

What You Don't Know About Radio

Jobs you can start working towards NOW

California Broadcasters Association YourCBA.com

Is Radio for Me?

Radio entertains, informs, persuades and motivates. Audio touches your emotions, connects you with world events, educates you on healthy lifestyles, and helps you prepare for natural disasters with weather reports using equipment so sensitive, it can track storm movements block by block.

This booklet is intended to provide a general overview to students perceptive enough to consider radio as a career. It has been written specifically for entry-level job seekers and includes general descriptions of job opportunities in the field and how these jobs relate with each other.

But if you don't want to be a disc jockey, podcaster or sports announcer, what does radio have to offer you? Plenty! Whether your interest is being on-air or behind-the-scenes, this booklet will help you decide if any of the **30** job categories at your local radio station fit into your career goals.

Because radio has been around for a century, some students assume it is "old school" media. Nothing could be further from reality. Radio is now digital and the top source for discovering new music. Each week, radio reaches an amazing 90% of American adults. Today's technologies increase and enhance the radio experience through text messaging, mobile applications, and time-shifted listening via podcasts. For a visual experience, you can even watch radio online! Best of all, it is the perfect entertainment media for multitasking.

Many people choose to work in radio because it is free to consumers. Radio is the only media besides television that provides its programming at **no cost** over the airwaves. Whether the audience is streaming on their phone, or listening at home, radio has no data charges or access fees.

If you believe in helping your community, radio may be what you are looking for. Every year California radio stations assist their local non-profit organizations and government agencies by sponsoring blood drives, raising money, offering free advertising and helping in countless other ways. In fact, radio and TV are the only media that are *required by law* to act in the public interest. This means community service is always a major part of a station's daily focus.

If you are looking for an opportunity to work anywhere in the world, radio will give you that freedom. There are over 15,000 commercial and non-profit stations in the United States alone, broadcasting in many different languages. Generally, you start in smaller media markets (determined by audience size) and move to larger ones as your skills improve. However, some workers choose to spend their entire career at one station.

Hopefully this booklet will assist you in understanding how the station jobs fit snugly together to make the whole. The typical job duties for the various radio careers discussed in this booklet are generalizations. Stations are constantly experimenting with ideas to keep their jobs exciting and deliver the best product possible to their audience. As a result, specific work skills for job titles will vary from station to station, market to market, and from one station ownership group to another.

The Table of Contents below lists the job opportunities generally offered at your neighborhood radio station. The job number assigned does imply any order of importance. It is just an easier way to locate a particular position than by a page number.

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General Administration

Job #1 General Manager / Station Manager

A station's **general manager** (GM) (also referred to as a station manager depending on company structure), is the chief operating officer at the station. They often hold the additional title of **president** or **vice president** in larger station groups and may be the owner in smaller groups. All departments typically report directly to the general manager.

Radio general managers predict market trends; set budgets and performance expectations; ensure the station is in compliance with all equal employment opportunity (EEO) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirements; and have overall responsibility for maintaining a station's reputation and image in their audience market. Radio general managers have final say on station hires and keep both on-air and behind-the-scenes talent in step with overall station directives. They create a clear vision for the station and the blueprints for success that every staffer is expected to follow.

The bottom line stops with the GM, who is charged with the station's profitability. Advertising revenue is crucial to a radio station's financial security, so relationship-building with advertisers and potential advertisers is a significant area of the GM's responsibilities. The GM is heavily involved in the station's sales efforts and is generally expected to participate in sales presentations along with executive members of the sales staff. GMs find creative ways to profit and succeed despite competitive obstacles.

Every radio station cultivates its own public image, based on its local market and community needs. As a result, general managers are committed to involving the station in community events and public affairs. Station managers are visible leaders in their markets and may choose to deliver on-air editorials to voice opinions about community issues.

General managers are typically recruited from within the advertising sales department, although news directors are also potential candidates for this position. A traditional advancement path for a general manager is to leave a smaller market station for a larger market. General managers are often recruited from their stations by corporate offices for positions at company headquarters.

