

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: AN EXPLORATION OF
THEATRICAL PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

By

Kylene K. Page

Submitted to the

Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

of American University

in Partial Fulfillment of

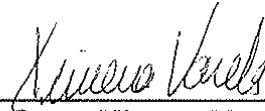
the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

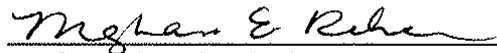
In

Arts Management

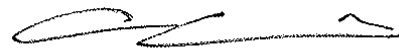
Chair:



Professor Ximena Varela, A.B.D., M.S.



Professor Meghan Raham, M.F.A.



Professor David Snider, M.F.A.



Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

May 1, 2012

Date

2012

American University

Washington, D.C. 20016

© COPYRIGHT

by

Kylene K. Page

2012

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: AN EXPLORATION OF
THEATRICAL PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

BY

Kylene K. Page

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the role of experience and personal qualities in defining a production manager in the performing arts. It examines the roles, backgrounds, and qualities of theatrical production managers by analyzing how non-profit arts organizations describe production management and how production managers describe their jobs and themselves. A definition of production management is created through an analysis of thirty-eight production management job descriptions for non-profit performing arts organizations; a survey of nine directors, designers, technicians, stage managers, and a producer; and interviews with five professional production managers from a presenting house, a producing house, and a university theatre.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	3
Management Responsibilities for a Production	3
Path to Production Management: Developing a Basic Understanding of Theatre.....	7
Personal Characteristics and Qualities of Effective Production Managers	8
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	12
Data Sources	12
Definitions and Classifications	13
Interviews with Production Managers	15
Survey of Directors, Designers, Technicians, and Administrators	16
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS: JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS.....	17
Tasks and Responsibilities	17
Experience.....	23
Qualities of Production Managers	25
Conclusions.....	27
CHAPTER 5 INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT PRODUCTION MANAGERS	28
Background and Experience that Led to Production Management	28
Formal Education: Is it Really Necessary?	33
Production Management Experience	35
Tasks and Responsibilities	37

Production versus Administration.....	41
Qualities	43
Defining Production Management.....	49
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52
Conclusion	52
Future Recommendations	54
APPENDIX A JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS CATEGORIES	56
APPENDIX B JOB DESCRIPTIONS TABLE.....	59
APPENDIX C INTERVIEW TOPIC LIST.....	62
APPENDIX D SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	63
APPENDIX E PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT GAME.....	64
REFERENCES	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Job Descriptions Listings in Alphabetical Order	59
--	----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Sample Non-Profit Theatre Production Department Organization Chart. K. Page, 2012.....	5
2. Breakdown of Production Management Job Titles.	14
3. Task-related Job Description Percentages.....	18
4. Breakdown of Facilitating Communication Responsibility	19
5. Experience-related Job Description Percentages	24
6. Qualities-related Job Description Percentages	26

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Production management can be defined as facilitating the theatrical elements that constitute the vision of the performance, including but not limited to lighting, sound, set, prop and costume design. To accomplish this, production managers must enable the creation of the various theatrical elements, create and maintain a season and production budget, manage and contract the theatre employees, and organize the scheduling of the rehearsals, set-ups and strikes, performances, and other events. Production managers serve as a liaison between the different technical departments, artists, technicians, and administration.

The role of a production manager is different at every organization. Regardless of the type of work produced (theatre, dance, music, etc.), or if the organization brings in outside productions to be presented at the theatre, there will be someone at the organization who has to do production management, regardless of his or her actual title. Production managers also have varying backgrounds and strengths, but they do have some key characteristics and skills in common.

What is theatre production management? The current literature about theatre production management is relatively sparse and mostly limited to how-to books and basic definitions within other topics of theatre administration or technical theatre, and very few describe the characteristics and skills of production managers or the type of administrative and technical support that creates the best atmosphere for producing theatre. Given this scarcity, and since almost every performing arts organization has a person or team working in production management, defining what constitutes production management and managers would be of interest to those in the performing arts field. Both facilitating the relationship between administration and artists and coordinating the practical application of an artistic vision are

integral to production management, and therefore the description of production management would also contribute to the field of arts management in general. Finally, a description of the management skills and characteristics of production managers could help to create a more comprehensive job description and an image of an ideal candidate. This could create a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of a production manager, which could be beneficial to those who are interested in pursuing a career in production management, or for those who are looking to hire individuals to work as production managers for a performing arts organization.

In order to define production management and attempt to understand the place of production management in the performing arts, the field will be analyzed from three different perspectives including published literature, current employers, and current production managers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature about the field of production management is sparse at best. Although there are a few books specifically written about production management, most publications that reference production management are limited to definitions or job descriptions. The field of production management is much more complex and vibrant than the current literature would indicate.

Management Responsibilities for a Production

If a theatre manager can be described as “a person who plays a part in bringing together or facilitating two or more of [performers, materials, places, and audiences], thereby contributing to the realization of a theatrical performance” (Conte, 2007), then the production manager is a clear example of a theatre manager. Most sources that attempt to describe the role of a production manager are either short descriptions or a long list of tasks. In interviews, production managers and theatre managers tend to describe production management in vague terms. Mike H. Bauder, a production manager with MB Productions, says that his responsibility as a production manager is “everything but the cast” (Waters, 2008). The production manager’s role has also been described as “knowing where everyone is at all times” and being “responsible for just about everything that happens inside the building” (Holahan, 2002). Although the role of a production manager involves many small details, it is important for production managers to have this more comprehensive view of the big picture – to see that each step is a part of “creating something from nothing” (Paviell, 1997).

Production management as a profession, in general, is not well documented. There are no specific dates for when the field of production management first began, and when

interviewing current production managers, each person had a different answer about when they first heard the term, ranging from between the 1970s to the 2000s. One thesis about production management suggested that production managers became important to theatres with the advent of the labor unions because someone was needed to negotiate with the many different unions on behalf of the theatre (Kirley, 2005). The rise of production management may also correlate with the Regional Theatre Movement and the rapid increase in nonprofit arts organizations that followed the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and the matching grant model of the 1960s (Ivey, 2008). As more and larger theatres were established across the United States, there may have been more of a need for production managers to handle the new work load. Additionally, unlike community theatres, the regional theatres would hire more designers, directors, and actors from outside the company, and a production manager would then be responsible for helping designers to work in an unfamiliar venue and within a shorter time frame. Katrina Gilroy, the production manager for the National Theatre, suggests that the increase in production management came from the growing complexity of the construction process and other design elements, as well as the need for more managerial support for the company (Hoque, 2012).

Before production managers, the Technical Director would oversee the production process. As the technical and management responsibilities became more complex, the Technical Director job has focused more on the technical aspect and is generally the head of the scenic department rather than the manager responsible for coordinating all of the technical theatre departments. The field of production management may have grown out of the need for more managers to compensate for the rise in the number of total theatres, the greater responsibility to labor unions, and an increase the size and complexity of the productions.

One definition describes the role of the production manager as someone who “administers and arranges the technical requirements and staff for the show” (Vasey, 1998). This definition succinctly describes the two important capacities of production management: the technical aspect and the management aspect. As a part of the management team for a non-profit theatre, the production manager is a key position because he or she “often supervises the largest number of hourly and seasonal employees (as well as the majority of independent contractors)” (Volz, 2004). In addition, the production manager is “crucial for budgeting [and] financial controls”, as the production costs are usually the highest budget cost allocation, aside from salaries and benefits (Volz, 2004). A production manager is typically a member of the senior staff of a non-profit theatre, reporting to either the artistic director or managing director, or to both (see Figure 1).

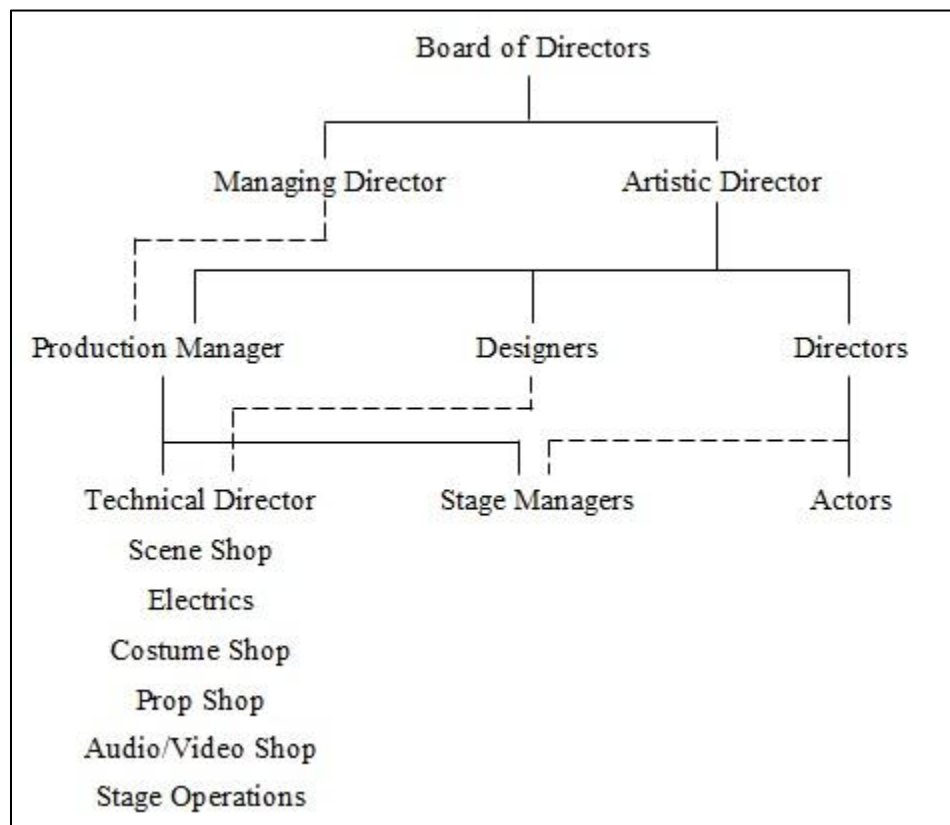


Figure 1. Sample Non-Profit Theatre Production Department Organization Chart. K. Page, 2012.

Ultimately the production manager is responsible for all of the technical aspects of a production, but this does not necessarily mean that the production manager is the one who personally implements them. Although there is a wide variety in the ways that theatres are organized, usually there is a production team that reports to the production manager. This can include a technical director, scene shop, costume shop, properties shop, electrical shop, sound shop, and stage operations department (Volz, 2004). In some cases the team also includes stage management (Dean, 2002). The production manager is responsible for hiring any designers and technicians that are needed for the production who do not already work for the theatre. (Lawler, 2007). One of the important skills for a production manager to have is being able to “assemble a good team” (Vasey, 1998), because a production manager is “only as good as the people who will work for them” (Dean, 2002).

The administrative duties of a production manager can be broken down into budgeting, scheduling, and personnel management. One large area of responsibility for production managers is budgeting the “production costs” (Conte, 2007) and providing “financial and strategic guidance to [the production] departments” (Vasey, 1998). In addition, it is important for the production manager to “be realistic about what can be achieved with the resources available” - not just financial resources but “the availability of suitably skilled staff, the space for them to work in, or to store work, and the amount of time there is to do any work” (Dean, 2002).

Scheduling is a required step when budgeting, but it is also in itself an important responsibility of the production manager. A production manager is “the person who gathers all the work of the various disciplines together in order that they arrive on the stage at the correct time and in the right order” (Aveline, 2002). This involves the schedules of the creative team and technical staff, as well as taking into account the building, theatre, and season schedules.

