

Mixed Results for Women and Minorities
 By Bob Papper and Michael Gerhard

The latest figures from the Annual RTNDA/Ball State University Survey show the largest percentage of women television news directors ever, a slight increase in minority news directors, but a slide downward in the percentage of minorities overall.

Women now make up 25.9 percent of TV news directors—that’s almost 2 percent higher than the previous record. Minorities edged up to 9.2 percent of television news directors.

At 20.6 percent, the TV minority workforce slid back from last year’s all-time high of 24.6 percent to just above the level from two years ago. Excluding Hispanic stations, the drop is less: from last year’s 21.8 percent minority to this year’s 19.0 percent. Other than last year, that’s the highest percentage of minorities at non-Hispanic stations that we’ve ever recorded.

So why are we down from last year? There are two possibilities. First, last year’s data could simply represent a statistical anomaly. We’re always at the mercy of who returns the survey, and last year’s sample could have over-represented the population. Another possibility is that the downturn in the economy has hurt minority numbers. As scarcer minorities may have moved up in market size, many stations were not able to make hires to replace them, and that could lead to an overall drop in percentage.

Most of the decrease from last year is among Hispanics. Michael Reyes, Member Services Manager of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists says the group can’t really compare last year’s membership figures to this year’s, but that there “definitely has not been a drop.” He says the numbers have been “consistent if not up slightly.”

The other group taking the biggest hit is Asian American. Randall Yip, executive producer at KNTV in San Francisco and Vice President of Broadcast for the Asian American Journalists Association says much the same thing—that they have no evidence of a drop in number.

Since the numbers for both Hispanics and Asian Americans tend to represent historic norms, that suggests that last year’s data may well have overstated the percentages.

Broadcast News Work Force ... Television

	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995
Caucasian	79.4%	75.4%	79.0%	81.0%	80.0%	79.0%	81.0%	82.9%
African American	9.3%	9.9%	11.0%	9.0%	10.0%	10.0%	9.0%	10.1%
Hispanic	7.7%	10.1%	7.0%	7.0%	6.0%	7.0%	6.0%	4.2%
Asian American	3.1%	4.1%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	2.2%
Native	0.5%	0.6%	<1.0%	<1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.6%

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Broadcast News Work Force ... Radio

	2002	2001	1994
Caucasian	92.0%	89.3%	85.3%
African American	4.1%	5.2%	5.7%
Hispanic	2.4%	5.5%	7.5%
Asian American	0.8%	<1%	0.6%
Native American	0.7%	<1%	1.0%

In television, minorities dropped to 20.6 percent—but the numbers are generally in line with historic trends other than last year. Without Hispanic stations, the minority percentage fell from last year's 21.8 percent to 19.0 percent this year. In radio, after a slight up tick last year, minorities continued the general slide that started with the elimination of the EEO guidelines.

Broadcast News Directors ... Television

	2002	2001	1994
Caucasian	90.8%	92.0%	92.1%
African American	2.0%	0.6%	1.6%
Hispanic	5.8%	5.7%	3.8%
Asian American	0.4%	1.1%	1.5%
Native American	1.0%	0.6%	1.0%

Broadcast News Directors ... Radio

	2002	2001	1994
Caucasian	94.9%	95.6%	91.4%
African American	1.9%	1.5%	5.4%
Hispanic	2.6%	2.9%	2.4%
Asian American	0	<1%	0
Native American	0.6%	<1%	0.8%

There has been a slight rise in the percentage of minority television news directors, primarily among African Americans. Among non-Hispanic stations, the percentage of minority news directors rose from 5.3 percent to 6.7 percent. Radio has changed little in the last few years.

