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The Network
Creating the Next Generation of TV Talent
Top Tips 2009

LOVE
TELEVISION?

LOVE
TELEVISION?



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BBC Academy

A Word from our Top Tips Sponsor

Welcome to the Network 2009

Well done – you’re one of 150 young talented people who’ve been selected from nearly 3,000 applicants. The Network is a fantastic opportunity for you to develop your skills, network with your peers and meet people who are already established in the TV industry.

There are four days of brilliant sessions ahead which will give you access to some of the best talent in the industry. You can learn from them and improve your understanding of how TV works. You’ll have the opportunity to practise presenting, hone your researching and script writing skills and sit in the director’s chair. Do make the most of these workshops, you have close-up access to some of the best practitioners, outlining the most useful skills, and that’s not easy to come by in TV. And there’s also an interactive and informative careers session which can help you decide which area of TV is for you.

Make contacts with people in the industry, ask them how they would go about getting more experience and how they got to where they are today. You must look for the opportunities to get experience – they won’t come looking for you! The next four days could be your springboard to a career in television and it’s up to you to make it happen.

The new BBC Academy is proud to sponsor such an important event. The launch of the BBC Academy signifies our commitment to providing great training not only within the BBC, but for the benefit of the wider industry. With the fast paced, ever changing media environment we live and work in, our aim is give those who receive our training the skills they need for a lifetime of employability.

Enjoy the next few days
Best wishes

Anne Morrison
Director, BBC Academy

BBC Academy

Contents



Top TV Career Tips	02
What do they do?	04
Stay Online	12
Further Training & Opportunities	13
The Network at Work	15
With Thanks to all The Network Sponsors	16

Top TV Career Tips

Right then big shot, you're here...

“Dig a little and you will discover lots of people started their careers thanks to **The Network**. Now it's your turn!”
Nick Astor, Production Executive,
BBC Comedy Commissioning,
The Network Committee

You've made it to Edinburgh.

You've managed to get through a selection process where thousands applied and only 150 people got through. You've done well. Take a deep breath, smile smugly to yourself, and mouth “I've made it” to your reflection in the window.

Don't ever do that again.

You're at the beginning of a career in broadcast media. Let's chuck in some reality at the beginning too – it's going to be hard work and late nights. But you'll do it, like everyone who works in TV, because you'll love every single minute of it. Like any industry, TV attracts all kinds of people but they will share the following characteristics:

- Passion
- Enthusiasm
- Determination
- Creativity
- Flexibility

And most important of all is YOU SHOULD LOVE TV! Watch lots of TV, all the channels, and think about what you like and why. Remember who makes what, think about who they are making it for. Which TV programmes don't work, and are there any gaps in the schedule you can fill with an idea?

So if you can tick all of the above then you're in the right place and onto a winner. If not, then have a serious think if this is for you. It's not going to be easy and there's nothing worse than doing something difficult that your heart's not in.

This booklet will give you advice on how to make the most of your four days at The Network, a snapshot of jobs within the TV industry, how to go about trying to get your first break and, when you've got that first break, how to make the most of it. Follow some of these simple hints and tips and you will be in a far better place than thousands of others who want that job in the media just like you do.

Make The Network work for you, work hard, make contacts, network, ask questions and enjoy – this could be the best thing you ever do and a springboard into a career in the exciting world of television.

Look at Me. Look at Me

How to make the first step

“Work placements can help you focus by seeing what other jobs and roles there are out there and to see if this is the direction you really want to go.”
Daniell Morrissey, BBC Production
Talent Network

In 2009, the BBC advertised 1,500 work placements and over 45,000 people applied. So, how do you get noticed amongst thousands of other applicants?

There are a number of things which will help you stand out and these are:

The Network

Being on The Network is brilliant. Lots of people in the industry either started their own careers here or are aware of the scheme. It shows you have a passion and an enthusiasm for TV and that you have picked up some vital skills. Put it on your CV.

Work Experience

Get work experience with media organisations, production companies, or broadcasters (listing projects you worked on at school/college/Uni isn't enough). You might think this is a “Catch 22” but we'll go into this later. Having this on your CV will show enthusiasm and determination.

