



Iowa Broadcast News Association

Salary and Job Satisfaction Survey

Prepared for the 2009 Ames Meeting

By

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IBNA 2009

2008 began with economic uncertainty and ended with layoffs and newscast cancellations within many broadcast companies as advertising declined.

Meantime, the Consumer Price Index for urban consumers declined 0.4 percent for the year ending March 31, 2009, the first 12-month decline since 1955, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The median salary Jan. 1 for this spring's IBNA Survey respondents was \$48,000. Television professionals earned more than their radio peers and enjoyed larger raises.

A greater percentage of respondents than in previous years received no raises during 2008. One person reported a salary cut.

Respondents completing the electronically distributed questionnaire believe they are underpaid by a median – half more, half less – \$7,000, or about 15 percent.

	3/1/09	Med % increase	Med % short	Med yrs. w/ employer	Med age
Radio	\$39,000 (13)	0.0	25	8.5	48
LT50K	34,500 (4)	0.0	0	3.75	51.5
50-250K	27,000 (3)	0.0	40	12	59
GT250K	44,500 (6)	-0.3	23	8	44.5
Commercial	\$38,650 (12)	0.0	36	8	47
Non-commercial	\$48,000 (1)	3	15	23	59
Television	\$68,400 (6)	3	0	4	38.5
101-150	\$60,900 (2)	2	8	6.5	42.5
51-100	\$99,000 (4)	4	0	3	38.5
News Director	\$97,400 (4)	4	0	16.5	48.75

TV respondents were generally satisfied with their pay. Several higher paid respondents indicated their current pay is fair for their responsibilities.

One of three larger-market TV respondents answering the question felt underpaid by 29 percent. Two others were satisfied with their salaries.

Among three small-market respondents answering the question, two were satisfied with their pay.

All but one of this year's respondents held at least one college degree.

Education	3/1/09	Med % increase	Med % short	Med yrs. w/ employer	Med age
High School or Voc/tech	\$24,000 (1)	--	0	0.5	22.5
Bachelor's	\$49,000 (N=14)	0	16	8.5	45.5
Master's	\$37,500 (N=2)	10	20	7.25	57.5

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The number of women responding to this year's survey was too small to generalize about salaries and gender. Raises enjoyed by the women were better than those reported by their male counterparts.

Gender	3/1/09	Med % increase	Med % Short	Med yrs. w/ employer	Med age
Men	\$43,500 (15)	0	17	8	48.75
Women	70,000 (2)	3.5	0	13.25	44

IBNA has regularly surveyed both "working broadcaster" members and non-members since 1987. Low-power college and high school stations are excluded.

Survey participation declines as owners consolidate or eliminate radio news operations. Last year, 24 forms were returned. Nineteen Iowa news professionals responded to this year's mailings.

Most of this year's respondents worked full time in news, and nearly half of those typically put in 56 or more hours. Ten years ago a smaller percentage of IBNA full-time respondents worked more than 56 hours a week.

Typical News Work Week	3/1/09	3/1/99
Full-time hours (16)	84.2%	81.6%
56 or more	43.75%	12.9%
48 - 55	25.0	51.6
40 - 47	31.25	35.5
Part-time hours (3)	15.8%	18.4%
30 - 39	66.7%	14.3%
20 - 29	33.3	28.6
10 - 19	0.0	28.6
LT 10 per week		28.6

About one in five respondents worked outside their main job "primarily for extra income." The median outside weekly commitment was 5.75 hours and included freelance writing, racetrack announcing, sports ushering and church music making.

Moonlight	3/1/09	Med % increase	Med % Short	Med yrs. W employer	Med age
No	\$50,000 (15)	0	11	5	45
Yes	40,562 (4)	3	25	16.75	59.5

Moonlighting journalists were more apt to feel underpaid.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, it's no surprise the Worldwide Web draws increasing attention from Iowa's radio and TV news professionals.

U.S. television stations sold \$1-billion worth of Web advertising last year and research company Borrell Associates projects a 26 percent increase this year, according to TVWeek.

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During late-March 2009, Drake Work Study assistant Alex Meyers sought Web sites for 202 commercial and higher power non-commercial stations listed in the Iowa Broadcast Association Directory.

Google helped her find sites for 184 stations, or 91.1 percent of the total.

Searching for station call letters proved ineffective in several cases since many stations, especially radio, use their catchy “branding” slogans for Web addresses.

Some Iowa stations should explore Search Engine Optimization, the growing science which generates more “hits” during searches.

