

# Media Managers

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## Media Personnel Identity Crisis

### Al LeBlanc

One of the greatest stress points for media personnel is the problem of role perception by fellow employees within an institution and from outside the field. To compound the problem is a lack of clear definition of duties and functions from the general to the specific. Very often the question, "What do you do for a living?" generates a puzzled expression as we try to put into layperson's terms what it is that we do (so well).

In the media field we are often confused by a wide variety of labels attached to the role from place to place. Usually, following the label Media or A/V we tag on such qualifiers as Supervisor, Coordinator, Consultant, Teacher, Manager, Director, Superintendent, etc. In order to provide some reference points for a "re-think" of this dilemma, I have included two actual definitions currently in use by an Ontario School Board. One is for a Coordinator and one is for a Consultant.

#### *Definitions*

*Coordinators.* Coordinators are individuals appointed by a Board to coordinate a department which functions across the total school system. The Coordinator organizes and operates the department subject to the authority of a supervisory officer. The Coordinator works with professional staff in the department and across the school system.

*Consultants.* Consultants are individuals who are appointed by the Board in various specialty areas because of their expertise in these areas. Consultants are not responsible for other professional personnel. Consultants work with teachers to assist in improving the quality of the teaching/learning process in the school. In some larger departments, consultants are responsible to department coordinators.

#### *Duties of a Coordinator*

Following is an actual sample of the duties of a Media Coordinator as implemented by a school board:

#### DUTIES OF COORDINATOR MEDIA RESOURCE CENTRE

- A. Related to correlation of resources with the needs of principals, teachers and students.

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Development of programmes in media utilization.

Provision of the following areas of service:

- Selection of materials;
- Cataloguing and processing;
- Reference Service;
- Production of graphic and photographic materials;
- Production and electronic distribution of radio and television materials;
- Circulation of loan materials.

Promotion of cooperation in matters relating to media with other school systems, with libraries, museums, etc. in the community, and with provincial and national institutions and agencies of government.

- Collaboration with supervisory staff developing curricula, to ensure that materials are purchased and/or produced that are appropriate to these curricula, and to assist teachers to become familiar with these materials and with associated equipment.

Development of programmes to promote and facilitate the use by teachers of materials in different and complementary media.

Arrangements for the professional development sessions by activities within and beyond the school district.

- Provision for the exchange of information and ideas between school learning resource teachers and their staff.

Implementation of procedures for previewing, evaluating, acquiring, cataloguing and processing of materials in cooperation with classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and others.

- Provision of a complete reference service and a multi-media professional library.

B. Related to Administration, Director, Superintendents and Board.

- General supervision of the programme of the district learning resource centre.

Maintenance of statistics and records as required by the Board.

- Maintenance of information files concerning publishers, producers, and other sources of materials available for acquisition by purchase, lease, etc.

Arrangements for evaluating media equipment, including field testing, and advising, concerning their suitability for purchase or lease.

Preparation of the budget for the Media Resource Centre.

Arrangements for acquired materials to be received and prepared for circulation.

Maintenance of inventory of replacement parts (for repairs) and of consumable supplies (for local production of materials).

- Operation of efficient distribution and circulation systems for loan equipment and materials.

Supervision of the clerical and technical functions of the Media Resource Centre.

### C. Related to Technological Processes and Operations.

Examination of each request for production with the interested party to determine the best medium (or combination of media), format, and other technical aspects most likely to achieve the desired educational goals within the available budget.

- Arrangements for media equipment maintenance.

### *Conclusion*

In the field of media in Canada, two documents which are very helpful in addressing the Media Personnel Crisis are:

(1) *Educational Media Personnel Classification Series* (June, 1974), prepared by the Media Directors of Ontario Universities by David Bennett and D. Douglas Todgham; and, (2) *Resource Services for Canadian Schools* (1977), by F. R. Branscombe and Harry E. Newsom, published by McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

The second document was the source from which the above Media Coordinator's duties were drawn. This text is a "must read" for all media personnel as it addresses roles across the spectrum in any media operation. It is also an excellent planner to deal with most facets of media services.