The production department is “one of the busiest in a working theatre; as it launches one production on to the stage it has begun working on the next and it falls to the production manager and his or her team to organize and coordinate this process.” (Foreman, 2009). The schedule can also vary depending on whether the theatre is a producing or presenting house – either coordinating with an outside company and their needs, or scheduling the building or rental of necessary design elements like sets, costumes, and other equipment.

Path to Production Management: Developing a Basic Understanding of Theatre

There is a wide range of what are considered necessary qualifications for a production manager, ranging from specific educational backgrounds and personality traits, to the idea that “having a solid background in theater is essential, but beyond that anything goes.” (Lawler, 2007). There are very few sources that even mention higher education in production management, and most of the sources concentrate solely on the technical and management experience that can be developed on the job.

Some production managers come to the field by working as the head of a technical department, e.g. master electrician, technical director, etc., but the “individual nature of a production manager’s job means that, to an extent, it can be tailored according to individual strengths, weaknesses and interests. The structure of the rest of the team can then be adjusted to make sure that there are no knowledge or skill gaps.” (Dean, 2002). If a production manager has more extensive experience in one particular technical area and little to no experience in another, he or she can then build a team that balances these strengths and weaknesses. For example, if a production manager has previous experience as a master electrician but has never worked with a theatre that built their own costumes, he or she might choose to hire an assistant production manager who has little experience in lighting, but has experience as a stitcher. If the

organizational structure does not include an assistant position or there is already someone in place, the production manager might simply include the costume shop in more of his or her conversations with designers and transfer responsibilities to the costume shop manager, and at the same time the production manager might be able to make decisions more independently in regards to lighting because of his or her previous experience and expertise.

Production managers also can come from a background as stage managers, which to many seem to be an obvious career move because many stage managers believe that the traits that make them successful stage managers would correlate into making them successful production managers (Lawler, 2007). Both stage and production managers need to be organized and communicate well, and although they deal with a different focus and scale, they also have similar responsibilities, like scheduling and personnel management. Ultimately, what is important is that a production manager has “broad technical skills” paired with management experience, and understands the work of the technical staff (Aveline, 2002).

Personal Characteristics and Qualities of Effective Production Managers

If production managers come from different backgrounds with different technical and work experiences, then how do you define a production manager? Again, there is a split between the technical and the managerial aspects of production management. In order to keep the production on time, on budget, and yet still a true realization of the artistic vision for the production, a production manager needs to be flexible, organized, efficient, inventive, and be able to see the big picture.

A production manager needs to be flexible because frequently there are changes and unforeseen issues throughout the process. These issues can include personnel management, like if a crew member becomes sick or takes another job and needs to be replaced last minute,

technical issues like if there was a mistake in the technical drawings or if technical equipment isn't delivered on time, issues with going over budget overall or with a specific design, or creative issues if a director or designer is not happy with the produced product when all of the pieces come together during tech week, which is the first time all the technical elements are implemented together and typically occurs less than a week before opening night. Production manager Valerie Sheppard described her job as "to stick to the budget and ensure everything was in place and running smoothly. Of course, it never did. There were always last-minute problems" (Anonymous, 2010).

Although production management is not traditionally defined as an artistic position, the most successful production managers are "creative and innovative" (Aveline, 2002). A production manager has to help to create a balance between achieving the artistic vision of the production while still maintaining costs and on a schedule. For example, one production manager, James Manley, "takes every idea seriously, no matter how outlandish. [...] His attitude [is] 'If they want a burning castle, we should try and achieve a burning castle. It's not for us to say no.'"

The production manager's job is to "present the creative team with all the information necessary to make creative trade-offs" in order to find the right solution (Costa, 2009). He or she works with the designers and directors, presenting them with the practical limitations of the theatre, budget, or schedule, but also working with the creative team and technicians to discover other potential options. One effective management style is where the production manager does not say no to a proposed design because it is impractical or expensive, but rather presents the potential difficulties and costs so that the creative team can then decide whether the design is

worth these difficulties. An inflexible production manager can hamper the technical process by focusing on the limitations instead of a potential solution or compromise.

The production manager's role within the creative team is to look at the physical production as a whole, making sure that the various pieces of the puzzle fit together. Rod McCullough, the managing director for the Fulton Theatre, speaks from the director's point of view when he says that "you can get to the point where you forget what the big picture is because you're so involved in what you're doing. You need someone who can look over the whole process" (Holahan, 2002). The production manager is the one who oversees the development of the production, helping the various parts to work together and "the ability to focus on details while remaining acutely aware of the (very) big picture is critical" (Lawler, 2007). If done successfully, "with efficient, organized, forward-thinking, resourceful and committed production management in place, everyone can concentrate on using their specific skills to produce enjoyable and exciting theatre" (Dean, 2002).

This coordination of people with many different skills is another facet of the production manager's responsibilities. This includes delegating responsibility effectively, conflict resolution, effective communication, and collaborating with a wide range of sometimes difficult personalities. When producing a show, "the best work is always accomplished through fair and open collaboration" (Lawler, 2007). It is the production manager's responsibility to ease this collaboration through "good, open, and honest communication" (Lawler, 2007) and "the best managers have the ability to deal with the stress of working with a multitude of personality types and being the final decision maker" (Lawler, 2007). It is important that the production manager understands the skills and roles of the people involved in order to coordinate their efforts to get the best results in a short period of time (Aveline, 2002). In a general sense, production

managers need to understand people -- “what makes them tick, why they are involved in the theatre which is, after all, a hard task-mistress, what are they seeking out of it and what are they putting into it?” (Aveline, 2002). Designers, directors, technicians, craftspeople, actors, and administrators can all have different personality types and working styles, and it is the responsibility of the production manager to understand all of the factors involved and facilitate a working relationship between all of the parties involved.

Although the available literature can help to define production management through some of the responsibilities, experience, and qualities of a production manager, a more complete picture can be achieved by delving in depth to how theatre companies and production managers themselves see the field.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

In order to determine how employers view the role of production managers, this study collected and analyzed information from thirty-eight job descriptions posted online on two prominent job databases for the performing arts: *Artsearch* and *Backstagejobs.com*, available between September 2011 and March 2012. The job description analysis revealed some trends that can help define how employers see production management as a field, as well as the qualities that characterize production managers.

Artsearch is a job database that has been run by The Theatre Communications Group (TCG) for the past thirty years, originally published and mailed to its members and is now available online. TCG is the national organization for American theatre and aims to facilitate communication between professional, community and university theatres (Theatre Communications Group, 2012). On *Artsearch*, organizations can pay to have their job descriptions made available to those with a paid membership, and the site is primarily focused on performing arts and arts administration jobs in non-profit organizations (Artsearch, 2012). Job listings are organized into five main categories: Administration, Artistic, Production, Career Development, and Education. Production management jobs are found under the Production category, in the sub-category of Production Management/Technical Direction.

Backstagejobs.com is an online job listing directory for “behind-the-scenes jobs in the live entertainment industry,” and has been available online for the past fifteen years (BackstageJobs.com, 2012). Job listings are free to post and free to read, and are categorized into Electrics, Sets, Props, Costumes, Sound, and Management on the main web page, as well as Administration, Literary, Musical, Education, Projections, and Effects, which are available

within the advanced search page. Production management job listings are found under Management, within an optional sub-category of Production Manager.

Definitions and Classifications

All of the job descriptions were tabulated into three datasheets: experience requirements, job tasks and responsibilities, and employment qualities and abilities. The individual categories were created organically by reading the job descriptions and using key terms and descriptions to determine specific categories. For example, the Production Coordinator position with the New York City Opera listed maintaining “thorough and accurate records of departmental expenses” as a requirement for the position, so it was counted in the job responsibility datasheet under the category “Budgeting and expenses.” Several categories were created using different terms because the two or more terms were related to a similar responsibility and were either combined into a category like “Budgeting and expenses” or into a larger category like “Personnel” which includes people management, hiring, writing and/or negotiating employment contracts, and processing payroll. A complete listing of the categories can be found in Appendix A.

The total number for each category represents the total number of job descriptions that included a key word or phrase that belonged in that category. If a job description listed similar terms or the same term more than once, the job description was only counted in the category once. The percentages of the job descriptions for each category were calculated using the number of job descriptions that were included in the category into the number of job descriptions that were classified into at least one category. Although most job descriptions did fit into at least one category within each datasheet, some of the descriptions were very succinct and were not applicable for one or more datasheets. This was especially true for the datasheet about qualities

of a production manager, for which only twenty-six of the thirty-eight job descriptions had terms that could be described as qualities or abilities.

Out of the thirty-eight job descriptions, twenty-three were for Production Managers, seven were for a combination of Production Manager and another job, four were for a Director of Production, three were for an Assistant or Associate Production Manager, and two were for a Production Coordinator. For those job titles that were a combination with Production Manager, three were combined with a Facilities or Operations job, three were combined with a technical job, and one was combined with an Associate Producer job.

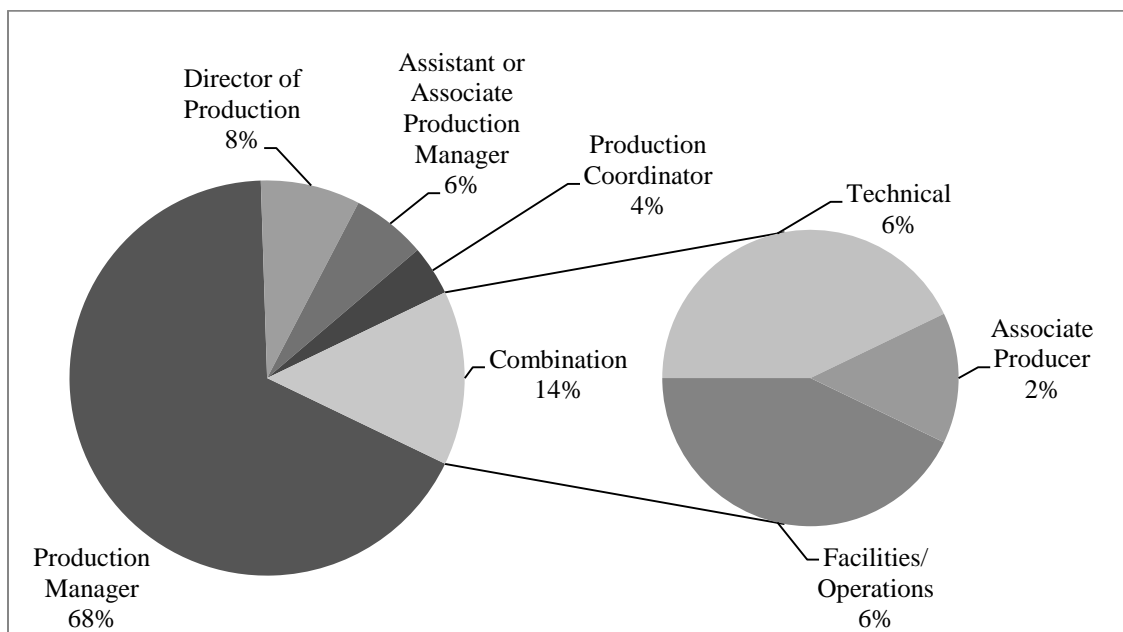


Figure 2. Breakdown of Production Management Job Titles.

