Governors State University
OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship

All Capstone Projects   Student Capstone Projects

Summer 2001

Creating Television / Video In-House Productions: A Brief Guide to Managing a Production for the Novice

Herbert J. Turner
Governors State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://opus.govst.edu/capstones

Part of the Broadcast and Video Studies Commons

For more information about the academic degree, extended learning, and certificate programs of Governors State University, go to
http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Degree_Programs_and_Certifications/

Visit the Governors State Communication and Training Department

This Project Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Capstone Projects at OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. For more information, please contact opus@govst.edu.

Creating Television / Video In-House Productions:

A Brief Guide to Managing a Production for the Novice

Herbert J. Turner III
Governors State University
University Park, Illinois
July 2001

Table of Contents

Preface

I worked as a production assistant with the Communication Services at Governors State University as part of my graduate project. Before my first working day, I had an orientation session with Producer/Director Tony Labriola. One of my study goals is to gain field experience in producing and directing television productions. As a production assistant, I will be trained on and in all aspects of television production: directing, producing, as well as coordination of sets, talent, marketing and set lighting. I completed a total of 120 hours for my training beginning May 14th to August 28, 2001.

Production has ever changing hours and dates. Change from week to week, so expecting a steady schedule would be impossible. Productions may have set schedules, but changing hours and dates is not uncommon. I may be down for days and then there will be

frantic days with lots of work to be accomplished, as deadlines have to be met.

This field experience in production found me using much of the knowledge obtained in the classroom. Aside from a whole different set of terminology used in the production company, I found many challenges in a fast paced work environment.

Introduction

This manual was created with the intentions to inform and educate individuals about creating their own television/video production. Throughout the period of time allotted me for this thesis project, I have gained knowledge that will be beneficial in acquiring a position at a television station or starting my own company. Vast experience is obtained through working or interning in the media field. While working for the

Communication Services, I learned shortcuts, tips and ways to efficiently execute T.V/Video productions. This experience accompanied with my collegiate instruction on the television/video world has heightened my interest in this field.

When producing or directing a production, you have the power vested in you to create something that once was a thought. Through good quality productions and a competent stuff, the sky is the limit for a career in production. Understanding all aspects of T.V/Video Production such as lighting, audio, and directing will make you a better producer or director. Being multifaceted in the television/video production field is a plus. With that being said, this manual exposed numerous positions that are important to a production. Need less to say the more technical duties you know the better chance of getting a job or if you are independent the less people you will have to pay.

Starting a Production

If you have a camcorder, a tripod, and a microphone, you can produce any number of television programs. With a camcorder, tripod, and microphone, you can produce a simple new show, create classroom videos, record school assembly programs, and even produce a simple orientation tape. You will have fun making exciting projects and interviewing friends for a news show. Beginning television production is a lot like buying a new house or returning to college, if you wait for the perfect situation, you'll never begin.

How to Pick a Production Company   When beginning a production you must first talk about money. If you decide to hire a production company solely on the basis of the lowest bid, you will probably end up with a video that is much less than what you expected. Remember that this video represents your company. It is

important to find a reputable company that gives a fair bid for the type of video you need, according to Roy B. Cohn, author of "How to choose a video producer". Two very important questions to ask yourself are, do you want to hire an independent producer or a company? Secondly, do you want to receive your bid as a package price, or as a piecemeal?

Independent producers usually work for themselves and do not own any equipment, relying on outside production companies for their crew needs. This means that if you have an immediate deadline, the producer is dependent upon someone else. Unless the independent producer is very busy, you should receive personal attention. By hiring a production company, you can get a producer that has the equipment and crew resources in house. Depending upon the scope of your project, a production company will either use an in house producer or hire a freelance producer to coordinate the details.

There are two ways of hiring a producer or production company to create your video: Package Price. A package price for the entire project is the way many videos are negotiated. The client knows exactly how

much to budget for and the production company knows how much money they will have to work with. The major downside for this arrangement is the client will naturally try to get as much for its dollar as it can, while the production company will then try to cut its costs to maximize its profits. A preferred way to produce your video is piecemeal. Hire your production company by the day, or by the hour. This way, you are paying only for the time-spent working on your project. Your producer should be able to give you hourly and daily rates and to estimate the total cost for the project.

Your producer should be available to you any time to answer questions and to consult with you about any part of the production. Your producer's job is to manage the project from beginning to end. The producer is responsible for coordinating the scriptwriting, pre-production, shooting, and editing. Depending upon location and experience, producers command between $350-850 a day.

When looking for a production company you can look under Video Production in your Yellow Pages of

your phone book generally and find a quality local production company. Remember the size of the ad from a company does not mean the company is any better than a small sized ad. Personal referrals sometimes are your best bet. You can also search the Internet; there are many sites with lists of production companies. Using search engines to find production companies with a web presence is also a pretty good source. The quality of the final product depends largely on the equipment used to shoot, light, and edit the video. For most corporate video projects as well as commercials and television programs, the Betacam SP format is the smartest choice because of its widespread compatibility. There are also a number of new broadcast digital video formats that are just now emerging on the market, which should produce about the same quality, especially once the video is duplicated to VHS.

When you first initially talk with your producer, be sure to ask questions. But even more importantly, the producer should ask you questions and listen to what you want. Be aware if the producer tells you what you need without listening to what you are saying. At

the same time, ask the producer for recommendations that would enhance the project beyond your expertise. Meeting at your location is usually most beneficial. Bring copies of videos you would like to emulate and tell your producer what you like and do not like about them. Be sure the producer brings sample tapes that are similar to the project you want to do. Look at past projects your producer has completed. You should also call the producer's past clients to get feedback on their professionalism, work quality, and personality to understand what it was like to work with them. Listed below from the book, "Starting a television production from scratch" are great question to ask potential producers.

