

# Marketing Renaissance: Opportunities and Imperatives for Improving Marketing Thought, Practice, and Infrastructure

My three-year term as editor of *Journal of Marketing* concludes with the October 2005 issue. On the basis of my interactions with various people in the marketing community, I believe that marketing science and practice are in transition, bringing change to the content and boundaries of the discipline. Thus, I invited some distinguished scholars to contribute short essays on the current challenges, opportunities, and imperatives for improving marketing thought and practice.

Each author chose his or her topic and themes. However, in a collegial process, the authors read and commented on one another's essays, after which each author had an opportunity to revise his or her essay. The result is a thoughtful and constructive set of essays that are related to one another in interesting ways and that should be read together. I have grouped the essays as follows:

- What is the domain of marketing? This question is addressed in four essays by Stephen W. Brown, Frederick E. Webster Jr., Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp, and William L. Wilkie.
- How has the marketing landscape (i.e., content) changed? This question is addressed in two essays, one coauthored by Jagdish N. Sheth and Rajendra S. Sisodia and the other by Roger A. Kerin.
- How should marketing academics engage in research, teaching, and professional activities? This question is addressed in five essays by Debbie MacInnis; Leigh McAlister; Jagmohan S. Raju; Ronald J. Bauerly, Don T. Johnson, and Mandeep Singh; and Richard Staelin.

Another interesting way to think about the essays, as Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp suggests, is to group the essays according to whether they address issues of content, publishing, or impact (see Table 1).

These 11 essays strike a common theme: They urge marketers—both scientists and practitioners—to expand their horizontal vision. What do I mean by horizontal vision? In *The Great Influenza*, Barry (2004) describes the enormous strides that were made in medical science early in the twentieth century. His depiction of William Welch, an extremely influential scientist who did not (as a laboratory researcher) generate important findings, includes a characterization of the “genius” that produces major scientific achievements.

The research he did was first-rate. But it was only first-rate—thorough, rounded, and even irrefutable, but not deep enough or provocative enough or profound enough to set himself or others down new paths, to show the world in a new way, to make sense out of great mysteries.... To do this requires a certain kind of genius, one that probes vertically and sees horizontally. Horizontal vision allows someone to assimilate and weave together seemingly unconnected bits of information. It allows an investigator to see what others do not see and to make leaps of connectivity and creativity. Probing vertically, going deeper and deeper into something, creates new information. (p. 60)

At my request, each author has provided thoughtful and concrete suggestions for how marketing academics and practitioners, both individually and collectively (through our institutions), can work to improve our field. Many of their suggestions urge people and institutions to expand their horizontal vision and make connections, thereby fulfilling their potential to advance the science and practice of marketing. In his essay, Richard Staelin writes (p. 22), “I believe that it is possible to influence directly the generation and adoption of new ideas.” I agree. I ask the reader to think about the ideas in these essays and to act on them. Through our actions, we shape our future.

—Ruth N. Bolton

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## When Executives Speak, We Should Listen and Act Differently

*Stephen W. Brown*

**C**ompared with some of the essays in this issue, this one is less about marketing scholarship per se and more about how marketing scholarship can contribute more broadly to business practice. I believe that marketing scholars can and should position their contributions

more to business in general rather than limit them to marketing practice. The underpinnings of this essay stem from a recent executive roundtable discussion that Ruth Bolton and I facilitated specifically for the purpose of developing this essay. Participants in the hour-long teleconference included five executives from IBM, Yellow Roadway, Luxottica Retail (i.e., LensCrafters and Sunglass Hut), McKinsey & Company, and Cisco Systems.<sup>1</sup> By design, only one

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<sup>1</sup>Roundtable participants included Frank Baynham, Executive Vice President, Luxottica Retail; Gary Bridge, Vice President, Internet Solutions Group, Cisco Systems; Greg Reid, Senior Vice

**TABLE 1**  
**Opportunities and Imperatives for Improving Marketing Thought, Practice, and Infrastructure**

Content	Research and Publication	Impact
Business practice (Brown; Kerin)	Multidisciplinary research (MacInnis)	Readability (Bauerly, Johnson, and Singh)
Marketing in organizations (Webster)		Serving stakeholders (Raju)
International marketing (Steenkamp)	Scholarship evaluation (McAlister)	Big new ideas (Staelin)
Marketing and society (Wilkie)		
Does marketing need reform? (Sheth and Sisodia)		

of the executives was from marketing, yet all participants had a deep interest in customers and topics of interest to marketing scholars. The executives represented organizations that are active in business-to-business and business-to-consumer spaces, and all were board members of the Center for Services Leadership at Arizona State University.

In the paragraphs that follow, I highlight six business opportunities and imperatives that were discussed in the executive roundtable. Some are directly related to the research of marketing academics, and all are important to marketing scholarship. I conclude by arguing how a broader perspective in marketing scholarship can offer greater value to business practice.

### ***Imperatives for Practice***

At the beginning of the discussion, the executives cited opportunities and imperatives in the transformation of organizations through the integration of business processes and the use of technology. First, IBM's Mike Wiley noted an "unprecedented fusion between a focus on business process and the use of technology to transform, reengineer, and then enable new processes." In Wiley's view, this transformation generates competitive advantage, cost saving efficiencies, and enhanced customer experience.

Building on this observation, Gary Bridge of Cisco Systems indicated that most of these improvements require cross-functional integration:

It's between the silos that we see almost all of the really large opportunities now. Within silos, I think there isn't much more to do. There just isn't much more we can do on supply chain management until we get to RFID [radio frequency identification]. There isn't much more we can do on CRM [customer relationship management] until we get everything connected. We do have all these governance issues to overcome that are between silos, not within silos.

According to Greg Reid of Yellow Roadway, the wave of mergers and acquisitions sweeping business adds to the mandate for integration. New organizational forms "[need]

to find connectivity and ways to leverage synergies" to increase competitiveness and provide additional value to customers. McKinsey & Company's Nick Semaca agreed with this observation, but he argued that opportunities for improvement still exist within silos for many organizations.

A second major imperative is in the art and science of execution. The roundtable participants observed a growing shift in emphasis from strategy to execution. Bridge noted that major companies know one another's strategies partly because they are announced in the newspaper and are featured in business magazines. Pointing to the Ritz Carlton Hotels, Semaca noted that in some instances, superior execution can be the core of an organization's strategy, as it is with Ritz Carlton's approach to customer service. Although it may not seem that profound, Wiley stressed that executing the strategy is much more difficult than many people think. For many firms, execution occurs at the interface with the customer.

The drive for executional excellence leads to a third imperative: more consistency in organizations. For example, Marriott wants its processes to be the same and its customers' experiences to be consistently positive whether the property is in Shanghai or Chicago. According to Bridge, this imperative also arises from firms' needs for standardization, economies of scale, and better and faster decision making. He also noted that organizations function best when all associates know their roles.

Paralleling this trend toward consistency is a fourth imperative: empowering people who are touch points with customers. Frank Baynham of Luxottica Retail stressed that frontline employees must be given boundaries or parameters but must also have the flexibility to treat each customer as an individual. Bridge cited a U.K. airline that empowers its employees to write up to a £100 check to a customer in real time to address a problem.

A fifth imperative the executives discussed was the notable development of providing customers with solutions rather than simply goods and/or services. According to Bridge, this often manifests in greater service emphasis and better content. He referenced General Electric, which is less interested in selling jet engines than in selling the more profitable multiyear service contracts that take care of everything for the client. Baynham noted that being solution oriented means spending more time with the customer, first

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President and Chief Marketing Officer, Yellow-Roadway; Nick Semaca, Director and Leader, Americas Travel & Logistics Practice, McKinsey & Company; and Michael Wiley, General Manager, Services Transformation, IBM.

listening to understand the customer’s needs and then offering solutions that he or she may not know are available. Reid cautioned that a firm must be able to deliver on the basics of its products and services before it can be successful in offering solutions.

