

Announcer

Snapshot

Career Cluster(s): Arts, A/V Technology & Communications

Interests: Presenting; Music; News; Sports

Earnings (Yearly Average): \$41,950

Employment & Outlook: Slower Than Average Growth Expected

OVERVIEW

Sphere of Work

Announcers present music, news, and sports and may provide commentary or interview guests about these other important topics. Some act as masters of ceremonies (emcees) or disc jockeys (DJs) at weddings, parties, or clubs.

Work Environment

Announcers' work environments can vary depending on the field in which the announcer is employed, but typically announcers work in well-lit, air-conditioned, soundproof studios.

Occupation Interest

Announcers not only have a passion for the subject at hand—be it music, news, or sports—but also for presenting that subject to the public. Most announcers are unseen, but must have voices suitable for airplay, as well as the stamina to present live, sometimes for hours at a time. They often work with co-hosts, as well as take calls from the listening



Many announcers work in radio and television studios. Photo via iStock.com/sturti. [Used under license.]

public. Others emcee events and enjoy presenting to and entertaining crowds of people.

A Day in the Life—Duties and Responsibilities

Radio and television announcers present music or the news and comment on important current events. Announcers are expected to be up to date with current events or a specific field, such as politics or sports, so that they can comment on these issues during their programs. They may research and prepare information on current topics before appearing on air. In addition, announcers schedule guests on their shows and work with producers to develop other creative content.

Radio and television announcers also may be responsible for other aspects of television or radio broadcasting. They may operate studio equipment, sell commercial time to advertisers, or produce advertisements and other recorded material.

At many radio stations, announcers do much of the work traditionally done by editors and broadcast technicians, such as broadcasting program schedules, commercials, and public service announcements.

Many radio and television announcers increasingly maintain a presence on social media sites. Establishing a presence allows them to promote their stations and better engage with their audiences, especially through listener feedback, music requests, or program contests. Announcers also make promotional appearances at charity functions or other community events.

Many radio stations now require DJs to update station websites with show schedules, interviews, or photos.

The following are examples of types of radio and television announcers:

- Duties and Responsibilities**
- Presenting music, news, sports, the weather, the time, and commercials
 - Interviewing guests and moderating panels or discussions on their shows
 - Announcing station programming information, such as program schedules, station breaks for commercials, or public service information
 - Researching topics for comment and discussion during shows
 - Reading prepared scripts on radio or television shows
 - Commenting on important news stories
 - Providing commentary for the audience during sporting events, at parades, and on other occasions
 - Selecting program content
 - Introducing upcoming acts and guiding the audience through the entertainment
 - Making promotional appearances at public or private events

Profile

Working Conditions: Both Inside and Outside

Physical Strength: Light Work

Education Needs: Varies; High School Diploma; Bachelor's Degree

Licensure/Certification: Usually Not Required

Opportunities for Experience: On-the-Job Training

Interest Score: AES

- Disc jockeys, or DJs, broadcast music for radio stations. They typically specialize in one kind of music genre and announce selections as they air them. DJs comment on the music being broadcast as well as on weather and traffic conditions. They may take requests from listeners, interview guests, or manage listener contests.
- Podcasters record shows that can be downloaded for listening through a computer or mobile device. Like traditional talk radio, podcasts typically focus on a specific subject, such as sports, politics, or movies. Podcasters may also interview guests and experts on the specific program topic. However, podcasts are different from traditional radio broadcasts. Podcasts are prerecorded so audiences can download and listen to these shows at any time. Listeners can also subscribe to a podcast to have new episodes automatically downloaded to their computer or mobile devices.
- Talk show hosts may work in radio or television and specialize in a certain area of interest, such as politics, personal finance, sports, or health. They contribute to the preparation of program content, interview guests, and discuss issues with viewers, listeners, or the studio audience.

Public address system announcers entertain audiences to enhance performances, or they provide information. They may prepare their own scripts or improvise lines in their speeches.

The specific duties of public address system announcers vary greatly depending on where these announcers work. For example, an announcer for a sports team may have to present starting lineups (official lists of players who will participate in an event), read advertisements, and announce players as they enter and exit a game.

Train announcers are responsible for reading prepared scripts containing details and data related to train schedules and safety procedures. Their job is to provide information rather than entertainment.

