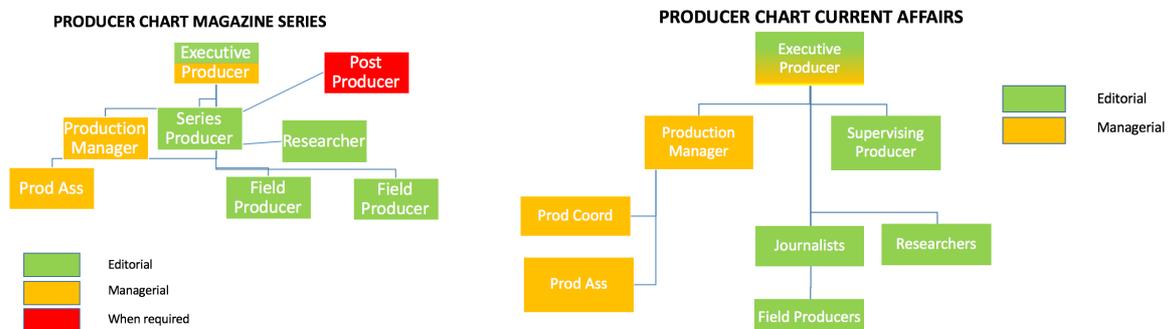


The Producer written by Ivo Burum

There are various producer titles each relating to a role in the development, production, delivery and marketing cycle of a film, video or online media project. Figure 1 Shows a hierarchical order of producing for a magazine and a current affairs show.:



Executive Producer credits in television are rec received by the individual(s) who report to the networks, studios or companies funding and distributing the series/show. The Executive Producer (Showrunner) has final responsibility for the creative and business aspects of producing the series. S/he will have direct authority over a majority of the producing functions throughout all phases of the series production.

The Executive Producer is often responsible for the creation of the series, including its concept, format and other production elements.. Over the course of production, the Executive Producer is expected to serve as the primary point-of-contact with the network, studio, and/or production company regarding the development, production, post-production and marketing of the series. During development of the pilot and/or series, the Executive Producer will supervise or participate in story or script meetings, approve all storylines, and supervise the creation of the series "bible." The Executive Producer will select or approve the hiring of all series directors, as well as the casting of all on camera talent including hosts and journalists. S/he will similarly select or approve of the hiring of key members of the producing team, such as the production manager, director of photography, and composer. The Executive Producer must supervise or approve the series budget and production schedule. On an independent production they can often develop these before the production manager is on board, because these will be required for commissioning.

Within post-production/marketing phase, the Executive Producer will continue to consult with the network, studio and/or production company regarding such delivery requirement issues as final cuts, air dates, and standards & practices. S/he will typically select and/or approve the choice of post-production facilities and editors, providing in-person consultation with them. The Executive Producer should view and provide consultation on the rushes, and should view, appraise and approve all cuts before leasing with the network and or distributor. S/he is typically consulted regarding publicity and promotional campaigns.

FUNCTIONS OF AN EP the Executive Producer in a Television Series is expected to exercise decision-making authority over a majority of the following specific job functions:

- Consulted with the network, studio and/or production company regarding the development of the series.
- Negotiated the network license fees or any additional financing required to produce the series.
- Conceived of and/or supervised the creation of the series "bible."
- Selected and/or approved all Department Heads
- Supervised or participated in story or script meetings, and approved all "in house" generated story outlines and scripts.
- Supervised and approved all final "shooting scripts."
- Supervised and participated in all department pre-production meetings.
- Served as the primary point-of-contact for the network, studio and production company entities for creative and "tone" issues.
- Selected and/or approved the hiring and contracts of all episodic producer/directors, production manager, cinematographer, editors etc
- Selected and/or approved the casting and contracts of journalists, presenters with the network and production company.
- Served as the primary point-of-contact for the network, studio, and production company entities for creative (format), business and financial issues including license fee requirements etc.
- Approved all set designs and set dressing for sets created and built for the ongoing series.
- Approved the choice of format (35mm, Super 35mm, 16mm, video, Hi-Def)
- Supervised and/or approved the preparation of the series schedule, budget and pattern budgets.
- Approved, first hand, the choice of locations
- Select post production facilities
- View any rushes and sign off on all edits, mixes and programs

The SERIES PRODUCER or SP reports to the Exec. Producer. And in Australia on factual series this is both a managerial and an editorial role. A good series producer is worth their weight in gold, because it frees the EP to look at the bigger picture and to get on with getting the next show up. As the name suggest they work on series and you rarely have one on a one off project. SPs have overall responsibility for making programs happen from pre-production through to delivery. A key part of the role is ensuring that the series complies to the overall look and style, especially when different directors are making individual episodes. It's a senior editorial role and SPs will usually have worked as producer/directors for a number of years.

