

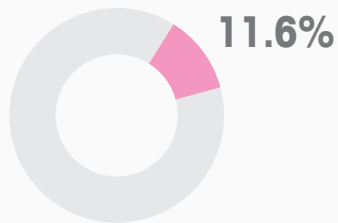


FEMALE CDS ON THE RISE

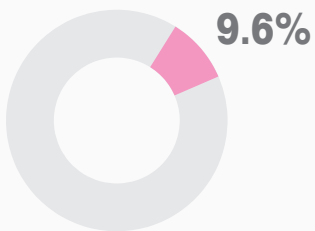
A 2014 study of women serving as advertising Creative Directors

SEPTEMBER 2014

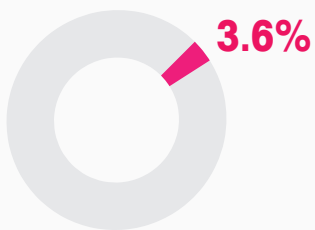
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN THESE ROLES



COPYWRITERS



ART DIRECTORS



CREATIVE DIRECTORS

Ever since The 3% Conference came into existence in September, 2012, countless reporters, students and ad folks have reached out to ask where the 3% statistic comes from.

While the figure itself is widespread, its origin is not. The number comes from a 2008 dissertation by Kasey Windels, then a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin. In *“Proportional Representation and Regulatory Focus: The Case for Cohorts among Female Creatives”*¹ and her subsequent conference paper, “An Exploration into the Representation of Female Creatives in Today’s Advertising Agencies,” Ms. Windels painstakingly checked the gender of award winners in the 1984, 1994 and 2004 Advertising Annuals of Communications Arts. She found just 3.6% of Creative Directors were female.



Nine years have passed since Ms. Windels conducted her original study, and as the final episodes of *Mad Men* loom on the horizon, The 3% Conference Founder Kat Gordon decided to mirror the study to see if the 2013 *Communications Arts Advertising Annual* revealed any new developments.

It did. ►

A photograph of a group of people, mostly women, clapping and smiling at an event. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark, semi-transparent overlay. The text is overlaid on the image.

The percentage of
female Creative Directors
in the Communication
Arts 2013 Advertising
Annual reached **11.5%**.
That's a 319% increase.

WE NEED A BETTER RULER

While Ms. Windels' study put a line in the sand around the issue, better metrics are needed to really survey the landscape of female CDs, accounting not just for those who won a particular industry award, but also the very real contributions of women who are:

- Freelance CDs
- In-house CDs
- Digital CDs
- Design Directors
- Experience Design Directors
- Creative Technologists
- Public Relations CDs
- Motion Graphics CDs

Currently the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not measure "Creative Director" as a job title, leaving the industry at a loss to benchmark its current state and for agencies to chart their own progress.

A couple of factors *may have* contributed to the improved figure in 2013:

- More women entering their work into the competition
- Increased awareness of the estrogen-driven consumer marketplace, making judges more likely to award work infused with a female sensibility

What we know *did not* contribute to the figure were more women serving as judges at CA in 2013 than in 2004, since Communication Arts reported to us that there were three (out of nine) women on juries both years.

We believe The 3% movement may have played a small part in increased visibility of female CDs and increased participation in entries.

You Are What You Measure

The gender bias of the advertising industry has been called on the carpet. It can no longer be swept aside. Ms. Windels' research spotlighted the issue when she published her findings in 2008. The 3% Conference continues to spotlight it today. But it is not enough. Better metrics are needed to fully survey the landscape of female Creative Directors. Relying upon the passion of a graduate student to unearth a metric and then the passion of a solitary advertising entrepreneur to create a movement to fix it shows how little attention this issue has received from our industry.

A look at the
consumer
marketplace
reveals
unprecedented
rates of female
influence.



Women control 73% of consumer purchasing and \$20 trillion of the world's annual consumer spending.²

They are more active on social networks and more likely to share a brand's message with others.³ Women also represent the majority of early tech adopters⁴, social gamers⁵, and are amassing wealth at rates that will culminate in control \$22 trillion of US wealth by the end of this decade.⁶

But perhaps the figure that matters most comes from Greenfield Online for Arnold's Women's Insight Team, where **91% of women reported they didn't think that advertisers understood them.**

In short, the consumers who brands should want to fall in favor with most report **overwhelming dissatisfaction with the way brands speak to them.** While good creatives are trained to market anything to anyone, a 97% skew (now recalculated to 89% skew) creates a level of groupthink that represents a group not holding the consumer reins.

