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Oprah The Cable Gal

Something surprising, even shocking, just happened to cable television –besides Lou Dobbs stepping down from CNN, that is. Oprah Winfrey, the reigning queen of talk shows, magazines, book clubs and much more, announced that she is shutting down her dominating network daytime talk show, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, as of 2011 and is moving to a new cable network bearing her name: The Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN).

Not only will this shift potentially bring a significant chunk of network viewers to the subscription television business model (try 42 million a week) it transfers one of broadcast’s vanguards to a world already influenced by women power—as in on-screen talent, audience and decision-makers. If women were once a traditionally weaker ad target in cable, where traditionally male sports and news programming sprung early roots, that’s no longer the case.

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[Excerpt]

Innovators In The Office

In overall numbers, women are nearly half of the industry workforce in cable programming and distribution, a trend that is healthier than in other sectors. The Style Network, for example, says it has a senior management team that is 47% women. Another tell: Women are projected to constitute 15% to 25% of technical professionals in the U. S., yet in cable programming, they represent 27.4% of all programmer technology employees, 37.8% of new media employees and 39.4% of

engineers and project directors, according to a 2008 report by the group **Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT)**.

Of those at the senior executive level in the report, 26% were women, a number that has decreased by about 10% over the last five years. Members of WICT and others see the rising statistics in other job levels, however, as meaningful for the possibility that the woman-led cable network or writers rooms may begin shifting in coming years from an anomaly to the norm.



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