

Running in Place
by Bob Papper

The latest figures from the RTNDA/Ball State University Annual Survey show little change for minorities in television news in the last year and slippage in radio news.

In television, the overall minority workforce remained largely unchanged at 21.2 percent, compared to last year's 21.8 percent.

At non-Hispanic stations, the minority workforce also remained largely steady at 19.5 percent, compared to 19.8 percent a year ago.

After a jump in last year's minority radio numbers, the percentage fell again this year. The minority radio news workforce came in at 7.9 percent, compared to 11.0 percent last year and 6.5 percent the year before. Except for last year, minority numbers in radio news have generally slid downward since the stringent Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) rules were eliminated in 1998

News director numbers were mixed, with the percentage of minority TV news directors down slightly to 12.0 percent (from 12.5 percent last year) while minority radio news directors rose substantially to 11.0 percent (from 8 percent a year ago).

The bigger picture remains unchanged. In the last 15 years, the minority workforce in TV news is up 3.4 percent. At the same time, the minority population in the U.S. has increased 7.3 percent. Overall, the minority workforce in TV has been at 20 percent – plus or minus 3 percent – for every year in the last 15. Some years it edges up, sometimes down, but there has been no consistent change. Radio is worse, with the minority percentage in news down from 15 years ago.

Minority Population v. Minority Broadcast Workforce

	2005	2004	2000	1995	1990
Minority Population in U.S.	33.2%	32.8%	30.9%	27.9%	25.9%
Minority TV Workforce	21.2	21.8	21.0	17.1	17.8
Minority Radio Workforce	7.9	11.8	10.0	14.7	10.8

Broadcast News Work Force ... Television

	2005	2004	2000	1995
Caucasian	78.8%	78.2%	79.0%	82.9%
African American	10.3	10.3	11.0	10.1
Hispanic	8.7	8.9	7.0	4.2
Asian American	1.9	2.2	3.0	2.2
Native American	0.3	0.5	<1.0	0.6

Broadcast News Work Force ... Radio

	2005	2004	2000	1995
Caucasian	92.1%	88.2%	90%	85.3%
African American	0.7	7.3	5	5.7
Hispanic	6.0	3.9	3	7.5
Asian American	0.7	0.2	1	0.6
Native American	0.5	0.4	1	1.0

The minority TV news workforce is down slightly from last year – 21.2 percent this year compared to 21.8 percent the year before. African Americans remained the same, but all other minority groups dropped slightly. Asian Americans slid by three-tenths of a percent and Native Americans and Hispanics by two-tenths of a point. Fewer Hispanic stations returned the survey this year than last, which probably accounts for the decrease there.

Among non-Hispanic stations, the minority percentage was essentially unchanged at 19.5 percent, down slightly from last year's 19.8 percent.

The percentage of minorities in radio news dropped back from last year's 11.8 percent to this year's 7.9 percent. That puts the number more in line with past minority percentages since the elimination of the strict EEO guidelines. Hispanics, Asian Americans and Native Americans in radio news all rose from last year, while African Americans all but disappeared. Unfortunately, even as the number of radio stations that we attempt to survey goes up each year, the number returning the survey continues to fall. That means the radio numbers tend to bounce more than they should, depending

on which stations return the surveys and where those stations are located. And radio consolidation makes year to year comparisons even more difficult.

In television news, all groups are fairly close in distribution of men and women – except Caucasians with an almost 2:1 ratio of men to women. Asian Americans are the only group where women actually outnumber men, although the ratio is close.

Broadcast News Directors ... Television

	2005	2004	2000	1995
Caucasian	88.0%	87.5%	86%	92.1%
African American	3.9	3.2	3	1.6
Hispanic	5.8	6.7	9	3.8
Asian American	1.3	1.3	2	1.5
Native American	1.0	1.3	<1	1.0

Broadcast News Directors ... Radio

	2005	2004	2000	1995
Caucasian	89.0%	92.0%	94%	91.4%
African American	0.0	2.7	3	5.4
Hispanic	8.8	2.7	2	2.4
Asian American	0	0	0	0
Native American	2.2	2.7	1	0.8

The percentage of minority TV news directors slid from last year's 12.5 percent to this year's 12.0 percent, although it's still the third highest ever. African American news directors rose, Asian American news directors held steady, but Native American and Hispanic news directors dropped. .

At non-Hispanic stations, the minority percentage actually rose from last year's 8.1 percent to this year's 8.4 percent. Excluding Hispanic stations, Hispanic news directors make up 2.8 percent of TV news directors. That's up 0.4 percent from last year. African American TV news directors rose even more, from 3.1 percent to 3.8 percent, but both Native American and Asian American news directors decreased.

Native American fell from 1.4 to 1.0 percent, and Asian American dropped from 1.4 to 0.7 percent.

Minority news directors were most likely to be in the biggest markets but were also most likely to be in the smallest news departments. CBS affiliates were the most likely to have minority news directors, and minorities were most likely to be news directors in the South and the West.