Job #2 Administrative / Executive Assistant

Executive assistants handle executive/senior-level paper and electronic communication; respond to viewer questions and complaints; manage the executive appointments calendar; handle the paperwork related to EEO and FCC reporting and, in general, try to make the day go more smoothly for the GM.

Administrative assistants make sure the day-to-day business needs of the station are met such as responding to audience questions, distributing tickets and prizes to listeners, and maintaining inventory for contests or promotions.

Job #3 Accountant / Controller / Bookkeeper

Whether the title is accountant, controller or bookkeeper, this position is responsible for maintaining the station's financial well-being.

These financial experts report directly to the general manager and, at larger stations, manage a business staff that oversees the accounting. They also partner with the station's department heads and the general manager to make decisions about large equipment purchases and expenditures.

In larger stations, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) license is often required.

Sales

Job #4 Director of Sales

The **director of sales (DoS)** hires and inspires the sales team. A DoS has daily contact with the station general manager and works with other sales staff to ensure the station is maximizing all available revenue opportunities in the market from both local and national ad agencies. Directors of sales will price and manage the advertising inventory; ensure money is collected from advertisers; do budget forecasts; meet periodic sales goals; issue sales projections; and coordinate projects with other department heads.

Job #5 General Sales Manager

The **general sales manager (GSM)** has training in sales forecasting, planning and employee motivation. Often reporting directly to a DoS, they are long-range thinkers, have excellent presentation and interpersonal skills and excel at client networking. GSMs develop monthly and quarterly revenue-generating proposals, establish individual sales goals and hire and manage the sales teams.

Job #6 National Sales Manager

The **national sales manager (NSM)** manages a radio station's national sales accounts. A national sales manager deals with the sales representatives at national advertising firms. Sales representatives at national advertising firms working with NSMs handle a host of stations and must make decisions quickly. It is imperative that NSMs are accessible at all times to negotiate advertising buys. Stations lacking a national sales manager give these responsibilities to a GSM.

Job #7 Local Sales Manager

A **local sales manager (LSM)** closely supervises the frontline sales staff consisting of account executives or account managers – whatever term that station prefers. If a station does not have a general sales manager, the local sales managers assume those duties.

Job #8 Account Executive / Account Manager

An **account executive (AE)**, who may also be titled an **account manager (AM)**, are part of the local sales team that generates advertising revenue by convincing local businesses to advertise on radio. Many write the commercials for their clients. Account executives often choose to have irregular hours and work evenings and weekends meeting with clients.

A proactive/confident attitude and a joy of dealing with people are essential in this position. Most account executives receive a commission based on their sales, so their monthly earnings fluctuate depending on sales performance. This is a job for those who want to be compensated for the revenue they produce for the station, not the number of hours they work. The potential for a large paycheck makes this an attractive position.

Job #9 Sales Assistant / Client Service Specialist

Sales assistants or client service specialists keep the communications flowing within the sales department, working with managers and account executives to create sales presentations and other sales support materials. They are adept at a number of computer programs and software (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel, Wide Orbit, Nielsen, etc.), input and tracking sales orders, troubleshoot client and agency phone calls, post and report delivery of advertising schedules, help track and gather articles that support the sales cause and may even plan the details of sales entertainment events.

Traffic

Job #10 Traffic Director

A **traffic director** juggles the programming, commercials, and breaks to ensure everything starts and stops at the scheduled times. They design and produce all required reports for sales and management to review.

Job #11 Traffic Assistant

The traffic assistants work closely with sales and programming to maintain station program logs and make sure data is properly entered. Strong computer skills are required.

Research

Job #12 Market Research Director

A market research director interprets a station's ratings and supporting research. The research director monitors the station's competitors, assists in the creation of sales materials, and uses the data to help project long term strategy and revenue. Sometimes a director may present materials to advertising clients. While degrees and experience vary, often basic math and statistic skills are needed, as well as ability to interpret, analyze, and communicate complex data in simple terms. In smaller stations, this job may be done by the sales manager.