The final imperative discussed was who is responsible for the firm’s relationships with customers. Semaca and Wiley noted that in their organizations, the people who develop and manage customer or client relationships are the same as those who deliver the actual services and solutions. Wiley added that for key clients, this can be a single person at IBM. Other executives noted that the customer must be a shared responsibility throughout the organization. Notably, none of the executives mentioned marketing as being responsible for the customer. Implicit in the roundtable discussion was the view that marketing and sales often have a major role in making promises to customers and in generating new business. However, the keeping of promises and building customer loyalty is typically considered the responsibility of others in the enterprise.

### ***Bridging Scholarship and Practice***

Several of the essays in this issue note the weak linkage between marketing scholarship and marketing practice. Further contributing to this scholarship–practice gap is the diminished role and influence of marketing in companies. Sheth and Sisodia indicate (p. 11) that “many strategically important aspects of marketing ... are being taken away by other functions in the organization.” The authors also note that at many companies, marketing has become a form of sales support.

The executive roundtable discussion reinforced the decline in marketing’s influence in firms. The term “marketing” was mentioned only a couple of times in an hour of intense exchange. Yet customers, clients, and competitiveness were on the executives’ minds throughout the discussion.

When they were asked how business scholarship could help business practice, the executives believed that thinking in terms of processes and across disciplines would do wonders, but some also realized that the recognition and reward systems must be revolutionized to jolt academic researchers into thinking and acting outside their disciplinary silos.

The executives also advocated that academic research should be more problem driven and focused on rich contexts. Speaking from the perspective of a former professor,

Bridge noted that 20 years ago, he believed that marketing scholarship was driving change in practice. Today, he noted, “I’m not seeing the continuous flow of new relevant ideas. The manipulating of two to three variables in an arcane situation is far a field from the day-to-day trade-offs we must make in business with dozens of variables plus volatile political and human factors.”

Wondering whether the answer for building bridges may be in the translation, Semaca pointed to Harrah’s Entertainment and its chief executive officer (CEO) Gary Loveman, a former Harvard Business School professor. This CEO catapulted his firm to a leading position in the gaming industry. Drawing on academic research, Harrah’s developed sophisticated models of customer behavior and translated this work into guidelines and incentives for frontline and “backstage” employees to follow.

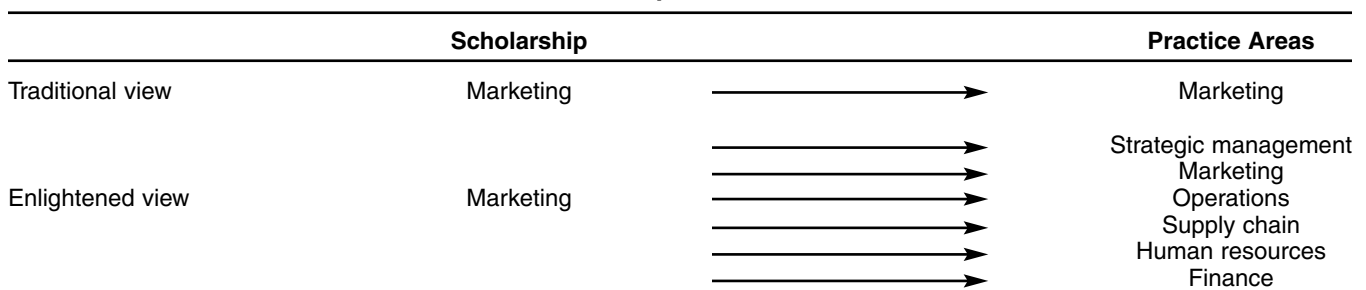
Two roundtable executives believed that business is partly responsible for the scholarship–practice gap. For example, Reid argued that business must play a role in working with academic researchers to determine practical applications. Referencing current research his firm is doing with Arizona State University’s (ASU) Center for Services Leadership (CSL), Baynham stressed the importance of upfront discussions so that both parties understand each other’s objectives, the key questions to be studied, and the projected outcomes of the research.

Despite the significance of the scholarship–practitioner gap, the executives voiced notable interest in the customer and other topics of interest to marketing academics. What can realistically be done? Let me offer one recommendation to change our perspective significantly. When thinking about business, as scholars, we must broaden our perspective. In the near future, I do not believe that marketing will assume a more prominent position within organizations. However, many executives and managers outside marketing are interested in what marketing academics study, such as work that links customer metrics to business performance and work on the interface between the customer and the organization.

For scholarly contributions, I believe that we need to broaden our targeted practitioner segments (see Figure 1). Traditionally, academics view the practitioner audience as marketers. I propose an expansion of the practitioner segments as I illustrate in Figure 1.

To illustrate my proposition, I use an example with which I am familiar. The CSL at ASU was launched 20

**FIGURE 1**  
**Scholarship and Practice**



years ago by the university's Department of Marketing. Although projecting a distinct brand to the business and academic communities, the CSL's leadership and knowledge workers are intertwined with the department. Much of the CSL's substantive research is conducted by marketing faculty and doctoral students working with prominent firms (for more information about how the CSL has engaged firms in scholarly research, see Brown and Bitner 2006). More than 40 leading corporations are CSL members, including IBM, Marriott, Southwest Airlines, Siemens, and Harley-Davidson. The board members that represent the member companies have changed over time. In the early years of the CSL's existence, most of the business leadership came from marketing executives. However, in succeeding years, more board members began to have nonmarketing backgrounds. Today, the business leaders who advise the CSL include general management, operations, supply chain, finance, and marketing executives.

What attracts board members and other business leaders to the CSL is its thought leadership in relation to customer focus and competing through service. With most of the CSL's research being produced by marketing faculty and doctoral students, this business interest suggests that what marketing scholarship offers is too good to be confined to marketing practitioners, especially when many organizations have marginalized the role of marketing. In other words, the bridge from scholarship to practice can be more fruitful if marketing scholars significantly broaden their view of what kind of practitioners may be interested in this work.

### ***A New Practitioner Focus***

This essay features a roundtable of business leaders talking about the opportunities and imperatives that confront firms today. The wide-ranging discussion covered issues of contextual and direct interest to marketing scholarship. The leaders' observations demonstrate that the contributions of marketing scholars should be targeted to practitioner audiences beyond marketers. The role and stature of marketing has waned in many firms. Yet the interest in creating and delivering value to customers is at the forefront of business priorities. Thus, as marketing scholars, we can build better bridges to practitioners when we begin to view our target markets as the many parts of a firm that are interested in customers, not just the marketers.

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## **Back to the Future: Integrating Marketing as Tactics, Strategy, and Organizational Culture**

*Frederick E. Webster Jr.*

**M**arketing thought leaders are taking a critical look at their field. They have identified several issues that have slowed progress in the development of the marketing discipline and are moving toward a new view of marketing as both an intellectual discipline and a profes-

sional practice. A successful reconceptualization of the field will recognize that marketing must be understood at three levels and will integrate these three dimensions of the marketing space into a coherent whole.

### ***Marketing as Tactics, Strategy, and Organizational Culture***

Marketing has tactical, strategic, and cultural dimensions (Webster 1992). Over the past 60 years or so, the emphasis in research, teaching, and management practice has shifted among these dimensions. At any given point, one has been emphasized to the detriment of the others. For the past two or three decades, the tactical dimension has dominated, with an emphasis on operational (i.e., input-level) marketing decision variables and short-term business performance results, especially sales volume and market share. Methodological rigor has been emphasized over problem importance and relevance and has been facilitated by the availability of large databases on product movement and individual retail transactions. Data and methodology have dominated academic research at the expense of both theory development and practical relevance, retarding the progress of the marketing discipline in a rapidly changing market environment. The focus has been on transactions as the unit of analysis rather than on the long-term enduring economic, interpersonal, and interorganizational relationships that characterize most marketing activity and produce sustainable business performance and growth.