Knowledge

Nothing annoys someone in TV more than a person who doesn't know anything about the programmes they're applying for, because there will be someone around the corner who does. You need to watch TV and as much different TV as you can. Your love of TV will come through if you can discuss it with depth and excitement. Don't forget that programmes need to get commissioned; developing an understanding of channels' audiences and brands will always be beneficial.

Ideas

You might be asked to come up with ideas for existing programmes or come up with programme ideas. You need ideas: by the bucket load... no, by the truck load. It's ideas that make the TV world go around. Someone with good ideas will go a very long way.

Focus

You need to start to think what area you want to work in. If it's in production, what do you want to do? Producer, production manager, camera operator or script editor? Your experience on The Network will help you understand what these jobs involve. Knowing what you want will provide the potential employer with clarity and help you make choices.

What do they do?

Job glossary

A job title is often not helpful when it comes to knowing what someone does. Here are some quick definitions which may help you:

Runner Works on a production or at a company and does basic tasks which range from getting teas, collecting contributors or carrying tapes.

Production Assistant Supports the director and production team during the making of films and television programmes.

Researcher May find participants for a reality show or research information for a documentary, or check historical detail for a period drama.

Producer Coordinates all the resources needed to make film, TV and video productions, and manages the production process from start to finish.

Director Responsible for the way films or TV programmes are made. They use their creative vision to manage the production process alongside the producer.

Production Manager Organises the business, finance and employment issues in film and TV. They are in charge of the production budget and make sure everything runs smoothly during filming.

Camera Operator Can be in the studio or on location. Camera operators can be trained to operate many different types of camera.

Editor Responsible for working with the director to cut all the footage together and add effects to make the final programme.

Development Creative Develops new programme ideas, which are then pitched to channels, who decide whether a programme will be commissioned.

Sound Technician Uses technical equipment to record, amplify, mix and monitor sound; responsible for setting up sound equipment on location.

Broadcast Journalist Researches and presents news stories and factual programmes for television, radio and the internet.

Commissioning Editor Responsible for selecting programme ideas for a channel. Has key creative input and will oversee the production of each programme or series until it's ready for transmission.

Agent A representative of on screen talent who negotiates dates, fees and requirements.

Scheduler Oversees the programme and planning of channels.

Catch22

Getting your foot in the door

"Always ask for feedback"
David Kermode, Editor, Five News

You need to get work experience, but you can't because you haven't got experience. What a nightmare. How do you solve this problem? There is not one simple way to get work experience, there are loads. It's just like with everything... you need to stand out.

Work Experience Websites

Many broadcasters including BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky offer work experience opportunities, as do a lot of production companies—including Endemol, RDF and Shine. However even with a placement application you have to be clever.

The BBC receives over 20,000 applications each year i.e. why not apply for a placement offering the same skills and development opportunities, but with a programme which isn't so 'sexy'. You'll still be developing your skills.

When you write your application make sure you answer the questions you're asked. Attempt to work out what the organisation is trying to ascertain with the questions. And, if you don't succeed first time, then try again.

Think Outside The Box

Explore alternative ways of gaining experience and making contacts:

- Explore regional media opportunities
- Gain work experience through smaller channels, local stations, hospital and university television and less well-known Indies
- Use corporate video productions to gain camera and production skills
- Volunteer at key media events, award shows and festivals including our very own Edinburgh International TV Festival

Networking & Contacts

The Network, as the name suggests, is an ideal place to start networking. Introduce yourself to people, tell them how passionate you are about TV and ask for some advice. If you have someone's contact details, find out what they make and watch it. You'll need a contact book; get one now and start writing names down.

Consider asking someone in TV to mentor you. You can bounce ideas off your mentor, talk through options, and gain a new sense of direction from hearing an alternative view point, and of course invaluable contacts!

Get Noticed

Contacting producers

“Write to people and never give up. Be ridiculously enthusiastic and people will remember you” Cameron Roach, Emmy Award Winning Producer, Life on Mars, The Network Committee

There is another way to apply for work experience, but for this you'll need to really work hard and do a lot of preparation.

