According to a study conducted by stephenfollows.com, the average film employs 588 crew members — based on the 50 highest grossing films each year from 1994 - 2013 (“How many people work on a Hollywood film?,” 2014). But do you know what each of those crew members actually does? As you begin your journey into film, it’s important to understand the different roles behind the scenes and the important skills needed to excel in each job position. If you’re undecided about your future job, this document will allow you to explore some of the many options. Or, if you have an idea of the career path you’d like to take, this document can help you determine the skills you’ll need to develop to achieve your goals.

Refer to the symbols on the next page to see where the key players fit in. Click on the symbols or department names to go directly to that page. For more film crew stats from the stephenfollows.com study, click here.
Above-the-Line

Above-the-line is a term derived from film budgets where those expenditures listed “above the line” relate mostly to pre-production costs or the costs associated with those who will influence the creative aspects of the film. These include the writer, director, producer and actors. Above-the-line costs are usually fixed costs, meaning if scenes are cut from the film, these costs would remain the same.

Below-the-Line

Costs listed below the line relate mostly to the other stages of filmmaking and the crew that support them. These are considered variable costs and will fluctuate if scenes are cut or added to the film. Below-the-line crew members are categorized by Departments including the following:

- Art Department
- Assistant Director Department
- Camera Department
- Compositing Department
- Editorial Department
- Electrical/Set Lighting Department
- Hair Department
- Locations Department
- Makeup Department
- Production Department
- Property Department
- Set Operations/Grip Department
- Sound Department
- Special Effects Department
- Transportation Department
- Wardrobe Department
- Video Assist Department
The following key players are considered above-the-line.

**Writer**

The writer is the author of the script, or screenplay, and the main person involved in the development stage. Although all writers have different processes, each will complete the same elements to develop the script. He or she will determine the theme and plot, or storyline, of the film. The writer will also create the characters, visualizing their appearance, determining their traits and writing what they will say in the film, called dialogue. Although writing is a creative process, film scripts are all formatted in the same way. Once the writer finishes the formatted film script, he or she may communicate with the director or actors about specific aspects of the story (Manriquez, 2014). Important skills for the writer include a good vocabulary, creativity, good writing mechanics and a descriptive imagination.

**Director**

The director oversees the creative aspects of the film from pre-production through post-production, serving as the creative boss of the film. He or she transforms the script into visual images, using storyboards to communicate to the cast and crew how each shot in the film will look. The director needs to become extremely familiar with the film as a whole — both in script form and shot-by-shot. Since most films are not shot in script order, it’s important for the director to know when each scene occurs in the film to make sure that everything shot will work together. The director will cast the actors and instruct them during rehearsal with the crew and during filming. During post-production, the director works with the editor to assemble the film (Manriquez, 2014). Important skills for the director include leadership, creativity, focus, good visual imagination, organization, communication skills and being a team player.

**Producer**

The executive producer oversees the entire production. He or she chooses the project and is in charge of securing financing to get the film made. Along with an understanding of their target audience, executive producers must have good business sense and be able to calculate whether or not a project will be competitive in the marketplace. They may be employed by a studio, but are tasked with putting together a team to produce their project (Manriquez, 2014). Important skills for the executive producer include managerial skills, leadership, understanding of film business and marketplace, understanding of film consumers (audience), and being an active reader and viewer. The producer oversees the day-to-day operations of the project. He or she will assign responsibilities to crew members and ensure that everything is completed correctly and on time. The producer needs to be extremely organized to deal with the operations of the entire crew, to make sure each aspect needed for the film is complete, and to keep the entire production on schedule (Manriquez, 2014). Important skills for the producer include managerial skills, leadership, organization, time management, being proactive, planning skills, problem solving, attention to detail and computer skills.
Art Department

This department is responsible for the design and construction of each set. They also set up and dress the set prior to the shoot. Important skills for members of this department include: artistic, creativity, organization, communication, good visual imagination, team player and attention to detail. The following are members of the Art Department:

Production Designer
- Head of the Art Department
- Chooses colors and props for the overall look of the film
- Supervises the work of the Publicity Designer
- Coordinates the Art Department with the DP and Director
- Designs the sets
- Included in location selection
- Oversees creation of title sequences and credits (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Art Director
- Works closely with the Production Designer
- Helps design the sets and creates blueprints for set construction
- Supervises construction of sets
- Participates in location scouts (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Set Decorator
- Works with the Art Director to decorate the sets
- Finds set decorating furnishings and arranges props on set
- Tags on-camera set pieces with the scene number
- Maintains inventory of set furnishings
- Hires the Head of the Art Department (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Leadman
- Works under the Set Decorator
- Hires Set Dressers and Swing Gang
- In charge of set continuity
- Ensures sets are camera-ready (Clarson, 2012)

Publicity Designer
- Designs the production’s website, posters and promotion materials
- Designs DVD (Paul, n.d.)