The tactical view of marketing is rooted in the concept of the four Ps (i.e., product, price, promotion, and place) and in the microeconomic optimization paradigm. Mistakenly, the sum of the four Ps was labeled as marketing strategy, even though the most important of marketing variables—market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, which also appeared as marketing concepts in the 1950s—were not part of this tactical formulation.

Short-term tactical outcomes, such as sales volume and changes in awareness, are easily observed and measured, and their effects on performance are easily isolated from those of other decision variables and competitive responses. These measures are the same ones used to evaluate the weekly, monthly, and quarterly performance of most marketing personnel. Pressure from financial markets and shareholders causes many firms to emphasize these short-term outcomes and to devote insufficient time to strategic thinking. Strategy should guide tactics. The sum of tactics without specific strategic analysis and formulation does not equate to a coherent strategy.

Marketing strategy is part of the firm's business-level (as opposed to corporate-level) strategy; it is focused at the level of the strategic business unit (SBU); and it is expressed by the definition of the SBU's served markets—its segmentation, targeting, and positioning choices; its value propositions to customers; its positioning in the value chain; and its strategy for capturing a fair share of the value created for customers as a fair return for the owners. The new definition of marketing recently adopted by the American Marketing Association (AMA) captures this strategic focus:

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

The strategic theme of marketing gained dominance in the 1970s as part of a pervasive organizational focus on formal, long-range strategic planning. Marketing responsibility was expanded beyond selling, advertising, promotion, and distribution, with heightened emphasis on product innovation and new business development. However, this emphasis was relatively short lived, and SBU-level marketing strategy was co-opted in many firms by the strategic planning department and in the academic realm by the emergence of the new discipline of strategic management in which market segmentation, value proposition, and customer orientation became key building blocks. Marketing scholars devoted relatively little attention to these macro-organizational and environmental trends that were reshaping the field in practice as they focused increasingly on tactical, not strategic, decisions.

The third dimension of marketing, organizational culture, is the most difficult to define, observe, and measure. A general definition of culture is the things we take for granted, which emphasizes how difficult it is to observe. Organizational culture is a system of values and beliefs that guide the actions of an organization's members. From a marketing management perspective, organizational culture can be defined as organizational cognition, or a knowledge system that expresses itself in assertions about why things happen the way they do in a particular organization, helps members understand the organization's functioning, and provides norms for their behavior (Deshpandé and Webster 1989).

The so-called marketing concept is an expression of organizational culture, a normative statement that the firm should always put customers' interests first. It is a management philosophy asserting that the existence and legitimacy of the firm ultimately depends on satisfying customer needs. The marketing concept was rapidly accepted by managers in many companies, and it quickly became a part of marketing textbooks in the 1960s. It was expressed in statements by some leading executives that the firm would ultimately be organized around the marketing function, that serving customers was not the means to the end of profitability but the end itself, and that marketing was too important to be left to the marketing people.

Despite its inherent moral appeal, the marketing concept has several basic weaknesses. Most important, it lacks strategic content. It says nothing about how the firm should compete. Like the narrow tactical focus, it ignores such basic questions as which needs the firm should focus on, who its customers should be, and how the firm should match its capabilities with the underserved needs of the marketplace. This lack of strategic focus was a major reason many firms brought marketing under the influence of strategic planning departments. When those departments were eliminated—a trend that occurred in the late 1970s and continued through the 1980s—marketing competence often went with it. Although customer orientation has remained a

central theme within marketing, it has received little scholarly attention and often is nothing more than lip service in firms that claim to adopt it. Shareholder interests have dominated management attention and corporate values. Both academic and business neglect of the fundamental importance of customer orientation reflect the notion that identifying its impact on business performance requires a long-term perspective and is extremely difficult to measure.

The good news is that significant research in the past decade has found positive associations between long-term business performance and customer orientation (Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster 2002; Narver and Slater 1990). These studies developed reliable scales for measuring market orientation as a combination of customer and competitor orientation and have found these concepts to be correlated with business performance (Deshpandé and Farley 1999). In general, these results suggest strong support for the notion that true marketing competence, including customer orientation and innovativeness as advocated by the marketing concept, is central to the long-term success of the firm. However, the view of marketing as organizational culture remains the least visible of the three marketing dimensions.

### ***Rebuilding the Influence and Integrity of Marketing***

Because marketing has been downsized or eliminated as a corporate function in many firms, marketing competence has waned in those organizations. Trying to assign marketing responsibility to the SBU level often fails because SBU managers do not have the necessary marketing skills, have many other demands on their limited time and resources, and are driven by short-term measures of performance. Marketing advocacy depends more on the marketing commitment of a CEO who can articulate the importance of customer orientation as the keystone of corporate culture and the basis for increasing the value of the firm (Webster, Malter, and Ganesan 2003). The position of the chief marketing officer (CMO) was often created to fill the gap left by the elimination of corporate marketing departments, but only rarely has this position been filled by a person with the necessary strategic and analytical skills, the true support of a committed CEO, and a clear mandate to build marketing competence and strategic thinking throughout the organization.

Recent trends in marketing publications suggest that the issues outlined here are being recognized and addressed by both scholars and practitioners. Problems are being more clearly articulated, but comprehensive solutions have yet to be proposed. Although an estimated three-fourths of companies have reorganized their marketing approach in the past five years, these changes are always driven by dissatisfaction with the status quo rather than by a clear vision of the optimal organization. There is still a desperate need for the integration of tactics, strategy, and culture in the reconceptualization of the marketing field as a business practice and an academic discipline. Our understanding of marketing must be embedded in our understanding of organizations, not just markets, and it must focus on issues of implementation, not just strategy formulation.

It is not likely that business leaders or young scholars will be the source of new conceptualizations of our field. Business leaders acting alone seldom have the time or the inclination for such disciplined reflection, though they can be the source of new ideas, insights about how the world of marketing is changing, and challenges to marketing thought leaders. They must be listened to, but we should not expect them to do our work for us. Young scholars, who by definition are the best trained in the latest techniques to do path-breaking research, cannot be expected to have either the perspective on the total marketing field or the ability to commit their time to developing integrated reconceptualizations of their newly chosen discipline. There are few incentives for executives to step outside the owner-focused mandates of transactions-based generally accepted accounting principles and securities regulations to advocate the primacy of customers' interests or for academic newcomers to challenge old paradigms in the field.

Despite the current cry for better measurement of the financial impact of marketing expenditures, we must not limit ourselves to the development of measures of marketing performance at the tactical level. This would be self-defeating. We need to develop measures, which will inevitably be less precise, of marketing's influence at the strategic and cultural levels if we are to understand marketing as an integrated body of knowledge and practice.

The major challenges are conceptual, not methodological. We must show renewed respect for conceptual thinking as opposed to methodological rigor. We must tolerate work that bursts through and redefines the currently accepted boundaries of our intellectual domain. We must respect insight and risk taking as much as we worship empirically verifiable propositions. We must work to advocate a proper balance of rigor and relevance, both theoretical and practical, and bring to bear the results of scholarship that goes back to the roots of the development of all three dimensions of marketing. Not all relevant knowledge is less than 20 years old!

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## Moving Out of the U.S. Silo: A Call to Arms for Conducting International Marketing Research

*Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp*

**A**lthough marketing academics demonstrate diversity by borrowing from many behavioral science disciplines, we are less eclectic when selecting populations in which to test our theories. We derive most of what we know from studies conducted in Western countries, typically the United States, the world's largest economy. Although this research yields a valuable stock of theoretical and empirical findings, three important reasons mandate that we must now move out of the "U.S. silo" and conduct more research on an international basis. In this essay, I discuss these three reasons and delineate the unique research challenges and opportunities for conducting research in emerging consumer markets (ECMs).