Here's what you need to do:

- Decide what area of TV you want to get into (drama, comedy, news, etc) and watch a TV programme you love in that area
- Watch it again, but this time make notes on things you really enjoyed, what you didn't like and why
- Watch the credits and make a note of the producer's name and the company who made the programme
- Begin to write an email. Your first three line paragraph should quickly explain who you are and how much you enjoy their programme

- Now list three reasons why you think the programme was good perhaps pointing out why it was relevant to you or the target audience
- This is where you can shine: offer them one or two ideas for their programme. Here you can show how creative and imaginative you are, but also how much you understand the programme. Be clever. If you can give some details and even show that you have researched the idea all the better. Bring your idea (or ideas) to life
- Do some research and add in anything, if relevant, about the programme being re-commissioned, nominated for awards or its ratings.
- End the email by thanking them for their time, expressing your desire to work in TV and on their programme and also with a polite request for half an hour of their time to offer some advice to you
- This email should be no more than a page long. It should also be accompanied by a CV
- Find their address by searching on the internet or ringing the company and then send off your email. Allow 4–5 working days before you follow it up



The Follow up

“Watch a lot of telly! It’s amazing the number of people trying to work in TV who don’t even seem to like it”

Sara Ramsden, Creative Director, Endemol UK

What would you prefer: a fly which buzzed around you all day and wouldn’t leave you alone or a bird who sat patiently next to you, occasionally letting you know it was there with a bird-song or two?

Of course it’s the bird, because there is nothing more irritating than a fly which won’t leave you alone. Why, then, do some people who are applying for work experience act like the fly with constant phone calls, emails and letters. Act like the fly, be swatted like the fly.

The people who you’re writing to don’t have to do anything with your letter. In fact, the people you’re writing to don’t have to offer anybody any work experience at all. So, here’s some things to think about on the follow-up:

- Be polite in all your communications with them
- Be persistent, yes, but be courteous and good humoured with it
- Be passionate, but keep it controlled and try not to be too excitable (trying to be ‘crazy’ with a capital ‘K’ will get you nowhere)

- Send a brief email, four to five lines, asking if they read through your original email and could they spare thirty minutes of their time

If you have their phone number then your approach is slightly different. An email is something you can craft and they can read through at their leisure. A phone conversation is different. It’s very immediate and you can infer a lot from the one-to-one contact. Some things to keep in mind when phoning:

- Phone from a quiet environment
- Prepare a message which is short, simple and to the point in case you need to leave a message. Don’t forget to leave a phone number and tell them who’s calling
- If you get through take a deep breath before you start talking and be clear and concise with what you’re about to ask
- You simply want to ask if they have had a chance to read through your email and ask if they can give you half an hour of their time
- If they say they haven’t, ask them, politely, if they could (to give you some advice) and would it be OK to follow it up
- Always thank them for their time



You need to be patient with all your applications. Some take far longer than others to get a response from, but it would be reasonable to follow up again after a fortnight. If they haven’t got in touch with you by then, then they’re either really busy or not worth pursuing. Move on. There’ll be other opportunities.

Onwards & Upwards

Heartbreak. They hate me. Everyone thinks I’m rubbish. I’m never going to make it. I’ve made a fool of myself.

Wipe your eyes and grit your teeth. Onwards and upwards.

A ‘sorry we can’t offer you work experience’, a rejection from a job or simply no response whatsoever is all part of the “trying to get into the media” journey you’re on. Sad, yes, but it can be guaranteed that the majority of the people in the industry all had the same experience. Don’t moan about it, pull yourself together and try again. This is where you can show people how determined you are.

If possible do ask for feedback, but never be defensive, and don’t chase it if they don’t respond.

Woohoo – You’ve got your Foot in the Door

Making the most of your work experience

“Before an interview, find out what your interviewer’s last show was and watch it!” Ian Russell, Deputy Controller of News, Current Affairs and Documentaries, Five

So, you get offered some work experience. Don’t put your feet up – you need to start working harder now. A couple of things to confirm and think about when you’re offered work experience:

- Double check the time and date of when the company is expecting you in
- Check what the dress code is so you can dress appropriately
- Check their address and then work out how you will get there. Not just one route but two or three
- Ask what you’ll be working on, so you can start doing some research around the topic or programme: this could be either watching lots more of the programme or reading articles and books
- Get yourself up to speed with what’s going on around the world. Read the papers: both broadsheets and tabloids. Challenge your assumptions and read something that you wouldn’t ordinarily look at

First Impressions Last

You must treat your work experience with any company as if it is your job...you want to make a good impression on the people you’re working with just in case a paid post does become available. If you’ve worked hard and been helpful they’ll remember you and may offer you something else. The flip side is that people will instantly forget someone who makes no effort at all.