Swing Gang
- Works to set up or strike the set before or after the main personnel
- Dresses set/strikes set
- Moves set furnishings to and from storage (Clarson, 2012)

On-Set Dresser
- Moves and protects set furnishings
- Cleans sets as needed
- Helps maintain continuity (Clarson, 2012)

Additional Art Crew
Assistant Directors Department

This department is responsible for the creation and distribution of pre-production documents. During production they ensure that shooting runs smoothly. Important skills for members of this department include: organization, computer skills, leadership, communication and problem solving. The following are members of the Assistant Directors Department:

First Assistant Director (1st AD)
- Works with the UPM to organize the crew and prepare pre-production documents and paperwork during pre-production
- Assists the Director during production
- Prepares script breakdown and shooting schedule during pre-production
- Liaison between crew and Production
- Runs the set, in charge of on-set PAs
- Responsible for the Production staying on schedule during the production stage
- Helps the UPM with location tech scouts
- Determines the cast and crew call times
- Supervises creation of the call sheet
- Directs background action and controls crowds

(Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Second Assistant Director (2nd AD)
- Assistant to the 1st AD
- Stationed at base camp or studio
- Dispatches actors to set when camera-ready
- Prepares and distributes the call sheet (supervised by the 1st AD)
- Prepares the daily production report (supervised by the UPM)
- Hands out scripts to cast and crew
- Supervises set and location wrap
- Serves as the liaison between UPM and 1st AD
- Assists 1st AD with direction of background action (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Second Second Assistant Director (2nd 2nd AD)
- Wrangles background extras and handles paperwork
- Conveys set information to the 2nd AD
- Fills in for 1st AD when needed
- Keeps a journal of daily production including an explanation for any loss of shooting time

(Clarson, 2012)
Camera Department

The camera department is responsible for the visual look of the film, setting up and running the camera equipment. Important skills for members of this department include: visual imagination, communication, team player, organization, hand-eye coordination and technical skills. The following are members of the Camera Department:

Cinematographer (Director of Photography/DP)
- Head of the Camera Department and Lighting Department
- Hires key personnel in each department (Clarson, 2012)
- In charge of the look of the film
- Chooses the camera and lighting equipment
- Works with the director and camera operator on-set to set up each shot (Manriquez, 2014)

First Assistant Camera (1st AC/Focus Puller)
- Preps the camera equipment during pre-production
- Builds the camera on set
- Changes lens, sets aperture and installs filters
- Focuses the camera (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Second Assistant Camera (2nd AC/Loader)
- Assists the 1st AC
- Labels, logs and maintains film reels or tapes
- Keeps track of film/tape inventory
- Fills out camera reports
- Operates slate (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Continuity Still Photographer
- Uses a still camera to photograph the action on set in each shot for the purposes of continuity references
- Takes pictures of each shot before the director says action and immediately after they say cut
- Cross-references with the Script Supervisor each day (Paul, n.d.)

Additional Camera Crew
Compositing Department
This department is responsible for creating and implementing visual effects in post-production. Important skills for members of this department include: visual imagination, creativity and computer skills. The following are members of the Compositing Department:

Lead Compositor/Visual Effects Supervisor
- Supervised by the Director, DP and Art Director
- Coordinates with the Editor
- Supervises all visual effects work
- Designs visual effects (Paul, n.d.)

Compositors
- Supervised by the Lead Compositor and Art Director
- Implements visual effects (Paul, n.d.)
Editorial Department
This department is responsible for organizing and cutting together the footage shot, editing the film, and outputting the final version of the film. Important skills for members of this department include: high attention to detail, organization, communication, creativity and computer skills. The following are members of the Editorial Department:

Editor
- Works under the Director and Executive Producer
- Uses the footage shot to assemble the film
- Reviews all the footage and cuts the movie either on film or using a nonlinear editing (NLE) software
- Works with the Director to tweak the film until finalized
- Assists the DP with color correction and post-production effects (Paul, n.d.)

