

The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 250 Films of 2009

by Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2010 – All rights reserved.

In 2009, women comprised 16% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. This represents a decline of 3 percentage points from 2001 and is even with 2008 figures (see Figure 1).

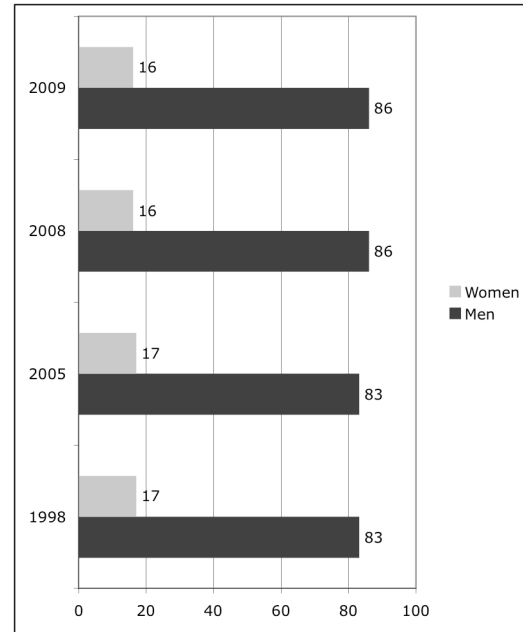
Women accounted for 7% of directors in 2009, a decrease of 2 percentage points from 2008. This figure represents no change from the percentage of women directing in 1987.

The following summary provides employment figures for 2009 and compares the most recent statistics with those from previous years.

Findings

- This study analyzed behind-the-scenes employment of 2,838 individuals working on the top 250 domestic grossing films (foreign films omitted) of 2009 with combined domestic box office grosses of approximately \$10.5 billion.

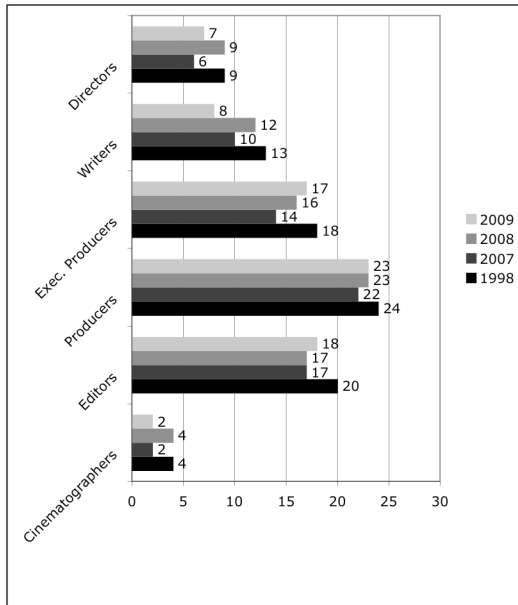
Figure 1.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of
Women Employed in Key Behind-the-
Scenes Roles*



*includes directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers

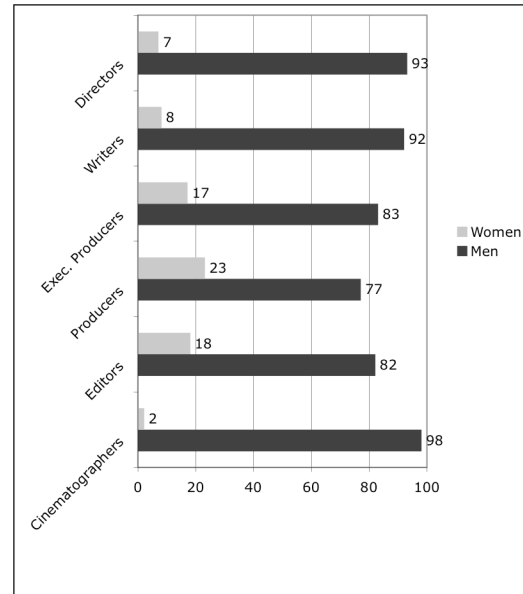
- A historical comparison of women's employment on the top 250 films in 2009 and 1998 reveals that the percentages of women directors, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers have declined slightly. The percentage of women writers has declined more substantially (see Figure 2).
- Women comprised 7% of all directors working on the top 250 films of 2009. Ninety three percent (93%) of the films had no female directors.

*Figure 2.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of
Women Employed Behind the Scenes on
Top 250 Films by Role*



- Women accounted for 8% of writers working on the top 250 films of 2009. Eighty six percent (86%) of the films had no female writers.
- Women comprised 17% of all executive producers working on the top 250 films of 2009 (see Figure 3). Sixty five percent (65%) of the films had no female executive producers.
- Women accounted for 23% of all producers working on the top 250 films of 2009. Thirty five percent (35%) of the films had no female producers.

*Figure 3.
Comparison of Percentages of Women
and Men Employed on Top 250 Films of
2009*



- Women accounted for 18% of all editors working on the top 250 films of 2009. Seventy eight percent (78%) of the films had no female editors.
- Women comprised 2% of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2009. Ninety eight percent (98%) of the films had no female cinematographers.

*Report compiled by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen,
Executive Director, Center for the Study of
Women in Television and Film, School of
Theatre, Television and Film, San Diego
State University, San Diego, CA, 92182,
619.594.6301*