Here’s some “do’s and don’ts”:

Don’t

- Check your email, Facebook or generally browse the web unless specifically told to do so
- Sit there and do nothing
- ‘Huff and puff’ when asked to do what you think is a job below you. There is no job beneath you
- Leave something half done because it’s 5pm & tell people that you have a ‘social engagement’ to go to
- Sit there and worry and stress about a task you’ve been given. Always ask for help if you don’t understand

Do

- Be proactive – ask if there is anything you can do
- Work hard! When given something to do really apply yourself to it
- Ask questions
- Be polite and good humoured (even when it’s really difficult to remain so)
- Show them how creative and imaginative you can be, coming up with more ideas
- Be punctual
- Be yourself. Be honest and offer feedback when asked
- Find out if you can get a brief meeting with a senior person before you leave to get careers advice
- Thank people when you leave, and send a follow-up thank you email to everyone you worked with

Job or Experience?

Until you get a job, continue getting as much experience as possible. Of course, it will test your finances, but some people are clever with their part-time jobs while others find temping an option. If you do a bit of research, you can find temping agencies who supply people to work to media organisations. This will allow you to get inside the organisation, understand it and make contacts.

Chance, Luck & Timing

You may have a lot of experience and have a contact list which would embarrass any channel controller but sometimes getting work experience is just based on luck and timing. But everyone at The Network wishes you the best of luck, hopefully you are in the right place at the right time. Be determined to succeed – and let us know how you get on.

You can contact us at thenetwork@mgeit.co.uk

Stay Online

Useful websites

“Be hard-working, self-starting, worldly-wise, inquisitive, diligent and persevering” Rob Kirk, *Editorial Manager, Sky News*

Media Industry Information

www.mgeitf.co.uk
www.mediaguardian.co.uk
www.broadcastnow.co.uk
www.mediauk.com
www.nma.co.uk
www.screendaily.com
www.shootingpeople.org
www.pact.co.uk
www.digitalspy.co.uk
www.c21media.net
www.startintv.com
www.channel4.com/4careers
www.britdoc.org
www.equity.org.uk
www.spotlightcd.com
www.thestage.co.uk
www.independent.co.uk/media
www.bafta.org
www.rts.org.uk
www.televisual.com

Jobs

www.bbc.co.uk/jobs
www.filmstv.co.uk
www.grapevinejobs.com
www.mandy.com
www.itv.com/jobs
www.talentcircle.co.uk
www.mavericktv.co.uk/jobs
www.about.five.tv/careers
www.debr.co.uk

Training Information

www.bectu.org.uk/home
www.channel4.com/4talent
www.skillsset.org
www.ft2.org.uk
www.bbctraining.com
www.bbc.co.uk/designvision
www.nfts.co.uk
www.bfi.org.uk
www.dochose.org
www.propellertv.co.uk
www.channel4.com/4docs
www.presentersinc.co.uk
www.toptvacademy.co.uk
www.dvtalent.co.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom
www.mediabridge.org.uk
www.metfilmschool.co.uk

UK Screen Agencies

Check which one is most relevant for your area:

www.screensouth.org
www.emmedia.org.uk
www.screeneast.co.uk
www.northernmedia.org
www.northwestvision.co.uk
www.screenwm.co.uk
www.screenyorkshire.co.uk
www.swscreen.co.uk
www.filmlondon.org.uk
www.walescreencommission.co.uk
www.screentrainingireland.ie
www.scottishscreen.com

Media Recruitment Agencies

www.careermovesgroup.co.uk
www.pfj.co.uk
www.christopherkeats.co.uk
www.pcrweb.co.uk