In radio, the percentage of minority radio news directors rose from 8 percent last year to 11 percent this year. Native American news directors slid down, and African American news directors disappeared. Asian Americans remained at zero in the survey, but Hispanic radio news directors soared to 8.8 percent.

Minorities in radio were a little more likely to be news directors at non-commercial stations than commercial ones and more likely to be in the biggest markets and the Northeast. They were less likely to be at group-owned stations.

Women in Local TV News

	News Staffs With Women	Women News Directors	Women as Percentage of Work Force	Average Number of Women on Staff
All Television	99.0%	21.3%	39.3%	14.3
Network Affiliates	99.1	20.8	38.9	15.1
Independents	100.0	17.6	39.4	11.9
DMA 1-25	96.8	39.0	39.0	22.7
DMA 26-50	100.0	19.2	40.0	21.5
DMA 51-100	100.0	18.0	38.0	14.2
DMA 101-150	98.6	17.1	40.7	11.3
DMA 151+	98.2	18.2	39.0	7.3
Staff 51+	100.0	26.4	40.0	31.5
Staff 31-50	100.0	16.9	37.7	14.9
Staff 21-30	100.0	17.2	38.1	9.6
Staff 11-20	100.0	24.4	42.1	6.7
Staff 1-10	91.2	19.4	47.8	3.3

These numbers are little changed from a year ago, although women news directors dropped for the second year in a row (from 25.2 percent last year to 21.3 percent this year). On the other hand, women are most likely to be news directors in the very largest markets and at the largest news departments. NBC affiliates were the most likely to have women news directors, and they were most likely to be in the Northeast.

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	47.6%	24.7%	27.5%	1.1
Major Market	90.0	30.8	33.7	2.9
Large Market	80.0	35.3	32.3	2.0
Medium Market	40.7	25.0	23.8	0.7
Small Market	23.3	16.1	18.6	0.4

Radio news numbers are also little changed from last year. Generally, the bigger the market, the greater the likelihood of finding a woman news director and the higher the percentage of women in the news department. Women in the radio work force were most likely to be in the South and West; women news directors were less likely to be in the West. 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	87.2%	12.0%	21.2%	7.4
Network Affiliates	87.2	5.3	20.0	7.7
Independents	96.4	20.0	18.6	5.6
DMA 1-25	90.3	14.3	29.0	16.9
DMA 26-50	100.0	12.0	22.1	11.9
DMA 51-100	93.0	9.4	18.0	6.7
DMA 101-150	85.7	13.6	17.4	4.8
DMA 151+	67.3	7.0	14.7	2.7
Staff 51+	98.2	28.1	21.8	17.2
Staff 31-50	97.8	14.6	19.1	7.5
Staff 21-30	83.3	8.6	16.7	4.2
Staff 11-20	74.5	9.8	22.7	3.6
Staff 1-10	64.7	3.9	33.6	2.3

Minorities were most likely to be found in the biggest TV markets and generally dropped as market size fell. That has been the overall pattern in the past. The smallest news departments are also the most likely to have the highest percentage of minorities. That, too, has frequently been the case in the past because of small, independent news departments in the largest cities. Minorities were most likely to be in the South and West, but there was no difference by network affiliation.

Minorities in Local Radio News

	News Staffs With Minorities	Minority News Directors	Minorities as Percentage of Work Force	Average Number of Minorities on Staff
All Radio	17.1%	11.0%	7.9%	0.3
Major Market	40.0	7.7	10.5	0.9
Large Market	40.0	11.8	9.7	0.6
Medium Market	7.4	12.9	2.5	0.1
Small Market	6.7	10.0	7.1	0.2

There were few consistent trends for minorities in radio news, although minorities were generally most likely to be in larger markets – a pattern that’s been true for years.

TV General Managers

	Percent Caucasian	Percent Minority	Percent Men	Percent Women
All Television	93.2%	6.8%	83.0%	17.0%
Network Affiliates	94.7	5.3	83.5	16.5
Independents	97.1	2.9	80.0	20.0
DMA 1-25	91.7	8.3	85.7	14.3
DMA 26-50	87.0	13.0	85.1	14.9
DMA 51-100	96.1	3.9	83.3	16.7
DMA 101-150	96.7	3.3	81.7	19.3
DMA 151+	91.5	8.5	80.0	20.0

The percentage of minority general managers fell in line with the drop in Hispanic stations responding to the survey. The biggest change from a year ago was an increase in the percentage of women general managers from last year's 12.1 percent to this year's 17.0 percent. The smaller the market, the more likely for the general manager to be a woman. Women are also most likely to be general managers at ABC and CBS affiliates and most likely to be in the West and least likely to be in the Northeast. Minority general managers were most likely to be at one of the few PBS affiliates that run local news. Interestingly, most of the GMs at Hispanic stations (responding to the survey) were white, so the minority percentage of general managers at non-Hispanic stations was still over 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	96.6%	3.4%	79.1%	20.9%

The percentage of minority general managers edged down from 4.2 percent last year to 3.4 percent this year. Women general managers rose from 13.4 percent a year ago to 20.9 percent this year. Women were most likely to be general manager at non-

commercial stations, in the biggest markets, independent stations and in the West.