The following are examples of types of public address systems and other announcers:

- Emcees host planned events. They introduce speakers or performers to the audience. They may tell jokes or provide commentary to transition from one speaker to the next.

- Party DJs are hired to provide music and commentary at an event, such as a wedding, a birthday party, or a corporate party. Many of these DJs use digital files or portable media devices.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Immediate Physical Environment

Radio and television announcers usually work in well-lit, air-conditioned, sound-proof studios. Some radio DJs can produce and record their shows while working from home—the same is true in many cases for podcasters. Announcers who emcee events may have to travel to reach those locations and could be called upon to perform their duties in varying weather. Television hosts may be called upon to travel extensively to host in varying locations, as their shows demand.

The pressure of deadlines and tight work schedules can be stressful.

Some announcers work part time. Many radio and television stations are on air 24 hours a day. Some announcers present early morning shows, while others do late-night programs. Some announcers have to work weekends or on holidays. The shifts, however, are not as varied today as in the past. More stations are recording shows during the day, eliminating the need to have an announcer work overnight hours.

Human Environment

Announcers must be prepared to work with studio staff and possibly co-hosts daily, necessitating good interpersonal skills. They may also interact with the public while on-air, or during events, and perform interviews with guests. Announcers who perform as emcees or party DJs will be face-to-face with crowds of people and must have strong public speaking and presenting abilities.

Technological Environment

Announcers should be familiar with the setup of a broadcast studio, which usually requires formal training, or at the very least hands-on experience. Although some announcers may have support staff to handle the more technical aspects, the announcers themselves will still be responsible for operating some of the equipment. Those involved in podcasting will likely need to purchase and operate their own equipment. Emcees and party DJs may bring their own equipment to events. Party DJs need to be highly adept at manipulating their equipment as needed, and to troubleshoot any issues that arise. They must also have an inti-

mate knowledge of the music they are required to play, and any media they use to store that music, such as portable drives.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND ADVANCEMENT

High School/Secondary

High school students interested in announcing should take courses that improve speaking and presentation skills, such as drama, music, and English. Courses such as civics and history are also important foundations for understanding current events.

Suggested High School Subjects

- Algebra
- Arts
- Biology
- Earth or Life or Physical Science
- Economics
- English
- Geometry
- History
- Physics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Trigonometry

Related Career Pathways/Majors

*Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
Career Cluster*

- A/V Technology & Film Career Pathway
- Journalism & Broadcasting Career Pathway
- Performing Arts Career Pathway

Postsecondary

Public address announcers typically need a high school diploma or equivalent. Radio and television announcers typically need a bachelor's degree in communi-

Transferable Skills and Abilities

Computer Skills

- Using editing software and other broadcast-related devices

Interpersonal Skills

- Interviewing guests and answering phone calls on air
- Party disc jockeys (DJs) and emcees should be comfortable working with clients to plan entertainment options

Persistence

- Auditioning for many positions before getting an on-air job
- Willing to work for a small station and the flexibility to move to a small market to secure a first job

Research Skills

- Researching the important topics of the day to be knowledgeable enough to comment on them

Speaking Skills

- Possessing a pleasant and well-controlled voice, good timing, and excellent pronunciation

Writing Skills

- Writing own material to be broadcast

cations, broadcasting, or journalism, but some jobs require only a high school diploma or equivalent.

College broadcasting programs offer courses, such as voice and diction, to help students improve their vocal qualities. In addition, these programs prepare students to work with the computer and audio equipment and software used at radio and television studios.

Related College Majors

- Arts
- Broadcasting
- Communication & Media Studies
- Journalism
- Music
- Performing Arts
- Public Relations & Advertising
- Publishing

Adult Job Seekers

Adults from varying backgrounds may become announcers with little formal schooling; however prospective job seekers should be aware that competition in broadcasting is strong, and a degree is almost always required.

Additional Requirements

Public address system and other announcers typically need short-term on-the-job training upon being hired. This training allows these announcers to become familiar with the equipment they will use during sporting and entertainment events. For sports public address announcers, training also may include basic rules and information for the sports they are covering.

Radio and television announcers whose highest level of education is a high school diploma or equivalent may also need some short-term on-the-job training to learn to operate audio and production equipment.

