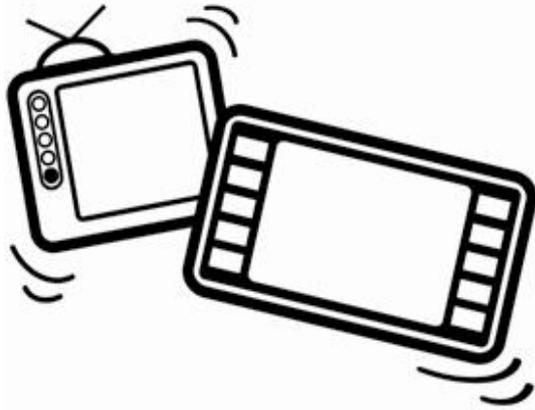




## 5 Reasons why working on TV shows can be better than movies [by Stuart Bray](#)



**There have been some major changes in the way TV gets delivered, and this has had a massive effect on the industry. Shortcuts and concessions made on makeup effects for TV just wouldn't cut it now.**

Consider the end result before the digital revolution in TV-smaller screens and at best recorded to videotape. Working on a TV show was thought to be second best to being on a major film! TV shows now have a lot more prestige, budget and creativity. So what could this mean to a makeup artist, and why does it matter?

### **TV has become epic**

Good writing gets taken seriously, with US shows like *The Shield*, *Lost*, *24*, *The Wire*, *Prison Break*, and *Heroes* to name but a few. Here in the UK, *Dr Who*, *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* are all popular and media savvy shows with very cool teaser trailers to whet the appetite. The US still have the most prolific output which is viewed extensively around the world- and then sets the bar. A season or series of a show can run into a lot of hours, allowing for more extensive plot and character development than a feature film allows. This makes TV shows often a lot more involved, and a season running for a number of weeks can create an ongoing buzz which movies don't have time to foster.

Better digital effects have allowed much more freedom, and cinematography is much more sophisticated than it used to be. This all makes for a slicker show and more kudos on the résumé. As a result good work gets seen and talked about.

### **TV can make money**

Movies made their money with ticket sales at the cinema, then hopefully with the licensing of merchandise and video and DVD sales. TV doesn't need ticket sales, but good TV is something to be advertising in during commercial breaks. Even if there are no commercials there are posters, T-shirts, toys...in fact anything you can stick an image or logo onto. DVD sales of TV shows can be just as popular as movies. Shows can sell as season sets and boxed sets, with added holiday specials, extras, making of documentaries and special editions. Then you can have spin off series resulting in more episodes with more work for more crews.

Also, a TV show can ramp up the merchandising each season depending on viewing response, so more merchandising is commissioned only when the popularity of a show is certain. Additional seasons of shows can build up fanbases, or become spin off shows if that's what the fans like, which can do all the above *again*. With movies, a lot of risk is involved with merchandising because of the lead times necessary to make all the stuff. If the movie is a flop you are left with a lot of unsold lunchboxes. The bottom line is there is good money to be made from good TV.

## Learn Prosthetic Makeup: 5 Reasons why working on TV shows can be better than movies

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### **TV is in your living room**

That means lots of people will watch it. Sounds obvious, but you can stumble across shows by accident, check them out for five minutes or watch an entire season without leaving your sofa. For the latest movies in a cinema, you need to get yourself to the multiplex and shell out for a ticket. This all means that more people are likely to have seen-or can see-your work

### **TV turnaround time is quicker**

Which means your work is out there sooner. Movies can take at least a year or two to hit the screens after production, and a lot can happen in that time. Things can take place in the world which could affect how the movie is received, and many times trailers, endings and plot lines have been adjusted to ensure the investment is well received. The [teaser trailer](#) for *Spiderman* featuring a web spun between the World Trade Centre towers is a case in point.

From a portfolio perspective, you can feature images of your work sooner. Usually, when you are involved a show of any kind, you agree to terms of privacy which prevent you from showing off your work until it has become aired-a very sensible policy indeed. It could be a valuable plot point based on a makeup, revealing the return or death of a leading character, for example. With TV shows not having to dance to the distributor drums, they can get in the public domain that much quicker.

### **TV crews tend to be nicer**

People are people, obviously, but TV crews are usually smaller and more intimate. If you are lucky enough to work on a show that will go for another season there's a good chance you'll see them again. Movies are a bit more brutal with crew, as the stakes are much higher so the teeth are sharper and the bark is louder. That's not to say film crews can't be nice too, just that generally TV crews tend to be a tighter unit.

Happy sticking!  
Stuart

Questions or comments about this article?  
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