**TV News Director Profile ... 2018**

**by Bob Papper**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey found that TV news directors continued to age over the last year … but just barely. Nice job if you can do it.

**TV: Age**

The typical TV news director remained in the mid-40s. Okay, upper, mid-40s. The average age was 47.8, and the median was 47. That's almost identical to last year … which means either some changes took place … or TV news directors simply don’t get older. Well, they do at Fox stations. A year ago, news directors at Fox affiliates were about 3 years younger than others; this year, they’re slightly older than all the others.

Age differences were small across all variables.

**TV news director age by market size**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Market size | Average age | Median age |
| 1 - 25 | 48.8 | 49 |
| 26 - 50 | 48.7 | 47 |
| 51 - 100 | 48.1 | 48 |
| 101 - 150 | 45.6 | 45.5 |
| 150+ | 48.5 | 48.5 |

Overall, the age ranged from 23 to 76 … which is two years younger on the young end and six years older on the high end.

The average TV news director has been news director at that station for 5.1 years -- although the median remained at just 3. The average rose just a hair from last year. The longest serving news director at the same station has been there for an impressive 33 years. And that news director wasn’t alone in the 30+ club. And a bunch more will qualify in the next couple years.

It used to be that durability averages (time spent as news director) went up as market size fell, but that hasn’t been the case for the last couple years. There is no consistent relationship between market size and time as news director. Markets 26 to 50 had the shortest average time (3.9 years), but markets 51 to 100 were the only markets with a median time below 3 (it was 2).

A bit more news director turnover at Fox and CBS affiliates than the others (again). A little less in the West.

The average TV news director has been a news director somewhere for a total of 10.3 years … with a median of 7. Both of those numbers are down a bit from a year ago. The longest serving news director had been in that role, somewhere or other, for 42 years, which edged out another who came in at 40. Which also means that at least a couple other long-time news directors either retired or didn’t fill out the survey this year.

Averages varied inconsistently by market size, but all the medians were between 6 and 8 years. There were differences by staff size. Average total time as news director was about 11 for staff sizes 21 and larger, but they were between 8 and 9 for smaller newsrooms.

News directors at NBC and Fox affiliates had about 3 years less total experience than news directors at ABC and CBS stations.

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 among all 1,683 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2%) and 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting it from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.