

Mary Allen Turino

Location: Unknown

Date: Unknown

(Interviewer) Mary Allen want to tell me what your job is and how many years you've been with the company and basically what you do?

(Mary Allen) Well I have been at the TV station for three years now and I started out just working as a receptionist and I moved on to working into sales and sales assistant currently a co-op specialist which is a fairly new position at the TV station so I am still learning about that. Basically I help our sales team and our general sales manager. That's basically what I do.

(I) How many employees does WIC have?

(M) We have a total of...I am not exactly sure the total number but its seventy five, that's including part time. That's full time and part time.

(I) And you are full time?

(M) I am full time yes.

(I) And how old are you?

(M) I'll be twenty in a month.

(I) So you started there when you were seventeen?

(M) Yes.

(I) Ok I want a little background on WLUC what are there reach as far as the U.P. goes?

(M) Um we reach pretty much the whole U.P. we do have more counties as far as Wisconsin we reach them too but as far as signal it's all across the U.P.

(I) Do you cover the whole U.P. equally? Do you think? In your local programs?

(M) Um we try to. Um and I think we do a good job on doing that going all around.

(I) What do they have to offer local people as in shows?

(M) What we produce locally?

(I) Yeah.

(M) We produce our news, which is very good a lot of people tend to watch that a lot. With our local newscast around this whole area and we have a noontime show which is called Upper

Michigan Today which deals with the people and places of Upper Michigan today. It's an informative show and we also have a show called Discovering, that's an outdoors type show produced by one person. He goes out and he'll do the whole show by himself it's about hunting and fishing and all that kind of stuff that guys like.

(I) That's about it then?

(M) Locally yes.

(I) Everything else is what syndicated?

(M) Well its we are CBS and NBC affiliated. What that means is our primary affiliated is CBS and we carry all their programming. We carry NBC shows on a delay bases, we can't get them straight from the network we have to carry them on a delay bases. Um and all the rest of our programming would be paid programming that we, that's what we try to get. Paid programming is how we earn our revenue there at the TV station and barter they are called barter where somebody will give us a show and they give us maybe like three minutes of air time to sell and we sell a thirty second commercial for such and such price to pay for that half hour show. If it was a half hour to make up for it.

(I) And that would be part of your job?

(M) That, well no it has to do somewhat with my job, I don't actually go out and sell I help them sell. I help them with the paperwork, the office work and whenever they not around I handle their clients through the telephone but I don't actually go out and make a sales call like these guys.

(I) Mm ok. Ok I have what do feel about working there? How is it?

(M) It's an exciting place work because every day is different in sales anywhere just about every day would be different but this is kind of exciting in a way that it's television and it's free and loose. Where you don't have to come work all dressed up every day. You can wear jeans if you going to be going out on a shoot so called, it's just its different because you meet a lot of different kinds of people. Now you have obviously its television and you hear from a lot of people and you hear a lot of opinions from people about what you carry and what you don't carry and this and that.

(I) Do the sales people and the television personalities and all the different departments um mingle amongst each other? Is it a separate entity?

(M) Well that is different well each department, like in the sales department we all get along great, we all like each other and we would be more apt to go out with each other than we would a news person because basically... well the news department is downstairs this is like a two story building. And the office workers there are like upstairs and we tend to more upstairs against the

downstairs. Not really against but it's... to me it seems kind of like different I can't see anybody in sales going out somebody from news. Like a party not a like a party party but just to go out and have a drink maybe after work, is more likely. It's department by department but the departments upstairs mingle amongst each other too, we all get along. There is nothing, there is no hate relationships there.

(I) When the management changed over which recently happened um did it cause any changes in... the way departments looked at each other?

(M) Yes. Well it actually changed the whole... what word am I looking for? That spirit of the station like... the management err WLUC has been sold and bought many different times and with each new management coming in people didn't expect much change because it was going on and on like that for thirty five years that they have been on the air. When this management came they are younger and they are very money oriented, more so than any other company and a lot of changes were made. Some were bad but some were good but all and all it's pretty much settled down now and we are all pretty much know where the position is and we know what we are supposed to do. We aren't running around anymore.