	Radio			Television	
	LT50K	50-250K	GT250K	51-100	101-200
Web Site Located	85.1%	95.2%	95.9%	*80.0%	100.0%
Connect LT 5 Seconds	95.2	98.3	97.9	100.0	87.5
Reliable Links	96.8	98.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
National News	15.9	30.5	34.0	87.5	83.3
Local News	81.0	84.5	61.7	100.0	100.0
Posted “Today”	95.9	82.9	92.9	100.0	100.0
Includes Photos	65.4	70.6	82.9	87.5	100.0
Includes Video	30.8	25.5	40.0	87.5	83.3
YouTube-type Video	2.0	8.2	14.3	0.0	33.3
Includes Audio	50.9	45.1	57.1		
Blog/Commentary	9.4	1.7	10.6	12.5	16.7
“Live” Streamed	59.3	58.8	77.1	87.5	100.0
Newscast Archived	81.5	66.7	65.7	100.0	100.0
Ad Before Stream	26.4	38.8	60.0	87.5	100.0
Audience Feedback	31.5	35.3	37.1	50.0	58.0

** ion stations serving Des Moines and Cedar Rapids share a corporate site.*

Radio stations serving potential audiences of fewer than 50,000 were the least likely to maintain a site. Simulcasting AM-FM stations typically managed one site.

Web sites for sister small-market stations occasionally looked very similar. While banners and design might differ, content like local news was the same.

Unlike 20 years ago, when a majority of Iowa radio newsrooms served one AM and perhaps an FM station, today’s radio groups typically operate three or more stations. Separate Web sites are common.

In a few cases, radio groups maintained a site with links to individual station sites. The group site was sometimes difficult for the uninitiated browser to find.

Most home pages loaded quickly within 5 seconds on Drake University’s T1 network, although a handful required more time.

As noted within the detailed tables on pages 12-13, links were generally reliable and quick.

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Radio was more likely to post local stories than state and national stories. Most state and national items appeared to post automatically from AP and other media companies. A few stations regularly posted local news summaries.

Larger market radio stations were a bit more likely to offer national news, but less likely to post local stories than their smaller-market cousins.

Television posted the freshest material. A few radio stations decline to time-stamp their posts, but some “most recent” local news items were days old.

A majority of stations posted digital photos with their local news.

About half of the radio stations posted audio with their stories and a healthy percentage posted local stories with video.

Few radio stations posted video clips with YouTube or similar cost-free providers.

We discovered relatively few stations posting Web logs (“blogs”) on news topics. A majority of stations live-stream and archive their newscasts. Especially television is likely to precede archival material with advertising.

About a third of the stations encourage audience feedback to local coverage.

This year’s IBNA respondents all worked for companies offering at least one Web site. Many respondents appeared never off the clock, using their home Internet connections for work needs.

They all prepare and post content on their employer’s Web site as do most staff members.

Internet Use	3/1/08 (18)	
	Radio	TV
Home Internet For Work Uses	83.3%	66.7%
Work Internet	100.0	100.0
Employer Web Site	100.0	100.0
Respondent Edits Scripts for Web	100.0	100.0
Respondent Posts Web Content	100.0	100.0
Another Staff Member Edits Scripts	81.8	100.0
Another Staff Member Posts	91.7	100.0
Scoop Newscasts With Content	90.9	100.0
Respondent Blogs	18.2	50.0
Another News Staff Member Blogs	41.7	83.3

(Pages 11-12 offer details)

An increasing percentage of respondents allow their Web sites to scoop their traditional newscasts. Television appears more likely to let their Web site lead.

TV respondents reported staff members are more likely to blog than news directors.

Radio respondents were the most certain their Web service will one day supersede their traditional delivery system.

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Web Increasing Importance	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
“Strongly Agree” / “Agree”	23.1%	
Neutral = 3.0	38.5	66.7%
“Disagree” / “Strongly Disagree”	38.5	33.3
(Mean)	3.01	3.00

Scaled “Strongly Agree” = 5 to “Strongly Disagree” = 1

But television respondents more strongly enjoyed preparing content for their site.

I Enjoy Preparing Content	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
“Strongly Agree” / “Agree”	33.3%	66.7%
Neutral = 3.0	41.7	16.7
“Disagree” / “Strongly Disagree”	25	16.7
(Mean)	3.33	3.90

Respondents generally believe they’re able to continue their Web efforts without harming the traditional product.

Traditional Product Suffers	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
“Strongly Agree” / “Agree”		
Neutral = 3.0	23.1%	16.7%
“Disagree” / “Strongly Disagree”	76.9	83.3
(Mean)	2.00	1.64

News on radio sites was most likely to be updated by the news director or a news staff member. Television more typically employed a Web specialist.

Web News Content Manager	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
Respondent	75.0%	
News staff member(s)	25.0	40.0%
Non-news staff member		
Full-time Web producer		60.0

A majority of respondents spend at least 30 minutes a day to maintain their Web site. Television respondents were more likely to spend more time on Web editing and posting.

Web Daily Time	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
More than 1 hour	16.7%	33.3%
30 – 60 minutes	58.3	50.0
Less than 30 minutes	25	16.7

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Television respondents were more positive about the relative quality of their sites than were their radio colleagues.