Questions your producer should ask you:

What do you want to achieve with this video?

Who is the target audience?

What do you want the audience to do after watching your video?

How will the tape be shown?

How may shoot locations will there be?

Will we be shooting during business hours?

How long does the video need to be?

Will a company executive need to be on camera?

Do you need a professional on camera talent or a voice over?

Who will write the script?

Will you need graphics or animations in the video?

Are there any other materials that need to be included in the video, such as photographs?

How Do I Keep My Cost Down?

You being the executive producer should ask your producer what can I do to keep my cost of production down? A good producer will help you keep the project within your budget. The experience of the producer relates directly to the quality of the finished product. Ask up front if there will be any extra charges, such as taxes, tape costs, mileage, travel expenses, and duplications. It is important to understand if you, as a client, make changes to the project that require additional work from the production company not originally agreed upon in the proposal, extra charges will most likely apply. You or a representative from your company will need to be

accessible to serve as a contact and help coordinate approvals, schedule shoots, and answer question.

An important point to remember, especially if you are a novice, is that communication is key to the success of the project. Your production company should be available at any time to answer any questions you may have. My supervisor Tony Labriola would answer the questions and at the same time ask questions. Neither any other staff nor I would be asked any questions, but if we were asked, we would refer the person asking the questions to Tony. Questions like who will pay for the employee and talents lunch or how much will it cost for duplication of tapes are examples of questions Tony would be asked at the inception of a production.

Set Creation

Because the television camera looks at a set both at close range and at a distance, scenery must be detailed enough to appear realistic yet plain enough to prevent cluttered pictures. Regardless of whether it is an abstract interview set or a realistic living room, a set should allow for optimal camera movement and camera angles, microphone placement and boom movement, appropriate lighting, and maximum action by the performers and actors. To fulfill all these requirements, we normally use four types of scenery: (1.) Standard set units, (2.) Hanging units, (3.) Platforms, and (4.) Set Pieces.

Standard Set Units Standard set units consist of softwall and hardwall flats and a variety of set modules. Both are used to simulate interior or exterior walls. Softwall flats are background units consisting of a lightweight wood frame covered with muslin or canvas. Hardwall flats are made of stronger cover material, such as pressed fiberboard or plywood. Flats

for standard set units have a uniform height but various widths. The height is usually 10 feet, or 8 feet for small sets or studios with low ceilings. Width ranges from 1 to 5 feet are hinged together; they are called twofolds or threefolds. Jacks support flats, wood braces that are hinged or clamped to the flats and weighted down by sandbags or metal weights. Softwood flats are easy to handle, assemble, and brace. They can be easily stored and do not take up much room, which are big considerations when building standard set units. Because they are light and flimsy, however, they often shake when somebody closes a door or a window on the set or when something brushes against them. They are ideal for rehearsal and useful for less demanding productions.

Hardwall flats are much sturdier than softwall flats and are preferred for more ambitious television productions. Hardwall units are generally built for a specific set and do not always conform to the standard set dimensions of softwall scenery. The problem with hardwall scenery is that the flats are heavy and hard to store. Hardwall flats reflect sound more readily

than softwall flats, which can easily interfere with good audio pickup. If a set design requires that two hardwall flats stand opposite and in close proximity to each other, the talent operating in this space will most likely sound as though he or she were speaking inside a barrel. Most hardwall scenery is built for specific shows and remains set up for the length of the series. News or interview sets are an example of such permanent sets. For small stations, where you do not have the luxury of building new sets for every show, you may consider versatile set modules that can be used in a variety of configurations. A set module is a series of flats and three-dimensional set pieces whose dimensions match, whether they are used vertically, horizontally, or in various combinations. A variety of set modules are commercially available.

Hanging Units Whereas flats stand on the studio floor, hanging units are supported from overhead tracks, the lighting grid, or lighting battens says Greg Coon, author of "What you need to know about producing a video". They include 1. The cyclorama, 2. Drops, and 3. Drapes and curtains.

The most versatile hanging background is a cyclorama, a continuous piece of muslin or canvas stretched along two, three and sometimes four studio walls. Some cycloramas have a second curtain of loosely woven material, called a scrim, hanging in front of them to break up the light before it hits the cyclorama, producing a soft, uniform background. Most studios use a ground row to blend the bottom edge of the cyclorama into the studio floor. Some studios have hardwall cycloramas, which are not actually hanging units but are built solidly on the studio floor.

A drop is a wide roll of canvas with a background scene painted on it. It commonly serves stylized settings where the viewer is very aware that the action occurs in front of the drop. Some drops consist of large photomurals for more realistic background effects. A chroma key drop is a wide roll of chroma key blue cloth that can be pulled down and even stretched over part of the studio floor for chroma keying. You can make a simple and inexpensive drop by suspending a roll of seamless paper, which comes in a great variety of colors.

When choosing drapes, stay away from overly detailed patterns or fine stripes. Drapes are usually stapled to 1 by 3 battens and hung from the top of the flats. Most curtains should be translucent enough to let the backlight come through without revealing scenic pieces that may be in back of the set.

Platforms The various types of platforms are elevation devices. The normal platforms are 6 or 12 inches high and can be stacked. Sometimes the whole platform is called a riser, although technically a riser is only the elevation part of the platform without its top. Some of the 6-inch platforms have four casters so that they can be moved around. Such platforms are called wagons. You mount a portion of a set, or even a whole set on a series of wagons and then move it rather easily in and out of the studio. Larger risers and hardwall scenery are often supported by a slotted steel frame, which works like a big erector set. You can cut the various slotted steel pieces to any length and bolt them together in any configuration.

