

A Run for the Money
By Bob Papper

Inflation continues to outpace many salaries in TV and radio news. But not all.

After a couple lean years, TV news salaries rose above the rate of inflation in 2007, according to the most recent RTNDA/Hofstra University Annual Survey. But not everyone in TV news shared in that salary increase, and radio news salaries actually fell.

Overall, TV news salaries rose by 5.1 percent, but that was mostly on the strength of large gains in the top 25 markets. No other market size saw salaries rise enough to cover the 4.1 percent inflation rate for 2007. Still, even the TV markets where salaries were unchanged (51–100) fared better than radio. Radio news salaries fell by 3.2 percent. Those figures continue radio news's historic up and down salary ride, producing contrasting gains and losses from one year to the next

Television News Salaries

	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
News Director	\$92,900	\$80,000	\$12,000	\$400,000
Assistant News Director	73,000	68,800	24,000	200,000
Managing Editor	62,000	56,000	20,000	175,000
Executive Producer	56,000	50,000	16,500	175,000
News Anchor	79,500	65,000	12,500	1,060,000
Weathercaster	64,900	55,000	10,000	600,000
Sports Anchor	56,300	45,000	10,000	350,000
News Reporter	38,300	30,000	10,000	350,000
Sports Reporter	36,400	30,000	17,000	175,000
Assignment Editor	37,500	35,000	10,000	100,000
News Producer	33,300	30,300	11,000	120,000
News Writer	31,800	27,500	10,000	80,000
News Assistant	25,500	25,000	10,000	50,000
Photographer	31,000	28,000	14,000	100,000
Tape Editor	28,000	25,000	10,000	80,000
Graphics Specialist	32,700	31,000	10,000	100,000
Internet Specialist	35,800	35,000	16,000	110,000
Art Director	50,500	50,000	25,000	100,000

Overall, salaries were slightly lower in the Midwest and the West, but the differences were small. There was no consistent variation based on network affiliation. Because the largest, highest-paying stations can raise the average salaries out of proportion, the median--or midpoint--is usually considered a best gauge of typical salaries.

Five and Ten Year Median Television News Salary Comparisons 2008 to 2003 to 1998

	2008	2003	5-Year Percentage Change	1998	10-Year Percentage Change
INFLATION			+16.2%		+30.6%
All TV news			+23.2		+34.8
News Director	\$80,000	\$63,000	+27.0	\$53,000	+50.9
Assistant News Director	68,800	55,000	+25.1	46,000	+49.6
Managing Editor	56,000	45,000	+24.4	46,500	+20.4
Executive Producer	50,000	42,000	+19.0	44,000	+13.6
News Anchor	65,000	48,000	+35.4	41,000	+58.5

Weathercaster	55,000	42,500	+29.4	37,000	+48.6
Sports Anchor	45,000	35,000	+28.6	30,500	+47.5
News Reporter	30,000	26,000	+15.4	23,000	+30.4
Sports Reporter	30,000	24,500	+22.4	21,500	+39.5
Assignment Editor	35,000	30,000	+16.7	27,000	+29.6
News Producer	30,300	26,000	+16.5	24,000	+26.3
News Writer	27,500	25,000	+0.1	20,000	+27.5
News Assistant	25,000	22,000	+13.6	18,000	+38.9
Photographer	28,000	25,000	+12.0	23,000	+21.7
Tape Editor	25,000	21,250	+17.6	*	*
Graphics Specialist	31,000	24,000	+29.2	32,500	-4.6
Internet Specialist	35,000	27,500	+27.3	26,000	+34.6

This table gives the longer term picture, comparing salaries with five years ago, ten years ago and with inflation over those periods. Overall, in the last five years, TV news salaries have grown at more than the rate of inflation, 23.2 percent versus 16.2 percent. The ten year picture is closer, with overall salary growth, 34.8 percent, running just ahead of inflation, 30.6 percent. The big winners in the last five years are news anchor, weathercaster, graphics specialist, sports anchor, internet specialist and news director, all up between 27.0 and 35.4 percent. Over the last five years, most positions came in at or above inflation. Exceptions: news writer, photographer, news assistant and news reporter. The picture is more varied over the last 10 years. The big winners were news anchor, news director, assistant news director, weathercaster and sports anchor, all up from 47.5 to 58.5 percent. On the losing end, well below inflation: graphics specialist, executive producer, managing editor and photographer. As an interesting historical note, this marks the 10-year anniversary of our first asking about a station internet specialist. *Insufficient or no data.

