



Advice for Getting a Job in Television

With the rise of the **television**, it has become one of the most powerful mediums so it's no surprise that so many of us want to have a role in producing what is shown on the small screen. Before you take the plunge into television jobs, you need to spend some time investigating the **career** options available and understanding which decisions you make now will provide you with the best opportunity at securing television jobs.



Available Jobs

When most people say they want TV jobs, they mean they want to be in front of the camera. That usually means working in the news department as an anchor, reporter, weather person, or sports anchor. Unfortunately, those jobs are highly competitive and may be the most difficult to get.

About 90% of television jobs are actually in production. That means you are working behind the scenes to create what is being viewed by audiences. While these jobs don't bring much fame or recognition by the general public, they can be lucrative and creative as well.

These behind-the-camera positions can be divided into two different camps: **operational** and **managerial**. Operational positions are going to involve operating the camera, positioning the lights, and editing the footage. Managerial positions would include some of the most highly paid positions off-screen, including news director and managing editor.

Because the types of television jobs are so varied, there are two ways to approach entering the industry. On the one hand, some people set their mind on a particular position and work towards obtaining that position. They stay focused and keep doing whatever possible to better prepare for employment in that area.

While that approach may work in some cases, you may be wiser to keep your options open. For example, if you have your heart set on becoming a television personality you might start off behind the camera so you can at least get in the proverbial door. Once you begin making connections, landing a spot on the other side of the camera may get easier. This method has worked for many professionals who now hold on-screen television jobs.

Regardless of the method you choose, preparing for the job you want in the long run is essential to your success.

Employment Requirements

The requirements for obtaining television jobs differ depending on the position. However, it's never a bad idea to have a college degree on your resume, especially in broadcast **journalism**, journalism, or mass communication. Recent studies have shown that more than 90% of the people in the industry earned a degree in one of these three majors (the vast majority had degrees in broadcast journalism).

Gaining experience is another reason to attend college before attempting to formally enter the television industry. Many colleges have television or **radio** station programs that students help produce. Working in these roles can give you valuable on-screen and off-screen experience that will provide a competitive advantage when you start your job search.

Most college journalism and broadcasting programs provide **internship** programs as well. Being an intern will let you work in the field you want and learn a little of what really goes on in those television jobs. Plus, this type of experience will help you make connections in the industry and possibly acquire a job offer.

However, a formal education is not going to be as important for some of the television jobs as others. For example, if you are planning on working as a video editor, experience might be more beneficial than a degree. Combining both though will offer more chances for employment and for promotion.

Employers don't just look at the objective parts of your resume either. Education and experience are important but employers also are looking for more subjective traits, including having a people-friendly personality, being highly motivated, having a good sense of creativity, and demonstrating the ability to adhere closely to deadlines. These traits are vital no matter whether you are in front of or behind the cameras.

Additionally, people hoping to land a spot in front of the camera will also need to be camera friendly — which means attractive. Audiences don't want to hear the news from people



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who look too ordinary, who are overweight or overly thin, etc. While this may not be a good thing, it is the nature of television jobs and isn't going to change any time soon.



Job Outlook

The salary for television jobs is varied. Not only will your earnings be determined by your specific position but also by the size of your television market. Obviously,

you are going to earn more if you are working in a large market, such as Chicago or New York. Of course, competition for those television jobs is fierce.

In general, on-screen non-management television positions pay better than off-screen television jobs. For example, a news writer in a medium market may earn about \$25,000 per year while the news anchor in that same market could earn \$55,000 for reading that news. The difference is even more pronounced in large markets when news writers and

new anchors earn an average of \$37,500 and \$173,000, respectively. In most markets, however, the best paid position tends to be the news director who earns between \$43,500 (small market) and \$150,000 (large market).

Unlike other types of industries, television jobs are almost always in demand. That means you're going to be facing tough competition for almost any position you seek, including those behind the camera. Being prepared with solid experience from an internship or from past work experience is going to give you an edge against the competition. However, many experts recommend having a back-up plan in case you are not successful at landing a television job right away.

Conclusion

If you're serious about landing a job in the television industry, experience and education are going to be key to your success. The more you know going in for potential television jobs, the more likely you are to walk away as a new employee.

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