Set Pieces Set pieces are important scenic elements. They consist of freestanding three-dimensional objects,

such as pillars, sweeps, folding screens, steps, and
periaktoi. A periaktos is a large three-sided standing
unit that looks like a large pylon. It moves and
swivels on casters. Whenever you work with scenery,
make sure that all the pieces are safely anchored and
secured so they do not tip over when bumped by
performers or equipment. It is always better to
overbrace than to underbrace the set. As in all other
aspects of television production, do not forsake safety
for convenience or speed. Communication Services does
not have complicated scenery. All pieces of equipment
are already in the studio and do not take long to put
together for the creation of different set looks.

Set Design

Before you design a set, you must know what the
show is all about. Talk to the director about his or
her concept of the show, even if it is a simple
interview. You arrive at a set design by defining the
necessary spatial environment for optimal communication
rather than by copying what you see on air. If the show
is intended to be shot with a single camera for heavy
postproduction editing, you may find it easier to take

the camera to the street corner than to re-create the street corner in the studio. But even if the show is slated for the studio, you can often streamline the set design by taking some time to discover just what the show is all about. Try to see the entire show in screen images and work from there. Your design depends on the answers you get, such as: the basic idea is to probe the conscience and feelings of the defense lawyer rather than hear about strategies.

Floor Plan We now turn to some of the major elements of scene design: 1. The floor plan, 2. The open set 3. Background and platforms, and 4. Floor treatment.

A set design is drawn on the floor plan, which is literally a plan of the studio floor. It shows the floor area, the main studio doors, the location of the control room, and the studio walls. The lighting grid or batten locations are naturally drawn on the floor area to give a specific orientation pattern according to which the sets can be placed. The completed floor plan should convey enough information to the floor manager and crew to put up the set and dress it, even in the absence of the director or the set designer. The

scales of floor plans usually vary. All scenery and set
properties are then drawn onto the floor in the proper
position relative to the studio walls and the lighting
grid. More elaborate sets, however, require a floor
plan that is, like a blueprint for a house, drawn to
scale. Even if you don't have to draw a floor plan to
scale, you are greatly aided if you use the templates
that have cutouts of standard furniture. They normally
come in a scale of ¼ inch = 1 foot and are readily
available in art supply stores. Most art directors use
desktop computers and specialized software for floor
plans and set designs. The floor plan is an important
aid for all production and engineering personnel. It is
essential for the floor crew, who must set up the
scenery and place the major set properties. The
lighting director needs it to make the general light
plot. The director uses it to visualize the show and
block the major actions of performers, cameras, and
microphone booms. The audio engineer can become
familiar with specific microphone placement and other
possible audio requirements. The performers use it to
anticipate their movements and spot potential blocking

problems. Although you may not want to become a set designer, you should nevertheless learn how to draw a basic floor plan and translate it into an actual set, into movement of performers and cameras, and finally, into television screen images.

Whenever possible, try to put the set where the lights are. Place it so that the backlights, key lights, and fill lights hang in approximately the right position. Sometimes a designer who is ignorant of television production will place a set in a studio corner, where most of the lighting instruments have to be rehung to get proper illumination, when in another part of the studio the same set could have been lighted with existing instruments. If you use the floor plan as the basis for the light plot, simply add a transparent overlay and draw in the major light sources. As you can see once again, you cannot afford to specialize in one television production activity by disregarding the other production aspects. Everything interrelates, and the more you know about the other production techniques and functions, the better your coordination of the various elements will be.

Lighting

As one of the photographic arts, television is
subject to photographic lighting principles. The most
basic photographic lighting principle, as it is
frequently called, basic triangle lighting consists of
three main light sources: key light, back light, and
fill light. Each of these sources is positioned so that
it can optimally fulfill its assigned function. Each of
the three main light sources, key light, back light,
and fill light have to fulfill very specific functions
so that the major objective can be reached: the
revelation of form and dimension, in lighting terms,
the manipulation of light and shadow in order to
produce the impression of a three dimensional object on
the two dimensional television screen.

As the principal source of illumination, the major
function of the key light is to reveal the basic shape
of the subject states "Start a television production
from Scratch". To achieve this, the key light must
produce some shadows. You can use a scoop, broad, or

even a softlight for a key if you want softer shadows, or technically, slower falloff. If you want to establish a specific direction from which the principal illumination is coming, however, the spotlights do a better job. During the day we see the principal light source the sun coming from above, the key light is normally placed above and to the right or left front side of the object, from the camera's point of view.

Adding illumination from behind helps separate the subject from the background. To get good back lighting on a set, you need a generous space between the performance areas and the background scenery. You must place active furniture, such as chairs, tables, sofas, or beds, away from the walls at least 6 to 10 feet toward the center of the set. If the talent works too close to the scenery, the backlights must be tilted at very steep angles to reach over the flats, and such steep angles inevitably cause undesirable top light.

A highly diffused floodlight or reflected light is generally used as fill light. The diffused floodlight makes the shadows in your studio more transparent without erasing them altogether. The more fill light

you use, the slower the falloff becomes. When the intensity of the fill light approaches, or even matches, that of the key light, the shadows are virtually eliminated. This gives the flat look, which means that shadows are no longer available to help define shape and texture.

When you do critical lighting in a specific area and do not want the fill light to spill over too much into the other set areas, you can use a Fresnel spotlight as fill light by spreading the beam as much as possible or by putting a scrim in front of its lens. You can then use the barn doors to further control the spill. With the three main light sources in the triangle position, you have established the basic photographic principle of television lighting. But you are not done just yet. You must now fine-tune the lighting arrangement. During my stint with the Communication Services at Governors State University, I did not participate in that many lighting arrangements in the studio. I did gain lighting experience on remote shoots. A remote shoot is when you film someone or something at an area outside of the studio. I learned

two important sources of light are a sun gun, a source

of brightening a direct area and natural light, the

light provided by the sun.

