**Is There Gender Discrimination in Local TV and Radio News?**

**by Bob Papper**

Well, is there? Almost certainly, the answer is yes, so the better question is how that manifests itself.

In the case of TV news, 44.4% of the local TV news workforce are women, but 34.4% of TV news directors are women. That differential probably answers the question on an overall basis. And I’d argue that’s especially true given that women have for decades dominated the producer category, which is the most common trajectory for news management.

I haven’t asked positions by gender for years, but I suspect the results would be much the same as it was: women are found in decreasing percentages as we move from producers (where women dominate) into managing editors and executive producers to assistant news directors and news directors.

The good news – and it is good news – is that the differential between women in local TV news and women news directors has been mostly steadily shrinking. When I started doing this survey nearly a quarter century ago, women were 37% of the local TV news workforce and 17% of the news directors. That’s a differential of 20 points.

Now, women are 44.4% of the workforce and 34.3% of the news directors. That’s double the percentage of news directors and a differential of 10 points between workforce and news directors. Not perfect … but clearly getting better.

What about salary? Funny you should ask. The only position I can determine salary discrimination for is news director. It’s really the only position with substantial numbers and for which a station only has one.

Overall, male local TV news directors make more money than female local TV news directors. Here are the averages and medians:

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|  | Average salary | Median salary |
| Male TV news directors | $111,400 | $100,000 |
| Female TV news directors | 103,900 | 95,000 |

That’s a differential of about 6%. But wait. That doesn’t tell the whole story. We need to look at the numbers by market size, by staff size, by network affiliation, and so on, because other factors could account for the differential in salary. If, in fact, there’s salary discrimination against women, then we would expect to find men winning a disproportionate number of comparable circumstances. But we don’t.

When we look at market size, we find that women make more money in the top 25 markets than men do. Men win in markets 26 to 50 and 51 to 100. Women win in markets 101 to 150 (with one tie). Men win again in the smallest markets, 151+.

When we compare salaries by staff size, we find that women make more with staffs of 51 and larger. Men make more in staffs of 31 to 50. Women make more in staff sizes 21 to 30 and 11 to 20. Make men more in the smallest newsrooms (1 to 10).

By affiliation, women were higher at ABC and Fox stations; men were higher at CBS stations; NBC split one each. Men took other commercial stations, and women took non-commercial stations.

Looking at the 18 possible comparisons: overall, market size, staff size, network affiliation … times 2 for median and average salaries … men won 18 comparisons … women won 17 … 1 tied.

Is there discrimination against women in local TV news? Sure, but it doesn’t come out in salaries – at least not for the top newsroom position.

**The same cannot be said in local radio news.**

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|  | Average salary | Median salary |
| Male radio news directors | $46,800 | $41,100 |
| Female radio news directors | 41,100 | 36,000 |

That’s a differential of about 12% -- double the TV difference.

Let’s compare all the radio variables. Men make more at commercial stations and at non-commercial stations. Women make more with staff sizes of one and 10 or larger newsrooms, but men make more at staff sizes of 2, 3 and 4 through 9.

Number of stations doing news in a cluster. Men win four and tie women in the fifth. How about market size? Men win major markets, large markets and small markets. Men and women tie in medium markets. How about corporate/organizational structure? Men win standalone stations and groups of 3 or more local stations. Men and women split in station combos (AM + AM, FM + FM and AM/FM).

So the envelope please? Men win 34 of the head to head detailed comparisons … women win 8. That’s almost certainly salary discrimination.

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**About the Survey**

The above data comes from the RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey, which 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.