## **Three Reasons to Conduct More Research on an International Basis**

*Cross-national generalizability and contingencies in marketing theory.* To advance marketing as an academic discipline, we must examine the validity of our theories and models, as well as their generalizability and boundary conditions, in international contexts. Cross-national generalization is implicit in our theories; that is, we usually develop theories without explicit reference to their socioeconomic, institutional, and cultural contexts. In many instances, cross-national generalization should not be assumed. To illustrate, consider market orientation, one of the most heavily researched constructs in marketing. Research conducted in Western countries supports the detrimental effect of formalization and centralization on market orientation (e.g., Jaworski and Kohli 1993). However, Burgess and Nyajeka (2005) show that this relationship does not necessarily apply to countries characterized by cultural hierarchy and the lower formal education of employees. In countries such as Zimbabwe, moderate levels of formalization and centralization actually stimulate the information acquisition and dissemination that is necessary for a market focus. Employees with less formal education need to be informed about market orientation and must have their roles clarified in order to deliver. Transaction cost theory, a predominant theoretical framework used to explain organizational boundary decisions, provides another example. Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar (2005) find that the explanatory power of the transaction cost dimensions differs systematically and predictably across national cultural contexts.

These and other examples (e.g., Deshpandé and Farley 2004; Ozsomer and Simonin 2004; Scheer, Kumar, and Steenkamp 2003; Xie, Song, and Stringfellow 1998) illustrate the need to test even our most established theories in an international setting. Including country and cultural variables enlightens us in new ways and clarifies marketing phenomena.

*Pushing the theoretical envelope.* A reason marketing theories may lack cross-national generalizability is that key country characteristics moderate the structural relations between the constructs in the theories. We can push the theoretical envelope by identifying and including these pivotal country characteristics in our frameworks, leading to true contingency theories of marketing. In marketing, national culture has attracted the most attention.

Cultural norms and beliefs are powerful forces shaping people's perceptions, dispositions, and behaviors. A society's shared cultural priorities frame the social and economic reward contingencies to which people and organizations must adapt for smooth and effective functioning. For example, Tellis, Stremersch, and Yin (2003) find support for the hypothesis that the takeoff of new products is faster in countries that are low in uncertainty avoidance and high in the need for achievement than in countries that are high in uncertainty avoidance and low in the need for achievement. In another example, Steenkamp, ter Hofstede, and Wedel (1999) find that a country's culture systematically and predictably moderates the effects of consumers' personal values on their tendency to purchase new products and brands. These and other results of studies that include cultural vari-

ables offer important new insights. Future studies have the potential to expand research on the effect of country contexts by drawing on socioeconomic theory (Etzioni and Lawrence 1991) and institutional theory (North 1990).

*Inherently international issues.* The globalization of the marketplace is arguably one of the most important challenges that companies face today; firms need to assess how each element of their marketing strategy should be executed along the continuum of internationally standardized to locally adapted. Marketing academics can contribute important new knowledge to these inherently international issues. Although the entire domain of marketing practice could be examined, I choose only two to illustrate this point: international market segmentation and new product launch strategies.

Research evidence shows that international segments of consumers can be identified if data are corrected for methodological biases, both for products (Steenkamp and ter Hofstede 2002; Ter Hofstede, Steenkamp, and Wedel 1999) and services (Bijmolt, Paas, and Vermunt 2004; Bolton and Myers 2003). Much work remains to be done in this area, including accommodating changes in segment sizes and structural properties of international segments over time, developing proper procedures for correcting for response styles, integrating international segmentation in managerial decision making, and extending international segmentation studies to include ECMs more fully.

The choice of product introduction strategy is crucial for companies. In an important game-theoretic article, Kalish, Mahajan, and Muller (1995) derive optimal conditions for the implementation of a waterfall (sequential) versus a sprinkler (simultaneous) product introduction strategy. A waterfall strategy is favored when the product has a long life cycle; when the foreign market is relatively small, exhibits slow growth, and is low on innovativeness and competitiveness; and when fixed costs of entry are high. These analytical findings need to be tested empirically.

### **The Special Case of ECMs**

Most non-U.S. marketing research is conducted in other Western countries, even though more than 80% of the world's consumers live in ECMs. These countries represent the growth and future of our companies. Over the next decade, General Electric expects that as much as 60% of its revenue growth will be from ECMs, and its outlook is echoed by other multinational corporations such as Siemens, Philips, Procter & Gamble, and Volkswagen (*Wall Street Journal Europe* 2005). As such, ECMs pose specific research challenges, three of which I highlight: business models, unit of analysis, and measurement instruments.

*Business models.* To be appropriate to ECMs, Western business models must often be recast. The profit maximization goal and the pursuit of self-interest—the very foundation of many Western business models—may not be the driving forces in embedded cultures. Other motivations and constructs must be substituted or incorporated. For example, understanding organizational relations in China requires recognition of *guanxi*, or the “expectations that, sometime, favors will be returned” (Ambler, Styles, and Xiucun 1999, p. 76). Similarly, in Africa, the cultural con-

cept of *ubuntu*—a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, humility, respect, and responsiveness (Mangaliso 2001)—must be recognized and included in business models. *Ubuntu* stresses kinship ties, reward systems linked to team performance, and consensus-based decision making. When properly managed, firms derive significant competitive advantages from *ubuntu*, including intrinsic motivation, loyalty, and long-term effectiveness.

The traditional business focus on relatively expensive, large-unit, overengineered products is unlikely to be successful in ECMs beyond small segments of relatively affluent consumers. To illustrate, 95% of all shampoo units sold in India (representing 60% of total value) are single-serve units, many of which are designed for the poor and do not even require hot water (Hammond and Prahalad 2004). Brown and Hagel (2005) introduce the concept of “innovation blowback”; they expect that ECMs will become important catalysts for product/service and process innovation because of the huge pool of youthful, low-income consumers, who are unusually demanding, open-minded, and adventurous. Companies that are able to develop the new innovation skills to be successful in these markets (e.g., production-driven networks, customer-driven modularity, process-driven services) are likely to gain competitive advantage, both in ECMs and in their home markets (Brown and Hagel 2005). However, little research has been conducted on these innovation skills.

*Unit of analysis.* The unit of analysis in individualistic Western countries is typically the individual consumer or manager, and research has largely focused on individual decision making. However, group decision making is relatively more important in collectivistic ECMs, which are often characterized by high cultural embeddedness and complex webs of personal and business obligations. We need more theorizing and better tools to conceptualize, measure, and analyze these social networks; to understand their role in group decision making; and to examine the reciprocal and dynamic relations between individual and group norms, attitudes, and behaviors.

*Measurement instruments.* On average, ECMs are characterized by lower levels of formal education. Unfortunately, many established measurement instruments require a fairly high degree of respondent sophistication. We urgently need simpler and shorter measurement instruments that can be used in ECM market research. Schwartz and colleagues (2001) developed the Portrait Values questionnaire to assess value priorities of less-educated populations, and it has been used successfully in ECMs (Steenkamp and Burgess 2002). A cross-culturally validated short form of the Big Five personality instrument is also available. Other researchers have sometimes constructed their own short form of existing scales on a rather ad hoc basis by including only the highest-loading items in their study (e.g., Batra et al. 2000).

Although some work has begun to address measurement issues in ECMs, much work remains to be done to construct shorter and simpler scales, new scales for concepts that are particularly relevant in ECMs (e.g., embeddedness, *guanxi*, *ubuntu*), and different wording and response formats. Some existing scales may need to be adapted at least partially to

the local context. Baumgartner and Steenkamp (1998) describe analytical procedures to analyze such combined emic-etic instruments and to compare results across countries.

I hope that future editions of the well-known *Handbook of Marketing Scales* (Bearden and Netemeyer 1999) will contain more information on the validity of marketing scales in ECMs. In the spirit of the innovation blowback, I except that marketing research in the United States and other Western countries will also profit from the development of scales that are cognitively less demanding.