Although the titles did vary, the differences in the content of the description was very slight, and any variances seem to be caused by the type of theatre than because of the title, e.g. the differences between responsibilities for a production manager at a producing house versus a presenting house. Some of these differences became negligible when the information was collated, e.g. one job description for a production manager included running a production

meeting, while a production coordinator job description included taking notes for a production meeting, which were analyzed together under “production meetings.” To simplify legibility in the findings section, these job titles will be referred to collectively as “production manager.” A complete list of the job descriptions with titles can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews with Production Managers

Five current production managers were interviewed to assess how production managers view their own roles and the production management field. Those interviewed were selected so as to give as much breadth of opinion as possible within a small number of interviewees. Two production managers, one the Production Operations Manager and the other the Production Manager for the Family Theatre and Theatre Lab, were interviewed from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, which is mostly a presenting house although it does produce some of its own work. The General/Production Manager and Associate Production Manager were interviewed from Arena Stage in Washington, DC, which is mostly a producing house that presents and co-produces some outside productions. The final production manager that was interviewed serves as the Facilities and Production Manager for American University, which mainly produces productions for the Department of the Performing Arts and other academic or student groups. Their individual backgrounds, paths to production management, education, and experience in the production management field are also varied, as did their titles and roles within their organizations.

The interviews were all conducted at the production managers’ places of work between March 7, 2012 and March 14, 2012, and each lasted for no more than 1 hour. The interviews were taped for research purposes only. All of the production managers were informed of this beforehand and gave their permission to be recorded before the interview began. The interviews

were conducted by first asking production managers about their professional backgrounds, including how they first became involved in theatre in general. The rest of the interview was conducted by addressing particular pre-determined topics ranging from thoughts about the need for formalized education for production managers, the people and tasks that they are responsible for at their organization currently, and the qualities that help someone to work as a production manager either at their place of business or in general. All of the interviews were concluded by asking first if the subject would recommend anything that an aspiring production manager would need to learn or accomplish before pursuing a career in production management, and finally by asking an open-ended question asking for any last thoughts about the field of production management in general. A complete list of topics and some specific questions that were on hand for the interviews (in case the topics did not come up organically) are listed in Appendix C.

Survey of Directors, Designers, Technicians, and Administrators

Nine people who work with the production managers who were interviewed responded to an email survey about working with production managers. Those surveyed included two directors, one sound designer, one lighting designer, one carpenter, one electrician, two stage managers, and one producer/administrator. They were asked about how often they work with a production manager, what they need from a production manager, and other questions designed to discover the qualities and abilities that they believe help production managers to work with directors, designers, technicians and administrators. A complete list of the questions can be found in Appendix D.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS: JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

The analysis of the production manager job descriptions revealed a split between management and technical responsibilities. Within the context of *Artsearch*, which focuses on arts administration, production management is classified in the technical field. Within the context of *Backstagejobs.com*, which focuses on technical theatre, production management is classified as a management field. Production management jobs seem to be too technical to be classified as administration, but too administrative to be classified as technical. Since production management is largely about managing the technical requirements for a production, it is not surprising to find that these two aspects define the field.

Tasks and Responsibilities

Out of the total job descriptions, thirty-five included the responsibilities of the production manager (see Figure 3). The largest percentage of descriptions referred to personnel management (seventy-seven percent). This included general references to managing staff, as well as specifically mentioning duties like payroll, hiring, and employment contracts. As shown in the literature, it is important for a production manager to be able to assemble a good working team, and also be able to communicate well with the many people involved.

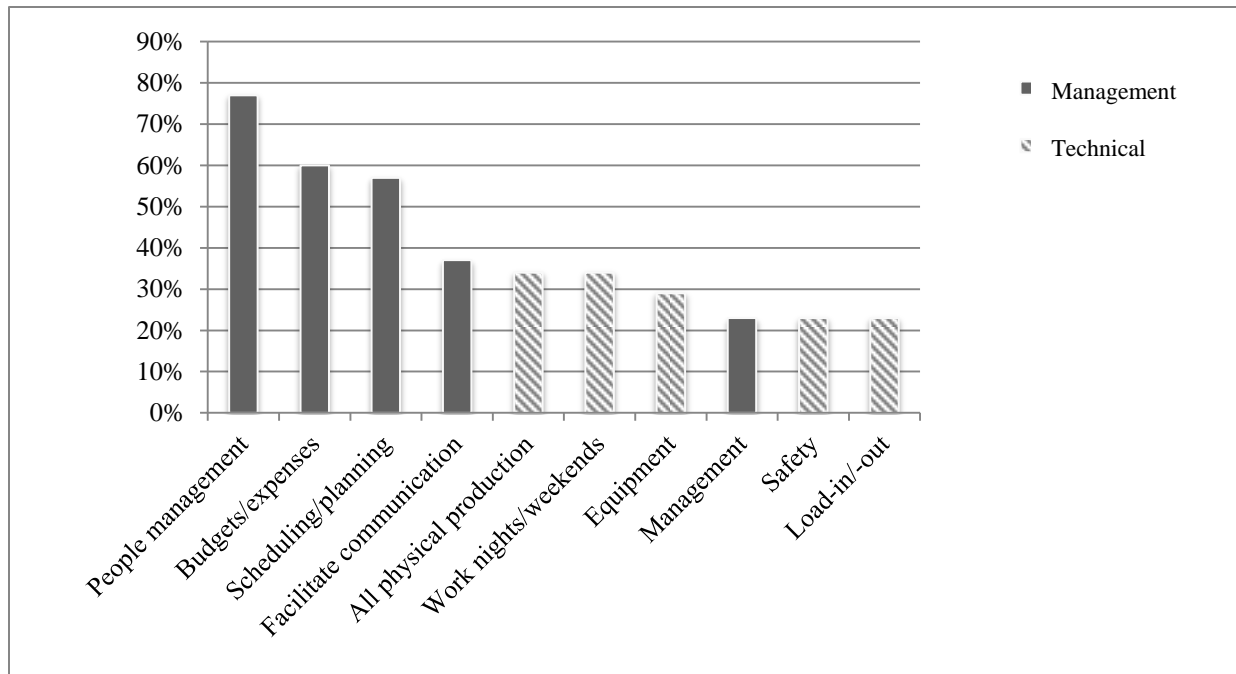


Figure 3. Task-related Job Description Percentages

Facilitating communication is important as a part of personnel management and was specifically mentioned in thirty-seven percent of the job descriptions. It is identified as a general responsibility, but it can also be broken down into the responsibilities of talking to technicians, designers, artists, and unions (see Figure 4). Out of the thirteen job descriptions that listed facilitating communication, two listed communication in general, nine mentioned talking to technicians (including specific references to the stagehands' union), seven mentioned talking to designers, two mentioned speaking to artists, and two mentioned serving as a liaison to the Actor's Equity Union (which is also the union for stage managers). There was some overlap, as some job descriptions listed working with technicians, as well as with designers, artists, and Equity. Most likely every position will require that the production manager facilitate communication in some manner, since this responsibility is listed high by both the literature and the production managers who were interviewed. Some descriptions may imply the need for

communication as a part of personnel management, and some job descriptions list communication skills as a necessary ability and listing communication as a responsibility would be redundant.

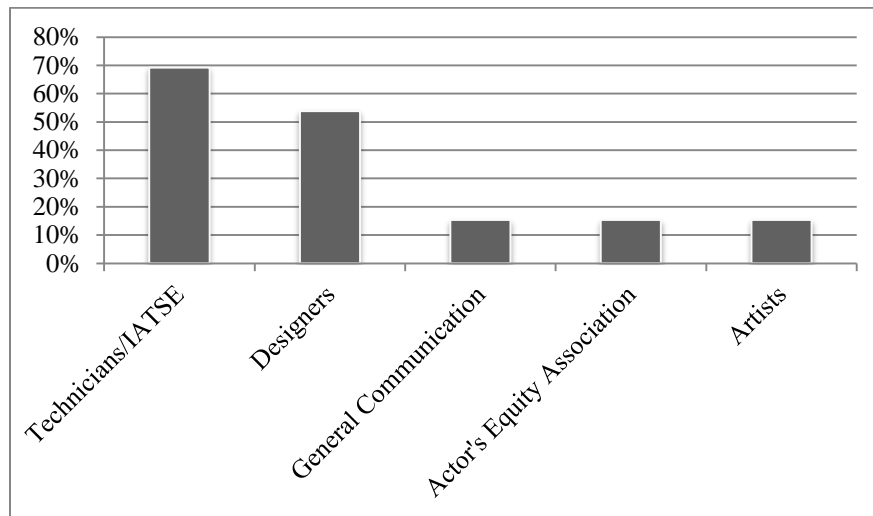


Figure 4. Breakdown of Facilitating Communication Responsibility

The second highest percentage (sixty percent) regarded budgeting and tracking expenses, and fifty-seven percent noted the responsibility of scheduling, planning, and time management for the organization. Although it takes technical knowledge to budget and schedule productions, the process is more of the administrative side of production management.

The technical responsibilities are also important. A variation of the production manager being responsible for the entire physical production was mentioned in numerous descriptions. This echoes many extant interviews of production managers who feel responsible for practically everything taking place on the stage, and the short definitions of production management that sometimes only include taking care of all of the technical aspects. It is curious that the technical responsibilities were mentioned less often than management and administrative tasks, which may indicate that a production manager's role, as seen by employers, is much more about managing the people and the paperwork than working hands-on with a production. Additionally, ten

percent of the job descriptions are for lower level positions that although they would work with the same departments as a production manager, they would not ultimately be responsible for the entire physical production.

One job posting aptly describes the relationship between technical knowledge and management in that “while [the] position does not necessarily require expertise in any one technical area, a strong understanding and basic working knowledge [...] is a plus” (Production Manager, Columbus Centennial Pavilion, 2012). Although a production manager may not have specific responsibilities requiring them to work in a technical capacity, it is important that he or she understand all of the technical elements that he or she is managing. Only three of the job descriptions specifically required that the production manager also serve as a resident designer or technical director.

Another responsibility mentioned by some of the descriptions was that of ordering and maintaining the technical equipment. In many cases this does not mean providing maintenance on technical equipment, but being responsible for ordering equipment, sending in equipment for servicing, or purchasing new equipment through vendors. This covers house equipment that is owned by the theatre company as well as renting equipment for specific productions or special events. Because a production manager is responsible for all of the technical elements of a production, they also oversee the process of ordering new equipment, whether this means serving as a facilitator for the technicians requesting the equipment, or understanding the technical equipment needs on a basic level in order to know when additional equipment is needed.

The production manager’s responsibility to safety and to attend the load-in and load-out are both specifically technical tasks. A production manager is held responsible for the safety of the venue and the crew members, especially during technical rehearsals and performances. A

load-in (also called a fit-up outside of the United States) is the period before the technical rehearsal where the physical production is first brought into the theatre, including putting together the set, focusing lights, setting up sound equipment, and more. This process usually only takes place between a week and a few hours depending on the show, and a production manager needs both general technical knowledge and an understanding of the specific designs for each show and how they are being implemented in the theatre.

Many job descriptions also mentioned that the production manager would have to work nights, weekends, and/or long hours. Although this is not listed as a high percentage overall, it is common for a production management job to require working nights and weekends, especially because of the load-ins and technical rehearsals that usually require work days that last more than twelve hours. Additionally, the production manager may have to work on the weekend because they are required to attend performances, rehearsals, or special events that commonly happen outside of the usual 9 to 5 work week. Therefore, the need to work these extra hours is implied for most of the job descriptions, and those jobs that specifically mention it may require the production manager to work more nights and weekends than usual, like for the jobs that are with festivals or seasonal jobs.