Women in Local TV News

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of	Average Number of Women on

			Work Force	Staff
All Television	93.6%	25.9%	38.6%	11.3
Network Affiliates	97.4%	20.3%	39.9%	12.2
Independents	93.3%	29.4%	33.8%	9.4
DMA 1-25	100.0%	28.0%	38.5%	19.7
DMA 26-50	93.9%	14.3%	38.9%	17.0
DMA 51-100	94.7%	13.3%	37.5%	13.2
DMA 101-150	93.1%	24.6%	40.4%	9.1
DMA 151+	90.6%	23.2%	38.1%	5.9
Staff 51+	100.0%	15.0%	38.9%	24.2
Staff 31-50	98.7%	17.7%	39.2%	13.2
Staff 21-30	100.0%	22.6%	35.5%	8.4
Staff 11-20	100.0%	35.9%	42.1%	5.9
Staff 1-10	52.6%	4.8%	35.4%	1.4

The biggest change here is the record number of women news directors—now 25.9 percent. It's possible that the number hasn't really jumped, but that we're just finding them. If we used projected numbers based on survey returns, we'd report that 20.4 percent of TV news directors are women. While most of the numbers above are projected from the smaller sample of returned surveys, the overall number above is an actual census count. That means that, for some reason, women news directors were less likely to fill out the annual survey than men. There has been little change in the overall percentage of women in TV news in the last year. Staffs with women dropped slightly from last year's 97 percent. The workforce percentage dropped a hair from last year's 39.7 percent. That's still just off the all-time high of 40 percent. There were not many meaningful differences based on geography or network affiliation. ABC and CBS affiliates were a little less likely to have women news directors, but PBS affiliates that do news were far less likely to have women on the news staff and dramatically less likely to have a woman news director.

Women in Local Radio News

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of Work Force	Average Number of Women on Staff
All Radio	49.2%	22.3%	32.5%	1.4
Major Market	66.7%	26.1%	42.9%	3.2
Large Market	62.5%	31.0%	37.6%	1.5
Medium Market	50.0%	22.4%	32.0%	1.3
Small Market	32.7%	13.3%	19.5%	0.6

There are no dramatic changes from last year. The percentage of staffs with women increased a little (from 46.4 percent). Women news directors remained steady (versus last year's 21.9 percent). But the percentage of women in the radio work force dipped from last year's record high of 37.4 percent. Major markets are those with 1 million or more listeners. Large markets are from 250,000 to 1 million. Medium markets are 50,000 to 250,000. Small markets are fewer than 50,000.

Minorities in Local TV News

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of Work Force	Average Number of Minorities on Staff
All Television	83.1%	9.2%	20.6%	5.2
Network Affiliates	86.9%	4.1%	16.3%	5.1
Independents	73.3%	33.4%	41.0%	11.5
DMA 1-25	95.0%	8.7%	30.2%	16.1
DMA 26-50	87.9%	8.6%	18.7%	8.2
DMA 51-100	96.4%	5.2%	15.7%	5.4
DMA 101-150	78.6%	6.9%	13.6%	3.1
DMA 151+	66.0%	7.4%	13.2%	2.1
Staff 51+	100.0%	10.5%	22.0%	13.9
Staff 31-50	94.7%	5.3%	17.3%	5.7
Staff 21-30	92.0%	5.8%	14.8%	3.1
Staff 11-20	65.8%	8.6%	16.9%	2.4
Staff 1-10	35.0%	5.0%	5.1%	0.8

The percentage of news staffs with minorities slipped slightly from last year's 86 percent, but the average number of minorities remained the same at 5.2. Fox affiliates and independents were less likely to have minorities on staff than others, although PBS affiliates were less than half as likely as anyone else to have minorities on staff. Independents were most likely to have minority news directors; ABC affiliates were least likely. While there were not strong geographic differences in whether a station was likely to have minorities on staff, stations in the South and West were far more likely to have minority news directors and a higher percentage of minorities on staff than stations in the Northeast or Midwest.

Minorities in Local Radio News

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of	Average Number of Minorities on
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			Work Force	Staff
All Radio	19.8%	5.1%	8.0%	0.4
Major Market	43.5%	8.6%	13.1%	1.2
Large Market	32.1%	14.3%	11.2%	0.5
Medium Market	10.2%	3.6%	3.2%	0.1
Small Market	11.4%	0	5.7%	0.2

Radio results are mixed. The percentage of staffs with minorities rose from last year's 15.5 percent, but the minority work force dropped from last year's 10.7 percent. Minority news directors edged up from last year's 4.4 percent.