(I) How did the new management effect your position or your department even?

(M) My department um they noticed that there was a lack of sales, in any business really, sales is where the money comes in so you have to have a good sales team. So what we did was we brought in more people for sales because their management realized that we didn't have enough people working so it affected me as in now I have more people to work for um I also got a pay raise. Um and I also work at a new job, the co-op specialist is my new job and I am still learning that job I'm not really into it yet so. But you know it's better for me now it's really teaching me a lot.

(I) Is that besides the experience and the teaching is there any other benefits that you can see working at a TV station that you wouldn't get in any other job?

(M) I'd say just the atmosphere basically because everything can be rush rush this and that and television is exciting if you look at it from a business point of view, that sure business is business and there are meetings you have to go with any business and they go over this and this. But the thing that makes the differences not in any job you wouldn't see somebody walking around with a camera in their shoulder, testing out a video tape. Just little things like that, you know making an appearance on a local show for something to do, it's just exciting that way.

(I) So you had a role in front of the camera as well as behind the scenes?

(M) Um I have been on television just a couple of times the local show Michigan Today, they have what they call cooking day. They have one day a week and that would be like a Friday and that's when we will have a fashion show on every Thursday and everything that has to do with

fashion showing will be fashion Friday would be something to do with food. I've cooked a recipe on the air before and I've also modeled different clothes for the fashion show.

(I) Is that common? Does everybody do it or you just...?

(M) Not everybody they don't ask everybody um I don't know they tend to ask me. I don't know.

(I) Because you are willing to do it!

(M) Right once you do it once you are kind of stuck in that position and they'll ask you next time.

(I) What is the tension breakers at times at work? Things that keep you motivated?

(M) Well um every year they, the sales staff gets to go on what we call a weekend retreat on the Keweenaw at the Copper Harbor, at the Keweenaw Mountain Log. Its where you take off of work Friday morning or even Thursday night you can go up there, the whole weekend is free the television station picks up the whole bill and there is a golf tournament on the Friday day. If you are a serious golfer there is a serious golf game with silly rules which makes it fun otherwise you can leave on a Friday morning and get there. It's nothing to do with business either it's all pleasure, just getting to know the people you work with on a different bases and its really relaxing if you ever been up to Keweenaw it's the log cabins where you stay and it's just so relaxing and if that the kind of atmosphere you like. You are not forced to go, you don't have to go um but its real fun and the only thing mandatory that whole weekend is that Saturday afternoon you have to play nine I think nine holes of golf and its silly rules. Like you get prizes for the worst score, prizes for the silliest distraction while someone is playing, something really silly it's fun is what it is.

(I) Do you think your age affects how the other employees look at you? Or how can you tell?

(M) At first it did, at first it did. Because I was seventeen so I wasn't that mature on the business point of view I have matured a lot over the past three years and they've noticed it and I've had people tell me that they notice it. It's easier to work, it was different with me because I started out when I was in high school working part time. So I was still wanting to have fun with my high school friends you know when you go to a business you have to have professional it was difficult. And they saw it and now that I am not in school anymore they just, they noticed a change in me and they said you know you really matured and you are a real benefit to this station and this and that type of thing.

(I) What do you think of the Someplace Special campaign? Who's behind it?

(M) Well there's... that was that started out with just t-shirts. We... they have companies where you can ask for a logo, you can ask for saying and you can use it. Well that's what happened to

us and we got it to copy right it for as a rainbow with Upper Peninsula, Someplace Special Part and it just started out as being t-shirts and we could not believe how much they sold. This camping wasn't meant to bring in money for the station and now we have what we call our rainbow room which does bring in revenue for the station. It's still going strong which is amazing, we have people coming in and tell us where they are going to send these and we have a map we stick where all our products have gone and they have gone all over the world which is really what is not expected when the campaign first started.

(I) You had to change the logo is that going to effect that at all?