News

Job #13 News Director

A **news director** sets newsroom journalistic standards that govern who, what, where, when, why or whether a particular news event is covered. News directors make certain the journalistic integrity of the station remains uncompromised, map out coverage strategies and plan assignments that showcase the talent in ways compatible with the station's image goals. This is a coveted position to which many ambitious journalists aspire.

Typically long-range thinkers, news directors identify future events that would interest their audience and plan coverage that allows the station to shine brighter than the competition. They must also plan for the unexpected and react well in times of crisis - keeping the news staff focused when under tension and stress.

Management duties for this position include developing budgets that allow leeway for overtime when the unexpected occurs. News directors understand that while their primary focus is on journalistic excellence, radio is also a business of revenue and ratings.

Job #14 News Reporter

Radio **reporters** at stations specializing in news and talk are much like television and newspaper reporters. The difference being they write stories for the ear not the eye. They exercise professional, journalistic judgment in investigating, reporting, interviewing, writing, editing and delivering news stories, They need the skill to ad lib as needed. Excellent writing skills oriented to sound are required along with a basic understanding of broadcast techniques and equipment. Reporters are the station's talent base and represent the station at scheduled events and appearances

Job #15 On-Air Personalities

The voices of radio bring a station's call letters to life, hooking listeners and drawing ratings for those stations that are personality-driven. **DJs** and **program hosts** spin verbal magic, whether it's between musical sets, as part of a morning or afternoon drive team or as hosts of programs designed to inform, provoke, entertain or enlighten the listening audience.

They embody the heart and soul of a radio station and are assigned to different day parts, depending on how the station is formatted.

Job #16 Producer

A **producer** has overall responsibility for their individual news program or show. Producers work with DJs and program hosts to put a show on the air that brings all expectations to life.

They work the board, generate show ideas, identify program guests, develop concepts for on-air stunts and gimmicks, are tuned into current events and keep the talent informed of everything critical to the success of their show. Often producers become part of the on-air mix as sidekicks to the main events, and sometimes it is the talent who produces their own show.

They are prepared to immediately switch gears in a crisis, such as a lost feed, no-show guest or any other unforeseeable event. Producers must be creative thinkers to create programs that connect with viewers.

Job #17 Assistant Producer

A more entry-level position, this job is heavy on the details, requires strong organizational skills and a willingness to go to any lengths to get the job done, anywhere, anytime.

Job #18 Board Operator

The **board operator** runs the sound control board, regulating the timing of programs and making sure logged commercials, promotions, and any other programming elements essential to operations air as scheduled. Board operators may be "loaned out" to other departments such as promotions. Those with a "can do" attitude, willing to help out in other areas, are often promoted and can even find themselves onair.

Marketing and Promotions

Job #19 Marketing Director

The **marketing director** oversees the advertising and promotion of the station.

Image goals set by station management are translated into such tangible realities as the look of the station's logo, promotional materials and advertising that could range from their own on-air promotion and newspaper ads to billboards, banners and television or cable spots.

They direct the promotions managers and closely work with programming and sales to educate the public about what's really behind a station's call letters: the people. If a station lacks a marketing director, these functions fall to the programming director.

Job #20 Promotions Manager

The **promotions manager** is often described as energetic, creative, spirited, self-motivator, diplomat, people person, and community liaison. They know who their listeners are and what makes them receptive, working with programming and sales to create memorable public impact. Up on current events and trends, they can spot a great opportunity and act fast to capitalize on the moment, whether raising funds to offset a local disaster or staging a public concert to showcase talent and involve advertisers.

Job #21 Promotions Assistant

A **promotions assistant** helps coordinate on-site events and promotions and along with the promotions director, represents the station to listeners and clients at promotional events and business meetings. High energy and willingness to work long hours and weekends are mandatory. These assistants are able to work with minimal direction, have strong organizational and computer skills, handle department billing, maintain listener databases, and are in charge of all station contest and prize fulfillment. They also pinch hit in other areas, answering phones and performing other general administrative duties.

