

WORKING IN THEATRE: Production Manager

Name: _____



A **production manager** works with designers, the technical crew, and the management team to make sure the technical elements of a show are completed safely, on time, and on budget. Production managers are often full-time staff members at large theatres and work on every show during a season. Some midsize or small theatres may hire production managers on a per-show contract basis; for smaller theatres and productions, the work may be split amongst the stage manager, producer, and technical director. Production managers have to be very organized, have extensive knowledge about technical theatre, and should enjoy working with a diverse group of people. Production managers usually studied technical theatre at the undergraduate level, and many hold a master's degree in production management or technical direction.



UNFAMILIAR TERMS: "GIVING NOTES"

After technical rehearsals, the production manager meets with directors and designers to discuss what needs to be corrected, changed, or finished. The team then addresses these issues the next morning.

"BANAL":

Lacking originality or freshness; commonplace.

Note to students: You'll get the most out of this video if you watch it twice. Watch it once, and then read the questions below before the second viewing.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1 Kate describes production management as a hub of information for getting the play from the rehearsal room to the stage. Based on what you heard and saw in the video, what are examples of the type of information Kate provides?

2 Kate gives examples of some of the problems she solves to help support the tech crew. Name one thing she mentions, and describe what might be involved in solving that issue.

3 Kate says it's important to be emotionally intelligent in her job. What do you think she means by that? Do you consider yourself emotionally intelligent? Why or why not?

4 Kate talks about negotiating among people with different needs. Describe a situation in which you helped two people resolve their differences, or when another person helped you and a friend, classmate, or family member resolve your differences.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1 What can you identify with or what speaks strongly to you in the video?

2 Before finding a permanent position, Kate was a “freelancer,” moving from job to job at many different theatres. How do you feel about a career that is project-based—in other words, one in which you regularly have to look for your next job when you finish a given project?

3 A production manager needs to have broad knowledge of many aspects of theatre, as opposed to deep knowledge of one specific area of theatre. Would you rather know a little about many aspects of a job field (a generalist), or a lot about one particular area (a specialist)?

4 Kate says one of the best things about her job is working professionally with artists; she describes it as a gift. Think of a career that interests you. What do you think the best part of that career would be for you and why?

FURTHER ACTIVITIES:

1 Take the Career Path Quiz. First, answer the questions for yourself, and then take it a second time as you think a production manager might answer them. What conclusions can you draw about your interests?

2 Production management is related to technical direction and general management, with some key differences. Research these positions within theatres, and note where they overlap and how they are different from one another.

3 Kate is a theatrical production manager, but the title “production manager” is used in other careers. Research other jobs that have this title and what they do.

Visit CTGLA.org/WorkingInTheatre and select “Production Manager.”

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