There were no consistent patterns for minority general managers in radio. Interestingly, most of the minority GMs in radio this year were Native Americans.

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	78.7%	21.3%	88.0%	12.0%	3.9%	5.8%	1.3%	1.0%
Assistant News Director	68.3	31.7	92.1	7.9	5.9	1.0	0	1.0
Managing Editor	72.5	27.5	90.0	10.0	3.8	5.0	1.3	0
Executive Producer	45.1	54.9	87.1	12.9	6.7	4.9	0.9	0.4
News Anchor	42.8	57.2	77.1	22.9	13.4	4.8	2.8	1.9
Weathercaster	79.0	21.0	92.5	7.5	4.1	2.2	0.9	0.3
Sports Anchor	92.8	7.2	90.2	9.8	7.5	0.8	0.3	1.3
News Reporter	42.2	57.8	74.5	25.5	13.2	6.3	4.5	1.5
Sports Reporter	89.5	10.5	87.1	12.9	10.5	0	1.2	1.2
Assignment Editor	53.6	46.4	79.5	20.5	12.3	5.2	2.2	0.7
News Producer	34.1	65.9	85.7	14.3	8.7	3.0	1.7	0.9
News Writer	44.4	55.6	70.9	29.1	14.5	8.5	5.1	0.9
News Assistant	33.7	66.3	71.2	28.8	19.0	4.9	4.9	0

Photographer	93.4	6.6	81.3	18.7	10.5	5.4	1.3	1.5
Tape Editor	68.0	32.0	70.1	29.9	16.9	7.9	2.5	2.5
Graphics Specialist	58.4	41.6	74.3	25.7	9.9	10.9	5.0	0
Internet Specialist	61.1	38.9	91.6	8.4	5.3	1.1	1.1	1.1

We ask about ethnicity by position every three years, starting in 1996, so we can see trends going back nine years. If there's a surprise, it's how little has changed in that time. Executive producers, managing editors and assignment editors are a little more likely to be minorities today. News directors, executive producers, assignment editors and sports reporters are a little more likely to be African American than they used to be. Hispanics are a little less likely to be sports reporters, and Asian Americans are a little less likely to be news reporters. But those are all the changes that are both measurable and at all consistent.

Comparing the percentages for each job against the percentages in the newsroom, minorities are most likely to be tape editors, news assistants, news writers, graphics specialists and news reporters (in that descending order). Minorities are least likely to be weathercasters, assistant news director, Internet specialist, sports anchor, managing editor, news director, executive producer, sports reporter and news producer (in that order, from least likely to more likely). Other areas come in reasonably close to the average.

Women are most likely to be news assistant, news producer, news reporter, news anchor, news writer, executive producer and assignment editor (in that descending order). Women are least likely to be photographer, sports

anchor, sports reporter, news director, weathercaster and managing editor.

Other areas come in reasonably close to the average.

Bob Papper is professor of telecommunications at Ball State University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. Data entry and tabulation were done by the Bureau of Business Research at Ball State. This research was supported by the Department of Telecommunications at Ball State University and the Radio Television News Directors Association.

About the Survey

The RTNDA/Ball State University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2004 among all 1,624 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 1,509 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,223 television stations (75.3 percent) and 103 radio news directors and general managers representing 417 radio stations. Data for women TV news directors is a complete census and is not projected from a smaller sample.

Women & Minorities Sidebars

Newspapers v. Broadcast

The latest survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that minority journalists make up 13.42 percent of newsroom employees at daily newspapers, up from last year's 12.95 percent. African Americans were 5.51 percent of the total, Hispanics 4.29 percent, Asian Americans 3.07 percent, and Native Americans 0.55 percent. Women increased slightly to 37.54 percent.

In contrast, minority journalists make up 21.2 percent of television newsrooms. African Americans are 10.3 percent of the total, Hispanics 8.7 percent, Asian Americans 1.9 percent, and Native Americans 0.3 percent. If we just look at English language TV news operations, the minority population is 19.5 percent. African Americans are 10.7 percent, Hispanics are 6.7 percent, Asian Americans are 1.8 percent, and Native Americans are 0.3 percent. Women make up 39.3 percent of the television news work force.

ASNE reports that minorities make up 10.8 percent of newsroom supervisors (broadly defined), with women in 34.8 percent of the supervisory roles.

In comparison, in TV news, minorities are 15.8 percent of the top four positions in the newsroom (news director, assistant news director, managing editor and executive producer). Women make up 48.4 percent of those roles.

For More Information

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