programmers** and **Creative Writers/Researchers** develop, draft and edit on-line content.

## SALES, MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Most employees in the area of *Sales* – for both radio and television networks and stations – occupy the role of **Account Executive** or **Sales Representative**. These employees sell station advertising time to buyers such as local retailers, national retailers, advertising agencies and other buyers of air time. Many stations have several employees that comprise a sales or street team; each individual working in sales requires detailed knowledge about their network or station, its target audience and the demographics of the station's listeners.

Larger radio and television stations and networks usually have teams that are solely occupied with selling air time. **General Sales Managers** or **Sales Managers** supervise and direct sales teams, handle some accounts and are responsible for the overall sales success of a station.

Many networks and stations employ **Marketing Specialists** across a range of jobs, including **Marketing Executives**, **Marketing/Product Managers** and numerous support personnel. They develop strategies for selling a broadcaster's brand, programming or community presence to the public and/or identified audiences.

**Sales and Marketing Teams** are also engaged in a range of **Promotion** activities on behalf of a network or station, such as radio broadcasts from out-of-studio locations, concert promotions, sponsorships and station-based contests.

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

**General Managers** or **Station Managers** coordinate radio and television station activities and are responsible for the overall success of the station. In smaller stations, the number of personnel is significantly reduced, with a **General Manager** and **Accountant/Bookkeeper** potentially handling the bulk of office administration, hiring, purchasing, and other duties.

In larger stations and networks, staff will often include a range of specialists that fulfill important behind-the-scenes duties, including:

- **Business Managers**
- **Lawyers**
- **Regulatory Affairs**
- **Accountants**
- **Human Resource Specialists**
- **Administrative/Payroll Staff**
- **Administrative Assistants**
- **Word Processors/Data Input**
- **Information Technology Support**
- **Video/Audio Library Technicians**
- **Finance Clerks**
- **Other Clerical Positions**

As broadcasting is a federally regulated industry, one of the more unique occupational categories is that of Regulatory Affairs, which involves legal, policy and research activities, as well as regular interaction with the CRTC.

## OCCUPATIONS IN AFFILIATED PRODUCTION

The following presents an overview – again, not an exhaustive list – of occupations within the affiliated production sector that creates programming for television networks and stations.

Jobs in the affiliated production sector can be categorized broadly in terms of:

- **Preproduction** – the planning phase that includes budgeting, casting, locations, set/costume design and construction, and scheduling.
- **Production** – the actual making of the film, involving workers that might number in the few or the hundreds.
- **Postproduction** – activities that take place in editing rooms and recording studios, where the program is shaped into its final form.

**Producers** work in all three phases, from searching for ideas or material that can be turned into television programs to the various details of the production itself – especially financing and budget management.

**Production Managers** handle a range of logistics that keep a production moving forward, including the assigning of technical crews, travel arrangements, casting, equipment and adhering to production schedules.

**Directors** are the effective creators of a production and are also involved in every stage of a program's production – they are effectively the 'CEO' of the set, in that they direct the entire cast of actors and crew of technicians during the shooting.

**Assistant Directors** do just that: they assist the *Director* with the volume of details involved in production, including transportation of equipment, hiring of 'extras', shooting of some scenes and other duties.

**Screenwriters** develop ideas into storylines, plots and dialogue for a television film, series pilot or television series episode. They also develop a script prior to shooting that identifies camera shots, angles, lighting and other details of how the production should be look.

**Art Directors** design the physical surroundings and environment of the television set to create the mood and look required. They supervise a wide range of employees on a production, including illustrators, scenic designers, model makers, carpenters, painters and electricians; labourers, set decorators, costume designers and makeup/hairstyling artists.

**Cinematographers** plan out the actual camera shots required in the production, designing the filming to capture the mood and look required.

**Camera Operators** handle all camera movements and perform the actual shooting. Assistant camera operators check the equipment, load and position cameras, run the film to a lab or darkroom, and take care of the equipment.

**Gaffers**, or **Lighting Technicians**, set up all required lighting for the **Director of Photography**, who plans all lighting needs.

