

## A Bad Year For News Salaries

By Bob Papper

Staff cutbacks and salary give-backs – especially at the upper end of the food chain – meant a drop in salaries in both radio and television news. That's the first time that's happened in the 15 years of the RTNDA/Hofstra University Annual Survey.

Overall, TV news salaries fell 4.4 percent in 2008, and radio news salaries slid by 1.8 percent. Tack on inflation at 3.8 percent, and real wages fell by 8.2 percent in TV news and 5.6 percent in radio news.

### Television-News Salaries – 2009

	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
News Director	\$89,000	\$76,000	\$12,000	\$200,000
Assistant News Director	68,600	65,000	40,000	145,000
Managing Editor	60,200	55,500	40,000	140,000
Executive Producer	54,900	54,000	35,000	140,000
News Anchor	72,600	57,500	12,000	500,000
Weathercaster	63,700	50,000	14,000	600,000
Sports Anchor	54,000	41,000	11,000	300,000
News Reporter	33,000	26,000	17,000	250,000
Sports Reporter	42,500	29,000	19,000	110,000
Assignment Editor	40,300	35,000	20,000	95,000
News Producer	32,300	28,500	12,000	110,000
News Writer	31,900	26,000	15,000	75,000
News Assistant	27,600	25,000	10,000	45,000
Photographer	29,300	28,000	15,000	110,000
Tape Editor	34,700	25,000	12,000	84,000
Graphics Specialist	30,700	28,500	16,000	80,000
Internet Specialist	36,900	33,000	20,000	95,000
Art Director	51,600	50,000	29,000	90,000

Television-news salaries are down across the board, although some are down much more than others. Hardest hit were on-air positions, with reporters down 13.3 percent, news anchors down 11.5 percent, weathercasters down 9.1 percent and sports anchors down 8.9 percent. The only jobs with salaries not dropping were assignment editors and art directors, both of which stayed largely even.

Because the largest, highest-paying stations can raise the average salaries out of proportion, the median -- or midpoint -- is usually considered a better gauge of typical salaries.

### Five And 10-Year Median Television News Salary Comparisons 2009 to 2004 to 1999

	2009	2004	5-Year Percentage Change	1999	10-Year Percentage Change
INFLATION			+14.0%		+28.5%
All TV news			+4.5		+22.9
News Director	\$76,000	\$68,000	+11.8	\$56,000	+35.7
Assistant News Director	65,000	60,000	+8.3	50,000	+30.0
Managing Editor	55,500	53,000	+4.7	47,500	+16.8
Executive Producer	54,000	46,000	+17.4	40,000	+35.0
News Anchor	57,500	59,500	-3.4	44,000	+30.7
Weathercaster	50,000	50,000	n/c	40,000	+25.0
Sports Anchor	41,000	40,000	+2.5	33,000	+24.2
News Reporter	26,000	28,000	-7.1	24,000	+8.3
Sports Reporter	29,000	28,000	+3.6	22,000	+31.8
Assignment Editor	35,000	32,000	+9.4	29,300	+19.5
News Producer	28,500	28,000	+1.8	24,000	+18.8
News Writer	26,000	27,000	-3.7	24,000	+8.3
News Assistant	25,000	21,000	+19.0	20,000	+25.0
Photographer	28,000	25,000	+12.0	23,000	+21.7
Tape Editor	25,000	23,000	+8.7	22,000	+13.6
Graphics Specialist	28,500	30,000	-5.0	24,000	+18.8
Internet Specialist	33,000	34,500	-4.3	26,000	+26.9

This table gives the longer term picture, comparing salaries with five years ago, 10 years ago and with inflation over those periods. Overall, in the last five years, TV-news salaries have grown only a third as much as the rate of inflation, 4.5 percent versus 14.0 percent. The 10-year picture is closer, but with overall salary growth – 22.9 percent – is still lagging behind inflation. 2009 is the watershed year, with TV-news salaries generally running ahead of inflation until now. Only two positions – executive producer and news assistant – are ahead of inflation over the last five years, and only five positions, news director, assistant news director, executive producer, news anchor and sports reporter, are ahead over the last decade.