Audio

When using a camcorder on vacation, you are probably fully occupied with the proper framing of shots and with zooming in and out, relying on the built in microphone and automatic volume control to take care of the audio. The audio requirements are basically set up for the user. In a field production, you will see considerably more audio equipment used. When walking into the audio control booth of a television control room, or the audio production room of a television station, the variety of equipment will show you the importance of studio control sound.

The audio control booth houses the audio, or mixing, consoles. The equipment in the audio booth are the digital cart, cassette, compact disc, and digital an audiotape machine. One audio engineer operates the audio control during a show. Most audio booths are separate from the program control section yet in close proximity to it. Some provide visual access to the studio or, at least, to the program control room.

Because of the many and various audio production demands in postproduction houses have still another audio production room or facility is required. This room, which has the appearance of a small control room of a recording studio, is not used for the sound control of studio shows. This area is used to perform such postproduction activities as making some sounds more prominent while getting rid of the unwanted sounds is called sweetening which composes music tracks, adds sound effects to the audio track of a play or a laugh track to a situational comedy, or assembles various musical bridges and announcements for the additional programming. The audio production room usually has a fairly elaborate audio console, two or more multitrack audiotape recorders and DAT machines, digital cart and cassette machines, CD players, and a computer system for the creation, modification, and storage of audio material. In addition to the computer activated patching and routing, many audio production rooms also contain a physical patchbay to route audio signals.

A very important position of the production is the VTR (video tape recorder). VTR's have the task of

making sure that all sound that is supposed to be on tape is on the designated tape and all sounds that are not supposed to be on the tape are not. A tape based video recorder uses videotape for the recording, storage, and playback of video and audio information. A disk based video recorder uses either large capacity computer drives with the option of reading and writing optical disks.

Analog recording systems record the continually fluctuating video and audio signals as created and processed by a video source on videotape and retrieve the recorded information as an identical continually fluctuating signal from the videotape. Digital recording systems convert the analog video signals by sampling the scanned image and translating it into millions of tiny, prepared, on and off pulses. The actual digital recording stores not video and audio signals, but data. To visualize these different distinctions between analog and digital, look at the view uninterrupted analog signal as a continuous ramp that leads to a particular rang.

Analog videotaping is similar to the analog audiotape recording process. Electrical impulses of television pictures are dubbed and saved on the plastic videotape by magnetizing its iron coating. During playback, the stored information is converted again into video and sound waves and translated by the television set into television pictures and sounds. The amount of electronic data is many times greater for video than for audio recording. Not surprisingly, there are many systems of treating and recording the video signals.

In digital videotape recording, the VTRs store an enormous amount of digital data. Just like the digital audiotape recording, digital videotape recording needs a special videotape. Most systems have the capability to move more briskly across the recording heads than in analog recorders.

Although the terms linear and nonlinear apply more to the way the recorded information is retrieved rather than stored, you may also hear tape based systems described as linear, and disk based systems as nonlinear recording equipment. All tape-based systems

are linear. Linear systems improcess their information serially, with that being said during retrieval you will need to roll through shots 1 and 2 before viewing 3. You cannot randomly access information if a tape based system records in digital rather than in analog.

All disk-based systems are nonlinear, which means that you can randomly access any of the shots, without having to roll through material ahead of the information you are looking for. Random access is especially important when editing, because it lets you call up equally fast any video frame or audio, regardless of where on the disk it is stored.

Directing and Producing on Air Talent

On air talent are the personalities that appear in front of the camera for your news or production project (commercial, company video). Talent has to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the event and your specific assignment. Know the message of whatever they will be commenting on during the taping of your production. Test their audio equipment to see what shape it is before your production begins and you cannot hear the talent. A brief run through of all the interior systems will give you talent confidence in the studio and the people running the equipment (VTR, Character Generator, and Technical Director) is stated by Ann Ricki Hurwitz author of "Choosing a career in film, television, or video". Being the producer or director, you will have to be on the same page as your talent do to the fact that nobody knows your work or information as well as you do. If you cannot be in constant conversation or assistance to you talent, get someone who has as much knowledge of the subject matter as you do, such as an assistant director.

    The use of a competent and confident individual to be your talent is necessary. If your talent is someone that was thrown into the part, it will show on you video. Using emotion in your tone and facial expressions create a sense of involvement or concern that sells the viewing audience on the believability of your project or news. Mistakes are acceptable if your talent is doing news or a live shoot, but be sure that your talent corrects their mistake. For other projects that are not live, corrections can be corrected during another take. Talent for newsrooms and live events must know that the event is more important than the talent. As stated before, people hear and see more than they hear or see on their own. If your talent is talking over a feed or tape that is equipped with sound, they are taking away from the originality of the clip. As much as possible let the event itself do the talking. Advice your talents to be extremely quiet during incredibly tense moments. At Communication Services, the director and assistant director handled on air talent from selection to briefing.

Editing

Regardless of how complex tape based linear editing systems may be, they all work on the basic copying principle: to have one or several VTRs play back portions of the tape with the original footage, and another VTR to rerecord the selected material from the original tape onto its own tape. To give you some idea about the different tape based systems, we group them into three categories: 1. Single source systems, 2. Expanded single source systems, and 3. Multiple source system.

A basic system that has only one VTR supplying the material to be edited is called a single source editing system. The machine that plays back the tape with the original footage is called the source VTR, or the play VTR. The machine that copies the selected material is called the record VTR, or edit VTR. In the same manner, we videotape, and to the one onto which the selected portions are recorded in a specific editing sequence as the edit master tape. To see what is on the source tape

and on the edit master tape, you need monitors for both VTRs.