Job #22 Social Media Specialist

If not handled by the Sales or Public Relations Departments, the social media specialist manages and provides the content for the station's web presence such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Public Service & Community Affairs

Job #23 Public Service Director / Community Affairs Manager

The **public service director** or **community affairs manager** also serves as the station's liaison to their audience communities. They will sponsor charity events or other visible causes, including those that could provide tie-ins with existing or potential advertisers. Public service directors receive countless public service announcements (PSA) submitted by groups hoping to get their non-commercial messages on the air and their causes promoted "for free." A number of public service directors/community relations mangers write, produce and edit local public affairs programs and may even serve as an on-air hosts.

Operations and Programming

Job #24 Operations Manager

An **operations manager** is the number two person at the radio station and is responsible for setting the advertising schedule. Large radio networks may have an operations director who also serves as the programming director for one or more stations in the group and also works with the programming managers at other stations within the radio family.

An operations director defines the vision for the station's on-air product, manages personnel in this area, cultivates talent and determines the best ways to showcase on-air personalities. Smooth on-air operations and shaping an on-air product that appeals to the targeted demographics are tickets to success in this position.

Job #25 Programming Director

The **programming director (PD)** works closely with talent and is involved in promotions for the programming side. Some handle creative production and station imaging as well, and when there's not a music director, they take on those duties.

Job #26 Music Director

The **music director** selects the music and determines what gets airplay and what doesn't. New recording artists are desperate to get through to the music director, who is inundated with songs from recording groups and musicians seeking a venue for their sounds. Many of today's biggest stars were identified by perceptive programming and/or music directors who gave them a try.

Engineering

Job #27 Director of Engineering

The staff of the Engineering Department keeps the radio station on the air and the station's physical property in good shape. Stations usually require a certificate from one of the training programs offered by the Society of Broadcast Engineers.

Heading this department is the **director of engineering.** They figure out what new equipment the station needs to keep competitive and maintain close relationships with vendors to get the best prices. The director of this department oversees the engineering and technical integrity of the station or station cluster and is familiar with AM and/or FM transmitters, combiners and antenna systems. They have the ability to manage large-scale projects such as studio builds or transmitter installations, and have expertise in studio equipment, computer and telephone systems as well. Some have college degrees in electrical and computer engineering.

Job #28 Chief Engineer

The **chief engineer** has direct responsibility for technical administration and staffing as well as maintenance and repair of broadcast systems and equipment. Chief engineers can communicate well with technical and non-technical personnel. Updated technical credentials and the ability to keep pace with technological advancements are crucial to this job.

Job #29 Communications Engineer

Large, multi-cluster stations have need for this position, which is focused on maintaining network integrity, security and Internet access for the enterprise WAN. A **communications engineer** coordinates with other departments any network changes or activities, provides technical support, and plans and implements any modifications or enhancements to the system.

Job #30 Assistant Engineer

Considered an entry-level position, the assistant engineer at larger stations should have at least one year of experience in radio engineering and a high school diploma. Internships may count.

What Job is for You?

The first question every broadcast job-seeker wants answered is: What entry-level salary can I expect?

To answer that, some industry background information is helpful.

The United States is segmented into 263 geographic radio markets. A select group of people in each market carry a pager-like device called a portable people meter (PPM). The device looks for hidden audio streams embedded in radio station signals, so it can measure a station's radio listening (ratings) for a particular time period. The PPM is a vast improvement over the old paper diary system where listeners had to remember a week's worth of listening to report.

Markets are ranked from largest to smallest according to the number of potential listeners. In California, the markets (with their ranking) are: Los Angeles (2), San Francisco (4), San Diego (16), Riverside/San Bernardino (26), Sacramento (27), San Jose (37), Fresno (66), Bakersfield (79), Stockton (80), Monterey/Salinas/Santa Cruz, (90), Modesto (117), Palm Springs (131), San Luis Obispo (172), Santa Maria/Lompoc (201), Chico (202), Santa Barbara (208), and Redding (225).