Quality vs. Main Competition	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
“Superior” / “Better than Average”	41.7%	83.3%
“Average” = 3.0	25.0	
“Worse than Average” / “Dreadful”	33.3	16.7
(Mean)	3.40	4.22

Television respondents also saw greater improvement in their Internet product during 2008.

Web Improvement	3/1/09	
	Radio	Television
Better	38.5%	100%
“Same” = 3.0	61.5	
Worse		
(Mean)	3.57	4.47

Most of this year’s radio respondents again worked in shops with one full-timer.

Twenty years ago the typical radio respondent also worked in a shop with one full-timer but they enjoyed more part-time help.

Radio News Staffing						
1/1/09				1/1/89 (N=34)		
#	FT	PT	Interns	FT	PT	Interns
0		69.2%	100.0%	5.4%	48.7%	48.7%
1	46.2%	15.4		40.5	35.1	32.4
2	7.7	7.7		27.0	8.1	5.4
3	15.4			21.6	5.4	5.4
4	15.4					2.7
5	15.4	7.7		5.4		2.7
6					2.7	
15						2.7

More than half of IBNA’s radio respondents 20 years ago also used interns.

During calendar year 2008, no radio news respondent reported changes in their number of full-time lines. Eleven of 13 respondents said their newsrooms hired no replacement full-timers, while two stations hired one replacement.

One radio respondent lost two part-time news workers.

A smaller market TV news director lost five full-time and three part-time lines during the year. The other smaller market station employed the same number of news personnel.

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Television News Staffing – Median					
NSI 51 – 100 (4)			NSI 101+ (2)		
FT	PT	Interns	FT	PT	Interns
43.5	5.5	2	24	6.5	0.5

Offering encouragement to this spring’s journalism graduates, each smaller-market TV station hired five news replacements during 2008.

One news administrator in a larger TV market lost two full-time lines during 2008. One station gained three full-time lines while another gained two.

News operating budgets faced renewed pressure last year for this year’s IBNA respondents. Both smaller market TV respondents reported cuts of at least 4 percent.

News Budget	1/1/09	
	Radio	TV
Decrease		
GT 6%		20.0%
4 - 6%	15.4%	40.0
LT 4%		
Same	38.5	
Increase		
LT 4%	7.69	20.0
4 – 6%		
GT 6%, LT 8%		
8% or more		
Unknown	38.5	20.0

Television respondents continue to enjoy slightly broader and deeper benefits.

Benefit (3/1/09)	Radio (13)	Television (6)
Paid Vacation	92.3%	100%
Sick leave	92.3	100
Medical insurance	84.6	100
Life insurance	69.2	50.0
Seminar expenses	61.5	80.0
Pension plan	53.9	66.7
Dental insurance	46.2	83.3
Vehicle expenses	38.5	66.7
Cash bonuses	23.1	50.0
Profit sharing	23.1	33.3
Personal expenses	7.7	50.0
Education benefits	7.7	33.3
Vehicle provided	0	33.3

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The employers of two respondents encourage staff fitness by paying for club memberships.

Six-of-nine respondents sharing the information worked for companies whose news staff members can ultimately earn at least four weeks of paid vacation.

Maximum Weeks	1/1/09	
	Radio (5)	TV (4)
2	20.0%	25.0%
3	20.0	
4	40.0	50.0
5	20.0	25.0

A 2009 survey by Yankelovich for CIGNA found 65 percent of a sample credited their jobs for lending importance to their lives. (The remaining 35 percent comprised what the researchers termed the “Work to Live” group.)

IBNA respondents, especially those working in television news, score better than that. (See p. 13 for mean values since 1990.)

Satisfied?	3/1/09		3/1/99	
	Radio (13)	Television (6)	Radio (30)	Television (5)
“Totally” or “Usually”	76.9%	100.0%	93.4%	100.0%
(Neutral = 3)	15.4		3.3	
“Seldom” or “Never”	7.7		3.3	
(Mean)	3.86	4.60	4.07	4.40

Scaled “Totally” = 5 to “Never” = 1

TV respondents have trended positively over time while mean radio satisfaction has shown little change.

Especially TV respondents reported they’d repeat their careers, given that opportunity.

Do Again?	3/1/09		3/1/99	
	Radio (14)	Television (6)	Radio (30)	Television (5)
“Absolutely” / “Probably”	46.2%	100.0%	66.7	100.0%
(Neutral)	15.4		16.7	
“Doubtful” / “Never”	38.5		16.7	
(Mean)	2.95	4.88	4.07	4.40

Scaled “Absolutely” = 5 to “Never” = 1

Means for radio respondents to this statement have been dropping during the last three years. (See p. 13 for mean values since 1990.)