When doing the actual editing, you use the source VTR to find the exact in and out points of the footage you want to copy to the edit master tape. The record VTR does the actual copying of the actual material supplied by the source VTR and joins the frames at predetermined points better know as edit points. You have to tell the record VTR when to start recording the source material and when to stop recording. An in or entrance cue tells the record VTR when to start recording the source material; an out or exit cue tells it when to stop recording. To assist you in this task is a piece of equipment called the edit controller or editing control unit. This editing unit automates editing to a certain extent. It memorizes some of your commands and executes them with precision and reliability. Single system edit controllers can also perform additional editing tasks, such as letting you do trial run before actually performing the edit, performing separate edits for audio and video tracks without one affecting the other, or producing

intelligible sounds at various speeds. You will notice that the basic single source editing system does not always give you the flexibility you need says Betty Sosin author of "Is a video in your vision?" Such audio manipulation between the source tape audio and your desired audio track on the videotape requires interfacing an audio mixer. If you also want to add titles to the documentary, you need a character generator and a switcher that can mix the scene from the source tape with the titles, without making the edit master tape undergo another generation.

The tape based multiple source editing system consists of two or more source VTRs, a single record VTR, and a computer assisted edit controller. Like the expanded single source system, the multisource systems can, and usually do, include an audio mixer, a switcher, and special effects equipment. The edit controller is a computer that directs the functions of the A and B source VTRs, the character generator or effects generator, mixer, and finally the edit and record functions of the record VTR. The multiple source editing systems allow you to run synchronously tow or

more source VTRs and combine the shots from any of the
source VTRs quickly and effectively through a variety
of transitions or other special effects. The big
advantage of this system is that it can facilitate a
great variety of transitions, such as cuts, dissolves,
and wipes. Another advantage is that you can arrange
all even numbered shots on the A roll. By switching
from A roll to B roll during the editing, you can
assemble the preedited shots rather quickly.

Various linear editing features and techniques,
including assemble and insert editing, and control
track and time code editing. When in the assemble mode,
the record VTR will erase everything on its tape just
ahead of copying the material supplied by the source
VTR. When you use in a camcorder a tape that has last
year's vacation pictures on it to chronicle your new
vacation adventures, the camcorder will, in effect, use
assemble editing every time you shoot a new scene. It
will simply erase what has been on before and replace
it with the new video and audio. The same happens in a
more sophisticated editing system. Even if the edit
master tape has a previous recording on it, the

assemble mode will clear the portion of the tape that is needed for the first shot. When editing shot 2 onto shot 1, the record VTR will, again, erase everything on the tape following shot 1 to make room for all the video, audio, address, and control track information contained in shot 2. The same happens when you assemble the subsequent shots.

The problem with assemble editing is that the record VTR needs a continuous control track, even though on is created from the control track bits and pieces copied over from the source tape. Even the best VTRs do not always succeed in this. A slight mismatch of sync pulses will cause some edits to tear, causing a sync roll, which means that the picture will break up or roll momentarily at the edit point during playback.

The primary advantage of editing in the assemble mode is that it is fast. You do not have to go to trouble of first laying down a black video signal with its continuous control track before you begin the editing. You can, in fact, use any tape for the edit master, regardless of whether it contains previous video material or whether it has a control track

recorded on it. Because of its speed, some hot news editing is done in the assemble mode.

It would be sensible to lay down a continuous control track on the edit master tape before copying and trying to match all the control track bits from the various source tape selection. You could then instruct the record VTR not to copy under any circumstances the control tracks from the source tapes, but yield to the one on the edit master tape.

This solution has been found, and it is called insert editing. To prepare the edit master tape for insert editing, you need to record a continuous control track on it. The simplest way to do this is to record blank, with the video and audio inputs in the off position. As though it were recording an important event, the VTR lays down a control track in the process. The blank tape has now become an edit master tape, ready to receive the many unforgettable scenes from your source tapes.

All nonlinear editing systems are basically computers that can capture video and audio information and store it on high capacity hard drives or read /

write optical discs. Recall that the fundamental difference between linear and nonlinear editing systems in that linear systems copy information from one videotape to another, whereas nonlinear systems create and arrange picture and sound data files in particular order. Instead of editing one shot next to another, you are basically engaged in file management.

Depending on the sophistication of the computer, the new arrangement of data can be retrieved either offline or as on line video and audio signals that you can watch on a regular monitor and speaker and transfer to the final edit master tape by the record VTR. The CamCutter has its own nonlinear editing system built into the hard drive and can deliver edited footage right from its own recorder.

Because of improved hardware, software, and compression methods combined with high capacity hard drive discs, even desktop systems that us PCs or Macintoshes can produce high quality video and CD audio.

High end on line systems have all these features and more. Their hard drives can store as much as 100

plus hours of BetacamSP quality video with relatively low compression. Most of these systems can even deliver D-1 quality images, but then you are limited to shorter program storage. If you are an audio enthusiast, you should be happy to hear that most on line systems can display and mix twenty-four tracks for a four-channel DAT quality audio output.

The controls for nonlinear systems come in various configurations. Some use the standard computer keyboard and mouse; others simulate film controls in an attempt to lure hard core film editors to the world of nonlinear editing.

Just to give you more options, most nonlinear systems can be linked as networks for sharing video and audio data files, for audio sweetening, or to send their rough cuts to a client for final approval. I have been getting help on the editing systems at Communication Services from everyone that has experience with editing. I did not know how to edit until working with Communication Services. Although I do not know how to use the linear editing unit, I do know how to use the non-linear unit. With the aid or

guidance of Mark Kundla and John Tullos, Production Assistance, with the Communication Services, I learned how to edit out mistakes in a production and also put in new beginnings and ends of productions as well.

