

careers with a  
**RADIO STATION**



Careers With a Radio Station  
Lerner, Mark

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LY CAREER BOOK

An Early Career Book

careers with a  
**RADIO STATION**

Mark Lerner

photographs by  
Milton J. Blumenfeld



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Minneapolis, Minnesota

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*With thanks to my friend Jim duBois*

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**Lerner, Mark.**

Careers at a radio station.

(An Early career book)

Summary: Describes fifteen careers, including announcer, sports director, sales manager, music director, researcher, traffic manager, promotions director, account executive, and chief engineer.

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## **Would you like to work for a radio station?**

The radio is a very important part of our daily lives. Radio entertains us with our favorite music and keeps us informed of the day's news. When we want to know what the weather will be like, we turn on the radio.

Everything we hear on the radio comes to us from a radio station. Some radio stations play rock music. Others play country songs. Still other stations report the news, weather, and sports throughout the day.

No matter what their radio station plays, the people who work there want as many people as possible to listen. In this book, you will read about some of the people who work for a radio station and what they do. Maybe you'll find a career that you'd someday like to try.

## ANNOUNCER

Announcers play the music you hear on the radio. They choose which songs to play and when to play them. And when you hear weather reports, announcers are the people you're listening to. They give the important information that listeners need.

When announcers are not on the air, they often talk to listeners who have telephoned the station. Announcers like to play *requests*, or songs that these callers especially want to hear. Announcers also do *commercials*. Commercials are advertisements. Businesses pay to advertise on the radio to tell listeners about what they sell. It is very important for announcers to make commercials sound just like the businesses want them to sound.

Announcers must have very clear voices. They must also like to entertain people.



**WDGY**  
Promos  
1. CAR  
2. Tele...  
3. Gi...  
4. W...  
WDGY  
WDGY

**WDGY**  
WDGY SCRIPT  
TOP 11  
HIT ME!



A sheet of paper with a grid or schedule, likely a broadcast log or program schedule, is placed on the console in front of the woman. The paper contains various columns and rows of text, though the individual characters are not clearly legible.

## NEWS DIRECTOR

News directors write the station's news reports. Their reports cover national, state, and local news. At some stations, news directors then read the news over the air. At other stations, that job is done by announcers.

News directors often attend important speeches and meetings where they hear government officials speaking about issues that affect the community. News directors put the most important information they've heard into their news reports. During severe weather, news directors give listeners up-to-the-minute reports.

The news director in the picture is standing in front of a *teletype* machine, or "wire." News comes over the wire from reporters all over the world. This news director will use some of these news stories when he writes his own reports.



**EBS  
CHECK  
LIST**

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

health  
protecti

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL



## SPORTS DIRECTOR

Have you ever seen somebody at a ball game holding a microphone and tape recorder while talking with a player on the field? If you have, you might have been watching a radio station's sports director at work. Sports directors go to many sports events. There they talk to fans, players, and coaches. Sports directors *interview*, or question, players about past games, upcoming opponents, or about how they are recovering from an injury.

Sports directors tape record such interviews and then *edit* them, or decide which parts of interviews to include in the station's sports report. Sometimes sports directors do "live" interviews. A live interview is not taped. Instead, it goes on the air as it happens, so listeners can hear the interview as if they were right there.

Sports directors are big sports fans and know a lot about the games they cover. Many were once athletes themselves.



## **RESEARCHER**

Radio stations want to play songs that their listeners like. So stations have researchers who telephone listeners and ask them which songs are their favorites. Researchers also play recordings of new songs for the people they call to see which ones people like. If they find that people like a new song, the station will play it often.

Many radio stations have contests and give away records, concert tickets, and other prizes. When researchers telephone listeners, they also ask them how they like the station's contests or how the contests might be improved. Stations often get the telephone numbers of contest winners. That's how they know who many of their listeners are.



## MUSIC DIRECTOR

Music directors make up the station's *playlist*. The playlist is the list of songs that the station plays. Music directors decide how often to play the songs on the playlist. Announcers then choose songs from the playlist to play on the air.

Music directors always want to keep their listeners happy. They know it is important to play songs that their listeners like. To find out which songs are the most popular, music directors ask record companies which records are selling best. The station's researchers also tell music directors which songs are listeners' favorites.

New songs come out every day, so listeners' favorites change often. That's why it's very important for music directors to keep close track of what people like to hear.



## PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Program directors decide what goes on the air. They make up the station's *program*, or how many songs, commercials, and news and weather reports to play each day. Program directors make sure that the station plays just the right balance of songs and commercials. Too many commercials might make listeners change radio stations. But too few commercials would mean less business for the station.

