"The Power of Schedule" analyses and discusses thoroughly the status and characteristics of the scheduling process in today's public service television. Scheduling has become a key aspect of broadcasting management. Indeed, it does not only consist in planning activity but it is also a way of exercising actual management power. The increased role of scheduling is a response to the new competitive environment of broadcasting and may be viewed therefore as the result of the general industrialisation process in television sector. In this context, competitiveness and pursuit of economic and organisational efficiency are key to broadcasting management, including scheduling.

The study is based on the assumption that scheduling is very important in the new audience orientation of public service television. The change from programme planning to scheduling means more than a change of language. It reflects the new social conditions of broadcasting in which the control of audience(s) and audience flow raises constant problems. This is the background of the new approach labelled as "Management by Schedule", which is the focus of this study.

The practices and principles of scheduling in public service television organisations were investigated by a research team involving all Nordic countries except Iceland. As shown in a number of analyses of the new channel environment in all Nordic countries, scheduling has grown in importance as Nordic public service television channels responded to intensified channel competition in the course of the 1990’s. In particular, the object of the study is the Finnish public service broadcaster YLE and its two channels TV1 and TV2 in the time span from the Big Channel Reform of 1993 to the launch of the new digital channels in August 2001. The main research data making up the Finnish contribution to the joint study consist of two kinds of material: on one side, records and documents on programming and scheduling activities, including strategic planning and evaluation, on the other side, interviews with relevant actors of the programming/scheduling process. Both these sources are very important, because - as the author points out - much of the scheduling process is rather informal and increasingly available online.

After a short history of Finnish television placing emphasis on the structural change of Finnish television in the early 1990’s as well as the relationship between public service and commercial television, the reader is introduced to the question of programming in general and to scheduling in particular (chapter 1). Programming is meant as a strategic tool for broadcasting management and scheduling (which, according to Eastman, is together with selection and evaluation one of the three stages making up the process of programming) is said to be a key process in the construction of broadcasters’ relationship with their audiences and society in general. Programming and scheduling are understood as tools for management in a double sense: in the internal control of output and production, on the one side, and in the external control of output and audiences as well as, in the last crucial instance, of the broadcasters’ relationship with a society as a whole, on the other. This is why one could, at a more general level, analyse broadcasting schedule as a cultural form. Indeed, the television schedule contains "the distillation of the past history of a channel, of national broadcasting as a whole, and of particular habits of national life" (p.7).

More particularly, the developing of scheduling is considered in the overall context of Finnish public service broadcasting throughout the 1990’s with a focus on major transformations including audience orientation, efficiency, accountability, transparency and competitiveness (chapter 2). Scheduling in itself is seen as a part of the broader process of programming which will be analysed as a dimension of strategic management and the subsequent construction of an internal market. In chapter three, the author reviews and analyses the adoption of Management by Schedule (in Finnish kaaviojohdattaminen) as an aspect of the new organisation and management of YLE Television in 1994 in order to fight the open channel competition with commercial television. In the following two chapters (four and five) the study moves on to describe the principles and practices of scheduling in YLE’s television channels as they appeared in 1999 and 2000 and discusses the consequences of Management by Schedule in terms of exercising power within broadcasting organisations. The idea here is to stress the management dimensions of the schedule, which make the schedule more compelling in relation to production than to audiences. As to these, the schedule is more about negotiating meanings than direct execution of power. One of the critical dimensions of scheduling is how it relates to the notion of "an internal market" and, in particular, to Producer Choice as an aspect of public broadcasters’ market orientation. The Producer Choice represents a form of creativity that makes it possible to manage the equation of ever growing output and saturated budgets. In this context, scheduling is related to changes that have raised questions about the reorganisation of power in-
side television. The basic hypothesis of the joint study is that the growing strategic importance of scheduling results correspondingly in more power for those actors inside public television companies who are responsible for scheduling practice. These people can be identified as "schedulers" or, in a more general sense, as "programmers". Finally, in Chapter 6, the future of Management by Schedule is discussed in relation to YLE's digital strategy. The description and analysis of YLE's digital strategy is a good example of the challenges which European public service broadcasters face on the way to digital convergence.

The author shows in depth how the adoption of Management by Schedule radically changed the traditional relationship between programming and production. The new way of action is based on a clear-cut distinction between programming and production functions. The schedule is a tool for broadcaster, that is essentially the publisher. Organisationally, broadcasting should be separated from production of programmes. Today, the publisher considers what is "the best menu and how to set and market it so charmingly" that one wants to receive it. In particular, present-day YLE prefer to articulate its accountability and social responsibility in terms of the so-called "audience orientation". This orientation can be seen as an effort to become more independent from the political market, the political decision-makers, who for example in YLE's case still have the formal power over the organisation. The adoption of Management by Schedule in YLE Television is very much a consequence of the new audience orientation. The power of the schedule is based on its potential use in structuring and systematising the broadcasters' relationship with their audiences. Earlier, there was at first a programme and then the schedulers tried to find an audience for that programme. Now there is first the audience as defined by the schedule and the schedulers and then the commissioning editors try to find a producer for programmers that would fit the orientation of the identified audience. Since YLE defines audience orientation as one of its basic value dimension, broadcasting schedule represents the normalisation and standardisation of output.

In the organisation of YLE's new television division, scheduling remained a channel-level activity. Being a tool for YLE's management, scheduling is first of all a measure of the television channels designed to keep control over their operations and to guarantee the implementation of strategy. The creation of the joint television division stressed the importance of co-ordinated action between the channels. Co-ordination was supposed to mean something more than avoiding the overlap of contents and target audiences. The intention was rather to create a closer link between the channel level operations and the overall corporate strategy of the company. The planning functions are closely integrated in the scheduling process of the two channels. To summarise, one should emphasise the planning has a double role in the process. As the case of TV1 in particular points out, it plays an important role in the construction of the strategy. On the other hand, it contributes both to the immediate and the more long-term evaluation of "the result", that is the success of the strategy. The double role of planning in the scheduling process demonstrates that the whole idea of Management by Schedule is based on continuous interplay between strategy and its evaluation. The strategy is valid only through a running evaluation of its implementation.

The author argues that the new style of management not only affected organisation and working practices, but also resulted in a major change of corporate culture and called for a new kind of professionalism, representing a new more industrial and market-oriented approach to public service broadcasting. Thus, Management by Schedule resulted in a more clear-cut division of work between programming, the broadcaster-level of activities and production, which was identified as a power shift from production to programming. In public service television the introduction of Management by Schedule is identified as the need for more effectiveness.

---

**Rating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Criteria</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Approach / Methodology</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of the Analysis</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of new Knowledge</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and Style of Writing</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating Points: excellent: ++++</td>
<td>poor: +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Tampere University Press, 2002

174 pages

ISBN 951-44-5427-8

http://granum.uta.fi

---

**Review Author**

Benedetta Prario,  
University of Lugano,  
(Università della Svizzera Italiana),  
Switzerland  
prario@lu.unisi.ch