The operating revenue for a radio station comes from the price they can bill for advertising. The larger the number of listeners, the more a station can charge for the same commercial. This is why an entry-level radio job in a small station will pay much less than that same job in Los Angeles. Market size matters!

While this makes it difficult to get an accurate salary preview, there are several resources that can help you make a good guess for the area of California you want to work in. First, a simple Google search for "broadcast radio job postings" will give you the local jobs available with salary levels. Each station within a market will also list available jobs on their website. Both the National Broadcasters Association (link) and the California Broadcasters Association (link) have dedicated websites for job postings as well.

The next question often asked is: What formal training/education do I need to get hired for a position?

The positions that generally require a degree or other formal training are noted in the job descriptions. Although many station positions do not have degree requirements, as the market size increases so does the level of competition. Keep in mind that jobs that require degrees are not necessarily the highest paid. For example, the top salespeople often earn more than any other employee at the station.

How much experience you will need, and the education level that will be required, depends on the station and specific job that interests you. While researching the job postings in a market for salary levels, you can also find what education and/or experience is expected.

Internships are often the best way for you to gain practical, real-world experience and see what station jobs might fit with your interests. Both paid and unpaid internships allow station management to see how competent you are – giving you a huge advantage when it comes to future hiring. Even if you do not have an interest in taking a job at a station near you, an internship there will be educational in deciding which jobs you want to apply for in other places.

Industry Resources

Individuals seeking jobs in the radio industry have a variety of resources to help them learn more about the business and determine how they might fit in. Some are trade associations and others fall under the auspices of educational groups. There are also those specifically dedicated to promoting the advancement of women and minorities. Listed below are some, but not all, of the many groups dedicated in whole or part to the radio industry.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)

1 M Street SE Washington DC 20003 Phone: (202) 429-5300 nab@nab.org www.nab.org

Employment resources within the NAB Include: WWW.BroadcastCareerLink.com

https://www.nab.org/careers/default.asp

NAB Bookstore

Phone: (408) 720-6150 www.nabstore.com

Alliance for Women in Media (AWM)

2365 Harrodsburg Road, Suite Å325 Lexington, KY 40504 Phone: (202) 750-3664 www.facebook.com/awmsacramento/ www.awmsocal.org www.awrt.org info@awrt.org

Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA)

575 Market Street San Francisco CA 941025 Phone: (415) 346-2051 www.aaja.org National@aaja.org

California Broadcasters Association

915 L Street, Suite 1150 Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: (916) 444-2237 www.yourcba.com

Corporation for Public Broadcasting

401 Ninth Street NW
Washington DC 20004-2129
Phone: (202) 879-9600 or toll-free 1 (800) 272-2190
www.cpb.org
www.cpb.org/jobline/

National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)

1100 Knight Hall

Suite 3101

College Park, MD 20742 Phone: (301) 405-0248

https://www.facebook.com/NABJLAOfficial/

www.nabj.org nabj@nabj.org

National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)

1050 Connecticut Ave. NW

5th Floor

Washington DC 20036 Phone: (202) 662-7145

www.nahj.org

https://www.nahjcareers.org

nahj@nahj.org

National Association of Program Executives (NATPE)

12534 Valley View St.

Suite 326

Garden Grove, CA 92845 Phone: (310) 453-4440

www.natpe.org

Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)

University of Oklahoma NAJA – Gaylord College 395 W. Lindsey Street Norman, OK 73019 www.naja.com info@naja.com

PROMAX

5700 Wilshire Boulevard Suite 275 Los Angeles CA 90036 Phone: 310 788 7600 www.promax.org

Radio Advertising Bureau

400 E. Las Colinas Blvd.

Suite 350

Irving, Texas 75039

Washington DC 20045-2520 Phone: (800) 232-3131

1110116. (000) 232-3

www.rtnda.org rtnda@rtnda.org

Radio-Television Digital News Association and Foundation (RTDNA/RTDNF)