Median TV News Salaries by Market Size – 2008

	1 – 25	26 – 50	51 – 100	101-150	150+
News Director	\$150,000	\$120,000	\$95,000	\$70,000	\$59,000
Assistant News Director	100,000	90,000	62,500	45,000	50,000
Managing Editor	87,500	68,500	52,000	47,500	32,500
Executive Producer	76,500	60,000	50,000	43,500	30,000
News Anchor	124,400	115,000	80,000	50,500	32,600
Weathercaster	100,000	100,000	65,000	43,000	30,000
Sports Anchor	95,000	70,000	50,000	37,000	28,300
News Reporter	60,000	45,000	33,500	25,000	21,300
Sports Reporter	77,500	45,000	30,000	24,000	22,000
Assignment Editor	43,500	39,000	35,500	30,000	27,000
News Producer	48,500	40,000	30,500	25,000	22,900
News Writer	34,700	26,500	24,000	22,000	10,000
News Assistant	35,500	33,000	25,000	16,300	15,000
Photographer	45,000	36,000	30,000	23,000	20,300
Tape Editor	38,000	30,000	24,000	20,000	17,500
Graphics Specialist	38,000	34,000	30,000	30,000	21,400
Internet Specialist	48,000	40,000	35,000	30,000	24,000
Art Director	65,000	55,000	45,000	25,000	30,000

As usual, the larger the market, the larger the salary. The top 25 market salaries would be even higher, but it also includes a number of smaller, independent newsrooms which generally pay lower salaries than their network-affiliated counterparts. Although the overall salary increase was

5.1 percent, salary increases fell into three groups. Salaries in markets 51-100 were unchanged, and all other markets ranged from 3.1 to 4.7 percent. All except the biggest markets, where salaries rose 12.1 percent. *Insufficient data.

Median TV News Salaries by Staff Size –2008

	51+	31-50	21-30	11-20	1-10
News Director	\$150,000	\$98,000	\$70,000	\$51,500	\$40,000
Assistant News Director	90,000	60,000	42,000	40,000	24,000
Managing Editor	71,300	56,500	43,000	35,000	85,000
Executive Producer	70,000	50,000	40,000	27,000	40,000
News Anchor	122,500	80,000	50,000	28,800	30,000
Weathercaster	100,000	65,000	40,000	26,200	21,000
Sports Anchor	86,800	50,000	35,000	25,000	24,500
News Reporter	60,000	35,000	25,000	21,000	24,000
Sports Reporter	45,000	30,000	23,800	19,500	25,000
Assignment Editor	43,000	37,500	31,500	25,000	29,500
News Producer	45,000	32,800	24,500	23,500	28,500
News Writer	31,000	24,000	26,500	*	*
News Assistant	32,300	24,500	10,000	*	*
Photographer	39,000	30,000	24,000	21,000	18,000
Tape Editor	32,000	24,000	20,000	17,000	*
Graphics Specialist	31,500	30,000	27,500	32,000	20,000
Internet Specialist	42,500	35,000	27,300	21,500	*
Art Director	52,500	40,000	30,000	34,000	*

With rare exception, the bigger the newsroom, the bigger the salaries. The one exception involves the smallest newsrooms where salaries are sometimes well out of line with other groups because they include a number of small newsrooms in the biggest markets – and so pay higher salaries. *Insufficient data.

Radio News Salaries

	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
News Director	\$35,000	\$30,500	\$10,000	\$104,000
News Reporter	23,400	25,000	10,000	46,000
News Anchor	30,200	30,000	10,000	75,000
News Producer	25,400	22,000	14,000	43,000
Sports Anchor	27,000	32,000	20,000	38,000
Sports Reporter	17,400	18,300	14,000	25,000

News anchors and sports anchors rose slightly from last year. News directors, news producers and sports reporters fell from a year ago. News reporters were unchanged. In real wages, taking inflation into account, the situation was worse. Overall, radio news salaries fell 3.2 percent – then tack on 4.1 percent inflation on top of that. 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.

Median TV News Salaries by Market Size

	1 – 25	26 – 50	51 – 100	101-150	150+
News Director	\$150,000	\$120,000	\$95,000	\$70,000	\$59,000
Assistant News Director	100,000	90,000	62,500	45,000	50,000
Managing Editor	87,500	68,500	52,000	47,500	32,500
Executive Producer	76,500	60,000	50,000	43,500	30,000
News Anchor	124,400	115,000	80,000	50,500	32,600
Weathercaster	100,000	100,000	65,000	43,000	30,000

Sports Anchor	95,000	70,000	50,000	37,000	28,300
News Reporter	60,000	45,000	33,500	25,000	21,300
Sports Reporter	77,500	45,000	30,000	24,000	22,000
Assignment Editor	43,500	39,000	35,500	30,000	27,000
News Producer	48,500	40,000	30,500	25,000	22,900
News Writer	34,700	26,500	24,000	22,000	10,000
News Assistant	35,500	33,000	25,000	16,300	15,000
Photographer	45,000	36,000	30,000	23,000	20,300
Tape Editor	38,000	30,000	24,000	20,000	17,500
Graphics Specialist	38,000	34,000	30,000	30,000	21,400
Internet Specialist	48,000	40,000	35,000	30,000	24,000
Art Director	65,000	55,000	45,000	25,000	30,000

As usual, the larger the market, the larger the salary. The top 25 market salaries would be even higher, but it also includes a number of smaller, independent newsrooms which generally pay lower salaries than their network-affiliated counterparts. Although the overall salary increase was 5.1 percent, salary increases fell into three groups. Salaries in markets 51-100 were unchanged, and all other markets ranged from 3.1 to 4.7 percent. All except the biggest markets, where salaries rose 12.1 percent.

