

Newspaper Staffing, Diversity and Turnover

The Workforce Characteristics Survey gathers baseline information about the 1999 newspaper workforce in the four departments most directly related to readership – Advertising, Circulation, Marketing and News. All 100 newspapers involved in the Readership Institute’s Impact Study completed the survey.

Please note that, for purposes of analysis, newspapers were asked to include all employees involved in marketing or promotion in a separate category even if there was no separate marketing department, or if the employee was assigned to another department for organizational purposes. The survey excludes temporary, seasonal, contract and leased workers. Selected charts follow

1. Staffing levels and hours

The total workforce is distributed this way across the four departments:

- News-Editorial – 35 percent
- Advertising – 26 percent
- Circulation – 34 percent
- Marketing – 5 percent

Fourteen of the 100 newspapers reported no employees whose primary responsibility is marketing or promotion.

In News and Circulation, about one in four employees are in exempt (supervisory) positions, compared with more than 40 percent in the Advertising and Marketing departments. Also, in all departments, supervisors work an average of 3-7 percent more hours than rank-and-file employees do.

2. Diversity

The percentage of non-white employees averages 21 percent, ranging from a low of 14 percent in News to about 27 percent in Circulation and Marketing. At the supervisory level, the average is 4 percent, with a range from 2 percent in News to 6 percent in Marketing. At the level of top administrative executives, there is 7 percent diversity.¹

Overall gender diversity average is 55 percent male and 45 percent female, which mirrors the composition of the national workforce. There is a wide variation among departments. Men outnumber women roughly 60/40 in News and Circulation, with the percentages reversed in Advertising and Marketing. At the top executive level, men occupy 68 percent of the positions.

The highest percentage of non-white men is in Circulation. The highest levels of non-white women are in Marketing.

3. Turnover

Annual turnover of full-time employees in the four departments (total annual separations, voluntary and involuntary, as a percent of total annual workforce) averages 18 percent. News is lowest at 15 percent, with Advertising and Circulation about 19 percent and Marketing about 21 percent.²

The survey also examined the length of service of those leaving newspapers. Overall, about a third of those full-timers who leave voluntarily or involuntarily do so within a year of employment. Unlike other departments, however, newsroom departures are weighted more to people who have been at the paper for more than a year.

4. Recruiting and hiring

Of all people hired to fill open positions, 84 percent are hired from outside the newspaper and 16 percent from inside. Departmental variations range from 89 percent external hires in Circulation to 76 percent in Advertising. The vast majority of external hires are in nonexempt (or rank-and-file) jobs. Internal hires are more evenly divided between exempt and nonexempt positions.

Newspaper advertising continues to be the dominant method of recruiting external job candidates for newspapers. Some departments, particularly News, report making regular use of the Internet and informal networking (word of mouth). Techniques such as talent banks or community recruiting are not widely used. For internal candidates for open positions, newspapers rely mostly on internal postings rather than such methods as structured development programs and skill databanks.

Newspapers also were asked if they measure the time it takes to fill open positions. Fewer than one in five do.

5. Education and community background

News departments rely heavily on those with journalism or professional school training – nearly three out of four employees. Circulation departments report that two-thirds of their people did not attend college. Other departments have an even mix of those with professional-oriented college training, other types of college degrees, or other levels of education.

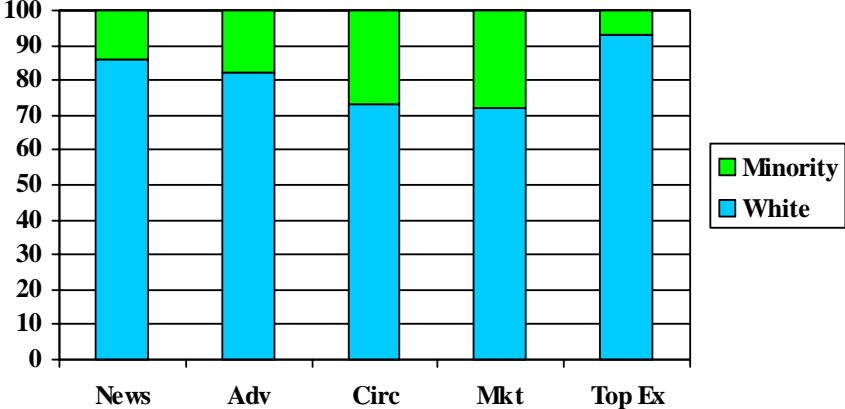
Another section of the survey asked about employees' job experience and community backgrounds. In all departments except News, the background of more than three out of four people are from within the newspaper's community or market. In News, community background is evenly split between inside and outside the market.

Newsrooms also rely more heavily on people with prior experience in the news industry – 81 percent. Another department stressing prior professional experience in the field is Marketing, at 62 percent.