### **A Challenge**

In her editorial, Bolton (2003) notes that international marketing research is underrepresented in *Journal of Marketing (JM)*. The same applies to the other top marketing journals, which is unfortunate. International marketing research enables us to assess the cross-national generalizability and contingencies of our theories and therefore to push the theoretical envelope in entirely new directions. It also provides answers to inherently international issues. Research in ECMs is especially necessary, given their significant market potential for our companies and their unique research challenges. As a discipline, let us move out of the U.S. silo. The world is beckoning us.

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## **Needed: A Larger Sense of Marketing and Scholarship**

*William L. Wilkie*

### **Has a Larger Sense of Marketing Gone Missing?**

**A** broad unrest appears to be surfacing about our field's direction and practices, and I appreciate this opportunity to share my observations. In recent years, Elizabeth Moore and I have been pursuing the question, What is marketing, anyway? (Wilkie and Moore 1999, 2003).<sup>2</sup> Our findings show that the field has changed sharply over time, and some considerable knowledge has been left behind during the general advance. However, this has now gone too far. Some of today's views of marketing scholarship are overly constraining, especially regarding broader conceptualizations of marketing. To illustrate, consider the new official statement of our field.

### **Limitations of the AMA's New Definition of Marketing**

The AMA has recently defined the term "marketing" as follows:

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value

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<sup>2</sup>Copies of our articles "Marketing's Contributions to Society" (Wilkie and Moore 1999) and "Scholarly Research in Marketing: Exploring the '4 Eras' of Thought Development" (Wilkie and Moore 2003) can be downloaded at <http://web2.business.nd.edu/Faculty/wilkie.html>.

to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

I appreciate the professional appeal in capturing a marketing manager's role. However, this definition's sole focus is on marketing within an individual organization, which limits its scholarship.

*Dangers in adopting goals of all organizations engaged in marketing.* In my view, the greatest risk of equating all marketing with managerial decisions within organizations is that their goals are being adopted by marketing thinkers without any external appraisal. This leads to something akin to blanket approval of the reality of the marketing world's undertakings. When identifying ourselves with these goals and actions, whose perceived interests are being served, and does this matter? A brief consideration of egregious examples found in political campaigning, lobbying, fraud, bid rigging, energy gouging, channel stuffing, and so forth, alerts us that many organizations are highly imperfect entities with mixed motivations. Furthermore, in most organizations, people other than marketers are setting priorities. Organizational marketing is important, but it should not be taken to represent all of marketing thought.

*Limitations in addressing the competitive nature of our marketing system.* The sole focus on a firm also leaves us without strong concepts to assess multiple firms engaged in simultaneous marketing activity. For example, when 8 or 12 firms compete in a market, how do we assess the "marketing" that is occurring on all fronts? Inefficiencies would be natural, but they are beyond the managerial purview itself. Is this why our field has not had more of an impact on antitrust enforcement?

*Limitations in addressing the marketing system's interactions with consumers.* One major task for every consumer is allocating his or her budget for purchases. If we ask, How well do marketers help consumers with their budget and effort allocation decisions?" the answer is, "Very poorly." In the aggregate, all marketers simply propose too much consumption for each consumer. The system acts as if consumer resources and wants are infinite and insatiable: Every product and service category is advocated as worthy of consumption for virtually everyone. Furthermore, within each category, marketers are offering consumers highly conflicting advice as to which alternative to select. To cope, consumers must ignore or resist most marketing programs and respond positively to only a relative few.<sup>3</sup> These characteristics surely make it difficult to equate each marketer's best interest with each consumer's best interest. (I stress that these are not criticisms but rather characteristics of the marketing system that are not evident from the managerial perspective on marketing.)

*Limitations in addressing major societal and public policy issues.* There are two good examples of this issue: (1) Childhood obesity is a growing problem in the United States. Is a single-firm focus for marketing the most effective way to address this? (2) Direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs is actually a public policy experiment

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<sup>3</sup>For extended discussion, see Wilkie (1994, Ch. 2).



in the United States. How helpful have marketing academics been in devising or evaluating this policy?<sup>4</sup> My point is simple: There are issues in our world that are larger than the problems of a single organization.

*Removing research opportunities from many marketing academics who would like to pursue these broader issues.* Given the AMA's definition, how are academic marketing thought leaders being prepared to address the role of marketing in society? To examine this, a survey of AMA-Sheth Doctoral Consortium participants was conducted (Wilkie and Moore 1997). The results show a striking gap between personal interest levels and training that is provided: Two-thirds of the doctoral candidates reported having a personal interest in learning about marketing and society, but fewer than one in ten had taken even a single course on the subject, and their self-ratings of expertise were low. Doctoral programs sorely need to reconsider this issue.

It is troubling to realize that knowledge does not necessarily accumulate in a field; knowledge can disappear over time if it is not actively transmitted (e.g., Wilkie 1981). One responsibility of academia is to place a field of study into proper perspective. I believe that the concept of an aggregate marketing system (Wilkie and Moore 1999) should occupy a central position in marketing scholarship. However, this will not happen unless current scholars accept that important knowledge is being lost from the active body of marketing thought. As research specialization has proceeded (with good reason), this risk has increased. Knowledge outside of a person's specialty may first be viewed as noninstrumental, then as nonessential, then as nonimportant, and finally as nonexistent. My particular concern is for the subsequent generations of scholars (both today's and the future's doctoral students) who may not gain enough background to even realize that a choice is available to them.

*Understating the scope and importance of marketing.* Finally, a key finding in the "Marketing's Contributions" (Wilkie and Moore 1999) article flowed from a system illustration that included 75 marketing-related activities. Of these 75 marketing system activities, we found that marketing managers control only approximately 30, or fewer than half. They influence most other activities, but they are not in control of them; furthermore, these activities are not what is typically considered marketing according to the current view of the field. To me, this understates the importance of marketing and calls for a perspective that is beyond the controllable decisions of marketing managers; such a perspective must reflect inclusive appreciation of organizational operations and of governments' roles in the facilitation of marketing system operations. In brief, we need a larger conception of marketing.

### ***Is Marketing Academia Losing Its Heart?***

A spontaneous episode at the 2005 AMA Winter Marketing Educators' Conference sent a signal about the state of our field today. Kent Monroe was named the 2005 Distinguished Marketing Educator (a fitting honor), and I was one

of the people asked to speak at his reception. Midway through my remarks, I detoured from my outline and mused, "By the way, there seems to be a meanness creeping into our field, and we really don't need this." Much to my surprise, applause for this sentiment spread across the 100–150 people in the room. A chord had inadvertently been struck that resonates with many marketing academics today.

This little vignette suggests a high level of emotion behind the scenes of our professional lives. Virtually everything in print is about facts, theories, methods, and applications. Behind this, however, is the living reality of our academic lives and pursuits. Collectively, we are the College of Marketing. Individually, we are talented people who have each invested heavily to be in a position to contribute to knowledge.

As the vignette suggests, overt attention needs to be paid to the quality of life in our field today. It is especially painful to talk with people who, as young, aspiring scholars in the field, are now out of research academia (or virtually so), embittered by their experiences and still suffering from the blows to their youthful enthusiasm, idealism, and self-confidence.<sup>5</sup> Are there steps to improve this situation? I think so.

Briefly, I assert that it is time for a new marketing academic summit, perhaps as a task force on thought development, with the goal of enhancing the participation in and quality of marketing scholarship. In addition to addressing what should be studied and how, I suggest that serious attention should be given to how research quality of life can be improved. For example, informal discussions with senior academics suggest that journal acceptance rates currently hover at approximately 10%, and tenure achievement for first positions at research schools are 25% or less (recall that this is the outlook for presumably the best-trained, most talented people entering our field). It strikes me that these figures reflect a pall on the pursuit of knowledge (at least to the extent that it is internally motivated) and help engender the cynicism and meanness that has entered our college. A key goal for this summit should be to strive to improve these rates and to engender a more positive context for our work.<sup>6</sup>

Specific topics I believe deserve to be addressed include the following:

- The unrealistic expectations of many universities today in context of a six-year tenure time frame and an overemphasis on "A" journals.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>I have developed further thoughts along these lines in an invited *Journal of Marketing* essay titled "On Books and Scholarship: Reflections of a Marketing Academic" (Wilkie 2002). It can be downloaded at <http://web2.business.nd.edu/Faculty/wilkie.html>.