Program directors work closely with the station's announcers. They *schedule* announcers, or tell them which times to be on the air. Program directors also *critique* (crih-TEEK) announcers, or listen to how they're doing and tell them how they might improve.

This program director is pulling out a tape of an announcer's voice. He will listen to it and perhaps offer helpful suggestions to the announcer. Many program directors were once announcers.



## ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Account executives sell radio time to businesses for commercials. Business people buy 30-second or 1-minute “spots,” or radio commercials, that will tell listeners about what they sell.

Account executives explain to business people how radio advertising will help their business. When talking to business people, account executives discuss their station’s *demographics* (dem-oh-GRAF-iks). Demographics tell how many listeners the station has at different times of the day, how old most listeners are, and where they live. This information is very important to business people. They want to buy radio time on the stations that most of their customers listen to.

Besides selling radio spots, account executives help business people decide how much radio time to buy and how often the commercials should be played. Account executives must like to talk to people and know how to get along with them.



SUPERIOR  
L'ELEGANCE

STONE  
WIRE BASKET

ERIC WHEEL  
ALTY STORE'S

SUPERBOOT

T-HANDLE

T-HANDLE

T-HANDLE

PUZZLE LOCKS

PUZZLE LOCKS

PUZZLE LOCKS

PUZZLE LOCKS

LUK NUTS

CUSTOM STYLE  
BEAUTY RINGS  
SET OF FOUR

STYLE  
RINGS

WIRED

3

MAG  
STYLE  
WHEEL

MAG  
STYLE  
WHEEL  
SET OF 4

ST 074

## **SALES MANAGER**

Sales managers are in charge of the station's account executives. They tell account executives which businesses to call on. And they decide how much radio time should cost. They know the station can ask higher prices for commercials during a time of day when the largest number of listeners are tuned in.

Sales managers keep track of the radio time that has been sold. Then they tell account executives which time slots are left to sell. Sales managers know that the station allows only a certain amount of time for commercials. Most of the time is reserved for music, news and weather, and special shows.

This sales manager is showing an account executive a rate chart. From the chart, she can tell business people how much their commercials cost at various times of the day.



## **PRODUCTION DIRECTOR**

Except for the announcer's voice, everything you hear on the radio has been recorded. Music has been recorded on tapes or records. And most commercials have been taped. Production directors record the commercial tapes that radio stations play.

Production directors work in the station's production room, which is a small studio. There they decide what music or background sounds will best fit in with the words of a commercial. When they have chosen the music or sound effects, they record the commercial. For a commercial about a car race, for example, a production director might talk in a fast voice and play the sounds of a roaring engine in the background. Commercials like these can then be played on the radio again and again.

Production directors must have clear voices and be able to say all that's needed in exactly 30 or 60 seconds.



## CHIEF ENGINEER

Chief engineers make sure that all of the station's equipment is working right. The most important piece of equipment is the *transmitter*. Transmitters are special machines that change sound into electrical currents that can be carried through the air. Transmitters send these currents into the air through the station's antennas. These currents are then picked up by *receivers* in radios and are changed into the music or voices being produced at the station.

Chief engineers tune the station's transmitter so that it sends out sounds of the highest quality. This chief engineer is taking a reading of the transmitter. He's checking to see how much electric power it's producing. If it's not producing enough, then the station's *signal*, or sound that listeners hear, is probably weak or full of static. The chief engineer will adjust the transmitter to just the right power level.



