

# Chapter 5 - Hierarchy Of A Production – Quiz

Ramiro Hernandez Moya

1. Spend some time researching exactly what it is an AD does. What are their responsibilities, why are they so vital to a production? Then write a 2 page paper on the duties of an Assistant Director.

The First Assistant Director (AD) is the director's right hand person, taking responsibility for a number of important practicalities so that the director is free to concentrate on the creative process. During pre-production, First ADs break down the script into a shot by shot storyboard, and work with the director to determine the shoot order, and how long each scene will take to film. They then draw up the overall shooting schedule (a timetable for the filming period). Once the film is in production, Firsts are in charge of making sure that every aspect of the shoot keeps to this schedule.

Responsibilities:

First ADs' main duties are assisting the director, coordinating all production activity, and supervising the cast and crew. They are also in charge of a department of other assistant directors and runners. Overall, they provide the key link between the director, the cast and the crew, while also liaising with the production office, and providing regular progress reports about the shoot.

Before the shoot, the Firsts' main task is to create the filming schedule, working in careful consultation with the director in order to fulfill his or her creative ambitions. When drawing

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up the shooting schedule, First ADs must also be aware of budgetary constraints, cast availability and script coverage. Preparing the storyboard, overseeing the hiring of locations, props and equipment, and checking weather reports, are all key pre-production duties for Firsts. During production, they must ensure that everyone is on standby and ready for the director's cue for action.

First ADs' core responsibility is to keep filming on schedule by driving it forward, so they frequently make announcements and give directions to coordinate the cast and crew. They also control discipline on the set, supervise the other assistant directors, and oversee the preparation of the daily 'call sheet' (a document detailing daily shooting logistics, which is distributed to all cast and crew). Firsts are also responsible for health and safety on set or location, and must take action to eliminate or minimize hazards at all times.

Skills:

First ADs must be authoritative team leaders and motivators, while also being approachable team players. They need exceptional organizational and time management skills. The ability to plan ahead, trouble shoot and pay close attention to detail is vital in this role. Being an excellent communicator, with tact and diplomacy skills, is also essential as they must routinely deal with problems or even crisis situations. They must also constantly prioritize tasks, and may be frequently interrupted, the ability to multi task is crucial. Firsts work long and often unsocial hours on a freelance basis, so a strong commitment to the job is essential. As they also

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usually work under highly pressurized and stressful conditions, a flexible and positive approach is highly valued.

2. Define in as much detail as possible what "below the line" means. "below the line" means. **Below-the-line** is a term derived from the top sheet of a budget (Motion Picture, Television, Commercial, Industrial, Student Film, and Documentary). The 'line' in below-the-line is the one separating the Actors, Director, Producers, and Writers from the other crew. The top sheet of the budget is the summary of the entire budget of the project – no matter what the size (cost).

The traditional delineations for the top-sheet are:

- Total Above-the-line
- Total **Below-the-line** (*hence the term*)
- Total Above and Below the Line
- Additional Coverage (Other)
- Grand Total

In general, Above-the-line refers to Actors, Producers, Writers and Directors. For the most part, these are fixed costs. For example, if a scene is cut from the script, the writer is still paid the same amount.

Below-the-line crew refers to everybody else including:

Assistant Director

Art Director

Best Boy Electric

Best Boy Grip

Boom Operator

Camera operator

Character generator (CG) operator (television)

Director of Photography

Costume Designer

Hair Stylist

Key Grip

Line Producer

Location manager

Make-up Artist

Production Assistant

Script Supervisor (continuity)

Sound Engineer

Stage Manager (television)

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Composer  
Dolly grip  
Film Editor  
Gaffer  
Graphic Artist

Stage Carpenter  
Technical Director (TD) <sup>[1]</sup>  
Video control Broadcast engineer  
Visual Effects Editor

### 3. What are the must-have qualities of a PA? Why are they so important on a film set? Production

Runners are the foot soldiers of a film or television production team, performing small but important tasks in the office, around the set and on location. Their duties may involve anything from office administration to crowd control, and from public relations to cleaning up locations. Production Runners are usually employed on a freelance basis, are not very well paid, and their hours are long and irregular. However, the work is usually extremely varied and provides a good entry level role into the film industry. Responsibilities: Production Runners are deployed by the producer and by other film/television production staff, such as the production coordinator, to assist wherever they are needed on productions. Their responsibilities vary considerably depending on where Production Runners are assigned. In the production office duties typically include: assisting with answering telephones, filing paperwork and data entry, arranging lunches, dinners, and transportation reservations, photocopying, general office administration, and distributing production paperwork. On set duties typically include: acting as a courier, helping to keep the set clean and tidy and distributing call sheets, health and safety notices, and other paperwork. On location shoots, Production Runners may also be required to help to coordinate the extras, and to perform crowd control duties, except where this work is dangerous, or performed by police officers or other official personnel. Skills: Production Runners must be flexible and well organized, and be able to think on their feet. They should be able to relay messages quickly and accurately, while paying due regard to the need for silence when on set. They should have strong verbal and written communication skills, be

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able to take orders, and to show tact and deference towards those in positions of authority and greater responsibility. They must be punctual and enthusiastic, and understand the importance of taking detailed notes and recording expenditure accurately. They should be level headed, and able to work calmly and effectively under pressure. Production Runners must be able to contribute to good working relationships, and to create a positive atmosphere on the production. They should have good secretarial skills, and be computer literate in standard word processor, spreadsheet and email programs. They should also be aware of health and safety issues, and ensure that their actions do not constitute a risk to themselves or to others.

Qualifications/Experience: Enthusiasm is considered more important than experience. While there are no specific educational requirements, this is a very popular area of work, and Production Runner jobs can be very strongly contested despite the low pay. In these circumstances, a good education is a definite advantage. A large number of colleges and other training providers offer media courses that may provide a suitable background. Some experience in drama or broadcasting, whether it is in amateur dramatics, student radio or filmmaking, is also an advantage. - See more at: <http://www.media-match.com/usa/media/jobtypes/production-assistant-jobs-402756.php#sthash.DbCZisxu.dpuf>