Some employers expect radio and television announcer applicants to have some announcing experience prior to employment. Applicants typically gain these skills from their college degree program, working on college radio or television stations, or through internships.

EARNINGS AND ADVANCEMENT

Earnings of announcers depend on their experience, market served, and type of announcing being performed. Median annual earnings of broadcast announcers and radio disc jockeys were \$36,770 in 2020. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$19,580, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$114,050. Median annual earnings of all other media and communication workers were \$49,730 in 2020. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$24,370, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$95,100. In general, announcers working in larger markets earn more than those working in smaller markets.

Because radio and television stations in smaller markets have smaller staff, advancement within the same small-market station is unlikely. Rather, many radio and television announcers advance by relocating to a large-market station.

Announcers typically need a few years at a small-market station to work out the “kinks” of their on-air personalities. During that time, they learn to sound more comfortable and credible as an on-air talent and become more conversational with their cohosts and guests. Therefore, time and experience allow applicants to advance to positions in larger markets, which offer higher pay and more responsibility and challenges.

When making hiring decisions, large-market stations rely on announcers’ personalities and past performance. Radio and television announcers need to have proven that they can attract, engage, and keep the attention of a sizable audience.

Many stations also rely on radio and television announcers to do other tasks, such as creating and updating a social media presence on social networking sites, making promotional appearances on behalf of the station, or even selling commercial time to advertisers. Therefore, an applicant needs to have demonstrated versatility and flexibility at the smaller market station.

EMPLOYMENT AND OUTLOOK

There were approximately 76,000 announcers employed nationally in 2019. Employment of announcers is expected to grow slower than average for all occupations through the year 2029, at a rate of 1 percent.

Employment of broadcast announcers and radio disk jockeys (DJs) is projected to decline 5 percent from 2019 to 2029. Continuing consolidation of radio and

Fast Fact

Despite the continued rise of streaming media, conventional radio still reaches an estimated 92% of adults in the U.S., giving it the widest reach of all platforms. Source: stacker.com



Photo courtesy of blk92, via iStock. [Used under license.]

television stations will limit employment growth.

In addition, over-the-air radio broadcasts will continue to face competition from an increasing number of online and satellite radio stations. More listeners are tuning into these stations, which can be personalized, reducing the number of listeners to traditional radio broadcasts and decreasing the demand for radio DJs.

Employment of media and communication workers, is projected to grow 8 percent, much faster than the average for all occupations. However, because it is a small occupation, the fast growth will result in only about 2,800 new jobs over the decade. Demand for additional media and communication workers will increase as the number of internet-only platforms, such as streaming video and podcasting services, continues to grow, along with the number of shows produced for these platforms.

Strong competition is expected for people seeking jobs as a radio or television announcer. Many of the openings will be due to people leaving jobs and the need to replace workers who move out of smaller markets or out of the radio or television fields entirely.

Applicants need to be persistent and flexible because many entry-level positions will require moving to a smaller market city. Small radio and television stations are more inclined to hire beginners, but the pay is low.

Those with a formal education in journalism, broadcasting, or mass communications and with hands-on work experience at a radio or television network will have the best job prospects.

In addition, because announcers may be responsible for gathering video or audio for their programs or for updating and maintaining the station's website, multimedia and computer skills are beneficial.

Related Occupations

- Actors
- Broadcast/Sound/Video Technician
- Musician/Singer
- Producer/Director
- Reporter/Correspondent/Broadcast News Analyst
- Writer/Author

MORE INFORMATION

American Disc Jockey Association (ADJA)

20118 N. 67th Avenue, Suite 300-605
Glendale, AZ 85308
888.723.5776
www.ada.org

American Sportscasters Association (ASA)

225 Broadway, Suite 2030
New York, NY 10007
212.227.8080
inquiry@americansportscastersonline.com
www.americansportscastersonline.com

Broadcast Education Association (BEA)

1 M Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
202.602.0584
heather@beaweb.org
www.beaweb.org

Broadcasters Foundation of America (BFA)

125 West 55th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10019
212.373.8250
info@thebfoa.org
www.broadcastersfoundation.org

National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)

1 M Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
202.429.5300
nab@nab.org
www.nab.org

National Association of Sports Public Address Announcers (NASPAA)

4424 NW Wildwood Drive
Gladstone, MO 64116
brumble@naspaa.net
www.naspaa.net

NCTA—The Internet & Television Association

25 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001
202.222.2300
info@ncta.com
www.ncta.com

North American Broadcasters Association (NABA)

c/o Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
205 Wellington Street West, Suite 9C200
Toronto, ON, Canada, M5V 3G7
416.205.3363
contact@nabanet.com
www.nabanet.com

United States Disc Jockey Association (USDJA)

443.903.2013
www.usdja.org

Stuart Paterson



Conversation With...