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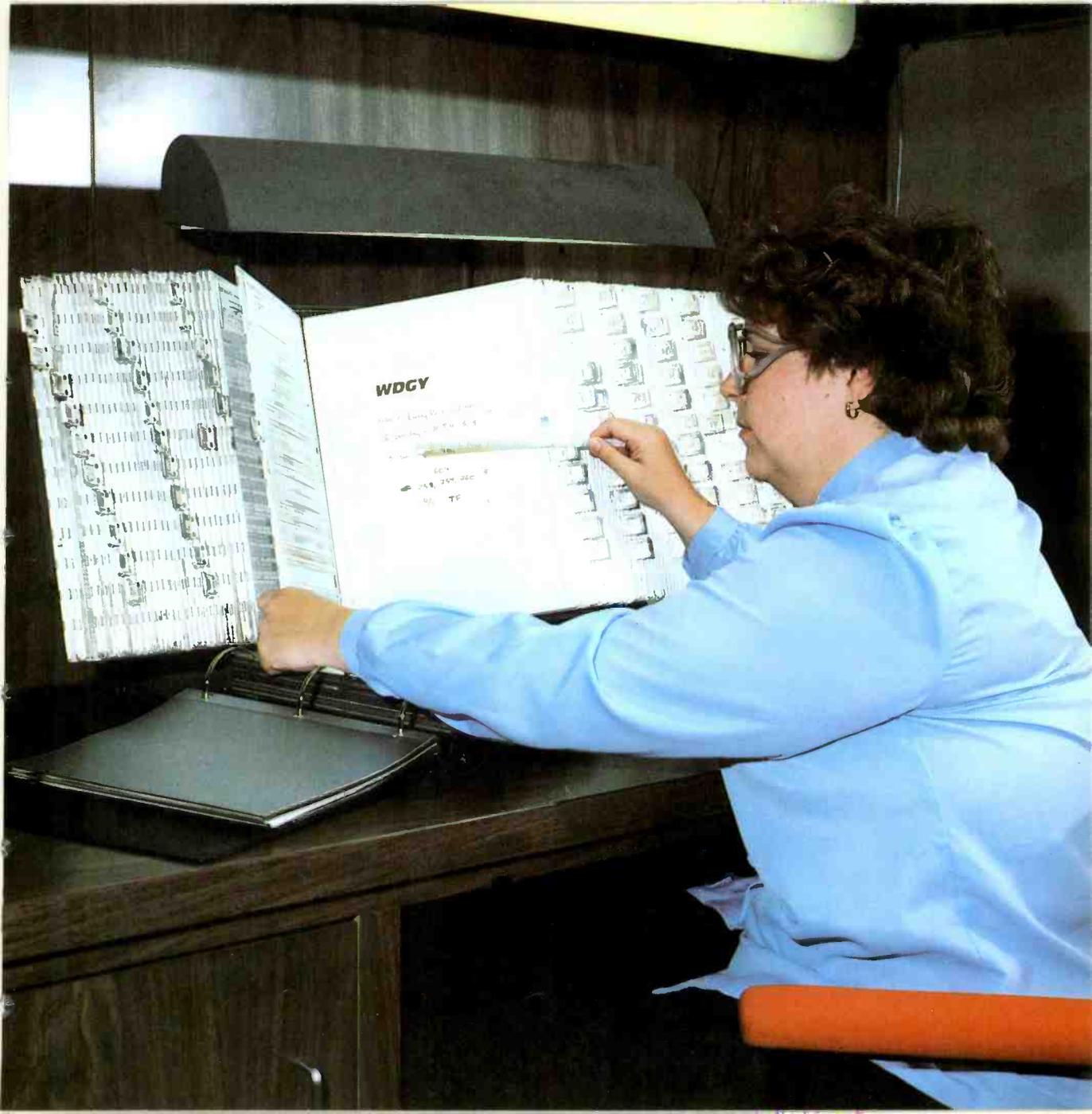


APRIL  
CST  
5:30 AM  
7:00 PM  
(Thu April 25)

## **TRAFFIC MANAGER**

Traffic managers make up the daily *log* that announcers work with. The log is a list of what the station will put on the air during the day, such as commercials and news, weather, and sports reports. The log also tells announcers when to take time for commercials. Traffic managers make sure all of the commercials that account executives have sold are put on the air when they are supposed to be.

Traffic managers schedule commercials so that one company's product is not being advertised right before or after a competitor's. For example, traffic managers would not schedule commercials for two ice cream companies in the same half hour. With all of the commercials that stations have to play, traffic managers must be very well organized.



## CONTINUITY DIRECTOR

After account executives have received the orders for commercials, they give them to the station's continuity (kon-tih-NOO-ih-tee) director. The continuity director types the orders and then gives them to the traffic manager, who schedules when to put them on the air.

Some businesses tape their own commercials instead of having the station tape them. Businesses send their tapes to the continuity director, who keeps them in order at the station. When businesses supply only the *copy*, or words, for commercials, the continuity director tells the production director to add the music or background sounds.

Continuity directors send the businesses bills for the amount they owe for their commercials.



## **PROMOTIONS DIRECTOR**

Promotions directors plan fun contests for the station to hold. The station might have contests with prizes of T-shirts, bumper stickers, or hats with the station's name on them. Or they might give away concert tickets. Promotions directors also design advertisements telling about these contests. Then they arrange to have the advertisements appear in newspapers or magazines. Promotions directors do all that they can to let people know what the station has to offer.

Sometimes promotions directors organize parties or dances. The station's listeners are invited to come to meet their favorite announcers.

Promotions directors also work with businesses that buy commercials on the station. They might, for example, hold a contest giving away a car made by a company that has advertised a lot on the station.

**WDGY**

**WDGY-1130**  
NORTH COUNTRY RADIO



## **PROMOTIONS ASSISTANT**

Promotions assistants keep track of the station's weekly playlist. Many stations call their playlist the "Top 40," because it includes the 40 songs played more than any others. Promotions assistants send the Top 40 lists to record stores. The store managers then know which songs people are listening to. This can help them decide which records to order for their customers.