529 14th St. NW

Suite 1240

Washington DC 20045-2520

Phone: (202) 662-725

www.rab.com

memberresponse@rab.com

Society of Broadcast Engineers

9102 North Meridian Street, Suite 150, Indianapolis, IN 46260 Phone: (317) 846-9000 https://sbe.org

Society of Professional Journalists

Eugene S. Pulliam National Journalism Center 3909 N. Meridian Street Suite 200 Indianapolis IN 46208 Phone: (317) 927-8000 www.spj.org https://www.spj.org/region11.asp#2

INDUSTRY TRADE WEBSITES

Every industry has trade magazines that serve the business. Radio is no exception. Listed below are some of the publications that may serve as valuable reference tools.

Advertising Age

www.adage.com

Adweek

www.adweek.com

Billboard Magazine

www.billboard.com

CBA Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/YourCBA/

Communications Arts

https://www.commarts.com/CA

Report5G Technology World

https://www.5gtechnologyworld.com

PR Watch

www.prwatch.org

PR News

www.prnewsonline.com

SMPTE Journal

www.smpte.org

Variety

www.variety.com

RELATED INDUSTRY WEBSITES

Below are some other web sites you may want to check out to learn more about the broadcast business.

Broadcast Image Group

www.broadcastimage.com

Broadcasting & Cable Magazine

https://www.nexttv.com/broadcasting-cable

California Film Commission

https://film.ca.gov/production/entertainment-jobs/

Citysearch.com (use this to locate media in your area)

www.citysearch.com

Dolan Media Management

www.smartrecruit.com

Entertainment Weekly

www.ew.com

4EntertainmentJobs.com

www.4entertainmentjobs.com

The Hollywood Reporter

www.hollywoodreporter.com

IRE - The Job Center

www.ire.org/jobs

MediaPost

www.mediapost.com

MediaRecruiter.com

www.MediaRecruiter.com

NewEnglandFilm.com

www.newenglandfilm.com

News Blues

www.newsblues.com

Next TV

https://www.nexttv.com/news

TV Spy

https://www.adweek.com/tvspy/

Spin Magazine

www.spin.com

The Maslow Media Group

www.maslowmedia.com

TVNewsCheck

https://tvnewscheck.com

TV and Radio Jobs.com

www.tvandradiojobs.com

MEDIA NEWSLETTERS

American Press Institute Daily Newsletter

https://americanpressinstitute.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=d4573d74e237e345f9abc9034&id=e3bf78af04

Atlantic - Idea 57

https://www.atlantic57.com/newsletter/

Axios Media Trends

https://www.axios.com/newsletters

CNN Reliable Sources

https://www.cnn.com/shows/reliable-sources

CJR - The Media Today

https://www.cjr.org

Digiday

https://digiday.com/newsletters/

Digital Content Next

https://digitalcontentnext.org/incontext/

Hot Pod

https://hotpodnews.com

Inside Radio

http://www.insideradio.com/newsletters/inside_radio_newsletter/

The Interface

https://www.getrevue.co/profile/caseynewton/

Journalist's Resource

https://journalistsresource.org/about-journalists-resource/

The Lead

https://blatchfordtaylor.medium.com/welcome-to-the-lead-a-newsletter-for-student-journalists-4da755fad8c9

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism

https://www.lenfestinstitute.org/solution-set/

Local Independent Online News

https://www.lionpublishers.com/mission-values/

Monday Note

https://mailchi.mp/mondaynote/subscribe

NAB Smartbrief

https://www.nab.org/news/smartbrief.asp

Nieman Journalism Lab

https://www.niemanlab.org

Pew Research Center - Journalism & Media

https://www.journalism.org

The Poynter Report

https://www.poynter.org/subscribe-to-the-poynter-report/

Radio Ink

https://radioink.com

Radio & TV Business Report https://www.rbr.com/category/broadcast-news/

Radio World

https://www.b2bmediaportal.com/dynamicregister/register.aspx?fid=RWACS

Tools for Reporters

https://toolsforreporters.com