<sup>6</sup>For an earlier report, see AMA Task Force on the Development of Marketing Thought (1988).

<sup>7</sup>Note that I would personally advocate extending the tenure period to nine or ten years (with options for a person to go up early) and would require that papers actually be read and evaluated for their quality and contribution. It would be difficult for the marketing field alone to gain such change, but our key institutions (i.e., AMA, Association for Consumer Research, and Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences) could surely

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<sup>4</sup>For an initiative in this area, see Farris and Wilkie (2005).

- The crucial role of a few key journals for the field—a positive or negative in the face of continuing growth and fragmentation?
- The sometimes destructive (and delaying) behaviors of reviewers, coupled with overreaching intrusions into freedoms of thought, theory, and method.<sup>8</sup>
- Current strengths, weaknesses, and biases in doctoral education, together with exploration of postdoctoral opportunities.
- Opportunities and problems presented by the twin forces of globalization and the Internet, including the explosion of business education around the world and the coming infusion of thousands of new marketing academics.

In closing, let me say that academic marketing has wonderful potentials, and it deserves our care, consideration, and cultivation.

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## Does Marketing Need Reform?

*Jagdish N. Sheth and Rajendra S. Sisodia*

In August 2004, a day-long symposium organized by Bentley College was held in Boston to address the question, “Does Marketing Need Reform?” Speakers were asked to address how the marketing function can simultaneously bolster trust with customers and respect within organizations. The event featured 17 speakers and drew approximately 125 attendees.<sup>9</sup> Judging by the response, it appears that this topic hit a hot button for many in the discipline. In this brief essay, we highlight some of the perspectives that were suggested at the symposium. The actual presentations can be viewed online at [www.bentley.edu/events/markreform/](http://www.bentley.edu/events/markreform/), and we are publishing a book of essays on the theme (Sheth and Sisodia 2006).

### **The Case for Reform**

Speakers were unanimous in the view that marketing indeed needs significant reform. It is ultimately marketing’s responsibility to align the interests of customers and the company, and too often, this just does not happen. As Glen Urban remarked, “Marketing effectiveness is down. Marketing is intrusive. Productivity is down. People resent marketing. Marketing has no seat at the table at the board level and top management. Academics aren’t relevant. And we have an ethical and moral crisis. Other than that, I think we are in good shape.”

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approach other areas of business to explore a unified improvement for business schools. I would not leave this up to the deans; they have other agendas beyond scholarship to pursue.

<sup>8</sup>I wanted to use the subheading “Reviewers and Rigor ... Mortis?” but I could not work it in because of space constraints.

<sup>9</sup>The speakers were Rajiv Grover, Steven Haeckel, John Johansson, Philip Kotler, Katherine N. Lemon, Robert F. Lusch, Raj Sisodia, J. Walker Smith, Rajendra Srivastava, Mohanbir Sawhney, Jagdish Sheth, Glen Urban, Rajan Varadarajan, Frederick E. Webster Jr., William Wilkie, Jerry Wind, and David Wolfe.

*A moral dilemma.* Phil Kotler noted that marketing’s fundamental dilemma stems from two of marketing’s central axioms: First, give customers what they want, and do not judge what they want. Customers often want products that are not good for them (e.g., tobacco, high calorie fast foods, sweets, alcoholic drinks). Second, many products may be acceptable to the customer but are harmful to society (e.g., asbestos, lead paint, guns, gas-guzzling automobiles).

The central thesis of Johny Johansson’s (2004) recent book is that marketing has become “morally corrupt” and has helped reduce the American way of life to its lowest common denominator while contributing to a rising tide of anti-American sentiment around the world. He suggests that marketing promotes many dangerous and unhealthy products using “preposterous and phony” arguments. Advertising is ubiquitous across old and new media, and there is increasingly nowhere for customers to hide (Johansson 2004).

### **Marketing’s Image Problem**

The image of marketing, far from strong to begin with, has taken a beating in recent years. J. Walker Smith presented results from a recent Yankelovich survey that found that 60% of consumers claimed that their opinion of marketing and advertising has become much worse over the past few years and that marketing and advertising is “out of control.” On the basis of a study of the image of marketing using approximately 1000 consumers, Raj Sisodia reported that approximately 62% of the respondents had a negative attitude toward marketing, and only 10% had a positive attitude (Sheth, Sisodia, and Barbulescu 2006). On the positive side, marketing is often associated with creativity, fun, humorous advertising, and attractive people, but most people (including most business students) associate negative words, such as “lies,” “deception,” “deceitful,” “annoying,” and “manipulating,” with marketing.

### **Marketer Myopia**

It could be argued that marketing academics and practitioners alike are suffering from “marketer myopia”; that is, they are so focused on what they do that they fail to notice significant changes in the environment around them. Summarizing his recent book, Jerry Wind suggested that new mental models are necessary to guide the thinking of marketing executives, practitioners, scholars, and journal editors (Wind, Crook, and Gunther 2004). He questioned whether the narrow and deep focus in academic marketing research and modeling is of value to business executives. Wind also criticized the prevailing marketing mind-set that largely ignores the 86% of the world living outside developed countries, most with per capita incomes below \$1,000 per year.

Kay Lemon identified three key ways that marketers are myopic and thus fail. First, most marketers fail to take a long-term view. Their typical focus is on short-term gains: improve sales this month, stock price this quarter, market share this week, shelf space compared with competitors.

This short-term perspective leads to angry and irate consumers, proliferation of “me too” products (because they are less risky), proliferation of “me too” research (because it is easier to publish), greater resistance to marketing, consumer confusion, and the threat of additional governmental intervention and regulation. Second, marketers often fail to consider all relevant constituencies. Although many do a good job of considering current customers, they fail to consider the effect of marketing on those not directly in the target market. Third, marketers fail to appreciate their own strength and power. Marketing is infusing and transforming cultures around the world. Marketers must be mindful of how powerful their tools are and understand their short- and long-term effects on consumers. Marketing academics must teach students how to use that power responsibly.

*Demographic denial.* Peter Drucker (1999) has identified the worldwide decline in birth rates as the number one issue that society faces today. David Wolfe highlighted two demographic trends. First, marketing has yet to come to terms with the reality that the majority of adults in the marketplace today are older than 40 years of age. By 2010, annual spending in the United States by households that are headed by people under the age of 45 is projected to be \$1.62 trillion, compared with \$2.63 trillion by those 45 years of age and older; that is a trillion dollar difference. Yet most marketing remains resolutely youth fixated. Wolfe suggested that marketers need to understand developmental psychology to appreciate how customers evolve continuously over their life spans. Second, around midlife, women begin to outnumber men quite significantly. However, most marketing today remains aggressively masculine in character and fails to speak effectively to women or aging men.

### **Marketers' Diminished Role and Influence Within the Company**

The fundamental value of a marketing mind-set is not in question. As Rajiv Grover put it, “If marketing is defined as satisfying the expressed and latent needs of customers, it is well accepted out there, so marketing is not really being marginalized. But marketers are being marginalized, in the sense that many strategically important aspects of marketing (e.g., pricing, ad budgeting, new product decisions) are being taken away by other functions in the organization.” Fred Webster noted that marketing management was once considered destined to assume ultimate influence and control over the U.S. corporation and become the dominant function (Keith 1960). With few exceptions, this has not happened. A key problem is that most marketing managers are not finance literate and have trouble answering questions about the productivity of expenditures. Equally important, other managers are usually not marketing literate. Raj Srivastava suggested that marketing does a poor job of communicating the value it creates because marketers do not speak the “financial language.” There is little appreciation for the balance sheet power of brands. Marketing is considered a variable cost, not a committed cost, so its budget is considered “soft money” that can readily be cut. Marketers are hard-pressed to justify their budget requests because they command little trust within most organizations.