Similarly, only a few of the job descriptions specifically mentioned the production manager needing to attend load-in and load-outs, although this is a common responsibility for a production manager. It is probable that this responsibility is implied, as it is integral to the production process. The responsibilities that include general management and attending the load-in and load-out may not have been mentioned in every job description, but they most likely implied through another part of the job description. For example, a job description might ask for general management experience but not list management as a responsibility.

Some of the job descriptions contained responsibilities that are specific to the company or the way the job is organized – the need to work rental events, “advancing” the show for presenting houses (also referred to as “roadhouse” duties), doing facility or operational work for small theatres, coordinating artist housing and travel, providing customer service, and working in the box office.

Rental events are a common way for theatres to earn revenue in spaces that are not currently in use for performances in their seasons, as well as a way to connect with the local community. These rentals can range from simple to complex and can include events like conferences, meetings, beauty pageants, parties, fundraisers, and even weddings. The amount of rental events can depend on the organization’s internal priorities and policies, as well as the organization’s capacity (space, schedule, and staffing).

In a presenting house, the production manager must “advance” the show, which includes coordinating with the incoming company’s production team to determine the technical elements that are coming into the theatre (sets, costumes, props), as well as who will provide the technical equipment and crew members. Many professional touring companies bring at least some of their own lighting and sound equipment, as well as some crew and stage managers, but there is always a discussion about the needs agreed upon in the technical rider of the performance contract.

Although a production manager may be responsible for managing the facility, coordinating artist housing and travel, providing customer service, and working in the box office, these tasks are typically not a part of the production manager’s job. Instead, these tasks, which were listed in less than three percent of the job descriptions analyzed, are usually a part of a production management position that is combined with another.

Experience

Out of the thirty-three job descriptions that asked for the experience or skills for the production manager (see Figure 5), most of them indicated that the applicant should have some level of experience in production management, either by vaguely asking for previous experience, or by indicating a specific number of years of experience in the field. Experience in production management encompasses many different skills, but it is telling that employers ask for previous experience in production management specifically, implying that the combination of skills that make up production management is a skill set unique to the field.

Second only to specific production management experience was experience in some kind of technical field, usually defined as a general working knowledge of technical theatre, although some specific fields like electrics, carpentry, and props were included. Stage management experience was also specifically requested, which in some cases was asked for as a part of general working knowledge of theatre, but also in some occasions as an alternative to production management experience.

About a third of the job descriptions indicated that computer skills, management skills, and a bachelor's degree were necessary for the production management position. This seems to indicate that these skills and experience are important in addition to the administrative skills that are a part of the production management experience. Although many of the computer skills were basic word processing and spreadsheet requirements, a few of the job descriptions also included technical theatre specific software, including drafting or lighting software. Some descriptions specifically mentioned management skills, and most of those were for positions that would work in multiple theatre spaces (e.g. organizations with more than one theatre, universities, festivals, etc.) and supervise many crew members.

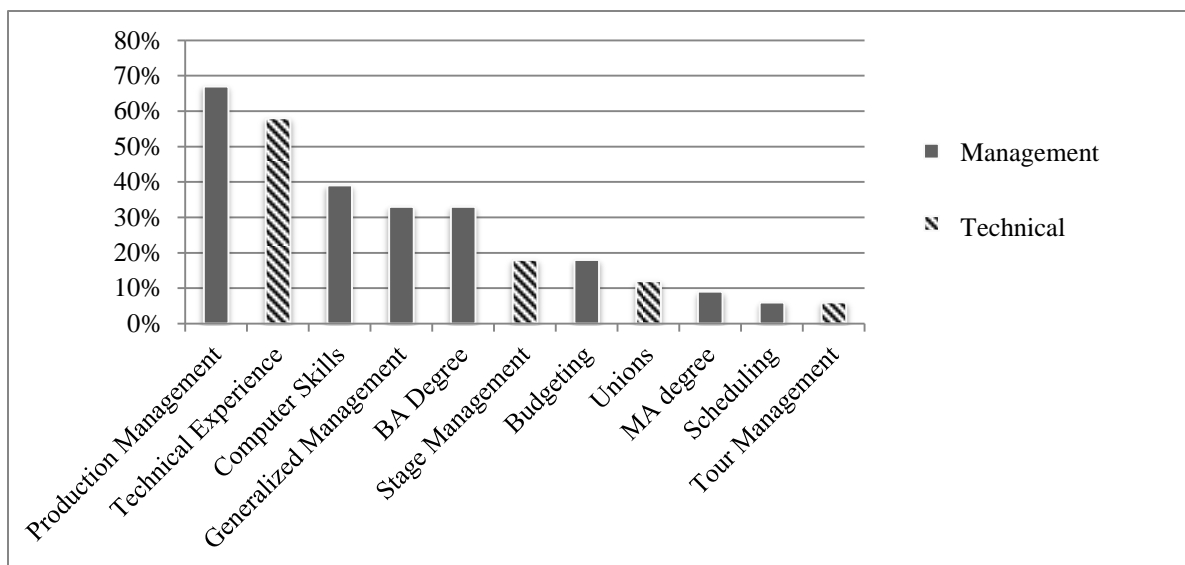


Figure 5. Experience-related Job Description Percentages

The Bachelor's degree requirement does not seem to follow a particular pattern. Jobs include those of Production Coordinator and the Director of Production, for an established opera house as well as a temporary summer position, for festivals and universities, and for presenting houses and producing theatres. This may indicate that the need for a degree for production management is not based on the type of company or production that is produced, but the requirements of the organization for the senior level staff.

Other skills and experience listed in the job descriptions included a Master's degree, experience stage managing, experience with budgets, and experience that may be specific to the theatre – working with unions, “advancing” a show on tour (tour management), and safety training. The job descriptions that ask for stage management experience include it as a measure of general theatrical knowledge, such as for the job descriptions that ask for experience in any of the technical theatre disciplines (including stage management in the list), or those that ask for a bachelor's degree in theatre or equivalent production management or stage management experience.

It is surprising that budgeting and scheduling experience is listed so infrequently, however this is mostly likely to avoid redundancy. Almost every job description that did not ask for experience in budgeting or scheduling listed these as responsibilities. It is possible that this indicates that these skills could then be learned on the job, but it is more likely that listing these skills as a responsibility of the production implies that experience is needed in these areas.

Qualities of Production Managers

Many of the job descriptions detailed the qualities, abilities, and personality of a production manager (see Figure 6). Although there were numerous qualities listed, the ability to communicate clearly and with many people rose far above the rest and was mentioned specifically in the majority of the job postings. This is not included in the same category as the job descriptions that wrote that the production manager would be responsible for communicating to others on the production team, but instead references job descriptions that specifically asked for candidates who possess strong or excellent communication skills.

Other qualities that were mentioned include being a team player, a leader, trustworthy, positive, easy-going, fun, good at conflict resolution, and having a sense of humor and a professional manner. These all contribute to the profile of a production manager who is pleasant and effective at working with many people, and corresponds to the foremost task that production managers are responsible for – personnel management.

Other qualities of a production manager are more about working on multiple projects or multiple aspects at a time, including being organized, self-motivated, flexible, a problem-solver, detail-oriented, able to multi-task, have many different skills, and skilled in time management. Even for theatres that have only one performance space, it is necessary to be working on different projects at once, as most budgeting and planning takes place at least a season prior. For

presenting houses, there is not as long a period of preparation, but there will be more productions to present. It is surprising that being organized, good at time management, and able to multi-task were not mentioned more often. These three abilities are integral to working on many projects at once, but they may be implied in the responsibilities of scheduling and planning.

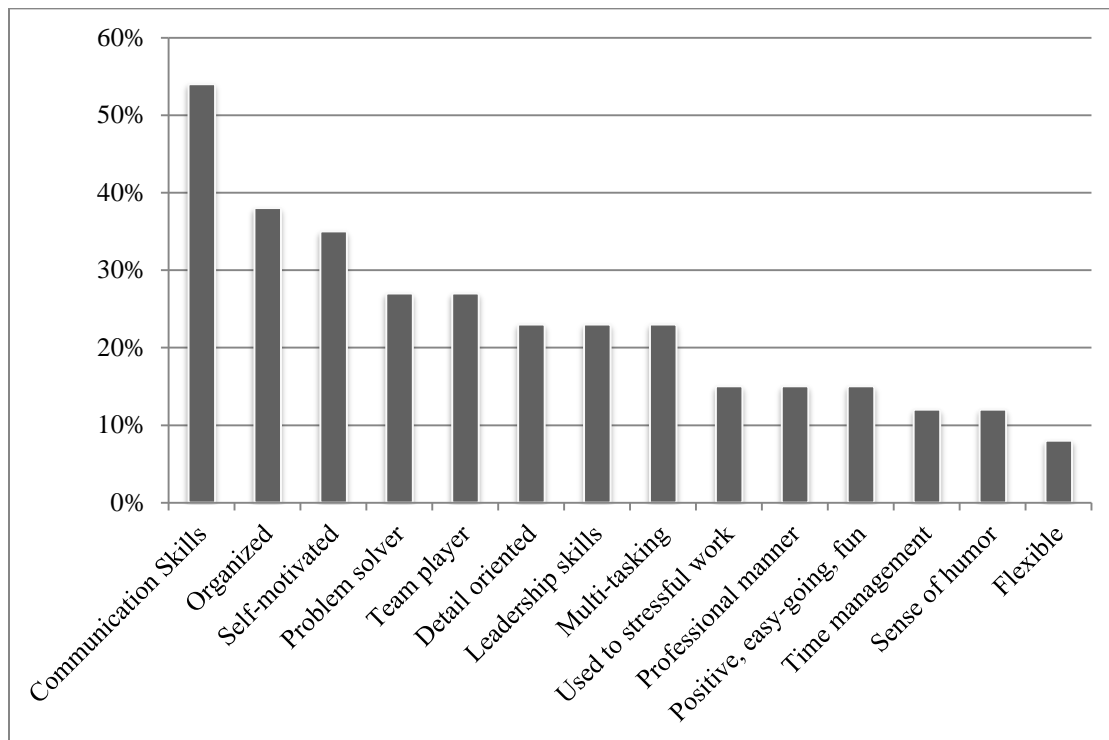


Figure 6. Qualities-related Job Description Percentages

The technical aspect of production management may manifest itself in the request for production managers who are hands-on and can work in a stressful environment. Production managers are frequently responsible for attending and coordinating technical rehearsals, which can require long, stressful hours and enough technical knowledge to coordinate the efforts of the designers and technicians to complete the various elements of the production.

The ability to see the big picture is discussed as an important quality in both the literature and in interviews with current production managers, but it seems to be missing from the job descriptions. Employers may not articulate this ability because it is either implied by the

production manager's large range of responsibilities, or perhaps because the employer does not see this skill as important as the many tasks, experience, and other qualities that need to be included in the job description.

Conclusions

Looking at the most mentioned experience, qualities, and responsibilities of the production management job postings helps to show how employers see the field. Extrapolating from the job descriptions, a production manager can be defined as someone responsible for making sure that the overall physical production is completed on time and on budget by supervising and facilitating communication between the many production elements. A production manager should have prior experience in the field, which includes a general working knowledge of technical theatre, financial and computer skills, and experience managing people. He or she should be able to communicate well, and in a personable manner, and be able to accomplish many administrative and hands-on technical tasks at a time.

