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Women Fail to Crack the Glass Ceiling In Communication Companies

Men Still Hold Vast Majority of Board and Executive Positions within Entertainment, Telecommunication, Cable, Publishing and E-Companies

Fewer than one in five board members of the largest communication companies are women, according to the second annual analysis of women in communication companies conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. Men account for more than three in four of the top executive positions across four different communication company sectors.

“There continues to be a dearth of women in the executive suites and corporate boardrooms of communications and e-commerce companies,” said Susan Ness, former FCC Commissioner and Director of the Information and Society Section of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. “With few exceptions, we have not moved beyond tokenism in the number of women in top leadership positions or serving on the boards of communications companies.”

Key findings of the Annenberg research include:

Entertainment: Annenberg researchers found that at the top of the leadership of 10 entertainment conglomerates, women comprise 13 percent of directors and 14 percent of executives. Fox Entertainment and USA Networks listed no women among their top executives in their 2001 Annual report. Clear Channel and AMC Entertainment had no women on their boards.

Telecommunication and Cable: In the 23 largest telecommunication and cable providers women account for 12 percent of directors and 16 percent of executives. Four telecom/cable companies had no women executives listed in their 2001 annual report, three had no board members who were women. NTL and Adelphia listed no women executives and no women board members in their 2001 annual reports. SBC Communications had one of the best records for female representation in corporate leadership with women comprising 29 percent of board members and 24 percent of top executives listed in its 2001 annual report.

Publishing: Among communication industries, women seem to fare best in publishing companies. At the top of the 11 largest publishing companies women account for 17 percent of directors and 22 percent of executives. Scholastic, Inc. had the best record for publishing companies, with women comprising 52% of top executives and 31% of board members.

E-Companies: At the top of the 13 most successful e-companies women account for only eight percent of directors and 18 percent of executives. Seven e-companies had no women serving on their board of directors. Two e-companies had no women included in their listing of top executives in their 2001 annual report.

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Communication companies with no women executives listed in their 2001 annual report: Adelphia Communications , Alltel Corporation, Fox Entertainment Group, Knight Trading Group, NTL, USA Networks, Inc., and WorldCom International, Inc.

Communication companies with no women board members listed in the 2001 annual report: Adelphia Communications , AMC Entertainment, Ameritrade Holding Corporation, Clear Channel, CNet, DoubleClick, E Trade Group Inc., Freemarkets Incorporated, IDT, Knight Trading Group, NTL, Washington Post, and Yahoo.

The Annenberg researchers found some improvement in the number of women highlighted at media and telecommunication conferences and meetings.

Women fare slightly better at lower levels of communication companies, but still fall behind men in executive positions for news and television production:

- In the seven commercial broadcast television and cable networks, women account for 32 percent of news executives.
- Among presidents and chief executive officers (CEOs) of over 120 broadcast television and cable networks (or channels) only 16 percent are women. Four out of five heads of local cable systems are men, as are more than four out of five heads of local television stations.
- Among publishers of over 1,450 daily newspapers in top 210 media markets, only 14 percent are women. Women are proportionately more often found among magazine publishers: they head 28 percent of over 550 magazines.

“With corporate governance under the microscope and stock exchange listing requirements tightening, boards are making an effort to increase the number of independent members,” added Ness. “Ironically, women may have a greater opportunity now than ever before to be tapped as top executives and board members. They should not be chosen, however, solely to add diversity. Women are ready with the expertise, the commitment, and the talent to provide shareholders and management with knowledgeable and dedicated service.”

The report was compiled by Svjetlana Tepavcevic, Graduate Researcher, Annenberg Public Policy Center, with assistance from Lorie Slass, using data from annual reports, SEC filings and company websites. Companies included in the report were taken from entertainment, telecommunications and publishing companies included in the *Fortune* 1000 and the *Fortune* list of top e-companies. Fox Entertainment Group and GeneralElectric were added to the list of entertainment companies because of their ownership of Fox Network and NBC.

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The Annenberg Public Policy Center was established by publisher and philanthropist Walter Annenberg in 1994 to create a community of scholars within the University of Pennsylvania that would examine the role of communication in public policy issues at the local, state and federal levels. The Annenberg Public Policy Center conducts research and sponsors lectures and conferences.