(M) Well the logo is changing on everything but the rainbow room because we have a lot of products there with the old logo and it be too much to all of a sudden take those and set them aside and never use them ever again and put a new logo on. The logo was only changed, the rainbow room doesn't have WLUC or TV6 on it, it just has a rainbow on it just says upper Michigan Someplace Special. When the logo was changed the TV6, the way TV6 was written was changed so it didn't effect we still have the rainbow on the logo but its set differently now. So it didn't change what the products were because the products didn't have the TV6 to begin with.

(I) What do you see as drawbacks of working at a TV station?

(M) Drawbacks? TV is never off the air quote on quote even if your cable is out, we are still there running, weekends and twenty four hours a day this type of thing. There is always someone at the TV station, which makes it bad for holidays, and having the weekends offs. I've got it nice because I work an office 8-5 Monday through Friday but like the – production room like news anchors they start at like three in the afternoon and they work to midnight. Which are odd hours that's the biggest drawback I would say, if you had a normal family life it be hard to work that into your schedule those kind of hours.

(I) Do you called upon a lot to come help with the telethons and other local promotions?

(M) Yeah the local promotions not counting here the telethons is what the sales staff usually puts together it's like for revenue generator. We are behind the scenes um of getting the promotion started this and that type of thing but that's pretty much all I have to do with it.

(I) And the telethons?

(M) The telethons are different they're are not, they... the difference about the telethons is I don't know a lot about the telethons but I do know that they... we have one person working in the TV station on the – and that's all that takes up there job. It's all on a voluntary bases and we have some of our on-air people host it for PR you know but that's just about it.

(I) Yeah.

(M) But as for us actually going out and looking I have nothing to do with the telethon really unless they want me you know I've been asked hey you want to come answer the telephone? Well there is a lot of other people out there who can be asked to use the telephone you know answer telephones who don't work at the TV station.

(I) Back to um the age factor, do you feel like customers realize it? Or customers hesitate to go through you or maybe just hear you from the phone and...?

(M) They hear me through the phone basically so they don't know basically how old I am. Right.

(I) Ok I always want to ask you um what about the competition as far as local station goes I know there is not...

(M) We've got it really good because there aren't any local stations around, we don't compete locally. I'd say one of our biggest competitors... well newspaper print that kind of thing direct mail orders um we compete against them, compete against Bresnan Cable but as far as competing against a TV station our closest competitor would be WJAM in Green Bay. But our DMA which is our designated marketing area um it overlaps with JAM's DMA so there is that little bit of competition there. But as far as our reach we are the only TV station here so we don't really compete against any other local. Now there is one that is supposed to be coming which we will be competing with um that's going to be another local station, we don't know what they are going to be affiliate with network or what but they would be our competition. If this goes through and there is new television station coming.

(I) What about your office do you compete with other sales people over ads or even on commission or anything?

(M) Well sales people get paid on commission and that started just recently. Before there had never really been competition and it's not like its competition, sometimes...I remember there was one kind of one little spat between two guys in the sales office. But as for that kind of thing they all have a client list and everybody knows they have to stay away from, they can't cross... it's called cross calling two people can't call on one business. That's cross calling and they have their call list and that's who they call on and if there is a business up there that's who basically whoever gets to it first. Or if there is someone who is not on the air and haven't been on the air for two years it goes back into the pool, where anybody can call on and you can go in and make what is called a cold call just walk and say boom you know tell them about TV and say do you want to buy? Now that's on their client list so it's good to be aggressive in sales so you get a bigger client list.

(I) So you are based on what you do sell your clients? Your...

(M) Right right.

(I) So in a nut shell what do you think of being a member of WLUC Someplace Special team?

(M) Well in a nutshell... that's a hard one. Um what do I think, what was that again now? What do I think of...?

(I) Being a member of the...

(M) Of the team. As in any business it's neat to have another family and basically that's what they are they are my work family. And I can see... they are people I wouldn't have known if I never worked there and I like it because it brings in a lot of, its teaching me for future years if I am there for the next thirty years or I'm not there, it's giving me a good learning experience. Learning all the different you know facets of the work its interesting very interesting, exciting. That's a good word.

(I) Ok thank you.

(M) You are welcome.

End of Interview