Only one respondent was actively seeking a new job. That radio newscaster sought work outside of broadcasting.

Many of this year’s respondents listed the “greatest challenge our poor economy is creating” for their broadcast operation. Most requested anonymity.

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“The FCC’s mandate to convert to DTV has driven many broadcast companies into bankruptcy,” wrote the news director from a smaller market TV station.

“Broadcast companies borrow millions of dollars to finance the conversion only to have the banking industry go ‘belly up’. Refinancing these loans became impossible.”

A large market radio producer-reporter wrote, “Cuts to our salary. Cuts to the news reporters at other stations we work with regularly. Cuts to the sales staff who sell the product we create. Pressure on advertisers not to spend money on our operation.”

“Lack of underwriting support,” is a main issue facing a public radio respondent.

A large radio market news director noted, “Layoffs and cutbacks (are) forcing double- and triple-duties that force news to a back burner more often than before.”

“Finding a revenue model that will allow us to keep reporters on the street to do *original* reporting,” is KCCI News Director Dave Busiek’s challenge.

“We need to enterprise and find stories that the competition doesn’t have. That takes a certain number of people knocking on doors and generating original content,” he continued. “I don’t want to end up just covering the easy pickings.”

Wrote a small market radio news director, “The challenge is for the sales department, but so far it’s not affecting us too badly. It has kept us from hiring a part-time news person, but we’re used to having a one-person department.”

“Losing good members of our team” challenges a larger market TV news director.

A medium market radio news director wrote that listeners blame the poor economy on media reports. “I kid you not!”

“(W)e are not rehiring a part-time news staffer who is leaving for another job out of the industry. This means additional work for me and my co-worker and a change in hours.”

The radio news director in a smaller market repeated a theme: “The biggest concern seems to be staff reduction to contain expenses. This seems counter-productive since we want to provide the best, cost effective product to capture listeners.

“If you can’t secure listeners you really don’t have anything to sell.”

“We have had to wait to fill a couple of spots longer than normal,” wrote a smaller market TV news director. “This has stressed the newsroom staff.”

The main challenge for another large market radio reporter-producer is “Mediocre pay and not enough people to handle an increasing workload.”

Wrote a smaller market radio news director, “The biggest challenge remains meeting management demand for continued and more quality product, even though management won’t provide updated equipment or adequate personnel.

“Overpaid and overstaffed management throughout the chain seem intent on riding a gravy train on the backs of the people who do the actual work,” this news veteran continued.

“Our biggest struggle is being able to cover news on the fringes of our viewing area,” noted WOI-TV Producer Chris Parrish.

“If there’s a breaking story in one of those areas we’re unable to cover it because it costs too much to send our satellite truck.”

But “(I)t’s also pushing us to utilize other technologies, like sending files with FTP”

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Thanks to the news professionals who completed this survey and offered comments.

Thanks, also, to Prof. Cliff Brockman at Wartburg College for distributing the material to his listserv contacts and to Drake student Alex Meyers for logging her inspections of 184 station Web sites.

Table Details

Home Internet For Work	Radio (12)	Television (7)
5 or more days / week	33.3%	66.7%
3 - 4 days	25.0	
1 - 2 days	8.3	
seldom	16.7	16.7
never	16.7	16.7

Work Internet	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	100.0%	100%
3 - 4 days		
1 - 2 days		
seldom		
never		

You Edit Web Content	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	90.9%	50.0%
3 - 4 days		16.7
1 - 2 days	9.1	16.7
seldom		16.7
never		

You Web Post	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	83.3%	33.3%
3 - 4 days		16.7
1 - 2 days	16.7	16.7
seldom		33.3
never		

Staff Edit Content	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	54.6%	100.0%
3 - 4 days		
1 - 2 days	9.1	
seldom	18.2	
never	18.2	

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Another Staff Post	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	50.0%	100%
3 - 4 days		
1 – 2 days	16.7	
seldom	25.0	
never	8.3	

Web “Scoop”	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	18.2%	66.7%
3 - 4 days	9.1	16.7
1 – 2 days	9.1	16.7
seldom	54.6	
never	9.1	

Audio/Video Serving	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	33.3%	100.0%
3 - 4 days	16.7	
1 – 2 days	8.3	
seldom	25	
never	16.7	

Live-Streamed News	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	83.3%	16.7%
3 - 4 days		
1 – 2 days		16.7
seldom		16.7
never	16.7	50.0

Respondent Blog Frequency	Radio (13)	Television
5 or more days / week	9.1%	16.7%
3 - 4 days		
1 – 2 days		
seldom	9.1	33.3
never	81.8	50.0

Other News Staff Blog	Radio	Television
5 or more days / week	8.3%	33.3%
3 - 4 days	8.3	16.7
1 – 2 days		
seldom	25.0	33.3
never	58.3	16.7

IBNA 2009 – Table Details