Directing

Now that you have gone through the steps of creating your show/ production, it is time to be the man so to speak. As the director of a show or production, you are the most important entity. Your main goal is to put what the producer or company wants portrayed on the screen in a manner that is creative yet focused said Dell Dennison author of Producing a first class Video for your business.

The various roles you assume as a director are not as clear-cut as you will see. Roles frequently overlap and you may have to switch from one to another several times just in the five minutes of rehearsal. Even pressed for time and pressured by a variety of problems.

A director is an artist, a director is expected to produce pictures and sound that not only conveys the intended message clearly and effectively but which do so with their own style. You need to know how to look at an event or a script, quickly recognize its essential quality, and select and order those elements

that help to clarify, intensify, and interrupt it for a specific audience. Your personal style enters when you do all the things with a personal touch.

You must deal with a variety of people who approach television production from many different perspectives; you need to also assume the role of psychologist. In a single production have to communicate with a producer who worries about the budget, technicians who are primarily concerned with the technical quality of pictures and sound, and an upset talent that is confused about the way you the director and the writing wants something portrayed.

Not only do you have to get everyone to perform at a consistent high level; you also have to get them to work together cohesively. Although there is now perfect way to keep a set or video shoot without problems, some suggestions made by George Carpenter, Lecturer, Media Communications, Governors State University (1999) are listed below.

- Be well prepared and know what you want to accomplish.

- Know the specific functions of each team member.

- Be precise about what you want the talent to do.

- Project a secure attitude; be firm but not harsh when giving instructions.

- Do not ridicule someone for making a mistake.

- Treat your colleagues with respect and compassion.

Although you do not have to be an expert in operating the technical equipment, as a director you should still be able to give the crew helpful instructions on how to use it to achieve your communication goal. In the role of technical adviser, you are acting much like a CEO. The CEO may not be able to do all of the position in their company, but he or she certainly knows the various positions that produce different elements of the CEO's company or business.

In addition to your various roles, you must coordinate a great many production details and processes. The role of coordinator goes beyond directing in the traditional sense, which generally means blocking the talent and helping them give outstanding performances. Especially when directing nondramatic shows, you must expend most of you efforts on cueing members of the production team to initiate

certain video and audio functions, such as getting
appropriate camera shots, rolling VTRs, riding audio
levels, switching among camera and special video
effects, and retrieving electronically generated
graphics. You need to coordinate productions with the
rigid time frame in which every second has a price tag
attached. Such coordinating needs practice, and you
should not expect to be a competent director
immediately after your first directing experience but
you will be obtaining experience every go around.

The more effort you spend on preproduction
planning, the easier, more efficient, and especially
more reliable your directing becomes in the actual
production phase. You need to focus on the following
major preproduction points and activities, 1. Process
message, 2. Production method, 3. Production team and
communication, 4. Scheduling, 5. Script formats 6.
Script marking, 7. Floor plan and location sketch, and
8. Facilities request.

Make sure you know the defined process message,
the purpose of the show or production and it intended
effect on a specific audience. All personnel must

clearly understand what the show/production is about and the expected outcome of the production. An early agreement between producer and director about specific communication goals and production type and scope can prevent any confusion from your producer's plans and yours, even if the producer has given you the responsibility for all creative decisions.

If you thoroughly understand the process message, the most appropriate production method becomes clear that is, whether the show is best done in the studio or in on videotape, single camera or multicamera, in sequential or nonsequential event order. If the process message is to help the viewer participate in the excitement of watching a Thanksgiving parade, you need to do a live, multicamera remote in the field. A traffic safety segment on observing stop signs may require a single camera approach and plenty of postproduction time. To help the audience gain a deeper insight into the thinking and working habits of a famous painter, you might observe the painter in his or her studio over several days with a small, single camcorder and then edit the videotaped material in

postproduction. If the viewer is to share the excitement of the participants in a new game show and is encouraged to call in while the game is in process, the show must obviously be a live, multicamera studio production.

Prepare a detailed schedule for preproduction activities that are based on the producer's master schedule. Such a schedule will help you keep track of who is supposed to do what, and when an assignment is supposed to be done. Some computer programs make it relatively easy to cross check on the various activities of the production team members.

One of the most important preproduction elements is the script. The script tells what the program is about, who is in it, what is supposed to happen, and how the audience shall see and hear the event. It also gives specific clues as to the necessary preproduction activities. The complete script includes every word that is to be spoken during the show as well as detailed audio and video instructions.

There are advantages and disadvantages in directing a fully scripted show. The advantages are

that you can visualize the individual shots and sequence them before going into rehearsal. You have definite cue lines and instructions for what shots the camera are to get. The disadvantages are that you are tied down to a highly specific shot sequence, regardless of the inventiveness of the camera operators, who may want to respond to the feel of the play rather than to the writer's instructions. If the actor or performer forgets the exact text and begins to ad lib, the live on tape shooting procedure may be seriously affected. Of course, such problems are considerably minimized if the script is structured for discontinuous takes that will be assembled in preproduction.

Newscasts are always fully scripted. They include every word the news anchors speak and the instructions every word the news anchors speak and the instructions of what visuals the director must call up at a particular time. As a director you have little chance to be creative. You follow the script and call up the various video and audio segments in the right order and at the right time.

Documentaries or documentary type shows, too, are frequently fully scripted. Because a documentary is intended to record an event rather than reconstruct one, scripts are often written after the production. Documentary scripts then guide not the actual production, but the postproduction phase. The script will often indicate which video or sound bites to use, or dictate the voice over segments by the off camera narrator. Normally, the major video and action cues are listed in the video column, and all spoken words and sound effects are listed in the audio column.

