

JOB DESCRIPTION

Production Manager

Santa Cruz, California · Full-time · Union position · September 2026

POSITION AT A GLANCE

Position	Production Manager
Reports to	Management Team; accountable to the Collective (Board of Directors)
Hours	40 hours per week, on-site in Santa Cruz, California
Classification	Union position — PPPW membership, with company-paid dues and initiation fee
Compensation	\$25 to \$31.50 per hour plus overtime
Benefits	Full medical, dental and vision (Kaiser, Dental, VSP); 28 days paid time off; 8 paid holidays; 401(k) with 2.31% employer contribution
Target start	October 1 – November 30, 2026 (Position is available now): with overlap and training from the outgoing Production Manager
Contact	Please email résumé and a brief note about your interest and experience to Shelly D'Amour at shelly@comprinters.com by October 1, 2026.

About Community Printers

Community Printers is a mid-size offset, digital, wide format printing and bindery, packaging and fulfillment company with deep relationships in the Santa Cruz Community and around the country. We serve over four hundred valued customers — many of them relationships of forty years or more. Approaching our fiftieth year, we are the last commercial shop of our size and capability in the Monterey Bay Area and have been a union shop since we began in 1977. We are dedicated to serving the communities that have nurtured our survival and growth all these years.

We are fortunate to have a highly skilled staff, most with 20- to 40 years' experience in the trade. Beyond high quality offset, digital and wide format printing, a great deal of our work involves complex finishing and bindery: die cutting, and complex folding including glue-folding for packaging, that online printers and small local shops cannot do. That capability is what allows us to serve the needs of our smallest to largest enterprise customers, and the Production Manager is responsible for ensuring their continuation as well as development of new, emerging capabilities for the benefit of our customers and the communities we serve.

We are also a collectively-managed, non-profit owned business — every collective member sits on our Board of Directors and has a vote in all major decisions. This shapes how the job works: authority here comes from credibility and persuasion at least as much as from position. People who thrive at Community Printers tend to be those who genuinely prefer working that way.

Position Summary

The Production Manager is responsible for the daily operation of the shop floor and for the systems, standards and technology that make it run well. The role combines hands-on production leadership — scheduling, traffic, quality, problem solving — with responsibility for the shop's production data, workflow automation and equipment strategy.

This is a working leadership role in a mid-sized shop, not an administrative one. The Production Manager is on the floor, knows what is running, and is trusted by an experienced crew. It is also a forward-looking role: the shop's next decade depends on how well we automate the parts of production that should be automated and invest in the finishing capability that differentiates us.

A note on the transition. Our current Production Manager has served the shop for over 20 years and is stepping back by his own choice and on a schedule he set. He is moving to a floater role, and he intends to remain with the shop 4 days/week currently and going to 3 days/week starting January 1, 2027. He will be here to train his successor and will continue to be a resource afterward. This is a planned, supported handover rather than a vacancy left behind. We will train a less experienced candidate who has sufficient commercial print production and/or production management experience in a related field who is eager to learn, highly organized, and tech savvy.

Core Responsibilities

Daily Production Leadership

- Manage daily production operations: scheduling in cooperation with the Sales Manager, traffic, quality control, and materials availability across all departments.
- Maintain the schedule board throughout the day. Resolve schedule conflicts, manage unusual requirements and job outs, allocate floater staff, and keep sales staff current on job status and delivery dates.
- Assess the production and scheduling requirements of complex jobs. Evaluate work orders and schedule tags, confirm that Leads and staff have correct instructions, anticipate problems, and produce the daily production lists.
- Make decisions on plant capability — what the shop can produce and on what schedule — and communicate specification changes promptly and accurately to production staff.
- Provide technical problem-solving support to production staff, and perform prepress, press and bindery quality checks.

Workflow, Technology and Systems

- Own the accuracy and usefulness of production data in our print MIS (Pace / ePS): job costing, estimating standards, production time standards, scheduling and shop-floor data collection. Ensure the numbers the shop makes decisions from are trustworthy.
- Drive workflow automation across the plant. Identify manual steps between order entry, prepress, press and finishing that should be automated, and lead their implementation — automated preflight, imposition, job ticketing, and MIS-to-device integration using JDF/XJDF and JMF or equivalent.
- Connect the front end to the floor. Work with sales and CSRs on online ordering and web-to-print pathways that deliver standardized, production-ready specifications into prepress rather than work that must be rebuilt by hand.
- Maintain color management and process control across offset, digital and wide format — calibration, profiling and consistency to a recognized standard such as G7, so that color is predictable and reruns are rare.

- Evaluate emerging production technology and bring recommendations to the Management Team and Collective, including AI-assisted estimating and scheduling, predictive maintenance, production inkjet, and automated and inline finishing. Finishing automation is a particular priority given the shop's market position.
- Report on production performance with data, including value added per chargeable hour by department, capacity utilization, on-time delivery, spoilage and rework — monthly, and in a form the Collective can act on.
- Maintain sound practice in sustainability and materials stewardship, including chain-of-custody requirements where customers require them, waste reduction, and responsible handling of substrates and consumables. Sustainability expertise and options has distinguished Community Printers almost from its inception.