When visitors come to the station, the promotions assistant shows them around. The promotions assistant in the picture is greeting a singer who just arrived in town for a concert. Now she will take him on a tour of the station, which often plays his songs.



## GENERAL MANAGER

All stations have *markets*, or groups of people, that they try to have as listeners. Some stations try to attract young listeners by playing rock music. Other stations have many news and weather reports, which older listeners are often more interested in. General managers make sure that the station is always pleasing its market.

General managers do this by keeping close track of how many listeners the station has and by watching how popular the station's contests are. General managers also help to decide how much to charge for commercials. They want to earn as much money for the station as they can, without losing any customers by charging too much.

General managers hire and fire the people who work for the station, and they buy new equipment when it's needed. This general manager is checking to see if one of the station's antennas needs to be replaced.



**Radio Station careers  
described in this book**

- Announcer
- News Director
- Sports Director
- Researcher
- Music Director
- Program Director
- Account Executive
- Sales Manager
- Production Director
- Chief Engineer
- Traffic Manager
- Continuity Director
- Promotions Director
- Promotions Assistant
- General Manager

## A letter from a radio station executive

# WDGY

NORTH COUNTRY RADIO 1130

Dear Reader,

For people who love people, radio is a great business to be in. Radio is simply a matter of communicating with listeners one on one, like a friend-to-friend relationship. The stations who do it best are the most successful in attracting people to listen and also make the most money.

Air personalities are the most visible part of a radio station, along with the news people and other "on air" performers, but everyone in a radio station gets to share in the excitement of pleasing the listeners.

Every job in radio can and should be very exciting and rewarding if you have the right attitude and are prepared properly. A college liberal arts education or a trade school course can help you prepare yourself academically. A love of people will make your radio career more fun.

Good Luck!



Dale G. Weber  
General Manager

10332 BLOOMINGTON FREEWAY, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55420  
• 50,000 watts • A Storz Station • NBC Radio Network News 

*The publisher would like to thank Storz Broadcasting Company of Omaha, Nebraska, and its station WDGY North Country Radio 1130, Minneapolis, Minnesota, for their cooperation in the preparation of this book.*



Lerner Publications Company

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At a very early age, most children begin to think about what they will do when they grow up. Some boys and girls imagine themselves as doctors or teachers or auto mechanics; others picture themselves as airline pilots or truck drivers or computer operators. In today's changing world of work, any of these dreams can come true. The Early Career Books introduce young readers to the various occupations available to them, pointing out the many different skills and educational experiences needed for each career. The books emphasize the feeling of personal satisfaction and self-worth that comes from a job well done. Accompanying the easy-to-read text are full-page color photographs showing actual work situations.

"Easily read and understood titles... attractive in format... handy for libraries which lack easy career-related materials."

— School Library Journal

"Colorful, attractive... has a place in the elementary classroom or school library."

— CAS Journal

"A pleasant, positive addition to an elementary classroom's or resource center's career library... An obvious attempt has been made to avoid sex and racial stereotyping throughout."

— Scholastic Teacher

"A serious approach to careers."

— The Instructor

Careers in AGRICULTURE  
Careers in the AIR FORCE  
Careers with an AIRLINE  
Careers in an AIRPLANE FACTORY  
Careers in ANIMAL CARE  
Careers in the ARMY  
Careers in an ART MUSEUM  
Careers in AUTO RACING  
Careers in AUTO SALES & SERVICE  
Careers in a BANK  
Careers in BASEBALL  
Careers in BASKETBALL  
Careers in BEAUTY & GROOMING  
Careers with the CIRCUS  
Careers with the CITY  
Careers in COMPUTERS  
Careers in CONSERVATION  
Careers in CONSTRUCTION  
Careers in a DEPARTMENT STORE  
Careers in EDUCATION  
Careers with a FIRE DEPARTMENT  
Careers in FOOTBALL  
Careers in HOCKEY

Careers in HOTELS & MOTELS  
Careers in a LIBRARY  
Careers in a MEDICAL CENTER  
Careers at a MOVIE STUDIO  
Careers in the NAVY  
Careers with a NEWSPAPER  
Careers with an ORCHESTRA  
Careers in PHOTOGRAPHY  
Careers with a POLICE DEPARTMENT  
Careers with the POSTAL SERVICE  
Careers in PRINTING  
Careers with a RADIO STATION  
Careers with a RAILROAD  
Careers with a RECORD COMPANY  
Careers in a RESTAURANT  
Careers in SOCCER  
Careers in a SUPERMARKET  
Careers with a TELEPHONE COMPANY  
Careers with a TELEVISION STATION  
Careers in the THEATER  
Careers in TOY MAKING  
Careers in TRUCKING  
Careers at a ZOO



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