The show format lists the major set areas in which the action takes place, or other points of origination, as well as major clock and running times for the segments. A show format is frequently used in studio productions that have established performance routines, such as daily morning shows, a panel show, or a quiz show.

A fact sheet, or rundown sheet, lists the items that are to be shown on camera and indicates roughly what should be said. No special video and audio instructions are given. A manufacturer or advertiser

who wants a particular performer to ad lib about a particular item usually supplies the fact sheet.

If the demonstration of the item is somewhat complicated, the director may rewrite the fact sheet and indicate key camera shots to help coordinate the talents and directors actions. Unless the demonstration is extremely simple, such as holding up a book by a famous novelist, directing solely from a fact sheet is not recommended. Ad libbing by both director and talent rarely works out satisfactorily, even if the videotaping is intended for postproduction editing.

The software available that will help you format a script, or change quickly and effortlessly from one format to another. Some of the more sophisticated software programs can also reformat a script that was originally created by a word processing program.

Proper marking of the script will aid you greatly in directing from the control room or on location. In control room directing, you need to coordinate many people and machines within a continuous time frame. Your marked script becomes a road map that guides you through the intricacies of a production. Although there

is no single correct way of marking script, certain
conventions and standards have been developed that help
you when the script is in actual production. Obviously,
a fully scripted show requires more, and more precise,
cueing than an interview that is directed from a show
format. Also live or live on tape productions directed
from the control room in a continuous time frame need
more, and more precise, script markings than do scripts
used in discontinuous, single camera studio or field
productions, where you stop and reset between each take
or small series of takes. But even in discontinuous,
single camera productions, a well-marked script will
help you remember various camera and talent positions
and make your directing less a pain.

Whatever script marking you may choose or develop,
it must be clear, readable, and above all consistent.
Once you have arrived at a working system, stick with
it. Without reading each individual note, script-
marking system permits you to interpret and react to
the written cues without having to read each individual
one.

The marking of the script for discontinuous takes consists of a careful breakdown and indication of the various scenes, their location, and principal visualization. You then number the shots in the proposed production sequence. You end up with a list of shots that refers to the original script by page number.

Unless you direct a routine studio production that happens in the same set, such as a news, interview, or game show, you need a floor plan for your preproduction. The floor plan shows the location of the scenery and set properties relative to some grid patterns and the available action areas. Like the script, the floor plan helps you visualize various shots and interpret those shots into major camera positions and camera traffic. With some practice you can do almost all the talent blocking and camera positioning simply by looking at the floor plan.

When the production takes place in the field, you need to get an accurate location sketch, which represents a field floor plan showing the major elements of the production environment. If the event

happens outdoors, the location sketch should show the street, major buildings, driveways, and various other locations.

The facility request is not prepared by the director, but by some other member of the production team. If someone else originates the facilities request, you need to examine it carefully to see whether the equipment requested is sufficient and appropriate for the planned production. List all special requests on the facilities request, such as a working television receiver in the living room set or working phones for actors who are talking to each other in a live on tape scene.

The more time and effort you devote to preproduction, the less time and effort you will have to spend during the production. Production efficiency does not mean to hurry through a production regardless of quality. Preproduction planning will provide you with the information necessary for properly directing the show, help you eliminate most of the production problems, and alert you to the few remaining ones. Preproduction planning provides you with the confidence

necessary to make correct judgements quickly and

reliably.

Producing

As a producer you are very concerned with preproduction planning. It is up to you to take care of all the production details necessary to move from the initial idea to the actual production activities with precision and efficiency. Most producers complain about the lack of money and time available for their productions. Although you could always use a bigger budget and more time than you have available, you have to learn to deliver high quality television programming on time even within such restrictions. Once you have acquired a certain production routine, you will find that more money and time does not necessarily make for a better show, especially if the initial idea is weak. To help you become on target and effective in your production process, you will have to focus on 1. Program ideas, 2. Production models, and 3. Program proposal and budget. Everything you see and hear on television started with an idea.

As simple as this may sound, developing good and especially workable show ideas on a regular basis is

not always easy. As a television producer, you cannot wait for the occasional divine inspirations, but must generate worthwhile ideas on demand. Whether you think of the ideas or they are given to you, you must translate them into effective video and audio messages said Majorie Bekaert Thomas author of "Lights, Camera, Action, Handling Your First Video Assignment". This translation process is what producing is all about. It demands the coordination of may diverse elements such as people, money, machines, space, and time.

Despite the volumes of studies written on the creative process, exactly how ideas are generated remains a mystery. Sometimes you will find that you've one great idea after another, at other times you cannot think of anything exciting, regardless of how hard you try. You can break through this idea drought by engaging several people to do brainstorming. Have everyone around in a circle and record his or her ideas on paper and audiotape. Start the brainstorming session with something as neutral and wide open. The aim of brainstorming is to break the noncreativity bug.

When you have finished the brainstorming session, you can play back the comments and pick some that seem relevant to the task at hand. You will find that the so-called absurd thought or comment can trigger workable ideas more readily than the ones that seem more appropriate.

Once you have decided on the general program idea, you can ask other production people to help with fleshing out the details. There is no single or correct way for organizing the ideas and translating them into an effective television program. Due to the fact that production involves a great number of diverse yet connected activities; you learn its function most profitably by considering it as an interlinking process. In the production process, as in any other, various elements and activities interact with one another to achieve the desired product. The process helps you determine which people you require, what they should do, and what equipment is necessary to produce a specific program.

Production models describe the flow of activities necessary to move from idea to the televised message.

They help you organize the production process and facilitate you coordination efforts. The two basic production approaches are represented by the cause to effect model and the effect to cause model.