For example, on *George Negus Tonight*, a nightly public affairs series, I had four series producers, one running each of four teams scattered across four states. On a weekly basis I would hook up with them and look at the week ahead. They would develop the week, and I would comment on the week's offerings and sign off on story and programs rundowns. Because the SPs were working remotely with numerous field producer (8 across the series) and reporters (12 across the series). They had to have and convey:

- a clear vision of the series and the format, stylistically and editorially

- provide producers and journalists guidance when planning stories
- provide script points
- sign off on edits (ready for EP to view)
- sign off on voice overs
- manage the team creatively
- keep stories and programs focused on target demographic
- maintain network imperatives
- make programs for less

Overall they need to manage the expectation of the Executive Producer by keeping the project on schedule, on budget, on point creatively and editorially sound.

THE SUPERVISING PRODUCER reports to the Exec. Producer and in Australia, more often than not it's essentially an editorial role. In a current affairs show the Supervising Producer will help develop stories and story lines before the shoot and shepherd these stories through post production. These people have a capacity to write and structure media into story in the edit suite. Generally, they are selected from a producing, journalism or writing pool and sometime can have a senior research background.

THE SEGMENT PRODUCER on factual projects is often also the director, except on news, documentary or drama projects, where you can find both. On factual magazine productions they are responsible for producing one or more individual segments of a multi-segment production, also containing individual segments produced by others. On factual magazine type series, the role of the producer is often split between the field and the edit suite, except in what's come to be called the 'Beyond Model'. This is a production model where the field producer/director remains in the field and editing is left to editors and a post producer and writers. On other magazine series the role of the producer, often called a segment or field producer, might look like this:

- producing segments
 - developing story ideas into briefs and outlines
 - planning the shoot
 - briefing the crew
 - overseeing travel arrangements
 - running the shoot and directing crew
 - ensuring all releases are organized
 - ensuring uplinks in place for live broadcast
 - editing the stories
 - working with journalists or presenters to write the script
 - writing the script on their own

POST PRODUCER completes stories or edits raw footage into stories and processes these finished stories through post production. They have responsibility for the creative and business aspects of the post production of the series, with a direct participation in making decisions that relate to format and schedule.

NEWS PRODUCER is one of the most integral members of any news-production team. A news bulletin showcases current breaking and developing live or packaged news stories. The news producer takes all the elements of a newscast (packages, video, graphics, etc.) and compiles them into a cohesive show (rundown).

The news producer (sometimes called a supervising producer) reports to the executive producer who reports to the news director. The news producer supervises the director, studio crew, reporters, field crew, studio crew and many others.

News producers are highly organized and pay attention to detail and are good writers even under stressful conditions. The news producer's responsibilities are wide-ranging. In no particular order of importance (because all are equally important), they:

- Involved in the morning or afternoon meeting during which the stories are assigned.
- Write the draft script for the anchor.
- Organize the show elements, to ensure that there is good "flow"
- Gather leads for possible stories
- Monitor the wire feeds for potential stories
- Edit video for voice-overs to determine story length
- Decide on order of stories on rundown
- Time the rundown and news cast to make sure it is on time
- Coordinate the record of the bulletin
- Liaise with field crew and reporters during day
- Set up and integrate live crosses
- Write in-show and pre-show teases

Current Affairs producer: I've never been a news producer, but I have worked in international current affairs and produced stories there in more than 40 countries. Many of the skills above apply to news type current affairs stories. But the role of current affairs producers can differ depending on the program.

PRODUCER TRAITS

- Team Builders
- Communicators
- Multi taskers
- Networkers
- Process orientated
- Good negotiators
- Good time managers
- Good directors
- Good writers