Assistant Editor
- Assistant to the Editor
- Logs and captures the footage into digital format
- Organizes the digital footage
- Maintains a system to backup the footage and project files
- Assists with output of the final film (Paul, n.d.)
BELOW-THE-LINE

Electrical/Set Lighting Department

This department is responsible for lighting the set. They also provide power to the set. Important skills for members of this department include: organization, communication, team player, good with hands and technical skills. The following are members of the Electrical/Set Lighting Department:

**Gaffer (Chief Lighting Technician/Lighting Director)**
- Head electrician who supervises the lighting on set
- Works with the DP to light sets and locations
- Manages lighting equipment (Paul, n.d.)
- Hires the lighting crew (Clarson, 2012)

**Best Boy Electric (Asst. Chief Lighting Technician)**
- Assistant to the Gaffer
- Preps and wraps truck
- Runs power to set
- Fills out Department paperwork
- Inventories Department equipment
- Works with Transportation Department to place the generator (Paul, n.d.)

**Lighting Technician (LT/Juicer/Electrics)**
- Assistant to the Gaffer
- Runs electrical cable to distribute power
- Lays out power distribution points
- Provides other Departments with power (Paul, n.d.)

**Rigging Crew**
- Prepares locations and sets before the main crew arrives
- Wraps locations and sets after the main crew leaves (Clarson, 2012)
Hair Department
This department is responsible for the design and styling of the talent’s hair. Important skills for members of this department include: creativity, style, communication and being good with their hands. The following are members of the Hair Department:

Hair Department Head
- Selects and designs hair styles
- Usually works on the principal talent
- Hires Key Hair Stylist
- Determines which product brands are used  
  (Clarson, 2012)

Key Hair Stylist
- Styles the cast’s hair
- Maintains cast’s hair during shooting while working with the script supervisor and continuity stills photographer
- Organizes Hair Department trailer
- Maintains product inventory
- Completes Department paperwork (Paul, n.d.)  
  (Clarson, 2012)

Additional Crew
- May include additional Hair Stylists for the Day Players and/or Personal Hair Stylists per actor’s request (Clarson, 2012)
Locations Department
This department is responsible for managing the logistics of each location needed for shooting. Important skills for members of this department include: organization, communication, logistical and computer skills. The following are members of the Locations Department:

Location Manager *
• During pre-production, works with the UPM and the 1st AD to find and secure locations
• Participates in location tech scouts
• Serves as the liaison between the Production and local authorities
• Hires security
• Obtains the necessary releases/permits/insurance for each location
• Secures base camp and crew parking (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Assistant Location Manager
• Liaison between all Departments on shoot days
• Distributes maps to locations
• Posts crew signs and caution cones near locations
• Protects location floors with layout boards
• In charge of crew parking
• In charge of heating and cooling locations (Clarson, 2012)

Location Assistant
• Assists the Locations Manager

* Above-the-Line
**BELOW-THE-LINE**

**Makeup Department**

This department is responsible for the design and styling of the talent's makeup. Important skills for members of this department include: creativity, artistic, communication and being good with their hands. The following are members of the Makeup Department:

**Makeup Department Head**
- Collaborates with the Director to design the appearance of talent
- Usually works with principal talent
- Hires Key Makeup Artist
- Determines which product brands are used  
  (Clarson, 2012)

**Additional Crew**
- May include additional Makeup Artists for the Day Players and/or Personal Makeup Artists per actor's request
- Special Makeup Effects Artist (Clarson, 2012)

**Key Makeup Artist**
- Applies makeup to the cast
- Maintains makeup during shooting while working with the script supervisor and continuity stills photographer
- Organizes Makeup Department trailer
- Maintains product inventory
- Completes Department paperwork (Paul, n.d.)  
  (Clarson, 2012)
BELOW-THE-LINE

Production Department

Members of this department run the business behind the film in each stage of filmmaking. They are responsible for managing the budget of the film and the day-to-day operations that keep the film production running. Important skills for members of this department include: organization, communication, computer skills, attention to detail and management skills. The following are members of the Production Department:

Line Producer *
- Runs the Production
- Creates the budget and controls the costs
- Manages Above-the-Line (Talent, Executive Producers, Producers)
- Negotiates talent and crew contracts (Clarson, 2012)