ADAM POHL

Director of Broadcast and Corporate Partnerships, Bowie BaySox
Voice of the Mount, Mount St. Mary's basketball
Radio broadcaster, 16 years

What was your individual career path in terms of education/training, entry-level job, or other significant opportunity?

I grew up in a musical family, played trumpet, went to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill on a scholarship, majored in music and loved it. But, I knew in the back of my mind that music wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I had called games when I was a teenager, and that's what I wanted to do.

After junior year, I was a summer intern for the Asheboro Copperheads of the minor league Coastal Plain League. They allowed me to broadcast some of their games. The next year, I interned for UNC's Tarheels Sports Network, and that was a huge help. I did that for two years, which allowed me to get my first job, part-time, with Minor League Baseball's Burlington Royals. I got my first full-time job two seasons later, then went on to Maryland and got a job with the Frederick Keys, another MiLB team. I did PR, sales, and a lot of marketing before I was promoted to assistant general manager. But, the more I did with the Keys, the more I got away from what I wanted to do. I stayed with them seven seasons, then joined the Baysox, also in MiLB, to refocus my career and try to get to a higher level of broadcasting.

During my time in Frederick, I made connections at nearby Mount St. Mary's University. I started doing women's basketball games. Now, I'm the Voice of the Mount, and I do all men's and some women's basketball games. So, I broadcast basketball from mid-November to early March, and baseball from April to September. I'm also the Baysox's business development person, and handle those partnerships.

If you're sitting in your seat at a game, you're not hearing me. But if you're in your car or on the internet, you do. For a minor league baseball team, broadcasting games on the radio is not a big money maker, but it's great marketing.

What are the most important skills and/or qualities for someone in your profession?

You have to embrace the fact that you're going to work a lot of hours. This is a 9-to-5 job plus games at night. You must be engaging, able to tell a story, and bring the emotion of the game to those who are listening. It's important to connect with people.

What do you wish you had known going into this profession?

That nothing is promised to you. You have to value what you have. When you start, you don't make money. You have to really carve your way and battle for opportunities. I'd love to have that rare, dream job announcing for the Baltimore Orioles, but if, a decade from now, I'm 45 and don't see much forward movement, broadcasting may become a hobby.

Are there many job opportunities in your profession? In what specific areas?

You have to network. For all six positions I've had, a connection got my foot in the door. It's unusual to send your demo and get picked over 400 other people.

How do you see your profession changing in the next five years, what role will technology play in those changes, and what skills will be required?

Things are moving toward podcasting from AM radio. The ability to make money off what we do is moving from advertising-based to subscriber-based. There will be more content. I'm concerned that there will be fewer outlets to break into the industry but, if you are an established commodity, there will be money to be made.

What do you enjoy most about your job? What do you enjoy least about your job?

The thing I love most is the actual calling of the game. That's one fortunate thing about the shelf life of this job, as opposed to being an athlete. I'm going to be able to do this, and do it at a high level, for a long time. I also like working with people in the industry; my colleagues share the same passion and vigor for sports, so being around baseball—and sharing that together—is special.

Because I do baseball and basketball, I'm away from home all the time, including on the road for 120 to 130 games. Broadcasting keeps me away 200 to 220 nights of the year, and that's a lot.

Can you suggest a valuable “try this” for students considering a career in your profession?

Work in sports in whatever way you can as soon as you can. Try to create an inroad with a local news or radio station, because that's what it's all about. That doesn't mean getting on the air. Once you're able to get some experience, it's not about how much you get paid. It's all about getting on air. Nobody is good at broadcasting right away. Be your own worst critic. Prepare one or two things to say about a player. You can't be scrolling through looking for a note and leave three seconds of silence. Be ready; be seamless.

This interview was originally published in 2020.