People Leadership and Development

- Work with production staff to maintain performance at or above standard, and serve as a model in quality, productivity and work habits.
- Establish staffing requirements by department and adjust for workload, schedule changes and forecasts. Control overtime.
- Assist department Leads with hiring, training, evaluation and, where necessary, termination, consistent with Community Printers Personnel Policies and the Union Contract.
- Evaluate staff skill levels and make compensation recommendations. Identify and address performance problems constructively.
- Hold regular meetings with Leads and staff to set goals, review results, solve problems and gather suggestions. Maintain a positive tone and morale in production.
- Recommend training programs, including training in automation and new technology, balancing development against production demands.
- Develop job descriptions, duties, plans and timelines, and delegate clearly.

Standards, Quality and Continuous Improvement

- Establish, review and update production standards in consultation with the Sales Manager and Financial Manager.
- Ensure quality control procedures are in place and followed, and that monitoring systems allow problems to be caught early rather than at delivery.
- Study problem areas and customer complaints; report findings and implement changes.
- Keep production areas clean, orderly and safe, meeting Cal/OSHA requirements and presenting a professional image to visiting customers.
- Maintain knowledge of and be able to communicate the production and delivery status of every job in the shop. Support monthly Work in Process.

Cost, Capacity and Profitability

- Meet efficiency and utilization targets established in the budget.
- Work with the Management Team to operate within budget and control expenses. Approve production purchase orders.
- Assist Sales and the Financial Manager in setting realistic estimating standards, production time estimates and pricing — including identifying where our capability justifies a premium and where it does not.
- Identify idle equipment time that could be sold, and support sales efforts on new accounts and problem solving as requested.

- Maintain knowledge of materials, suppliers and competitive pricing. Manage vendor relationships and negotiate improved terms where possible.
- Ensure proper equipment maintenance and provide maintenance logs to the Management Team quarterly.

Planning and Cross-Functional Leadership

- Develop forecasts for staff, equipment, technology, facilities and financial requirements for Production.
- Research printing and related markets to inform short- and long-term production strategy, capacity and service decisions.
- Participate in researching and selecting new equipment, technology and production methods.
- Serve on the Management Team. Keep other managers informed of developments in production and work across departments to solve shared problems.
- Contribute to the formulation of the overall business plan, goals and objectives.

Qualifications

Required

- Substantial commercial print production and/or production management experience in a related field — typically five or more years — including experience leading or supervising others. We will consider a strong trainee candidate with less tenure who demonstrates the work ethic, judgment, organizational skills and tech background the role requires.
- Working knowledge of digital operations, production equipment, and the ability to make sound capability and capacity decisions.
- Knowledge of offset, finishing and bindery operations and related equipment a plus.
- Knowledge of paper types and sizes. Ability to assess appropriate substitutions when necessary.
- Demonstrated fluency with a print MIS — Pace/ePS, PrintIQ or comparable — including job costing, estimating, order entry, report production and analysis.
- Proven ability to schedule mixed technologies against competing deadlines and to keep commitments to customers.
- Ability to read production data and act on it, rather than managing by impression alone.
- Clear communication and a collaborative leadership style. This shop responds to explanation and respect; it does not respond to command and control.
- Willingness to work within a union contract and a worker-collective governance structure, including bringing significant decisions to the Collective.

Preferred

- Experience implementing workflow or prepress automation — automated preflight, imposition, job ticketing, JDF/XJDF or JMF integration.
- G7 certification or formal color management training.
- Understanding of the mechanics of how various pieces of production equipment work, and their parts. Experience troubleshooting mechanical and/or quality issues. Ability to engage with vendors and repair professionals.
- Experience with die cutting, specialty finishing, structural or packaging work.
- Wide format and signage experience.
- Fulfillment, mailing or direct mail production experience.

- Experience evaluating and justifying capital equipment purchases.
- Prior experience in a collective, cooperative, employee-owned or unionized workplace.

Physical Requirements and Working Conditions

This position is based on the production floor of an active print shop. It requires standing and walking for extended periods, moving between departments throughout the day, and occasionally lifting materials. The position will need to periodically engage in certain aspects of production in order to ensure jobs are completed on schedule. This includes basic skill level in paper cutting, operating finishing equipment, operating a forklift. The shop will train. The environment includes press noise, ink and solvent odors, and moving machinery. Reasonable accommodations will be made for qualified individuals with disabilities.

How to Apply

Please email your résumé and a brief note about your interest and experience to **Shelly D'Amour** at shelly@comprinters.com by **October 1, 2026**.



Scan for the online posting

Community Printers is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Qualified applicants with arrest or conviction records will be considered in accordance with the California Fair Chance Act.