In addition to defining production management through the literature, this analysis has defined how these employers see production management. This paper attempts to create a more complete picture by discovering how production managers see themselves and their field.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Background and Experience that Led to Production Management

Many production managers do not find their way to the field in a direct manner. Each of the five production managers interviewed were introduced to theatre in five different ways -- as an actor, a designer, a technician, a stage manager and a director. Most of those interviewed had a professional career in theatre in a different field before taking a permanent position as a production manager.

Deirdre Kelly Lavrakas, currently the Production Operations Manager at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, was first introduced to technical theatre while she was pursuing her graduate degree in acting at George Washington University.¹ She wanted to take dance classes to supplement her training, and she bargained for free classes in exchange for working as a theatre technician. Although she “wanted to do everything [she] could to get through grad school,” she found herself enjoying the work and would take any opportunities that arose. When she first applied to the Kennedy Center for the Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) program, the hiring manager looked at her resume and told her that “you’re never going make it and have a successful career. What you are is a dilettante. There is nothing here that shows me that you are serious about anything.” Lavrakas did not consider herself a “dilettante,” but rather what she calls a “generalist.” When she began work at The Kennedy Center in the Education department, including work as the production manager for the Theatre for Young Audiences On Tour program, she demonstrated the benefit of her general theatrical knowledge.

¹ Deirdre Kelly Lavrakas, personal communication, March 8, 2012, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC.

Marissa LaRose, the Associate Production Manager at Arena Stage, also developed production management skills through a multidisciplinary theatre background as an undergraduate double majoring in Theatre and Communications at Truman State University.² Pursuing a Liberal Arts degree, LaRose was “exposed to a little bit of everything.” Although directing was her main focus, she also stage managed for productions and took various academic and studio classes in the Theatre department. The school did not have a production manager for the university, so when LaRose was directing a show she also served as what she now knows to be the production manager for her production. Her interest in theatre and arts management led to two internships: at the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in the Executive Office and at Arena Stage with the Development department. This background in management, administration, and production led to a position at Arena Stage as Production Coordinator, where she learned the budget tracking and event coordination skills that now serve her well as the Associate Production Manager.

In contrast to LaRose’s more administrative background, Jeff Hill began his career in theatre with a degree from West Virginia University in Design and Technical Theatre.³ At the Actor’s Theatre of Louisville, he “started off pounding nails in the scene shop and then moved up to the assistant TD and then moved up to an electrician and then lighting director – in the last few years [he] was there as the resident lighting designer.” Hill currently works as a Production Manager for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, but previously he worked as a technician, designer, and production manager for LORT theatres – regional theatres that belong to the League of Resident Theatres, a professional theatre association for regional theatres in the

² Marissa LaRose, personal communication, March 12, 2012, Arena Stage, Washington, DC.

³ Jeff Hill, personal communication, March 7, 2012, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC.

United States (League of Resident Theatres, 2012). When Hill began working, “there was no such thing as production management at that point,” even at the LORT theatres. He didn’t start to become “aware of production management until sometime in the early 80s when [his theatre] hired a stage manager and told them ‘now you’re going to be the production manager.’” He suggests that the need for production managers arose when resident theatres began hiring guest designers rather using resident designers. Previously, “everybody did everything in those days” and designers would be familiar with the company, equipment, and performance spaces. Hill held positions where he was both a production manager as well as a lighting designer, but this was not unusual at the time because “it seemed like production managers were either former stage managers or designers in one field or another.” Hill’s experience as a technician and designer led him to production management when he took a position at Stage West, where he went from running a department of a couple people to running a department of twenty to twenty-five. In learning how to manage all of those people, he says, “it was a bit of an eye-opener and there were a lot of things I had no clue whatsoever how to do and a lot of it was just flying by the seat of my pants. [...] Some of it was relying on instinct, some of it was relying on experience in terms of what I had seen before, some of it was just simply saying ‘okay, I’m not quite sure I know what to do’” and seeking help from others in the organization.

Greg Anderson, the Facilities and Production Manager for the Greenberg Theatre at American University, also began his career as a technician.⁴ Anderson was first introduced to theatre in an introductory class to stagecraft and lighting, and working in technical theatre “paid for [his] college education and it kept paying the bills.” Out of college, he joined the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada, known more simply as the

⁴ Greg Anderson, personal communication, March 14, 2012, American University, Washington, DC.

stagehand's union, IATSE, or IA. His local union offered work opportunities for many different fields within technical theatre, so he was able to gain a wide range of technical experience. Anderson was employed as a union stage technician for many years at Disney and toured the United States with Broadway shows, but his first experience with management came when he was promoted to the supervisor position for the stage technicians at Disney. When he was laid-off from Disney, he began work in event management, which he calls one of the best moves of his career. Using his experience as a stage technician and an event coordinator, he then served as the Interim General Manager at the Brandeis University Theatre Complex and as the Technical Director of the Majestic Theatre with Emerson College before coming to American University. Anderson developed his technical skills and management experience separately before combining them to work in theatre management for various universities.

Ian Pool, the General/Production Manager for Arena Stage, first began his career in theatre as a professional stage manager.⁵ After spending three years working for British repertory theatres, he worked for a small company on the west coast of Canada where he stage managed the mainstage productions for the season. After his first season ended in 1974, he requested that upper management hire a production manager. They agreed on the need, and that summer asked him to become the production manager for the company. When he managed the company's tour to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, the NAC was impressed with his work and asked him to fill the newly created position of tour manager.

Pool's illustrious career includes work as a manager for many different live entertainment companies. From 1989 to 1993 he worked as the production manager for the Live Entertainment Corporation of Canada, or Livent, which produced mega-musicals, including "Kiss of the Spider Woman" before it was transferred to Broadway. Pool has also worked for many international

⁵ Ian Pool, personal communication, March 12, 2012, Arena Stage, Washington, DC.

athletic games, including as the Technical Director for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, an independent contractor for the 1999 Pan American Games in Winnipeg, coordinating all ceremonies and cultural events for the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, and as the Director of Ceremonies Integration for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. He spent five years working as the Chief Operating Officer with an automation company that created automations for Broadway and the Broadway touring market, and he worked for a lighting company coordinating inventory and systems integration. Before Pool came to Arena Stage, he was the first Production Manager for the Blue Man Group, overseeing all production and technical needs for the tours, new works, and facilities. With the Blue Man Group, which originally began as an art project, he was constantly challenged about his work, but Pool accepted this challenge because “at the end of the day, [he] became a better project manager because it caused [him] to go back and reevaluate.” Even though at this point Pool had been a production manager off and on for almost thirty years, he welcomed this chance to investigate and improve his work as a manager.

Regardless of differences in the paths that each of these people have taken to becoming production managers, there are some common key steps in each story. All were introduced to production management through one facet of theatre and incorporated management and technical knowledge. Both the technical and management sides of production management helped develop those interviewed into production managers. It is worth noting that all of them had general experience in theatre, even if they began their career focused on one particular field. All of them had experience in production management before their current positions – even in LaRose’s case she worked at Arena Stage as the Production Coordinator for years before she became the Associate Production Manager. Practical experience as a production manager is

important, for as Pool asks, “if you coming into close to a \$20 million dollar operation, of which [production management is] responsible for 45% of that, are you going to trust it to someone who just got out of school or do you want someone who has some real world experience?” In addition to the story that is told by the experience and background that these production managers have themselves, as hiring managers and experts in the field of production they also understand what kind of experience, education, and qualities that production managers need to work in theatre today.

Formal Education: Is it Really Necessary?

It is contested whether production managers need formalized education in the field. In the thesis “The Education and Practical Experience of Theatrical Production Managers,” Rachel Kirley suggests that formal education could be provided for production management students in order to fulfill two core competencies: a general background in theatre that includes technical theatre and theatre history, and studies in administration including “problem-solving skills, leadership, communication, and financial management” (Kirley, 2005). While it is necessary for production managers to develop these skills, those interviewed by Kirley indicated that practical experience is ultimately more valuable than a formal education. However, an undergraduate program could help to develop general skills as well as to make networking connections in the theatre field, and a combination of education and practical experience can create a well-rounded production manager (Kirley, 2005).

Pursuing an undergraduate major in Theatre could help to gain the general theatrical knowledge that is important for production managers, but Hill asks, “What do you need a degree for? Mickey is a prime example of that – he got his own degree in real-world experience. I think it depends on the organization and what they are looking for.” Mickey Berra began his

career working for carnivals, and he started working for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as a stagehand when it first opened in 1971 and now serves as the Vice President of Production (Tischler, 2012). Working in production management at the Kennedy Center today, however, does require advanced formal education. According to Lavrakas, a Master's degree is required for Production Manager positions and a Bachelor's degree is required for Production Coordinator positions because of the "complexity of the job," stating that "Very few people could walk into this." She is quick to point out that the degree requirement does include "or equivalent experience." Although she personally supports higher education for production managers, in the end it is all about the experience.

Lavrakas believes that the college experience is valuable for students because "that's where they are getting the nuggets of [theatre]." In college, they can be exposed to many different aspects of theatre, and you can enter "into this world [of production management] through many different ways, like the facet of a diamond." Although someone would not necessarily need to go to college to gain this exposure and knowledge, in a university setting you are "learning the jargon, learning the words – what are the protocols? What are the unspoken things?" Anderson also supports learning theatre at college because "only in a school situation can you work with so many different crafts in such a short time. [...] It gives you a leg up - you can speed the process a bit [...] so that you don't have to spend so many years to get the practical experience."

Pool is not convinced that an advanced degree is the best path for those who want to become production managers. Although he does say that an undergraduate degree is "sort of the first step - it's almost like high school used to be," he argues that if someone can get an entry level job and gain "hands on, real life experience" then they will be in a better position at the end

of those few years than using those same years to pursue a graduate degree when upon graduating they will still have to go out and get that first job. He does concede that when he was first looking for work that there were more available job opportunities which made it easier to find a job without having a degree. Although it may not be necessary to have a degree to be a production manager, each organization may have its own rules about minimum education requirements.

Additionally, Anderson suggests that having a formal education would be helpful for “financial management, personnel management, and some formal education in the technical requirements because [...] it gives you a background that you can then take into the real world and not learn from scratch.” Although management skills can be gained on the job, it could be helpful to be exposed to different management styles and basic administrative responsibilities like budgeting.

Production Management Experience

It is clear that regardless of how it is gained, experience in production management is important, and this experience includes a range of skills. Hill thinks that it is “important that production managers have experience in the fields that they are managing.” A production manager needs to have enough experience in the technical fields so that he or she can “have a pretty good grasp of what each field needs to do in order to do a show, in a general concept and sometimes in a very specific concept,” which can depend on the organization. At the Kennedy Center, for example, “you also have to know what the rules are like for the unions – and they are all different.” Hill also places “a lot of value on people who have done the work before and then end up managing people who are doing the work currently” - not just having an understanding of the technical fields, but also “spending time [...] being a worker bee.” This hands-on experience

doesn't have to be in all of the technical fields. For example, he thinks that "a stage manager could become a production manager without having to have the experience of being a technician or a designer as long as they understand what it takes to do a show, a presentation and/or a production. Anybody who has been a stage manager for a couple of years has sat through too many techs not to understand what's going on."

