

From Intern to Executive Director

What is the name of the company you work for?

Community Access Media (CAM Erie)

What does this company do?

Formerly known as CAT-TV, we are now a nonprofit community media center located in downtown Erie. Our mission is to facilitate and promote local content production and help people share media content that benefits our community. That includes providing a media production facility and equipment, teaching basic production classes, recording local events, and sharing local content on our cable TV, fiber TV, website, and social media channels. Some of the things that we help individuals and organizations produce include: television shows, podcasts, YouTube videos, social media content and lastly, coming soon we will have an ESports Studio to livestream videogames.

What is the size of this company?

Currently, we have seven employees in our organization. In addition to our employees, we have 15 people on our board of directors, and over 260 volunteers.

How long have you been with this company?

I have been working at CAM for 11 years. In 2010, I started out as an intern, then after my internship, I was hired on as a production assistant. In 2014, I was promoted to the interim Executive Director, and then after 6-months I was promoted to my current position.

What is your job title?

Executive Director

What is the nature of your position at your organization?

I am in charge of overseeing the day-to-day operations of CAM and ensuring that our organization is upholding our mission. Overall, I act as the Chief of Operations, Human Resources Director, Development Officer, Comptroller, Community Relations Manager and Public Information Officer.

Describe your day to day job/work related tasks and activities.

The cool thing about my job, is that I am always doing something different every day. Some of the duties that I perform on a weekly basis include meeting with organizations and businesses about their media projects, helping our members with their content (editing, recording in our studio, or podcasting), scheduling production shoots, writing grants for funding, maintaining all of the finances (accounts payable and receivable), scheduling payroll, creating new projects, purchasing production equipment, programming all of the content on all of the CAM channels, and working with our staff to maintain our studio facilities to better serve our volunteers and the community.

What are the best things about your career?

My favorite part of my career at CAM is working with Erie residents who are passionate about what they do. People from all different backgrounds, professions, and ethnicities come into our facility and want to share about something that they believe in. We are fortunate to help make that idea come to life in the form of media.

What are the challenges faced in your career?

Early on in my career, we were faced with a funding crisis and we were not quite sure our organization would survive. However, we did, and here we are 7 years later, growing our organization even more! In addition to making sure we have the revenue needed to operate, managing our growing staff and volunteer group is no small task. We are continuously learning how to work better together to accomplish our goals.

What is your educational background?

I obtained two associate degrees from Tri-State Business Institute, one in Accounting and the other in

Marketing. In addition, I am planning to go back to school later this year to earn my Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree to further my education.

Is this the career you chose initially, or have there been changes in your career choices?

No, initially I wanted to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

What led to those changes?

My career path changed after I took my internship at CAM. I learned about television production, started working with technology, and enjoyed helping people be creative.

What has led you to your current career?

I was offered the opportunity to become the Interim Executive Director in April of 2014, and after being in that role for 6-months, I was hired as the permanent Executive Director.

What qualities are important for you to hold the position you have?

In order to be successful at running a business or organization, I believe you need to be 100% devoted to your cause or purpose. I think that in any management position, being organized is one of the best skills for success. Lastly, I think that coming to work each day with a positive outlook and attitude, allows you to overcome any obstacles that are in your way of success.

How do you prepare for an interview for this position?

If I were to prepare for an interview as an Executive Director, I would first and foremost do as much



Jacob Bartko, Executive Director



research as I could into the organization, their mission, and the people that they serve. Being knowledgeable and prepared always leaves a great impression.

What would people be surprised to know about your career?

I think that people would be surprised at the amount of preparation that it takes to complete a media production. From point A in the development process, to point Z in the file delivery. A lot of planning, hard work, and hours go into creating that final file. However, once you are done, it is extremely rewarding once you see your work of art come to life.



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