Median Radio News Salaries by Market Size

	Major	Large	Medium	Small
News Director	\$68,800	\$34,000	\$32,500	\$30,000
News Reporter	35,500	25,000	24,500	15,500
News Anchor	40,000	27,000	28,000	15,000
News Producer	30,500	32,000	21,000	24,000
Sports Anchor	30,000	18,500	32,500	35,000
Sports Reporter	*	*	18,300	*

As usual, the larger the market, generally, the higher the salary, although there's a fair amount of compression—especially in the medium and large markets. 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 – 2008

	One	Two	Three or 4	5 or more
News Director	\$27,500	\$31,000	\$38,000	\$50,000
News Reporter	*	12,000	25,000	28,500
News Anchor	*	27,000	27,000	41,300
News Producer	*	16,000	22,000	*
Sports Anchor	*	25,000	34,000	19,000
Sports Reporter	8,000	19,500	25,000	*

The salaries by staff size are almost always highly variable, although there is a general tendency for the largest news operations to pay more. We, too, were puzzled by stations with one news staff member who's a sports reporter. *Insufficient data.

Median Radio News Salaries by Number of Stations News Director Supervises - 2008

	One	2-3	Four	5-6	7 or more
News Director	\$29,000	\$35,500	\$30,000	\$23,000	\$32,000
News Reporter	16,500	17,000	*	12,000	25,000
News Anchor	30,000	15,000	18,000	40,000	29,000
News Producer	35,000	*	*	18,000	22,000
Sports Anchor	*	38,000	*	25,000	32,000

Sports Reporter	*	*	*	*	18,300
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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 - 2008

	Group-Owned	Independent
News Director	\$30,000	\$31,000
News Reporter	25,000	24,500
News Anchor	30,000	25,000
News Producer	22,000	32,000
Sports Anchor	30,000	35,000
Sports Reporter	17,000	25,000

In a reversal from last year, independent stations paid more than group-owned stations in four of the six listed positions. *Insufficient data.

Percentage of TV News People Under Contract and Non-Competes - 2008

	Under Contract	Under Non-Compete
News Director	56.3%	81.6%
Assistant News Director	25.3	84.9
Managing Editor	14.9	80.0
Executive Producer	33.4	86.2
News Anchor	62.2	85.6
Weathercaster	59.0	86.6
Sports Anchor	55.7	86.8
News Reporter	58.4	87.0
Sports Reporter	23.6	87.4
Assignment Editor	32.6	80.8
News Producer	46.7	87.2
News Writer	7.3	70.4
News Assistant	7.6	71.4
Photographer	33.2	78.7
Tape Editor	19.8	80.8
Graphics Specialist	6.5	58.3
Internet Specialist	14.9	80.0
Art Director	4.1	73.3

For the second year in a row, the percentage of TV newspeople under contract has gone down. Not every position. News directors, assignment editors, photographers, tape editors and graphics specialists all rose, although assignment editors and graphics specialists only barely edged up. All other positions fell. So did the percentage under non-competes, although the difference was small.

Percentage of Radio News People Under Contract or Non-Compete – 2008

	Under Contract	Under Non-Compete
News Director	17.9%	46.7%
News Reporter	0	0
News Anchor	15.0	66.7
News Producer	0	0
Sports Anchor	10.0	0
Sports Reporter	0	0

The percentage of radio newspeople under contract fell from a year ago. Last year, the numbers were largely unchanged from the year before.

TV news 2008 starting salaries for new employees with no fulltime experience

Position	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
All TV news	\$23,300	\$22,000	\$14,600	\$55,000
Reporter	22,700	22,000	14,600	55,000
Producer	22,700	22,000	14,600	55,000
News assistant	24,800	24,500	18,000	35,000
Photographer	21,500	20,100	16,000	30,000
Tape editor	23,900	22,800	15,600	45,000
Assignment editor	25,600	22,900	17,000	35,000
Other	24,100	21,800	15,000	45,000

The positions are listed in order of how many starting hires were made in 2007. There were no meaningful differences in either new or replacement hiring by region.

Radio news 2008 starting salaries for new employees with no fulltime experience

Position	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
All radio news	\$22,700	\$20,000	\$11,000	\$62,900
News reporter	24,300	23,000	14,600	45,000
On air	20,500	20,000	13,700	25,000
News anchor	30,600	28,000	15,000	55,000
Board Op	24,200	16,600	12,500	62,900
News director	23,300	23,300	20,000	26,600
News assistant	22,000	22,000	20,000	24,000
Other	20,500	20,000	13,500	37,400

The positions are listed in order of how many starting hires were made in 2007.

About the Survey

The RTNDA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2007 among all 1,647 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 2,000 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,241 television stations (75.3 percent) and 138 radio news directors and GMs representing 271 radio stations.

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