The advertising industry does not have a recruitment problem, but a retention problem when it comes to gender diversity in creative departments. Portfolio schools are graduating equal (if not greater) number of women than men. Yet these same women "disappear" from the field right around the time they have the appropriate level of experience to be CDs. The 3% Conference tackles the many reasons why: lack of mentorship, lack of visibility of female CDs, award show jury bias, lack of support for motherhood and other factors.

WHAT AGENCIES NEED TO DO

Agencies that care about gender diversity can't improve upon their current state if they don't know what it is. A **company-wide audit** is needed to set current benchmarks before agencies can accurately measure whether their efforts at diversity are fruitful. The same holds true for ethnic and cultural diversity, which also are not reflective of the current consumer landscape, nor are widely measured and tracked.



60% of all personal
wealth is controlled by
women in the U.S.

#FEMININEFORWARD

* Barclays Wealth

POSSIBLE

As sponsors and avid supporters of The 3% Conference and this initiative, it seems only right that we know where we stand as an agency – for our clients and for our employees – so we can create the best work and be the best place to work. We’re excited to share our process with you, what we’ve done since then and what’s next, and ask you **what’s your number?**


Martha Hiefield

President of POSSIBLE Seattle

One agency that took the 3% message to heart is **POSSIBLE**. They undertook an audit of their 4 U.S. offices, revealing that **15% of their Creative Directors are female.**

POSSIBLE then made a plan to improve all offices’ state of diversity, tasking those POSSIBLE offices with better results to consult with those in greatest need of improvement. They have encapsulated the steps they took to create their audit into a presentation they will deliver at the 3% Conference on November 4 in San Francisco, entitled “What’s Your Number?”

If your agency would like to conduct a gender audit, we invite you to attend the fall 3% Conference and participate in an upcoming **#whatsyournumber** social media campaign.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a patterned top, stands at the front of a room, gesturing while speaking to a large audience. The audience is seen from behind, seated in rows. The room has large windows on the left side, showing a view of a city building. On the right, there is a large screen displaying "#3Per" and "POSSIB".

“The advertising business is a \$33B industry. Misunderstanding female consumers, from a business perspective, is sheer lunacy.

Kat Gordon

Founder, The 3% Conference

GENDER GAP GRADER

The first study published about airline pilots, using The Airman Database

gendergapgrader.com

As daunting as an agency audit may seem, especially to large agencies or holding groups, technology holds promise for getting a quick, accurate read on gender breakdown.

GenderGapGrader is one such technology which uses applied onomastics (the science of proper names) to extract the gender from personal names with high accuracy, making cultural inferences for names that can be both male and female based upon the surname. The company's mission is to publish gender gap estimates at the finest grain level, using whatever reference database can be identified for a particular industry. They have already conducted a GenderGapGrader study on Internet Movie Database (IMDB) for the film industry and published a study about the "The Airman Database" for pilots.

The 3% Conference is excited about how new technologies like these can be applied to large employment databases of the global advertising holding companies. Even LinkedIn becomes a mineable source for gender breakdown by different job titles globally. This is the scale at which we imagine gender being studied and reported regularly in the not-too-distant future.

FOOTNOTES

1. Kasey Farris Windels, “Proportional Representation and Regulatory Focus: The Case for Cohorts among Female Creatives,” University of Texas Libraries
2. 2009 Boston Consulting Group
3. Alex Hillsberg and David Adelman, “Most Popular Social Media Sites Review: Why Women Are The Real Power Behind The Huge Success Of Pinterest and Tumblr,” FinancesOnline.com
4. Alexis C. Madrigal, “Sorry, Young Man, You’re Not the Most Important Demographic in Tech,” The Atlantic
5. Mathew Ingram, “Average Social Gamer Is a 43-Year-Old Woman,” Gigaom.com
6. “Financial Categories Where Untapped Sales to Women Are Worth Trillions,” Harvard Business Review

THE 3% CONFERENCE

Started as a passion project to spotlight a huge business opportunity in advertising — the lack of female creative leadership and its impact on connecting with an overwhelmingly female marketplace — The 3% Conference has grown exponentially since its 2012 launch. Today it is a fully fledged movement: encompassing a 600-person, 2-day annual conference in San Francisco and multi-city “road shows” throughout the world, along with a vibrant online community, agency consulting, and a student scholarship fund.

3percentconf.com