### **An Agenda for Reform**

*Regain trust with customers.* Building on his recently published article (Urban 2004) on the subject, Glen Urban proposed a possible new paradigm for marketing: Instead of just trying to create products their customers might want, marketers should actively advocate for their customers across all departments within the company. Several forces are converging to increase customers' power: the Internet-fueled ability of increasingly skeptical customers to talk to one another, reduced media power, overcapacity, and more stringent government regulations. More and more customers are actively exercising their power, many becoming crusaders for or against companies. In response, companies must choose between “old style marketing” (i.e., the push model that characterized marketing from approximately 1950 to 2000) and “trust-based marketing,” whereby companies cooperate and work with customers to make them successful. As Urban said, “If you gave customers full information and the best technical and buying advice you could, would you suggest they buy your product? If you can't say that, then you must work on a better product.”

*Use technology to enhance mutual value.* Sawhney suggested that the implication of widespread connectivity is a greater need for collaboration with customers and business partners because most value creation is now outsourced. He proposed that companies must integrate customers into an entire set of end-to-end processes from ideation to support. Sawhney also noted that technology is enabling customers to move toward “do-it-yourself” marketing. If they choose to, customers can disintermediate marketers from the marketing process; they can self-inform, self-evaluate, self-segment, self-price, self-support, self-organize, self-advertise, self-police, and self-program.

*Broaden marketing's perspective.* Marketing has come to view itself too narrowly and, in many cases, merely as sales support. It must adopt a much broader perspective centered on improving the quality of life for customers. Marketers should develop new marketing models that focus on long-term issues about which customers really care. To counteract the pressure to produce products that are harmful to people or to society, marketing should take the responsibility to educate customers in ways that positively affect the world. Marketing should also work to promote better corporate citizenship. Kay Lemon noted that a new corporate citizenship metric ([www.accountability.org.uk](http://www.accountability.org.uk)) on global accountability ranks only one U.S. company in the top 100 (Hewlett-Packard). Marketing has great power to align corporate interests with great societal causes, such as alleviating poverty and disease. Jerry Wind highlighted C.K. Prahalad's (2004) recent book, which shows how marketing can help solve real problems and alleviate poverty on a large scale by targeting “the fortune at the bottom of the pyramid.”

*Make marketing a true profession.* Today, anyone can go into business as a marketer. To strengthen marketing as a profession, Sheth suggested requiring certification and recertification of marketing practitioners, similar to the

accounting and medical professions. He also suggested the establishment of a National Academy of Marketing, similar in reputation and mandate to the National Academy of Science.

*Revitalize marketing within the organization.* Srivastava noted that marketers have historically focused on sales-related measures, such as market share, but have largely ignored profitability and shareholder value. Marketing must do a better job managing its resources and demonstrating the value of investing in marketing programs. The role of marketing in achieving price and stock appreciation is beginning to be understood, but other effects also need to be measured. For example, a strong brand confers greater clout in terms of dealing with distributors and can lead to the ability to negotiate lower distribution costs.

Sheth suggested that instead of being managed as a line function, marketing should be designated as a corporate staff function (similar to finance, information technology, legal issues, and human resource management), with both capital and operating budgets. Marketing's domain should include branding, key account management, and business development. The head of corporate marketing should report directly to the CEO, and a standing committee of the board should be formed to oversee the company's marketing activities.

*Use new terminology.* Reflecting a growing trend, Southwest Airlines has named its department of marketing the "customer department" and its human resources department the "people department." Sheth suggested that the word "marketing" has lost so much credibility that companies would be better off using the designation of chief customer officer rather than CMO.

Many have come to believe that the term "consumer" objectifies customers and creates a one-dimensional image in the minds of marketers. Kotler suggested that using this term creates the image of customers with their mouths open, waiting to be filled by marketers. Instead, he proposed the term "prosumers," which acknowledges that customers participate in the creation of value.

*Learn from other disciplines.* Several speakers commented on the continuing need for marketing to learn from other disciplines. Wind suggested that marketing is becoming too self-centered and isolated now that it has matured as a discipline. Likewise, Sawhney commented that marketing began as an eclectic discipline but has become increasingly insular and has come to view itself falsely as self-contained. He proposed that marketing transcend its narrow horizons and begin learning again from neighboring disciplines.

*Reform marketing academia.* Several speakers spoke of the responsibilities of marketing academics in restoring marketing to a position of respect in companies and in society. A recurring theme was the need for greater relevance in academic research. Webster suggested that there has been an increased emphasis on rigor versus practical relevance. Academic research must become more relevant without sacrificing rigor. He added that it is critically important that research become more idea driven, not just data driven. Sheth suggested that academic research should focus on

newsworthy domains and discoveries, similar to medicine and engineering. Grover recommended that marketing be taught as an art and a science (analogous to cooking) because the creative dimension will always be crucial to good marketing.

## **Conclusion**

As the world becomes increasingly market driven and globally competitive, marketing is becoming marginalized at a time when it is most needed. Unfortunately, the "side effects" of marketing today often overwhelm its intended main effects. Can marketing's reputation be redeemed? Not unless it resolves the fundamental contradiction at its core: Marketing claims to be about representing the customer to the company, but it remains mostly about representing the company to the customer, using every trick in its bag to make customers behave in the company's best interests.

Speakers at the symposium were unanimous in asserting that "marketing as usual" is not working any more and that fundamentally new thinking is necessary to rejuvenate this vital and potentially most noble of business functions. Done right, marketing is truly an enlightened undertaking. As Phil Kotler and Bill Wilkie reminded the attendees, marketing has made major contributions to raising standards of living around the world. It has played a role in creating markets for products that reduced drudgery, increased convenience, and enriched life in general in the twentieth century.

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## **Strategic Marketing and the CMO**

*Roger A. Kerin*

**M**arketing has evidenced a renaissance of sorts in the corporate hierarchy with the creation of the CMO position. According to a recent Booz Allen Hamilton study (Hyde, Landry, and Tipping 2004), 47% of *Fortune* 1000 companies have a CMO designation on their organizational chart. This study also concluded (p. 37) that "[c]ontrary to prevailing wisdom, the marketing function is more important now than ever before." Marketing has indeed found "a chair at the table" (a phrase to describe elevation to the senior executive suite), but the CMO's chair has proved to be a hot seat. A CMO's tenure averages 22.9 months, only 14% of CMOs for the world's top brands have been with their companies for more than three years, and fewer than half of CMOs have been on the job for 12 months (Welch 2004).

The CMO "churn and burn" statistics are not surprising. My interactions with CMOs are consistent with the impressions of McGovern and Quelch (2004), who cite several reasons for the high casualty rate. Many CMOs mention that the position is often ill-defined; there is little formal authority, corporate expectations are frequently unrealistic, and credibility and legitimacy with other company "chieftains" is absent. I would add that some CMOs simply overpromise and underdeliver on proposed top-line initiatives and bottom-line outcomes. Indeed, it may be that few mar-

keting specialists are up to the task. My essay puts these recent developments into context and considers future prospects for the CMO position, if not an individual, as the embodiment of strategic marketing perspectives and practice in the corporate executive suite. I also address implications for scholarly research in marketing and executive education.

### ***Marginalization of the CMO***

The origins of the CMO can be traced to the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the role of chief marketing executive emerged in corporations. At the time, CEOs focused on converting their companies from a production or sales orientation to a market(ing) orientation (Keith 1960). A common practice was to aggregate and centralize marketing staff resources at the corporate level for the purpose of developing marketing policy and planning guidelines that could be adopted within each of the company's business units. Subsequently, CEOs looked to these executives (now labeled corporate vice president or senior vice president of marketing) to (1) promote strategic marketing thinking in their organizations, (2) represent a genuine marketing presence and mind-set at corporate headquarters, and (3) assist in the preparation and implementation of business unit marketing strategy designed to achieve a competitive advantage. By one estimate, about half of the largest U.S. manufacturing firms had an individual who was considered the chief marketing executive in the early 1970s. Most reported to the company chairman or to the president (Hopkins and Bailey 1971).