Hands-on experience doesn't necessarily translate into being an expert in all of the technical fields. Although Hill understands audio technology and sound design "as a general concept," he says that on a certain level, he is "sound stupid, especially now that sound is turning very digital." Anderson believes that for production management, regardless of for what kind of performance or organization, there will always be "a lot of production knowledge required because you have to talk to everybody." As found in the analysis of job descriptions, some jobs do require production managers to also design or act as a technician, but for the majority of production management jobs, technical knowledge is required to be able to manage the production process, not to directly engage in one of the technical fields. The skills learned while being hands-on before becoming a production manager can serve the manager throughout his or her career. Lavrakas worked in "so many different houses" for twelve years gaining technical knowledge, and as she says, "I only had to fall of a ladder once." Luckily, she concedes that it was only "a small ladder."

As a relatively new production manager, LaRose would like more exposure to "all things technical." Although she has "a good basic understanding" when a designer requests something for a production, she wants to be able to "have enough base knowledge to answer that request without necessarily needing to go to the [department heads]." It is the production manager's job to understand the technical needs of the production and the technical capabilities of the

organization to the extent that he or she can handle technical questions “initially whenever they come through” and facilitate communication between the designers, administrators, and technical staff.

Technicians and designers who work with production managers appreciate those who understand the various technical theatre fields. Paul Villalovoz, an electrician who works with Arena Stage and other area theatres, most respects the production managers who understand what goes into “building a set, constructing a dress, and hanging a light plot.” David Kilpatrick, a producer for the Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences, believes that it is crucial that a production manager should first work as a designer or technician professionally and “learn by doing.” Marne Anderson, a stage manager for Arena Stage and the Kennedy Center, explains that when a production manager understands all the aspects of the theatre process they can be better prepared to plan a production, as well as to problem solve any issues in an educated manner.

The responses from those interviewed echoes the findings from the job description analysis. For employers, production management experience is the most important, followed by technical experience. The third highest category includes management skills, computer skills, and a bachelor’s degree. Most of the job descriptions include the phrase “or equivalent experience” when referencing formal education. This reiterates the idea that it is the experience that matters, but a degree program is one way to be introduced to some of these skills.

Tasks and Responsibilities

There is no such thing as a typical day for these production managers, although Lavrakas admits that she likes “the fact that every day is different.” The tasks that she handles every day “depends on the day and it depends on where [she is] in the advance of a show.” She works on

average about ten to twelve hours a day, and is “working on each project at a different part at a time,” usually about three weeks in advance to the production’s arrival. Therefore she may work on numerous projects in one day, each project coming from different organizations to the Kennedy Center at different times, but she also has to be flexible enough to work on any emergencies or urgent priorities as they arise. Lavrakas describes the process as that “you have a certain amount of time to get the show up and in, and you try to do it with as much grace as possible.”

At Arena Stage, both Pool and LaRose describe their job as running in cycles, so Pool says that his responsibilities on a certain day depends on “where you are in the cycle.” At the time of the interview, they are mid-season so they are focusing on “staying on schedule for the productions that [they] are doing,” but Pool also says that “a lot of the hours this time of year are spent working on next year. We start in the fall budgeting for the next year.” In the spring, Pool begins to contract directors and designers, and then once more details are confirmed he can finesse the budget. Although the production schedules may run in cycles, they overlap, so that the preparation for one season begins during the previous season.

LaRose describes her job as a production manager during the season of a production as “sitting through the design meetings and production meetings and having a good understanding of all things technical that are going in to the show and actually being able to handle all those problems that come up.” The split between Pool as General/Production Manager and LaRose as Associate Production Manager originated because Pool says that trying to be the lead Production Manager on all of the shows as well as the General Manager is “too much for one person. And it’s stupid for one person to be doing all of the productions.” Currently they split up the season, taking the lead role on about half of the shows, while LaRose handles scheduling rehearsal space

and managing supplementary activities to the season, both for the production like photo shoots or marketing events, and also for outside rentals and productions inside the theatres. Pool then handles the bigger shows and looks after “the big picture and the management side and all that that encompasses.” LaRose believes that her experience as the Production Coordinator has helped because she learned a lot about budgeting and expense tracking and she “worked from the ground up so [she has] a good idea of all the little minutiae that needs to happen for the bigger picture to make sense.” She has also learned to be flexible, because even if she has a long list of tasks to do in one day, there is always a chance that something urgent will have to be taken care of that day instead. Kilpatrick appreciates a production manager who is flexible, saying that he loves it “when a production manager says ‘Let me check on that before I answer that one’” and explores other options before making a decision.

At American University, G. Anderson has a different situation. He is responsible for being the production manager for all events in the three hundred seat Greenberg Theatre, which includes five mainstage productions, occasional events from university clients, and outside rentals from local community clients. He also fills in the production where there aren’t enough faculty members to fill the roles – most recently by acting as a properties designer. He says that he does “very little hands-on dealing with the productions” because, simply, he doesn’t have to. The Greenberg Theatre employs a Lighting and Audio Coordinator and a Technical Director, so G. Anderson only gets involved “in terms of getting the meetings going, chairing the meetings to keep them moving along, finding the designers that we do need, and booking the rights.” Although he says it depends on the organization, a university production manager is “dealing pretty much with the same creative team all the time,” unlike a production manager in the

outside world who would be responsible for “finding and hiring the design staff, the technical staff, or booking scenic construction and putting it out to bid at various shops.”

Because the designers and directors are familiar with the space and the organization, as well as having “qualified personnel to interface directly with [the designers],” G. Anderson only gets involved “if there are questions or problems that somebody else can’t answer or solve.” The other theatre at American University is a small black box theatre that is run separately from the Greenberg Theatre. In this studio space, the directors act as the production manager for their shows. Carl Menninger, the Director of the Theatre, Musical Theatre and Dance program at American University, frequently directs in this space and appreciates when he has a production manager to “chase down information.”

This is a marked difference between Arena Stage, where facilitating communication to the designers is very important. This is still a part of G. Anderson’s role as production manager, but because usually both the designers and the technicians are permanent employees of the university and because the budgets are relatively small, there is less that G. Anderson himself has to coordinate. He doesn’t need to focus on “how to make the practical side of things happen,” but instead he sees his role as to “make sure everything happens in general” and to resolve conflicts between production needs, which he says happens only rarely. Because of this structure and support, G. Anderson’s position also includes facility management, which takes up about thirty to forty percent of his time during the school year, and the entirety of his time during the summer. Although the Greenberg Theatre at American University is a very different organization than Arena Stage or the Kennedy Center, the main difference in G. Anderson’s responsibilities is the frequency of his production management tasks, and the company culture that determines the communication flow. At the heart of his role as production manager, he still

supervises the production process and facilitates communication between the creative team, the technicians, and the administration.

The job description analysis revealed a similar list of responsibilities. Both the interviews and job descriptions include management tasks like personnel management, facilitating communication, budgeting, and scheduling/planning, as well as responsibilities directly linked to the production, including organizing the entire physical production, ordering technical equipment, and supervising the technical rehearsals and performances. The body of work as seen by employers seems to match the responsibilities of the role as seen by production managers.

Production versus Administration

As seen in the literature, the technical aspect and the management aspect are both important to production management. The responses to the suggestion of a split between production/technical and administration/management were met with a wide variety of reactions. Lavrakas was adamant that everything she does she considers to be production. Even tasks that could be considered administrative, like assigning rehearsal rooms, she calls production because “what you’re doing is putting in the ground plan for the next year.” In part this is due to the way that the Kennedy Center delineates responsibility between the Production department and other departments in the building, so Lavrakas classifies what the other departments do as administrative and what she does as production. She is not so lucky as to avoid paperwork, however, and usually does it at home or in the morning, but there are some days when she is “not at the desk at all,” especially now that the company has given her a BlackBerry smartphone. She does enjoy the need to be on her feet most of time, saying, “I wouldn’t have wanted to sit behind a desk.”

Hill, also at the Kennedy Center, does see a split in his work between production and administration, at least where production is defined by working on the stage. He guesses that he spends about sixty-five to seventy percent of his time on production work. For example, when he was working on the Kennedy Center 2012 Season Announcement in the Family Theatre, which is filmed in front of a live audience and streamed live online, he spent “almost the entire time the crew was called up on the stage, managing the crew and making sure that they [had] what they need.” He considers administration to be tasks like “payroll, piano tuning requests, doing estimates, [and] doing invoices.”

Pool believes that it is beneficial to work in both production and administration, away and at the desk. He says, “It could be very easy just to stay in the office [...] I think it’s healthy to stay in touch with the shops and the theatres because it reminds you why you are doing it and also you hear things that can help you.” During a production at Arena Stage when LaRose is the lead production manager, she spends about seventy percent of her time doing production work in the theatre, which she defines as “working with the department heads and following up on whatever issues that come up with the department heads for physically building or creating the shows or maintaining the shops.” Her days also have to become about fourteen hour days to accommodate the extra work, including production meetings and technical rehearsals. When a show is not in production, she spends around sixty to seventy percent of her time on administrative responsibilities, which she describes as human resources work, staffing, and contracts. In the end, “it all comes back to production,” but it is her job as a production manager to work with many different technical and administrative departments.

Qualities

Although discovering the experience and background of these production managers, as well as the responsibilities they have as production managers, can help to create a better understanding of the field of production management, there is also insight to be found about the personalities and qualities that characterize production managers.

Some qualities can help production managers to manage people. Pool describes how “at the end of the day, it is about communication and teamwork and how you work with people, and the skills you can develop if you apply yourself.” He considers himself to be a successful production manager because he is “reasonably personable” and he sees his management style as asking, “What do you need to make this possible?” It is also important to Pool to be open and honest because he believes he is only as good as the people he works with, so he sees his job as “making it possible for others to do theirs.” In order to be successful, he says, “They have to be on board, I have to give them the tools they need -- otherwise I have failed them, which ultimately is my failure.” This supportive attitude is appreciated by those who work with production managers. Christopher Baine, a sound designer who works with the Kennedy Center and other area theatres, sees the production manager’s role as to “create a healthy environment to work in” and be supportive of the artists. Kilpatrick describes a production manager who is supportive of their staff as someone who “wears authority lightly” and can inspire the “designers and crew and ask the best of them without bossing them around.” Menninger enjoys working with production managers who are fun to work with and enjoys the process, saying that “We’re not doing it for the money and the fame. We’re doing it because we find it fulfilling and gratifying.”

Being personable does not mean that every production manager needs to treat everyone like their best friend. Hill has learned in previous positions that “you can’t be a friendly boss,”

and he has had to build in “a bit of separation” between the technicians, department heads, and himself, because “you can’t be their friend and then turn around and chastise them, and even constructive criticism is not sometimes taken well.” Learning to hire well, though, can also be important, for Hill describes that production managers need to have confidence in their work and some of that comes from having a good crew. Lavrakas agrees, saying that “you have to know how to hire smart.”

Villalovoz stresses the importance of a working relationship based on trust. A production manager needs to trust that the departments will get the work done and function with some autonomy, and in turn the technicians need to be able to trust the production manager to “make the hard calls and protect them when necessary.” Some of these hard calls include saying no to a designer or director. A production manager who agrees to any idea, no matter how outlandish, can in turn cause problems for the technicians working on the production. They must work to find a balance between the artistic vision and the abilities and limitations of the production and their staff. Stacey Flory, a carpenter and stagehand for Arena Stage, adds that a production manager should also have “compassion” when saying no and as a producer, Kilpatrick appreciates when a production manager has explored every possibility before saying no. They are willing to listen to ideas and approach the decision from many different angles before saying something isn’t possible or advisable. As a director, Nick Jonczak appreciates a production manager who has the “courage to tell [him] no.” He enjoys working with those who can delegate well and then trust “their employees to perform to high standards.” Although Jenna Henderson, a stage manager with Arena Stage and the Kennedy Center, enjoys working with a production manager who is more hands on, she also emphasizes that trust is important to the relationship. A production manager should trust in the judgment of those that they work with, instead of

doubting something they are being told or “second-guessing” a decision that had to be made when the production manager wasn’t present.