Unit Production Manager (UPM) *
- Deals with the day-to-day operation of the set and budget
- Manages Below-the-Line (Department Heads)
- Negotiates crew rates and AD contracts
- Liaison to Unions and Guilds
- Approves the call sheet (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Production Coordinator
- Manager of the Production Department office
- Hires office staff
- Makes sure that everyone/everything needed on set is arranged
- Facilitates communication between the set and the Production Department office
- Liaison between Production and other Departments (Clarson, 2012)

Production Secretary
- Maintains office supplies
- Fields phone calls and emails
- Other office responsibilities (Clarson, 2012)

Office Production Assistant
- Runs errands for the Production Office (lunch, office supplies, etc.)
- Performs office tasks (copies, filing, answering phones, etc.) (Clarson, 2012)

Assistant Production Coordinator
- Assists the Production Coordinator
- Handles insurance claims regarding equipment and personnel
- Makes travel arrangements for cast and crew
- Maintains lists of Production employees (Clarson, 2012)

Set Production Assistant
- Runs set errands
- Manages the walkie talkies
- Assists the Assistant Directors Department (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Production Secretary
- Maintains office supplies
- Fields phone calls and emails
- Other office responsibilities (Clarson, 2012)

* Above-the-Line
Production Department
Continued…

Casting Director
- Works with the Director to cast the film
- Organizes casting calls and auditions
- Hires the cast (Paul, n.d.)

Production Accountant
- Works with the UPM to maintain the Production’s budget
- Prepares the budget
- Keeps track of the Production’s bank accounts
- Controls release of money used for expenses
- Fills out cost reports (Paul, n.d.)

Script Supervisor
- Creates a daily log of the shots completed each day
- Responsible for continuity (since films are typically not shot in script order, it's important to note actions from scene to scene to maintain continuity throughout the film)
- Takes script notes and communicates to the post-production staff
- Maintains a log of all shots
- Works with the Continuity Stills Photographer
- Provides information for daily production reports
- Notes camera angles/positions
- Makes sure dialogue is spoken as written in the script
- Documents lens, aperture and film changes
- Provides Production Department staff with log of footage
- Makes sure all scenes in the script are shot (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Publicist
- Works to promote the film during each stage of filmmaking
- Supervises creation and distribution of press releases
- Assists in fundraising
- Liaison between the Production and the press (Paul, n.d.)
Property Department
This department is responsible for the assembly and maintenance of all props, which are things that actors use or hold during their performance. Important skills for members of this department include: organization, attention to detail and craftsmanship. The following are members of the Property Department:

Prop Master
- Searches for and obtains props
- Maintains props throughout production
- Manages the props budget (Paul, n.d.)

Assistant Prop Master
- Organizes the props truck and storage
- Tags props with scene number
- Shops for props
- Ensures props continuity (Clarson, 2012)

Prop Assistants
- Assistants to the Prop Master
BELOW-THE-LINE

Set Operations/Grip Department
This department is responsible for construction, setup and strike of equipment needed for all other departments. They help ensure the safety of cast and crew members. Important skills for members of this department include: communication, team player, good with hands, organization and engineering skills. The following are members of the Set Operations/Grip Department:

Key Grip
- Hires the other grip crew
- Works with the DP and Gaffer to set up lights
- Supervises camera movement equipment such as dollies, cranes and vehicle mounts
- Supervises set up of lights to maintain safety
- Unofficial safety officer for the crew members (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Best Boy Grip
- Assistant to the Key Grip
- Liaison between Grip Department and Production
- Manages grip equipment, preps and wraps the grip truck (Clarson, 2012)
- Assists the DP with the technical aspect of set operation (Paul, n.d.)

Dolly Grip
- Grip in charge of dolly equipment
- Works closely with the Camera Operator
- Supervises laying of dolly track
- Operates the camera dolly (Paul, n.d.) (Clarson, 2012)

Company Grip (3rd/Hammer)
- Builds and strikes grip rigs
- Supports other departments to help set up and strike equipment
- Erects scaffolding
- Keeps staging area tidy (Clarson, 2012)

Construction Foreman
- Oversees the construction and demolition of sets and special equipment such as camera movement equipment or car-mounts
- Coordinates with the Production Designer (Paul, n.d.)

Construction Grip
- Aids the Construction Foreman
- Constructs and demolishes sets (Paul, n.d.)

Additional Grips
BELOW-THE-LINE

Sound Department

This department is responsible for recording sound on set during production as well as mixing and creating sound effects and music in post-production. Important skills for members of this department include: creativity, communication, attention to sound detail, technical and electronic skills. The following are members of the Sound Department:

Sound Mixer/Recordist
- Head of the Sound Department
- Participates in location tech scout
- Hires sound crew (Clarson, 2012)
- Responsible for recording sound and playing back sound, such as music, on set
- Manages on-set sound equipment
- Assists in sound recording during post-production (Paul, n.d.)