TV General Managers

	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
All Television	94.8%	5.2%	87.0%	13.0%
Network Affiliates	97.5%	2.5%	87.4%	12.6%
Independents	72.2%	27.8%	77.8%	22.2%
DMA 1-25	91.7%	8.3%	92.0%	8.0%
DMA 26-50	94.1%	5.9%	88.6%	11.4%
DMA 51-100	91.7%	8.3%	82.0%	18.0%
DMA 101-150	96.7%	3.3%	90.3%	9.7%
DMA 151+	98.0%	2.0%	85.5%	14.5%

The percentage of men and women general managers is virtually unchanged from a year ago, although women slipped slightly among network affiliates and rose substantially among independents. In the three years we've been tracking general managers, women have remained about the same, but minority general managers have dropped from 10 percent two years ago to 8.7 percent last year to 5.2 percent this time around. And minority GM's at network affiliates have dropped by more than half from last year (5.5 percent). Among non-Hispanic stations, minority general managers dropped from last year's 6.6 percent to this year's 3.6 percent. Note that the figures for general managers only include those stations with news departments; those without news departments are not included in this survey.

Radio General Managers

	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
All Radio	96.2%	3.8%	89.0%	11.0%

As with television, there's little change in the percentage of women general managers from the last two years, but minority general managers dropped from last year's 5.7 percent to this year's 3.8 percent.

TV Positions by Gender and Race

	Percent Male	Percent Female	Percent White	Percent Minority	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic /Latino	Percent Asian American	Percent Native American
News Director	79.6	20.4	93.4	6.6	1.3	4.0	0.4	0.9
Assistant News Director	67.4	32.6	87.4	12.6	6.2	3.8	0	2.6
Executive Producer	50.4	49.6	89.4	10.6	7.4	2.4	0	0.8
Managing Editor	70.3	29.7	86.9	13.1	7.4	1.9	3.8	0
Assignment Editor	59.6	40.4	78.2	21.8	13.2	6.1	2.5	0
News Producer	35.7	64.3	85.0	15.0	7.9	5.0	1.9	0.2
News Anchor	43.0	57.0	79.1	20.9	12.0	5.0	3.6	0.3
Weathercaster	80.5	19.5	90.9	9.1	3.1	5.0	1.0	0
Sports Anchor	92.6	7.4	89.4	10.6	6.0	3.8	0.8	0
News Reporter	41.7	58.3	73.8	26.2	12.3	7.9	5.4	0.6
Sports Reporter	91.9	8.1	89.9	10.1	6.1	4.0	0	0
News Writer	33.0	67.0	64.7	35.3	14.8	10.2	10.3	0

Photographer	92.7	7.3	82.7	17.3	9.1	6.7	1.1	0.4
Tape Editor	68.5	31.5	74.9	25.1	13.4	10.2	1.5	0
Graphics Specialist	68.0	32.0	78.6	21.4	8.0	6.7	6.7	0
Internet Specialist	63.3	36.7	93.9	6.1	2.0	4.1	0	0
News Assistant	36.1	63.9	77.0	23.0	12.5	7.9	2.6	0

We see relatively few trends developing as we look at specific newsroom positions. We collect this data every three years, and this marks the third time. Three years ago, it looked like both women and minorities were making headway in many of the higher end positions. This year's numbers tend to split the difference between 1996 and 1999. Women continue to be more likely to be news anchors, and that's likely to continue as women reporters continue to outpace men. On the other side, women made no gains in weather, although minority weathercasters rose slightly. In sports—both sports anchor and sports reporter—neither women nor minorities have advanced at all. And photographers, if anything, are slightly more likely to be white and male.

About the Survey

The RTNDA/Ball State University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2001 among all 1,396 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 1,505 radio stations. Valid responses came from 818 television stations (58.6 percent) and 249 radio news directors and general managers representing 622 radio stations. In television, uneven geographic distribution of returned surveys led us to gather additional data from 52 stations to evenly represent all areas, bringing the minority data responses to 870 or 62.3 percent. Data for women TV news directors is a complete census and is not projected from a smaller sample.