The cause to effect model starts with a content expert who generates a program idea. This idea is then given to the production people, who try to translate the basic idea into a program. Once produced, it is distributed to the target audience. The way viewers react is the communication effect. If there is any feedback from the audience, it usually goes to the content expert and not to the production people. If the feedback suggests that the viewers reacted in a way the content expert anticipated, you will be fine. The problem with this approach is that the separation of content expert and production people immediately suggests a division of interest, although both parties may have a common communication goal. Often, the content expert suspects that the producer knows too little about the subject to turn it into an effective program, and the producer assumes that the content expert is largely unaware of the requirements of the

television production process. The content expert is generally concerned with the integrity of the subject matter, like what should be communicated and the producer is more concerned with how it can best be shown.

Like the previous model, the effect to cause model starts with a basic idea; but instead of moving from idea to the production process, it jumps to the desired communication effect on the target audience. Because a process of the viewer watching and listening to television messages generates this communication effect, this form of message is called process message. It is the desired communication effect that should drive the production process rather than the initial idea. This means that as a producer you should know exactly what you want to achieve, what you want your target audience to learn, do, and feel before deciding on the specific medium requirements that would lead to such an effect. The more the actual process message matches the defined one, the more successful the communication. The advantage of this model is that the precise definition of the process message will help

content and the necessary production team and

facilitate selecting the necessary production personnel

and equipment.

To get your brilliant idea accepted for

production, you need to first explain it to the people

who make the final decisions. You do this by developing

an effective program proposal. A program proposal is a

written document that shows what you want to do. It

briefly explains the process message and the major

aspects of your television presentation. Every proposal

should include the minimum information: show or program

series title, objective, target audience, show

treatment, and a tentative budget.

Keep the program title short but memorable. Perhaps it

is the lack of screen space that forces producers to

work with shorter titles. This is a brief explanation

of what your production is to accomplish. You can

rewrite the process message so that it is less formal.

The target audience is whom you are aiming for to view

you production. A properly formulated process message

will give you a big clue as to the target audience is.

Even when you want to reach as large an audience as

possible and the audience is not defined, stay away from general and be more specific in describing the potential audience. Advertisers and other video communication people make extensive use of such demographic and psychographic parameters.

A treatment is a brief narrative description of the program. Some of the more elaborate treatments have storyboard like illustrations. The treatment should not only say what the proposed show is all about but also reflect in its writing the style of the show. Keep the treatment brief and concise.

If you are an independent producer, you need to figure the cost not only for obvious items, such as script, talent and production personnel, studio and equipment rental, postproduction editing, and clearances or user fees for location shooting. When producing a show or production for your local station or a small independent company, the normal personnel and equipment costs are usually included in the overall production budget. Dividing a budget into preproduction, production, and postproduction categories may give you a more workable breakdown of

expenditures than the above and below cost, especially

when you are bidding for a companies business.

When you are first presenting your proposal, your

client may be interested not so much in how you broke

down the expenses, but in what it will cost overall to

have the show produced. It is therefore important for

you to think of all the probable expenses, regardless

of whether they occur in the preproduction, production,

and postproduction phases. Some simple productions may

require only that you fill out the summary of costs.

Whenever you prepare a budget, be realistic. Do not

underestimate costs just to win a bid from a company

because you may regret you bid so low down the road. On

the other hand, do not inflate the budget in order to

get by, even after severe cuts. Be realistic about the

expenses, but do not forget to add at least a 10

percent contingency. In general, a show or production

always costs a little more than anticipated. Although I

did not produce any shows our productions I did get to

stand in on a production with the Communication

Services. For those who do not know what a producer

does while his or her vision is being directed, a

producer directs a director. Tony Labriola did an excellent job of controlling what he felt was the vision he wanted portrayed on screen. For a perspective of production a internship is an essential tool to understanding what the idea or plan is to getting a production started.

Conclusion

As I drew closer to the completion of my project, I felt my knowledge of television production had grown tremendously. My interest in chasing my dream has intensified and I personally feel the adage that the more interning you can get the better a production member you will be. I want to direct or produce television news. With that being said, I feel that with the gained exposure to various equipment and literature that I have used for this project, I think that I have created an manual that would be useful to the average Joe that has no experience in the production field.

I would like to thank everyone who has aided me in my quest of becoming and understanding the role of producer and director of television production. I enjoyed the way that I was instructed and advised to pursue knowledge that I did not have by all of the people involved with this project.

The texts that I have consulted with while participating in this project have furthered my technical knowledge of the topic. Between the hands on and technical aspects of the texts I feel I will be able to continue on to a television station or independent company.

Bibliography

1. Carpenter, George. (1999) MCOM 539. Governors State University.

2. Cohn, Roy B. (1996 July). How to choose a video producer. Training, pp.58-61.

3. Coon, Greg. (1999). What you need to know about producing a video. The CPA Journal, 69. 56

4. Dennison, Dell. (1992). Producing a first class Video for your business: work with professionals or do it yourself. Bellingham, Washington: International Self Counsel Press.

5. Harris, Neil (Eds.). (1994). Managing a video production facility. White Plains, New York: Knowledge Industry Publication.

6. Hurwitz, Ann Ricki. (1996). Choosing a career in film, television, or video. New York: Rosen Publishing Group.

7. Luest, Helga. (1996, August). Hr as producer-director. HR Magazine, pp. 82-84.

8. Start a television production from scratch (1998, April). Curriculum Review, pp.4.

9. Sosin, Betty. (February, 2001). Is a video in your

   vision? HR Magazine, pp. 100-106.

10. Thomas, Majorie Bekaert. (January, 1989). Lights,

Camera, Action: Handling Your First Video Assignment.

Personnel, pp. 33-37.