Boom Operator
- Supervised by the Sound Mixer/Recordist
- Holds the boom microphone to record sound on set
- Wears headphones to monitor recorded sound
- Sets up and wraps sound equipment
- Operates recording devices (Paul, n.d.)

Sound Assistant
- Liaison between Sound Mixer/Recordist and Script Supervisor
- Manages and logs tapes, completes log forms
- Reports tape logs to Script Supervisor (Paul, n.d.)

Utility
- Manages cables for Boom Operator
- Operates second boom when needed (Clarson, 2012)

Sound Designer/Sound Editor
- Works with the Director to create the sound track of the film
- Supervises the audio mix of music, dialogue, and sound effects during post-production (Paul, n.d.)

Composer
- Writes music for the film during pre-production to be playing during on-set recording
- Writes music during post-production to be heard in the film
- Supervises the recording of music (Paul, n.d.)

Mixing Engineer
- Supervised by the Sound Designer
- Mixes the sound track of the film into multiple output formats during post-production (Paul, n.d.)

Foley Artist
- Creates and records sound effects to accompany specific visual elements such as footsteps or punches (Paul, n.d.)
Special Effects Department
This department handles on-set special effects such as explosions, weather effects, fire, bullet hits, fake blood, etc. Important skills for members of this department include: creativity, communication and being good with their hands. The following are members of the Special Effects Department:

Special Effects Coordinator
• Works with the Director and Stunt Coordinator
• Ensures the safety of the cast and crew
• Hires Special Effects Department crew
  (Clarson, 2012)

Special Effects Foreman
• Completes Department paperwork
• Preps special effects truck
• Maintains equipment
• Liaison to other Departments (Clarson, 2012)

Special Effects Technicians
• Assists the Special Effects Coordinator and Foreman (Clarson, 2012)
Transportation Department

This department is responsible for transporting everything the film needs. They handle the logistics of company moves (relocating base camp to shoot at a new location in the middle of the shoot day) and transport all equipment to and from each shooting location according to the shooting schedule. Important skills for members of this department include: organization, communication, being good with their hands and logistical skills. The following are members of the Transportation Department:

Transportation Coordinator
- Scouts locations prior to shoots
- Works with the UPM and Location Manager
- Hires drivers
- Transports talent to and from hotels/airports/sets
- Services generators
- Coordinates company moves
- Locates and modifies (if necessary) specific cars used in the film (Picture Cars) (Clarson, 2012)

Transportation Captain and Co-Captain
- Assists the Transportation Coordinator
- Coordinates the picture cars
- Mechanic for picture cars
- Operates the generator
- Truck driver for multiple departments (Clarson, 2012)
BELOW-THE-LINE

Wardrobe Department
This department is responsible for designing, making and maintaining the actors' costumes. Important skills for members of this department include: creativity, communication, being good with their hands, attention to detail and craftsmanship. The following are members of the Wardrobe Department:

Costume Designer
- Head of the department
- Works with the Art Director to design, create and maintain the costumes
- Works with actors to fit costumes
- Obtains all costume components and assembles them (Paul, n.d.)

Costume Supervisor
- Oversees extras’ clothing and ensures continuity
- Organizes wardrobe trailer and tags costumes with scene numbers
- Completes Department paperwork
- Liaison between Department and Production (Clarson, 2012)

Key Costumer
- Assists Costume Supervisor
- Handles extras’ costumes
- Makes sure all costumes are correct on set (Clarson, 2012)

Set Costumer
- Helps with costume fittings
- Prepares dressing rooms for talent
- Helps ensure continuity
- Helps the actors change into the costumes (Clarson, 2012)

Additional Crew
- May include seamstresses and tailors, to create and alter costumes, and shoppers to purchase costumes elements (Clarson, 2012)
BETWEEN-THE-LINE

Video Assist Department
This department handles the Video Assist, a device used by the Director and DP to see an instant playback of the takes that were just shot. Important skills for members of this department include: technical skills, communication and organization. The following are members of the Video Assist Department:

Video Assist Technician
- Records takes and plays back takes at the Director’s or DP’s request
- Maintains and relocates equipment such as monitors
- Keeps a record of good and bad takes
  (Clarson, 2012)
REFERENCES