Although Jonczak and Villalovoz enjoy the trust that comes with independence, Dan Covey, an area freelance lighting designer, believes that “there are as many useful styles as there are individuals doing the job.” M. Anderson prefers working with a more “present” production manager. She appreciates when a production manager knows “what's going on in each department at all times,” because a delay in any one department can affect the rest of the team. As a stage manager, M. Anderson values a supportive production manager, both in terms of facilitating communication between stage management and the technical departments, and also being supportive when stage management is making decisions or when things go wrong. Henderson appreciates a production manager who initiates more contact with the stage manager. For example, at the Kennedy Center, Hill is in contact with the production and the stage managers daily, which Henderson says helps when there is an issue because she doesn’t have to “recount the entire history of a production” when the production manager is already up to date about the show. Flory describes this management style as “respectfully hands on,” and Baine believes that the best production managers are proactive without micromanaging. As a designer, Baine sees the production manager as his “biggest advocate” at an organization.

M. Anderson, Villalovoz, Covey, and Menninger all discussed how facilitating information is one of the most important aspects of a production manager’s role. Menninger identified that what he needs most from a production manager, as a director, is someone who can “answer questions or find out the answers.” As a freelance designer, Covey needs a “clear and accurate information flow,” where the production manager facilitates the communication between the producing organization and the production team. Similarly, as a producer,

Kilpatrick appreciates when a production manager can be diplomatic and patient when solving problems, since they are the main representative of the organization to designers and directors. Villalovoz describes an effective production manager as someone who is articulate, as well as communicative.

Lavrakas has a succinct way of describing what she believes is needed to be a production manager: you need to “be organized, have to like work, you’ve got to be able to keep your goals in the forefront, and you can’t lose your cookies.” Although they may not have phrased it in this exact way, all of the production managers who were interviewed made these same points. Being organized is a fundamental skill that was mentioned in the job descriptions as well as in the literature, and Villalovoz, Baine, and Menninger all mentioned that a production manager should be organized. One of the reasons that Lavrakas is a good production manager is, she says, “I have a real structured part of my brain. [...] I just have a brain that just gravitates towards putting things in an orderly fashion and I like flow and I can see it.” Pool asserts that to succeed as a production manager “you always need attention to detail.” A production manager needs to be able to see the details and organize them in a useful way. This complex thinking also helps with problem solving, which LaRose describes as both the thing she likes and the thing she hates about her job. She loves the “unpredictability, and the challenge of trying to predict, so you can put out the fire before it starts.” This can be a challenge, but she takes pride in being able to navigate and organize complicated situations.

Being organized and good at problem-solving is complemented by being able to see the big picture. Lavrakas sees her work visually, both as a director and as a production manager. When she is working on complicated festivals, for example, she says she sees the whole process “like a grid.” LaRose says that when she was first learning about production management, she

had to understand the “concept of how [the] pieces play with each other and how the departments play with each other.” She says that she understands now that “the winning element of production management is being able to take that step back and have the bird’s eye view and understanding how every little bit is going to fit into that bigger picture.” Lavrakas’ experience with both the big picture and the small details means that she is able to “go up to the stage and know if there is something wrong.” It takes a deeper understanding of how everything fits together to be able to view in the production process and figure out the priority areas.

This wider view also encompasses a broad understanding of theatre. Pool advocates for having “a good general knowledge” of theatre and states that it is essential to have an “understanding of how systems go together and what it takes.” LaRose says that her personality is partially responsible for her general knowledge – she claims to be “a dabbling type of person” and enjoys that “production management is kind of the connector of all of those random things [...] that aren’t always connected.” This interest in varied subjects can be an asset to a production manager who works with so many different people and types of work. G. Anderson discusses how theatre is a collaborative process, and he says, “The best people I have worked with in the business, including production managers, have been able to see outside of their own specialization [and this] allows you to be more collaborative.” He emphasizes practical experience and suggests getting “training in technical theatre – all branches of it. Not focus on any particular one, although you can be more interested or better at some.” LaRose elaborates on the importance of experience in all of the fields, not just “exposure to each of the design elements” but also being exposed to different kinds of productions, and basic arts management to help understand how all of the departments in a non-profit organization fit together. Flory

appreciates a production manager who can be “a translator between each aspect of production,” but also has an “overall understanding about what it takes to make a production happen.”

It is not only important to have broad technical and theatrical knowledge, but for LaRose this also includes the “willingness and the ability to be able to see the other person’s side,” and according to Hill, a production manager should “remain open and be a sponge to a certain degree.” Theatre is a very collaborative process, and Covey believes that production manager should be “open as possible to the collaborative nature of the production process.” Lavrakas sees her greatest strength as being “unflappable” – she is calm and composed no matter the situation. This is very important when trying to communicate with many people in what can sometimes be difficult situation. Lavrakas says that a production manager needs to know “how to ask a question and know how understand and listen to the answer and knows what it means.” This can only be done by being open-minded and really listening to those involved. Lavrakas admits that it is “humbling how to know how much you don’t know,” but a good production manager needs to “know how to ask the questions, [and] know who in this building or who in the area can answer the questions.”

The qualities as described in the interviews reinforce the qualities discovered in the job description analysis. Both employers and production managers see the value of being able to communicate with and organize many different groups of people. The job descriptions and interviews both describe the importance of being organized and good at problem solving, but unlike the interviews, the job descriptions did not include being able to see the big picture. Some of the job descriptions discussed the responsibilities of planning a season and supervising the entire physical production, but they do not detail the qualities that help a production manager to accomplish these tasks.

Defining Production Management

“I think production management is very difficult to define. They will define at the university levels in classes and there are books on it – not very many and I don’t know how good they are – but everyone in the position is going to have to come up with his or her own way of doing because every organization will be different. There is not going to be one specific way to do production management.” – Greg Anderson

Production management may be difficult to define across the board, but each individual production manager can define for themselves what the field and their job means to them. For Lavrakas, production management is “making the connections between what a company needs and what we can provide in as efficient, safe, and effective way as we can.” At its simplest, production management is providing the technical needs for a production, or as Pool defines it, “Production management is basically looking after the production needs of the show.” Hill details the process a little more in his definition, where production management is “translating the personal experiences of hands-on work into what the other people who actually have to do the work – to let them know and give them the information and to take out all the extra razzle-dazzle stuff that they don’t need to know about and boil it down to the simplest explanations you can get into.” He describes how his experience comes into play during this translation process because he knows what is needed and can then just bring the information to “the people who actually have to do the work.”

A production manager to Hill is someone who is “a cross between a traffic cop and a psychiatrist and a nurse” – someone who can solve problems on a practical and emotional level. Some of the job descriptions hint at this when they describe the role of a production manager as needing to be diplomatic, supportive, and skilled at conflict resolution, but few job descriptions detail this emotional responsibility explicitly. LaRose describes how when someone comes into her office with problem she has to figure out whether this is something that needs to be

addressed on a practical level, or if what is really needed is that the person needs someone to listen to their issue and support them emotionally. Flory believes that it is most important that a production manager be open minded, but they should also be a good listener and have natural leadership skills. “Listening is a crucial leadership skill,” and a production manager needs to learn how to listen to those they work with in order to determine how to address any issues (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Jonczak echoes this sentiment, saying that a “strong production manager will act as the administrator at some times [and] the counselor at others.” For Menninger, a production manager should also be able to “deal with the egos and the issues without having an ego and creating issues” themselves.

LaRose promotes the usually overlooked artistic aspect of production management, saying that she enjoys being a production manager because it is a “different way to be creatively involved.” Jonczak involves his production manager artistically, saying that she is the first person he goes to with an idea. Menninger collaborates with his production manager after he has developed the concept for a production, and works with the production manager to finesse the “implementation of the concept.” A production manager’s job can be creative, both in the way that they go about their work, and also as a part of the creative process.

Pool believes that production management in general “gets overlooked a lot” and that most people are unfortunately unaware of the field as a career choice.

“It’s a great job. The great thing is that we get to work with the directors and the designers and the total package. It can be extremely frustrating depending on who the team is, but it can be extremely rewarding when you actually get to opening night and you can say ‘Yeah, I can dig it.’ There is a real reason we do this and you can see that you have had an impact on how you got there.” – Ian Pool

Production management can be a challenging but enjoyable career for someone who is interested in being involved in the performing arts process. Menninger identifies this as the

satisfaction that comes from bringing “all of these disparate pieces and personalities together” and facilitating a process that is “harmonious and artistically valid.” Perhaps as more information becomes available about the field, more people can discover production management as a possible career choice.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

By assessing the field of production management through three lenses, the written literature, employers, and production managers themselves, there is a better understanding of the field and the people who become production managers. The literature can help define production management in a very basic way through specific responsibilities, the production manager's place in the organization, and some opinions of professional production managers who have described their role. The literature establishes production managers as people who are in charge of the technical needs for a production and responsible for budgeting and scheduling for a season and come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Although the literature does describe production managers as needing to be flexible, detail-oriented, efficient, collaborative, and able to see the big picture, there is not much defined about why people go into production management, how production management fits into the production process, and how people can be successful as production managers.

The analysis of the thirty-eight job descriptions has helped to establish how these employers see the role of a production manager within their company. Although the definition found through this study does have many aspects in common with the literature, the analysis did find more of an emphasis on the need for good communication, as well as helping to prioritize the job responsibilities of a production manager. The importance of personnel management responsibilities and experience is clear, especially in regards to communication, and the study revealed the significance of being able to work on many projects at once, and in a pleasant and professional manner.

The interviews with current production managers and surveys of those who work with them reveal a deeper insight into the lives of production managers. Although all of the production managers came from different backgrounds and all have jobs that differ in some manner (whether because of the type of theatre or realm of responsibility), they all found their way to the performing arts first and learned the production management skills through practical experience. Many of them became involved in production management because they had developed the relevant skills for the job while pursuing their interest in the performing arts. Their general experience in the theatre, combined with their range of technical theatre backgrounds, opened the door for them to work professionally and then gain the management skills to become production managers. Although the university setting has its benefits, these production managers have demonstrated that experience is what ultimately matters. Whether a production manager has worked as a technician or a stage manager or a designer, a production manager needs a good working knowledge of all of the technical theatre elements, as well as a sense of the flow, minutiae, and the protocols that surround the production process that can only be found by being a part of the process.

It is possible that there is not much documentation on the day-to-day life of production managers simply because every day is different. The detailed tasks and responsibilities can also vary depending on the type of house (producing, presenting, university), and the individual system of the theatre determines how these tasks are carried out, but these different responsibilities can combine together to give a more complete picture of production management as a field. Production management also straddles the line between technical and management fields, and although a production manager will need to spend some to a lot of their time working hands-on in theatre, they will also have to balance their administrative responsibilities. These

two sides are complementary – all of the work is for a common goal – but a production manager needs to be able to live in both worlds simultaneously.

