



Women Versus Men

As the role of women in the profession grew, *T+D* tracked it.

By Paula Ketter

WHEN *T+D* BEGAN publishing in 1946, the country was a very different place, and so was the training and development industry. Men dominated the workforce and the industry, which made “Ladies Night” at local chapter and national events a common occurrence.

As late as 1970, the training and development field was 90 percent men. But in a 25-year period, between the mid-1970s and late 1990s, the percentage of women in the training and development field doubled, while the percentage of men in the industry fell 29 percent. What started out as a male-dominated industry quickly shifted to a female-dominated industry by 1999.

Today, ASTD membership is 66 percent female and 34 percent male.

August 1971

In “Human Relations Training for Women,” a *Training and Development Journal* article, Stephen D. Anderson and Nancy E. Anderson, both of The Dow Company, noted that a training-needs survey indicated that 77 percent of secretaries felt that training in human relations would be “helpful,” “very helpful,” or “extremely helpful.”

Industry has targeted training at the male sector of the workforce for many years. Proponents of such training believe that training programs will increase productivity and efficiency, improve job satisfaction, encourage feelings of self-worth, qualify people for promotion, and increase receptivity to change. It is our belief that all of those benefits of training apply to women as well as men.

The secretaries who responded felt that this human relations training would increase many skills, including human relations with others,

English grammar and punctuation, business letter writing, office practices and procedures, shorthand, and functional interrelationships of departments and company organization.

August 1973

In “Equalizing Advancement Between Women and Men,” a *Training and Development Journal* article based on testimony given before the California Commission on the Status of Women, Theodora Wells writes an honest account of the treatment of women in the workforce.

...Most entry-level jobs for women do not provide the kind of training or experience that lead to supervisory or management positions. Typically, the training is to increase skills—typing procedures, recordkeeping processes, keypunching, factory machine operation, and processing training.

Note the language in the following paragraph: *In manufacturing, where large numbers of women are employed, the career ladder is much shorter. Women may advance to lead-girl. Men who advance to lead-men are the group from which foremen are selected. The number of women who advance to foreman is virtually nil.*

...In conclusion, the problem of equalizing advancement potential of women and men requires considerably more knowledge, a coordinated organizational approach, and on-going evaluation from which modifications can be formulated. The perspective of women and men

ASTD Board of Directors

- The first female elected to the ASTD Board of Directors was Frances M. Kidd (1957-1958).
- In 1969, Inez Lauderbach became the second female to serve on the board.
- The first female to chair the board was Jan Margolis in 1979.

working as partners, peers, and colleagues is still so new that we are just beginning to see the implications of equalizing advancement opportunities between the sexes.

May 1999

In “The Female Profession,” a *Training and Development* article, Shari Caudron examines the influx of women to the industry. The rise in women in the profession corresponds directly with the rise of women in other male-dominated occupations, such as law, medicine, psychology, engineering, and accounting.

Though it may be hard to argue conclusively whether women are choosing HR or HR is choosing women, the fact is that more than two-thirds of people in the profession are now female.

...The key for women in the profession is not to give away their power or assume that they’ll be discounted because they’re women (or in training or in HR). More than ever, women need to focus on how they can advance in their companies, not on why they can’t.

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ASTD Membership	1970 Membership Survey	1981 Membership Survey	1992 <i>T+D</i> Survey	2000 ASTD Research	2005 ASTD Research
Male	90%	66%	50%	40%	34%
Female	10%	34%	50%	60%	66%

Note: In the 1965 Membership Survey, the question of gender wasn't asked.