### Median TV News Salaries by Market Size – 2009

	1 – 25	26 – 50	51 – 100	101-150	150+
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News Director	\$155,000	\$125,000	\$99,000	\$70,000	\$53,500
Assistant News Director	100,000	80,000	65,000	43,800	48,000
Managing Editor	85,000	68,500	50,000	51,000	45,500
Executive Producer	76,500	66,500	46,400	42,500	32,000
News Anchor	130,000	104,300	76,000	53,000	38,900
Weathercaster	130,300	100,500	64,500	45,000	35,000
Sports Anchor	100,000	80,000	50,300	39,500	30,000
News Reporter	65,000	47,800	32,500	24,000	21,000
Sports Reporter	58,000	40,000	33,000	25,000	22,000
Assignment Editor	46,000	40,000	38,000	30,500	28,000
News Producer	46,000	40,000	32,000	25,000	22,000
News Writer	36,500	32,000	23,000	23,500	*
News Assistant	34,000	37,500	24,500	20,500	23,000
Photographer	45,300	35,800	30,000	22,000	21,000
Tape Editor	41,500	29,500	25,000	19,000	18,000
Graphics Specialist	40,000	34,000	26,500	22,000	22,000
Internet Specialist	45,000	40,000	33,000	32,000	25,500
Art Director	55,000	55,000	29,000	*	*

As usual, the larger the market, the larger the salary. The top-25 market salaries would be even higher, but the data includes a number of smaller, independent newsrooms, which generally pay lower salaries than their network-affiliated counterparts. Although TV-news salaries, overall, were down for 2008, the picture is more complicated market by market. In fact, in most markets, more salaries rose than fell – except in markets 51 – 100, where more median salaries fell than rose. In markets 26 – 50, more salaries fell or stayed the same than went up, and it was pretty near dead even in the largest markets.

\*Insufficient data

### Median TV News Salaries by Staff Size –2009

	51+	31-50	21-30	11-20	1-10
News Director	\$140,000	\$90,000	\$70,000	\$55,000	\$45,000
Assistant News Director	86,000	60,000	45,000	40,000	39,000
Managing Editor	75,000	54,000	40,500	41,000	*
Executive Producer	65,000	50,000	40,000	33,000	35,000
News Anchor	122,500	70,000	50,000	40,000	35,000
Weathercaster	104,300	57,000	42,000	35,000	31,000
Sports Anchor	82,500	43,500	36,000	28,000	22,000
News Reporter	49,000	30,000	23,000	22,500	23,000
Sports Reporter	41,500	30,000	23,500	23,000	21,000
Assignment Editor	40,000	38,000	32,000	26,000	25,500
News Producer	42,000	30,000	25,000	22,000	*
News Writer	32,000	26,000	22,000	25,000	15,000
News Assistant	35,000	23,000	19,000	*	16,000
Photographer	36,300	28,000	22,700	20,800	30,000

Tape Editor	32,000	25,000	19,500	31,000	20,000
Graphics Specialist	38,000	25,000	25,000	29,000	16,000
Internet Specialist	40,000	33,000	26,000	29,500	24,000
Art Director	55,000	42,500	29,000	*	*

When we look at salaries by staff size, we get a different picture of what 2008 was like. Stations with 21 or more news employees all had more salaries that went down from the year before than went up or stayed the same. Stations with 11 – 20 news people had more salaries going up, and the smallest stations were just about even. Salaries at stations not affiliated with the four major networks were noticeably lower – as were salaries at PBS affiliates. Salaries in the Northeast tended to be a little higher, but, otherwise, there were no real differences. With rare exception, the bigger the newsroom, the bigger the salaries.