Finally, the personality of a production manager can have an effect on their work. A production manager is working as a hub in the creative process of creating a production, and it is his or her role to keep the lines of communication open and flowing. Using the information from these five production managers and nine theatre professionals as a guide, a production manager should be open, honest, personable (although still professional), and invested in the work. On a practical side, he or she should be organized and able to keep track of the small details while still being able to see the larger picture of what the organization is trying to accomplish. A good production manager can solve the many different problems -- maybe even catch them before they begin – by understanding the process, the details, and the people involved.

Every production manager will have to find his or her own management style, but he or she can best succeed by having flexibility, an ordered mind, an openness to collaboration, and a thorough understanding of the production process.

Future Recommendations

The field of production management is a complex subject that is largely unexamined. There are many more areas of research that could build on this definition of the field, including more interviews with production managers of other types of performing arts organizations, theatres of varying size, and festivals or other short-term theatrical events. Additionally, this thesis focused primarily on non-profit performing arts organizations in the United States, and further study could examine the role of a production manager within commercial theatres and for film and television, and for performing arts organizations across the world.

This thesis was written to provide a definition of production management and identify the personality and qualities of those who work in production management. Future research would be recommended in identifying the metrics that determine success within the field, both in terms of the outcome of a production, and, more importantly, in terms of the production process. Some production managers are able to accomplish a desired outcome to some degree without successfully handling the production process, and these situations could be analyzed to discover the effectiveness of a well-managed production process. Successful production managers could be identified by those in the performing arts community, and they and the production managers could then be interviewed to discover how success is measured within the field of production management.

Finally, since a production manager benefits from general knowledge and working experience in the fields that he or she supervises, future research would be recommended in investigating whether the benefit of this organic development of a management style and basic level of interdepartmental knowledge could translate into other management positions within the arts management field as a whole.

APPENDIX A

JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

This analysis examined thirty-eight job descriptions posted online at *Artsearch* and *Backstagejobs.com*, available between September 2011 and March 2012. The job descriptions were tabulated into three datasheets: experience requirements, job tasks and responsibilities, and employment qualities and abilities. The following individual categories were created organically by reading the job descriptions and using key terms and descriptions to determine specific categories.

1. Experience and Background

- a. Production Management experience
- b. General management experience
- c. Technical experience
- d. Computer skills, including MS Office software and technical theatre software
- e. Bachelor's degree
- f. Master's degree
- g. Stage management experience
- h. Budgeting experience
- i. Scheduling experience
- j. Experience working with unions
- k. "Advancing" a show
- l. First aid experience or certification
- m. Experience with risk assessment

2. Tasks and Responsibilities

- a. Personnel: people management, employment contracts, payroll
- b. Budgeting, expenses
- c. Scheduling, planning
- d. Facilitating communication
- e. Responsible for all physical production
- f. Required to work nights and/or weekends
- g. Equipment management, maintenance, and/or ordering
- h. Implementation
- i. Management
- j. Safety
- k. Attending the load-in/-out
- l. Production/design meetings
- m. Attending the technical rehearsals
- n. Attending performances
- o. Roadhouse duties (“advancing” a show)
- p. Special events and rentals
- q. Administration
- r. Design
- s. Rental and/or sales of company-owned equipment (i.e. renting out costumes)
- t. Supervise stage managers
- u. Housing and travel for incoming artists
- v. Talking to the public
- w. Working in the box office
- x. Creating technical specifications for the performance space(s)

3. Production Management Qualities

- a. Able to communicate well
- b. Organized
- c. Self-motivated
- d. Problem-solver
- e. Team player
- f. Detail oriented
- g. Leader
- h. Multi-tasking
- i. Able to work in a stressful environment
- j. Has a professional manner
- k. Time management
- l. Sense of humor
- m. Flexible
- n. Positive attitude: positive, easy-going, fun
- o. Having many skills
- p. Hands-on attitude
- q. Trustworthy, reliable
- r. Good at conflict resolution
- s. Customer service

APPENDIX B

JOB DESCRIPTIONS TABLE

Table 1. Job Descriptions Listings in Alphabetical Order

Organization	Job Title	Database Posted To	Date Posted
5th Avenue Theatre	Production Manager	Artsearch	9/7/2011
Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	9/8/2011
Ars Nova Theater	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	1/3/2012
Birch North Park Theatre	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	10/4/2011
Boston Children's Theatre	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	10/1/2011
Bucknell University	Weis Center Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	2/22/2012
Chautauqua Theater Company	Production Manager	Artsearch	1/17/2012
Cheshire Youth Theatre	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	10/5/2011
Children's Musical Theater San Jose	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	8/16/2011
Columbia University	Director of Production	Artsearch	1/13/2012
Columbus Downtown Development Corporation	Production Manager, Columbus Bicentennial Pavilion	Backstagejobs.com	2/8/2012
Downstairs Cabaret Theatre	Production Manager/ Technical Director	Artsearch	9/30/2011

Organization	Job Title	Database Posted To	Date Posted
Florida State University	Production Manager/ Technical Director	Artsearch	2/21/2012
Fox Valley Repertory	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	2/15/2012
Golden Thread Productions	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	9/27/2011
Good Sense + Company	Production Coordinator/Associate Producer	Backstagejobs.com	2/17/2012
Holiday Image	Production Manager	Artsearch	9/15/2011
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival	Associate Production Manager	Artsearch, Backstagejobs.com	1/13/2012, 1/6/2012
Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center	Production/Operations Manager	Artsearch	9/16/2011
Long Wharf Theatre	Director of Production	Artsearch, Backstagejobs.com	1/19/2012, 1/11/2012
Mark Morris Dance Group	Facility and Production Manager	Artsearch, Backstagejobs.com	1/20/2012, 1/19/2012
MASS MoCA	Production Manager	Artsearch	1/10/2012
Moscow Ballet	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	3/2/2012
New York City Opera	Production Coordinator	Artsearch	9/20/2011
New York Stage and Film	Assistant Production Manager	Artsearch	2/8/2012
New York Stage and Film	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	2/23/2012

Organization	Job Title	Database Posted To	Date Posted
Ogunquit Playhouse	Production Manager	Artsearch	12/29/2011
Opera Theatre St. Louis	Production Coordinator	Artsearch	8/7/2011
Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival	Assistant Production Manager	Artsearch	1/13/2012
Pepperdine University Center for the Arts	Competition Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	12/19/2011
Pepperdine University Center for the Arts	Lead Technician/ Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	1/31/2012
SMG/Wagner Noel Performing Arts Center	Production Manager	Artsearch	2/29/2012
Texas Performing Arts	Academic Production Manager		11/10/2011
Theatre Aspen	Production Manager	Artsearch	1/10/2012
Tidewater Community College	Production Manager	Artsearch	1/19/2012
Tulsa Ballet	Director of Production	Artsearch	12/22/2011
Virginia Arts Festival	Production Director	Backstagejobs.com	11/14/2011
Williamstown Theatre Festival	Production Manager	Backstagejobs.com	10/24/2011

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW TOPIC LIST

1. Education and Background
 - a. Previous Experience
 - b. Educational background
 - c. Specific questions, if needed:
 - i. How did you first get involved with theatre in general?
2. Tasks and Responsibilities
 - a. Responsibilities of a production manager at their place of business
 - b. Who they report to and who they directly supervise (by job title)
 - c. Specific Questions, if needed:
 - i. What is the biggest part of what you do in your job?
 - ii. What is the split in your work between production and administration?
Follow-up: How do you define “production”?
3. Qualities of Production Managers
 - a. Qualities or personality traits of those in production management
 - b. Specific Questions, if needed:
 - i. What qualities do you think make you a successful production manager?
 - ii. Are there any management styles or qualities that you have seen in others that you think would be helpful for someone in production management?
If so, what and why?
 - iii. Is there anything you wish you had more experience in, and if so, why, and how do you compensate for the lack of experience now?
4. Conclusion
 - a. Specific Questions:
 - i. Is there anything you would recommend that an aspiring production manager should learn or accomplish before pursuing a career in production management?

APPENDIX D

SURVEY QUESTIONS

These questions were emailed to directors, designers, technicians, stage managers, and administrators that work with the production managers who were interviewed for this project.

1. In general, how often in your process do you interact with a production manager?
2. As a [director, designer, technician, stage manager, producer/administrator], what do you need the most from a production manager?
3. When working with production managers, are there any management styles that you prefer?
4. What qualities or personality traits do you think make the most effective production managers?
5. What do you appreciate about production managers who you would choose to work with again?
6. Is there anything you would recommend to someone who was interested in production management?

APPENDIX E

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT GAME

As a part of the presentation of this thesis paper, an online interactive fiction game was created to demonstrate the responsibilities, experience, and qualities of production managers. Titled “A Day in the Life of a Production Manager,” this game presents a narrative where the reader can choose various options for certain scenarios, which then yields different results based on the choices made. The first half of the game shows the reader the many challenges and rewards of a production manager’s daily life in the development of a production, and the second half shows the sometimes absurd challenges that a production manager can face the day of a performance. This game is currently available to play online at <http://www.kylenepage.com/thesis/adventure>.

REFERENCES

- “Artsearch – Rates and Notes.” Retrieved March 4, 2012 from <http://www.tcg.org/advertise/artsearch/rates.cfm>
- “BackstageJobs.com.” Retrieved March 4, 2012, from <http://www.backstagejobs.com>.
- “Production Manager, Columbus Centennial Pavilion.” Retrieved March 4, 2012, from <http://backstagejobs.com/jobdetail.php?jobID=15945>
- “Theatre Communications Group – Our Mission.” Retrieved March 4, 2012, from <http://www.tcg.org/about/index.cfm>.
- Anonymous (2010). “Whitestable Pearl: Retired TV Production Manager Valerie Sheppard.” Whitestable Times. Whitestable, United Kingdom.
- Aveline, J. (2002). Production Management. Cambridge, England, Entertainment Technology Press.
- Conte, M.D., Stephen Langley (2007). Theatre Management: Producing and Managing the Performing Arts. Hollywood, EntertainmentPro.
- Costa, M. (2009). “Looks Great – But It’ll Never Work: A Shower of Paper, A Castle in Flames, A Window That Wept – All Great Ideas that Never Quite Made it into the National Theatre’s Latest Production.” The Guardian. London, United Kingdom.
- Dean, P. (2002). Production Management: Making Shows Happen: A Practical Guide. Marlborough, The Crowood Press.
- Foreman, Gill. (2009). A Practical Guide to Working in Theatre. London, Methuen Drama.
- Holahan, J. (2002). “Fulton Hires ‘The Great Organizer’ as its Production Manager.” Lancaster New Era. Lancaster, PA.
- Hoque, S. “Theater Production Manager.” Creative Choices. Retrieved April 22, 2012, from <http://www.creative-choices.co.uk/industry-insight/article/theatre-production-manager>
- Ivey, B. (2008). Arts, Inc.: How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Kirley, R. (2005). “The Education and Practical Experience of Theatrical Production Managers.” MA Thesis, The University of Akron.
- Kouzes, J. and B. Posner. (2003). Encouraging the Heart: A Leader’s Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Lawler, M. (2007). Careers in Technical Theater. New York, Allworth Press.

- Paviell, J. (1997). "Rob Osborne: No Longer an Unsung Hero of Theatre." Manawatu Standard. Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Vasey, J. (1998). Concert Tour Production Management : How to Take Your Show on the Road. Boston, Mass., Focal Press.
- Volz, J. (2004). How to Run a Theatre: A Witty, Practical and Fun Guide to Arts Management. New York, Backstage Books.
- Waters, E. (2008). "Frederick, MD., Production Manager Makes Magic Happen on Stage." The Frederick News-Post. Washington, DC.