**Sound Engineering Technicians**, **Film Recordists**, and **Boom Operators** record dialogue, sounds, music, and special effects during the filming. Sometimes these roles are performed by a single individual, especially when on location.

**Multimedia Artists and Animators** create a range of special visual effects, graphics and animation that require a strong artistic streak and wide knowledge of computer technology. A number of related occupations also require skills in *New Media*, including **Web Developers** and **Programmers** for on-line content.

The affiliated production sector also has a range of support roles for many employees, often at the entry level of the industry, including **Production Assistants** and **Grips** or stagehands. These individuals perform a range of tasks, from errands to helping with props.

**Actors** or **Performers** are of course integral to a television production of comedy or drama; while a few have speaking roles, many are cast in supporting roles, non-speaking roles are as 'extras' (such as riders on a train or crowds on a street).

After a film is shot and processed, **Film and Video Editors** select the footage of the production and assemble it in a way that provides both continuity and the right mood. Again, the ability of editors to work with digital media is very important, and strong computer skills are a must.

**Assistant Editors** or **Dubbing Editors** select the soundtrack and special sound effects to produce the final combination of sight and sound as it appears on the screen. Assistant Editors help with a number of technical aspects involved in editing, including splicing, patching, rewinding, coding, and storing film.

**Sound Effects Editors** or **Audio Recording Engineers** add prerecorded and live sound effects and background music to the film; their work is becoming increasingly computer driven as digital equipment replaces conventional tape-recording devices.

**Unit Publicists** are public relations professionals who write press releases and biographies of actors and creative personnel for trade magazines and newspapers. They may also set up interviews on entertainment magazine programs for the stars or director to promote a television series.

**Sales Representatives** are often contract employees retained by a production company to market a television program to a network.

Of course, affiliated production companies also have **Senior Executives** and **Managers** who oversee the operations of the company. Depending on the size of the company, these personnel can include:

- **Chief Executive Officers**
- **Accountants**
- **Lawyers/Business Affairs**
- **Marketing Executives**
- **Support Staff/Clerical**

Some production companies are extremely small, with a single producer, a staff person or two and contract or freelance employees hired on a project-specific basis. Smaller scale productions will often see a small group of creative people carrying out multiple tasks, including writing, directing, producing, camera operation and editing.

## SKILLS REQUIRED IN BROADCASTING AND PRODUCTION

The question for many considering a career in broadcasting or affiliated production is how to tailor one's skill set to meet the needs of an industry that is growing – and rapidly changing.

Here are a few considerations.

First, anyone who may be interested in a career in broadcasting should carefully research the education, experience and skills that a given job might require. Some of the specific jobs outlined in this manual require specific levels of education and experience – but qualifications that employers search for can also vary between companies. For example, a station in a small market may have different qualifying standards than a larger market station.

Second, there are many entry-level jobs available in broadcasting and affiliated production, but just what constitutes 'entry-level' positions can also vary between stations and markets. Again, check with your guidance or career counsellor, or contact your local station for more information.

And third, as noted earlier in this manual, there is a strong demand for skilled employees in the broadcasting industry – but the number of persons with disabilities enrolled in related educational programs is low. If you think you might be interested in a broadcasting career, you might want to consider what the broadcasting and affiliated production sectors see as key areas of industry growth, where an on-going supply of talent will be needed:

- ***Business development and marketing***, including international sales, working with investors and creative promotions;
- ***Technical skills***, including digital production skills, CGI applications, three-dimensional graphics, digital animation and web design;
- ***The ability to work effectively with new technology***, especially High Definition Television, interactive content and on-line distribution, in-house editing and post-production; and
- ***Management and financial expertise***, including international business affairs and advanced financial structures.

Industry executives have also pointed to the on-going need for *versatile* employees, or those that can manage a variety of jobs and possess excellent general knowledge of the industry as opposed to specialized skills.

The private broadcasting industry is among the most exciting, and challenging sectors in Canada, offering a wide range of opportunities for career development and growth. To find out more, visit the Canadian Association of Broadcasters website at [www.cab-acr.ca](http://www.cab-acr.ca). The CAB has links to hundreds of television, specialty and pay, and radio broadcasters across Canada that can provide more information about the industry and assist with your education and career decisions.

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