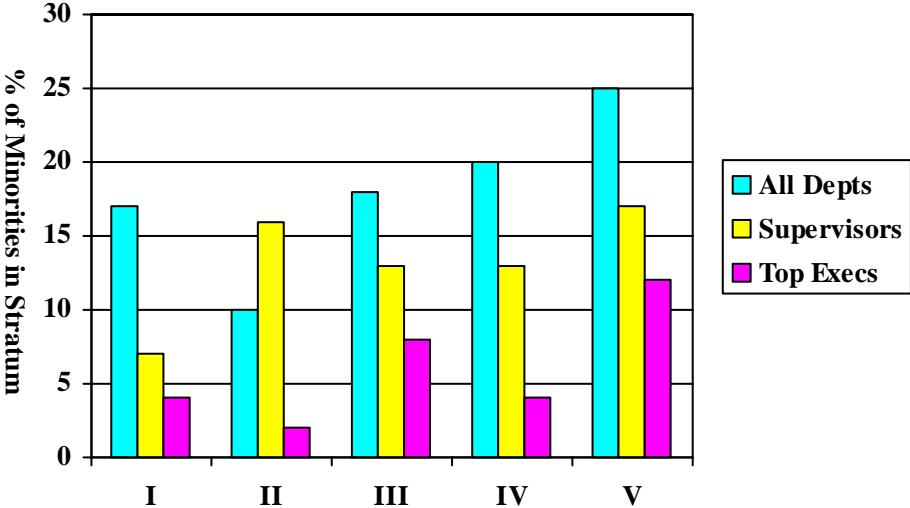
6. Differences by circulation levels

Smaller newspapers – those with less than 50,000 circulation – tend to have less ethnic diversity, higher percentages of women, higher levels of turnover, and more external hires than larger newspapers. Newspapers over 50,000 circulation tend to use a wider variety of methods in finding and evaluating job candidates.

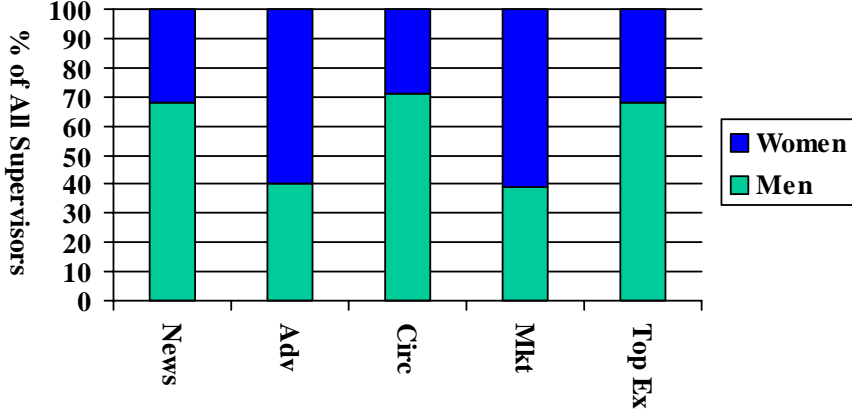
RACIAL DIVERSITY BY DEPARTMENT



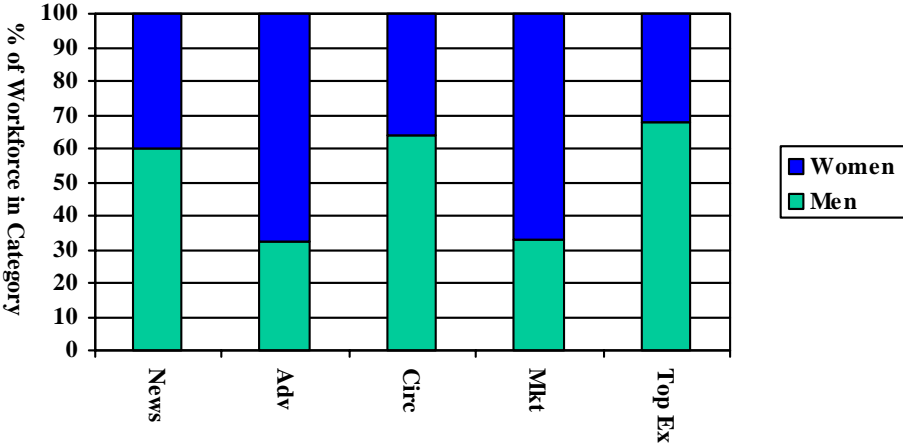
RACIAL DIVERSITY BY CIRCULATION STRATA



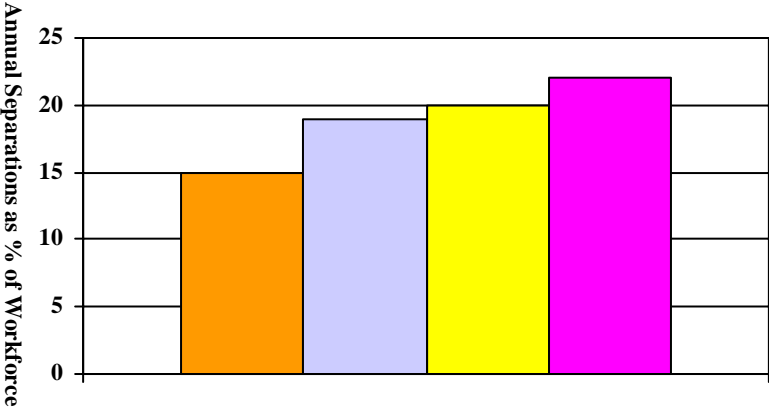
WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT



GENDER DIVERSITY BY DEPARTMENT



FULL TIME TURNOVER BY DEPARTMENT



¹ Minorities make up more than 28 percent of the total U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 1998 non-whites comprised 26 percent of the civilian workforce, which includes part-time employees and those who are unemployed but looking for work. In a 1998 NAA/Belden study, the employment level of minorities at newspapers was found to be 22 percent of all employees, and 18 percent for full-time workers. The American Society of Newspaper Editors reported newsroom minority representation in 1999 to be about 12 percent of the total staffing.

² The 1998 NAA/Belden study showed newspaper industry turnover at 17 percent among full-time employees, compared to 13 percent in a 1995 NAA/Watson Wyatt survey. Both studies included all newspaper employees. In mid-2000, the Bureau of National Affairs reported, the annual turnover rate for U.S. companies was more than 15 percent for both full-time and part-time employees. The rate for manufacturing companies was holding at 1999 levels, about 12 percent, while non-manufacturing businesses were averaging nearly 20 percent.