Production Manager

What do Production Managers do?

Production Managers organize the business, finance and employment issues in film and television productions. As a Production Manager, you would be in charge of how the production budget is spent and making sure that everything runs smoothly during filming.

Before production begins, your work would involve:
- meeting the producer and other senior production staff to examine scripts or program ideas
- drawing up a shooting schedule and estimating cost
- hiring crews and contractors, and negotiating rates of pay
- negotiating costs and approving the booking of resources, equipment and suppliers
- overseeing location bookings and arranging any necessary permissions and risk assessments

During filming, duties include:
- making sure that the production runs to schedule, and reporting to the producer on progress
- managing the production schedule and budget
- managing the production team
- dealing with any problems
- making sure that insurance, health and safety rules, copyright laws and union agreements are followed

To become a Production Manager you will need substantial experience in TV or film, in-depth understanding of the production process, and a network of contacts in the industry. Experience and track record is more important than formal qualifications, however, you may find it helpful to take a course that includes practical skills, work placements and the chance to make contacts. You will need a good understanding of budget management, so skills and qualifications in accountancy are useful.

You could work your way up through the industry to become a Production Manager in various ways. For example you could start as a runner or an assistant or secretary in the production office, and progress to production coordinator then assistant production manager. You might also start as a trainee production accountant. Alternatively, you could progress from runner to 3rd assistant director then 2nd and 1st assistant director, or to assistant TV floor manager then floor manager or location manager.