

Competency Profile

SHOWRUNNERS

Film and Television

A Competency Analysis

www.culturalhrc.ca

Recommended Skills for

Showrunners

COMPETENCY PROFILE

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... AND TO ACCOMPLISH THE PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED PROFESSIONAL
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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the outcomes of an occupational analysis ¹ for **SHOWRUNNERS**.

The Cultural Human Resources Council (www.culturalhrc.ca) brings together cultural workers and employers to address training, career development and other human resource issues. The cultural sector includes a labour force of over 600,000 and several thousand businesses and organizations – large, medium and small, not-for-profit and for-profit. Through its volunteer Board of Directors and broad national network, CHRC works for and with all the cultural industries and arts disciplines in the cultural sector including the Live Performing Arts; Writing and Publishing; Visuals Arts and Crafts; **Film, Television; Broadcasting;** Digital Media; Music and Sound Recording; and Heritage.

CHRC's initiatives on behalf of and in collaboration with the film and television industry include developing *Fast Forward*, a national training strategy and establishing a National Training Advisory Council (NTAC) to oversee the implementation of the *Fast Forward* recommendations. CHRC has also undertaken occupational analyses for certain key occupations in the film and television industry including one for **Showrunners**. The others are Location Managers, Film and Television Producers, Film and Television Directors, Documentary Filmmakers, and Production Managers.

The Showrunners' Profile of Competencies identifies the combined competencies that make up the work of a Showrunner; it was compiled by a group of expert practicing Showrunners from across Canada. It is to be used in conjunction with CHRC's *Chart of Competencies for*

Showrunners. The Competency Chart and Profile can be used by individuals to evaluate their own skills and to determine areas where they should pursue additional training. They can be used to design professional development modules and to modify/enrich curriculum. These tools can also be applied in defining job profiles, developing competency-based professional development programs, negotiating and customizing training programs, developing career planning programs, recruitment profiles and individual position descriptions. They can also be used by educators and trainers to develop course curricula, workshops etc.

¹ The expressions 'occupational analysis' and 'competency profile' are used interchangeably in this document.

"The Showrunner is the chief custodian of the creative vision of a television series. The Showrunner's primary responsibility is to communicate the creative vision of that series - often from pilot episode through to finale.

Showrunners need to be able to collaborate effectively with all the other producers, executive producers, directors, cast and crew on the show as well as broadcast executives and distributors. They are generally credited as producers or executive producers.

Showrunning skills cannot be learned solely in a classroom setting. Field experience is essential. Anyone seriously contemplating becoming a Showrunner should first complete several successful tours of duty in series production, series writing and story editing.

Scripts are the lifeblood of drama and comedy series. Typically Showrunners are successful TV writers who have risen through the ranks, gaining the necessary skills in production. Directors and producers can also become Showrunners, of course - provided they have acquired the necessary professional writing skills, experience and credits or are prepared to partner with someone who has.

TV series development and production is an intense, organic, ever-changing process. It requires Showrunners to be passionate, creative, strong and open to the universe.

Showrunning itself takes an inordinate amount of time, talent, energy, stamina - and the ongoing ability to complete many tasks more or less simultaneously.

Showrunners need to meet an exacting business challenge - namely, to produce the best show possible within a set framework (budget, available resources and schedule).

Only a tiny minority of writers possess the creative, business and managerial skills needed to be Showrunners. Only a tiny number of executive producers, producers and directors possess the creative skills and writing experience needed to be Showrunners. Therefore, a successful Showrunner is a rare bird.

Finally, it needs to be said that running a hit tv series requires the ability to invoke a creative magic not listed among the competencies outlined in the Chart and Profile."

Steve Lucas, on behalf of the CHRC's Showrunners' Expert Working Group.

METHODOLOGY

The Cultural Human Resources Council has chosen the DACUM (Developing A CURriculum) model to conduct this analysis. One of the key features of DACUM is to rely on a group of expert practitioners to review all the competencies required to function effectively in a given occupation.

The combined **Chart of Competencies** and **Profile** present four levels of analysis:

1. A series of **General Areas of Competence**, more commonly called **GACs**. A GAC describes a major function or responsibility of a particular profession, trade or position. There are two types of GACs: **General Areas of Professional Competence** (GACs A to J inclusively) and **General Areas of General Competence** (GACs K and L).
2. Each GAC is further defined into **skills** (competencies). The skills, as well as the GACs, are identified in behavioral terms and thus begin with an action verb depicting the applied behavior.
3. Each skill is further analyzed into **subskills**. A subskill is an intermediate step between the whole skill and the detailed actions associated with practicing the skill.
4. A (non-exhaustive) series of **important actions** and **key general competencies** has been identified; these may be used as performance indicators, providing the criteria by which competence can be assessed.

