



Without training will there be future for the TV Industry?

by Graham Reed. Lighting Cameraman, Lighting Director, Trainer

It might come as a surprise to you but do you know that in the UK there are 80,000 people working in the TV industry. That's 10% of the work force.

And some more facts:

- The UK has overseas programme sales of £980 million.
- Non-terrestrial TV spends £193 million on content whilst terrestrial TV spends £2.6 billion on content.
- Independent producers in the UK have a turnover of £2 billion and BskyB generates revenues of £5.9 billion.
- The UK Film Industry generates £1.5 billion to the GDP and pays £430 million to the exchequer.

With all this money in the TV production industry you would think that there would be great training centres and well equipped training academies with the latest equipment and dedicated staff producing well trained young people who can maintain our internationally recognised standards in these industries.

If you type into Google 'training for cameraman' you will find 6 companies. Two are small training companies and I do training for one of them. One of the other four still talked about Sony PD150, an old SD camera. Another, the BBC Academy seemed to offer no camera courses just 'how to' video clips. The other two were The London Academy which looked at first sight

quite good and the well respected National Film and Television School.

Ravensbourne College, now next to the O2, which has a fine TV studio with Sony HD Cameras on Vinten Camera Pedestals does not come up on the search page, nor do the other colleges which offer full time courses for budding TV people.

I know Ravensbourne College did have a great reputation for producing great students for the TV industry, I used to spend a lot of time there teaching the students who are doing degree courses in Broadcasting Operations. I was not the only 'Sessional' person there, there were also other top practitioners in their fields, sound, lighting, directors, teaching. But because of cuts in the educational budgets we, the Sessionals, are hardly ever there now, so the young students are missing out on this great teaching. Ravensbourne is now planning to cut this course as well.

There are other full time courses, NFTS, Bournemouth, Leeds but how many students can they teach?

Now let me confess that I am a full time Freelance Lighting Cameraman/ Lighting Director so I have a great interest in lighting and camerawork but I am also acutely aware about the need to have well trained other programme production staff. If I was a young person who wanted to learn about, for example, TV make-up or wardrobe, where would I go?

Is the lack of training all about money? How much do companies spend on training? The answer is almost nothing.

I spend quite a lot of time working in the studios at Sky TV near Gillette Corner, Osterly, but I have never heard of any training schemes. They will send people, mainly their staff, on courses about new equipment but what about investing money on training new people entering the industry. Broadcasters have invested huge amounts of money on 3D and marketing, but as far as I know, please correct me if I'm wrong, little money on training future personnel.

The BBC in the old days, when I was young, used to have a training establishment at Evesham in Worcester, but no more. Wood Norton is now the BBC Academy run for profit and the BBC no longer sends new recruits in broadcasting, like I was, there.

Most independent broadcasters do very little, if any training. So what will the future of the TV industry be like with the majority of people having had no formal training? Will the workers have been taught by other workers 'on the job'?

I used to freelance as a cameraman at the MTV studios in Camden. There people were taken on as unpaid interns, not something that I approve of, and I'm very pleased to read that BECTU is working very hard to stop this unpaid work. Some of

