

**ROBERT HAWKINS**  
**Recording Arts**  
**Class of 2011**

**What do you like most about your current role as the Director of Audio Visual Services?**

I like creating shows for large corporate events. I work closely with clients to make sure the show looks and sounds great. I get to help plan and create events based off of how clients want their audience to feel /interpret the information. We are in control of the energy level in the room, and we help the presenters get the intended message across to their audience. The creative aspect is great, and there are always new challenges.

**What has been the greatest challenge you have encountered working in your current role/field and how have you overcome it?**

The greatest challenge for me to overcome was learning how to speak to clients in terms that they will understand. Most of my clients do not work with Audio Visual equipment often, so I have to learn to speak their language in order to give them the experience they are looking for. I might have a client that is asking for a "clip-on microphone", or a client will ask if we can turn a Screen into a Whiteboard. I have to figure out what they are specifically looking for, and make sure that we are talking about the same end result. For instance, when my client asked for a Screen to be used as a Whiteboard, I suggested using an iPad that we could connect up to our Switcher Wirelessly. This way, their presenter could walk around the room with an iPad and all of his drawings and notes would show up onto the Screens.

**What would you say is one of the most important assets to have in your industry?**

A good attitude is the most important asset of the industry, if not all industries. I would much rather have somebody with a great attitude, who doesn't know the equipment, than somebody with a bad attitude, who is amazing with all of the equipment. This is an industry that will always involve face-to-face contact with the clients and other team members, and having a poor attitude will get you blacklisted quickly.

**In your opinion, what should candidates new to the industry avoid in order to succeed?**

If you want to succeed in the industry, avoid being too prideful. You are always going to meet people who are better than you in one thing or another. Always be willing to learn new ways to do things. There are usually multiple ways to a complete a task, your way not always be the best. Always be willing to adapt to new ideas and practices. Also, avoid being late. I have seen great Technicians lose out on work because clients don't trust that they will get to a gig on time.

**What advice do you have for individuals specifically interested in your field of work?**

Be ready to work. If you decided to freelance in Audio Visual, be ready to take on as many gigs as possible. It might slow down in the winter and summer months, so be sure to prepare for the slow months. Always be willing to learn anything you can. I was like a sponge my first few years into the industry. I came into the industry knowing audio only, but I was willing to learn about

video, lighting, and anything else I could get my hands on. I would even stay late on gigs without pay in order to learn new equipment. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for me taking the time to learn anything I possibly could. Also, make sure to prepare as much as possible for each job. If you are running a show, you will get one chance to get it right. There are no second takes. If a mistake is big enough, the client may not use you or your company again.

**What piece of advice do you have for Flashpoint candidates preparing for the job search?**

Don't expect your school to do all of the work for you. I remember Career Services teaching us to keep our resumes up to date and how to reach out to prospective employers. These skills will be very helpful for you in your job searches. Always be hustling!

**How did your experience at Flashpoint help you join your industry?**

The most important experience with Flashpoint that helped me in this industry was learning to stay sharp even with a lack of sleep. Having to learn about all of the equipment in depth was also very helpful. There is always new equipment and practices coming out, and you will want to learn as much as possible to stay with the times.

**What would you look for if an opportunity to potentially hire Flashpoint candidates came along?**

A good friendly outgoing attitude is the most important quality for potential candidates to have. Being hungry to learn as much as possible is very helpful. Always being ready to help out in a challenging situation. This will show management that you can be trusted, and that you can be effective and calm in tough situations. It also shows that you are willing to do what it takes to make a show run flawlessly.

**What was your favorite thing about attending Flashpoint?**

My favorite things about Flashpoint were the teachers and the gear. You will not get a chance to work with some of the equipment you have worked with for many years into the industry. The teachers were always easy to learn from and willing to play with new ideas. The college teaches collaboration as one of its core values, and that doesn't change once you enter the industry.

**Name one thing that made you choose Flashpoint over other colleges?**

One thing that helped me choose Flashpoint was how quickly I could learn what I wanted to learn. It is a tough and fast program, but when you are actually passionate about the subject, you will enjoy every step of the learning process.

**If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?**

If I were to do it all over again, I don't think there is much I would do differently. I took advantage of any opportunity I had to work on student projects, projects from the school, and external projects.

**Could you share a fun fact (or two) about yourself?**

Besides Audio Visual work, I am also passionate about Music, Photoshop and Video Editing. This is more than a career. I actually enjoy what I do, and it gives me a chance to grow in more than just a career. I get better at my "hobbies" as I work.