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SUMMARY – CHART OF COMPETENCIES | A **SHOWRUNNER** MUST BE ABLE TO:

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

A. SECURE A DEVELOPMENT DEAL

1. Generate an idea
2. Develop the idea
3. Adapt idea to marketplace
4. Create a pitch document
5. Make the sale

B. WRITE A BIBLE AND PILOT TO SECURE PRODUCTION ORDER

1. Articulate the vision of the world
2. Create characters and story arcs
3. Create episode spring boards
4. Recommend key creative personnel
5. Write the pilot
6. Close deal

C. ASSEMBLE A WRITING TEAM

1. Generate list of potential candidates
2. Evaluate talent
3. Select writing team
4. Secure approvals for writing team hired
5. Close all writing deals

D. SUPERVISE SERIES PREPRODUCTION

1. Communicate vision
2. Collaborate on scheduling
3. Develop production budget
4. Build team
5. Make optimal use of resources
6. Initiate series production preparations

E. RUN A WRITING ROOM

1. Establish a safe creative environment
2. Break stories
3. Direct research
4. Schedule delivery of script stages
5. Direct the writing and rewriting
6. Write original scripts
7. Train writers
8. Manage the room

F. DELIVER PRODUCTION DRAFT

1. Issue production draft
2. Issue blue script / pages
3. Issue pink script / pages
4. Issue yellow script / pages
5. Issue subsequent drafts

G. SUPERVISE EPISODIC PREPRODUCTION

1. Hold concept and tone meeting with Director
2. Collaborate to create a production schedule / board
3. Cast guest actors / stars
4. Approve key creative elements
5. Run production meetings
6. Run a read through

H. SUPERVISE PRODUCTION

1. Make time to spend on set
2. Ensure that the vision of one's series is being maintained
3. Ensure production is on time and on budget
4. Evaluate dailies

I. SUPERVISE POSTPRODUCTION

1. Deliver locked picture(s)
2. Complete all other visual components
3. Complete all other sound components
4. Deliver broadcast versions

J. ASSIST WITH DISTRIBUTION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE SERIES

1. Facilitate publicity campaign
2. Create internet content
3. Consult on licensing and merchandising
4. Support creation of promos / trailers
5. Support creation of DVD / CD / downloads

GENERAL COMPETENCIES

K. DEMONSTRATE COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

1. Tell a story
2. Write a story
3. Collaborate
4. Persuade
5. Lead a team
6. Demonstrate oral communication skills
7. Practice active listening
8. Negotiate
9. Delegate
10. Exercise tact and diplomacy
11. Demonstrate empathy
12. Demonstrate fairness
13. Demand excellence

L. DEMONSTRATE PERSONAL SKILLS

1. Demonstrate passion for the work
2. Multitask
3. Demonstrate imagination
4. Demonstrate analytical skills
5. Read critically
6. Solve problems
7. Make decisions
8. Embrace change
9. Prioritize
10. Demonstrate self-confidence
11. Trust one's instincts
12. Demonstrate visual imagination
13. Embrace competition
14. Demonstrate persistence
15. Maintain perspective
16. Demonstrate stamina
17. Recognize one's limitations
18. Demonstrate thoroughness and attention to details
19. Demonstrate curiosity
20. Demonstrate planning skills
21. Maintain focus
22. Demonstrate toughness
23. Demonstrate resourcefulness
24. Anticipate problems
25. Take risks
26. Open to the universe

COMPETENCY PROFILE

A **SHOWRUNNER** MUST BE ABLE TO ...

A SHOWRUNNER MUST BE ABLE TO:

A. SECURE A DEVELOPMENT DEAL

SKILLS	SUBSKILLS	IMPORTANT ACTIONS	GENERAL COMPETENCIES
1. Generate an idea	1.1 Brainstorm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free associate Apply non-linear thinking Exchange ideas with partners (if any) 	Most critical interpersonal and/or personal skills associated with the competency as a whole
	1.2 Recognize dramatic possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue and expand creative notions that grab you Identify the seeds of a good story and/or characters Make notes of possible creative elements Trust the process 	
	1.3 Write it down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose strongest creative elements Edit for maximum dramatic impact 	
2. Develop the idea	2.1 Define premise of series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write it down Rewrite based on development process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEMONSTRATE IMAGINATION (L3) COLLABORATE (K3) DEMONSTRATE ANALYTICAL SKILLS (L4)
	2.2 Establish working relationship with other creators (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze idea Tell the truth about your reaction to the idea Consider other viewpoints 	
	2.3 Research the idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen similar programming Read relevant fiction and non fiction Explore genre characteristics Contact experts in relevant fields 	
	2.4 Challenge the idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if ideas/characters have legs Explore all possible extensions and implications of the idea Choose elements that have maximum dramatic impact Eliminate deadwood (boring parts) 	
	2.5 Rewrite the idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust idea to incorporate above Re-examine idea and repeat steps 	