Further Training & Opportunities

Met Film

The Met Film School is London's leading provider of practical filmmaking courses, based at Ealing Studios. We deliver a range of full and part-time programmes - including our unique two-year degrees: BA Practical Filmmaking, BA Film & Television, BA Film & Interactive Media, BA Film, Visual Effects & Animation, BA Film & Digital Cinematography. These are the most intensive and practical BA Hons degrees in filmmaking available in the UK. They have been developed with the support of outstanding industry partners, and our classes are taught by active industry professionals, preparing students for working life by combining the latest industry tools, technology and practice with a solid foundation in the critical skills in filmmaking alongside each specialisation.

How to Get a Job in Television

This book is packed with inside information and advice from training bodies, HR executives, and people working in the industry at every level. This is the TV job hunter's bible. The advice includes CV and interview tips, the do's and don'ts of work experience and the skills you need as a runner or researcher. How to Get a Job in Television is written by Elsa Sharp (www.elsasharp.com) and published by A&C Black in conjunction with The Guardian

BECTU

BECTU, the media and entertainment trade union, runs a free contact scheme, the Student Register, for students looking to work in the media. The union also offers recent graduates, or those entering the industry after training, New Entrant membership at half the standard joining fee. Check out www.bectu.org.uk for information on both, as well as news on current industry issues, networking events, the annual Freelancers' Fair and quality training opportunities at subsidised rates. Contact: info@bectu.org.uk

National Film and Television School

MA in Producing & Directing Television Entertainment. What makes this course unique is its total emphasis on practical programme making – working across the whole spectrum of entertainment television. Our students learn how to generate and pitch new ideas, develop formats, produce and direct their own single camera and multi-camera entertainment programmes, using our own fully-equipped 5-camera TV studio and out on location.

Edinburgh TV Festival

Keep in touch with your fellow The Network alumni through www.mgeitf.co.uk/thenetwork. Remember to follow updates on the Festival, find out about becoming a delegate, applying to Fast Track in the future and information about other opportunities in the industry.

CV Tips

- One standard CV is not enough. You should have one CV for each type of role you plan on applying for (e.g. researcher, runner) and tailor it to the type of employer you plan to approach (e.g. broadcaster, production company)
- Expect to tweak your CV for every application you make emphasising the relevant experience and skills for each role
- Your CV is your opportunity to sell yourself so use active words i.e. managed, organised, developed to describe your skills and experience
- Try to keep to one side of A4 paper, two at the max, and don't cram too much text on to the page. Employers should be able to locate the information they require quickly and can be put off by paragraphs of text. Try to keep as much white space as possible and consider the style and size of the font
- You may wish to include the following:
 - Personal details: as well as your name, address, contact details and job title, it is useful to include whether or not you have a valid passport and drivers licence
 - Personal statement: a short, positive statement to show what type of person you are and what role you are looking for
 - Key skills: highlight what equipment and software you can use along with other skills you have that set you apart from other applicants
 - Experience and achievements: include all relevant experience, describing the particular achievements you have made
 - Training: List any schemes or training courses you have undertaken such as The Network
 - Qualifications: This section should come after the experience section. Only list your most relevant qualifications starting with the highest type of qualification or most recently awarded
 - Always include a covering letter with your CV, but keep it brief. Make sure you address the right person, show that you have some knowledge of the person/company you are applying to and flag up why you are right for the role

The Network at Work companies

“Don't rush to the top, a deep foundation of skills and experience will keep you at the top longer when you get there” Jane Mote, Director of Factual and Lifestyle, UKTV

The Network at Work is our annual work scheme for all former Network delegates. The successful applicants are given a six month paid work placement at some of the country's top broadcasters and production companies, and receive training in areas such as DV Camera and TV Production from the Met Film School.

The companies offer jobs in a range of areas including research, channel management, communications, promos and development. Interviews for the coming year take place in September, anyone who has attended The Network in the last 5 years can apply.

This is your next step from The Network so make sure you find out more: if you would like to apply for The Network at Work or if your company is interested in participating, please email thenetwork@mgeitf.co.uk or call 020 7278 9515



rdF media group



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With Thanks to all The Network Sponsors

Notes



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