\*Insufficient data

### Radio News Salaries – 2009

	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
News Director	\$37,100	\$31,000	\$19,000	\$95,000
News Reporter	23,700	25,000	6,000	115,000
News Anchor	36,600	30,000	15,000	110,000
News Producer	26,400	26,000	24,000	48,000
Sports Anchor	49,900	35,000	24,000	130,000
Sports Reporter	12,300	8,000	3,000	22,000

Overall, radio news salaries fell 1.8 percent in 2008. News director salaries rose slightly, but others were mixed. In real wages, taking a 3.8 percent inflation rate into account, the situation was worse. Because the largest, highest-paying stations can raise the average salaries out of proportion, the median – or midpoint – is usually considered a better gauge of typical salaries.

### Five-And-10-Year Median Radio News Salary Comparisons 2009 to 2004 To 1999

	2009	2004	5-Year Percentage Change	1999	10-Year Percentage Change
INFLATION			+14.0%		+28.5%
All radio news			-6.3*		+27.0
News Director	\$31,000	\$35,500	-12.7	\$25,000	+24.0
News Reporter	25,000	25,000	0	24,000	+4.2
News Anchor	30,000	30,000	0	23,000	+30.4
News	26,000	25,000	+4.0	26,000	0

Producer					
Sports Anchor	35,000	30,000	+16.7	24,000	+45.8
Sports Reporter	8,000	20,000	-60.0	**	**

Over the last five years, only sports anchors have seen salaries keep pace with inflation. Over the last 10 years, sports anchor and news anchor salaries have outpaced inflation, and news director salaries have come close.

\*If we eliminate the sports reporter salary then radio news salaries are up 1.0 percent in the last five years.

\*\*Insufficient data

#### Median Radio News Salaries By Market Size – 2009

	Major	Large	Medium	Small
News Director	\$93,500	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$27,500
News Reporter	55,000	32,000	20,100	16,500
News Anchor	82,500	33,000	30,000	22,000
News Producer	42,000	27,000	*	18,000
Sports Anchor	130,000	70,000	45,000	14,700
Sports Reporter	*	*	7,000	22,000

Generally, the larger the market is the higher the salary. Major markets are those with 1 million or more listeners. Large markets are those from 250,000 to 1 million; medium markets are from 50,000 to 250,000; and small markets have fewer than 50,000 listeners.

\*Insufficient data

#### Median Radio News Salaries By Full-Time Staff Size – 2009

	One	Two	Three or 4	5 or more
News Director	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$36,000	\$57,000
News Reporter	*	15,200	28,500	25,000
News Anchor	*	26,000	25,000	33,000
News Producer	10,000	26,000	*	30,000
Sports Anchor	30,000	14,700	40,000	100,000
Sports Reporter	15,000	*	*	*

The salaries by staff size are almost always highly variable, although there is a general tendency for the largest news operations to pay more.

\*Insufficient data

**Median Radio News Salaries By Number of Stations News Director Supervises – 2009**

	One	2-3	Four	5-6	7 or more
News Director	\$28,000	\$30,000	\$44,000	\$46,500	\$50,000
News Reporter	10,000	33,000	10,000	28,500	30,000
News Anchor	30,500	27,500	31,000	32,500	*
News Producer	*	26,000	25,000	30,000	*
Sports Anchor	*	38,500	130,000	*	40,000
Sports Reporter	14,500	8,000	*	*	* 0

As with previous years, there is no consistent pattern to salaries based on the number of stations a news director supervises.

\*Insufficient data

**Median Radio News Salaries By Ownership – 2009**

	Group-Owned	Independent
News Director	\$40,000	\$28,000
News Reporter	27,000	10,000 0
News Anchor	31,000	27,500
News Producer	30,000	18,000
Sports Anchor	50,000	*
Sports Reporter	*	8,000

This year – as in most years – group-owned stations paid more than independent ones.

\*Insufficient data

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