The following 25 years witnessed the gradual devolution of corporate-level marketing and its strategic role and influence in U.S. companies. Why did this happen? There are at least four interrelated reasons: (1) the proliferation of businesses and product lines in the aftermath of aggressive acquisition activity common to companies in the 1970s and 1980s; (2) the emergence of strategic-planning staffs largely as an outgrowth of the budgeting and financial-planning process associated with multibusiness firms, which in turn co-opted marketing's strategic role; (3) the perceived ineffectiveness of a single, corporate-based marketing head and staff to address an increasingly diverse set of markets and business models; and (4) the growing autonomy of business units followed by the dispersion of marketing responsibilities and personnel among individual operating units (Hopkins and Bailey 1984; Kerin, Mahajan, and Varadarajan 1990). By the late 1990s, the corporate marketing presence had become an administrative cost center and assumed a supportive role in many companies under the direction of a vice president for marketing services. This position entailed managing marketing-service supplier relationships (e.g., advertising agencies, research firms) with a primary emphasis on coordination, monitoring, guidance, and dotted-line links extending into business units. Noticeable in this administrative and supportive role was the limited reference to strategic marketing perspectives as a source of insight or direction for corporate or business strategy.

### ***Materialization of the CMO***

So what is new? First, the conditions that circumscribed the presence, role, and influence of corporate-level marketing are disappearing. Companies are divesting unrelated businesses and pruning product lines and brands. Corporate strategic planning departments have been dismantled as a consequence. This "deconglomeration" process has heightened senior management's attention to and involvement in business and marketing strategy formulation and execution to generate top-line growth from existing businesses (Varadarajan, Jayachandran, and White 2001). Second, the majority of CEOs today have significant marketing and sales (along with operations) experience in their career history before assuming general management responsibilities at the business unit level (Allen 2005). Most are in their 50s and actually benefited from marketing responsibilities (and accountability) being delegated to business units over the past 25 years. These executives recognize the potential role and contribution of strategic marketing thinking in the executive suite. Otherwise, the CMO position would not exist. Third, previously autonomous business units have been reined in as CEOs mandate "best practices" across units, resource sharing, comarketing efforts, and the like.

These structural changes have cleared the path for corporate-level marketing to find a chair at the table again in the senior executive suite. However, those who occupy the chair will not necessarily be marketing specialists or have the same experience, skills, and knowledge as chief marketing executives 35 years ago, much of which was acquired in brand management systems and advertising agencies (Silver 2003). Rather, the CMO position demands that its occupant combine a broad business outlook, multi-industry experience, and cross-functional management expertise with the analytical skills to interpret extensive market and operational data and an intuitive sense of consumer, customer, and competitor motivations and market-based assets. The position also expects that its occupant view technology not so much as an enabler of marketing processes and activities but as a key differentiator and a means to create, communicate, and deliver value to consumers. Finally, the position requires the action and results orientation of frontline marketing. Chief marketing officers do not have the luxury of hiding behind the pernicious oxymoron "great strategy, poor execution" as evidenced by the position's high turnover.

The resurgence of corporate-level marketing, manifest in the CMO position, has important implications for the academic marketing community. For example, a recurrent theme in the Marketing Science Institute's (MSI's) 2004–2006 research priorities (McAlister and Taylor 2005) is the need for research that has value to senior management. My sense is that this research, regardless of topic, should explore multifunctional, business-level issues; identify cause-and-effect relationships; and focus on metrics that matter to CEOs and corporate boards. Marketing educators in executive MBA and senior executive development programs must address the demands placed on the CMO position and modify course content and pedagogy. For example, emphasis should be placed on improving data and financial

analysis skills and encouraging creativity in framing strategic marketing initiatives in light of implementation considerations and financial targets.

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## Them Versus Us: Woes on the Bifurcation of the Academic Marketing Discipline<sup>10</sup>

Deborah J. MacInnis

### *The Domain of Marketing*

**M**arketing is a multifaceted field that leverages perspectives from multiple disciplines to study substantive topics ranging from the study of the macro to the micro, the organization to the consumer, capitalist practice to social welfare, and the local to the global. Marketing also serves an important applied constituency that demands tools (theories, methods, and measures) to inform marketing, consumer, or public policy actions. As is true in most scientific disciplines, the study of the substantive topics in marketing often involves a diverse set of theoretical and methodological perspectives to understand and appreciate fully all aspects of the phenomena under study. For example, the impact of advertising on consumers is enriched by theoretical perspectives from linguistics, literature, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics and by such diverse methodological approaches as ethnography, experimentation, survey research, discrete choice models, and quantitative modeling techniques using aggregate data. Through this multimethod, multitheory perspective, we (the “blind men”) gain insight into the “elephant” known as advertising.

### *Marketing and Science*

There is general agreement in the philosophy of science that data or ideas are used to advance a theory, which is tested by data, which in turn leads to theory revision and additional testing through relevant methods and acquired data (Zaltman, Le Masters, and Heffring 1982). In an applied discipline such as marketing, there is also hope that findings will provide substantive insights that are relevant to managers, consumers, and policymakers. In this ideal world, progress is made by a strong interface between data and theory, rigor and relevance. Because various methodologies differ in their emphasis on external versus internal validity, their obtrusive versus unobtrusive nature, and the study of universal versus particular systems (McGrath 1981), knowledge accrues through the use of diverse methods that compensate for the weaknesses of others. Such compensation is warranted because the decisions made on the basis of this

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<sup>10</sup>Wilkie and Moore (2003) have provided a rich and deep historical perspective on the evolution of the field of marketing. With their systematic study as a background, I comment on observations about more recent history and trends in the discipline that cause concern.

research have the potential to affect applied constituents (see the essay by Raju).

### *Self- and Other Categorizations*

However, movement toward such multidisciplinary and multimethodological perspectives seems to be inconsistent with a strong trend I have observed in the field. At a fundamental level, academics in marketing identify themselves not by substantive interest (e.g., advertising, materialism) and theoretical orientation but by methodology. Specifically, there is an evolving bifurcation of the field in which researchers categorize themselves and others as “behavioral” (often meaning experimentalists who study consumer behavior but sometimes also meaning “ethnographic types”) and “modelers.” Some also identify themselves as “managerial types,” which typically means behaviorally oriented people who use surveys to study organizations.

### *Houston, We Have a Problem*

Although self- and other categorizations by methodology may be appropriate in some contexts, some intellectual and disciplinary problems accrue when categorization by method becomes a focal lens for viewing the field. Consider the following questions:

*What is important?* First, categorization by method affects the focus on theory versus data versus relevance. Academics taking a behavioral approach increasingly focus on theory, often at the expense of relevance or generalizability; it is quite possible that we may answer theoretically interesting questions about phenomena that exist only in the artificial world we create for purposes of testing theory. Indeed, in some cases, articles are so far removed from marketing that it is difficult to understand (1) what they have to do with marketplace phenomena or (2) why they are published in marketing rather than psychology, sociology, or anthropology journals. Modelers seem to focus on data and relevance with increasingly little regard for theory. “Strategy types” focus on theory, data, and relevance; however, little gets through the review process because authors are being subjected to the standards that are used in both behavioral (strong theory, methodological controls) and modeling (real-world data, advanced techniques) contexts (Stewart 2005).

*What is good research?* Second, categorization by method leads to inconsistent rules about what constitutes “good research.” For example, in the behavioral area, articles are not viewed as interesting unless they advance theory or entail interactions (e.g., demonstrate that the theory does not apply under certain conditions). In contrast, in the strategy area, articles are not viewed as interesting unless they demonstrate generalizations across populations, have multi-item scales, and use multiple informants. In modeling, articles are not viewed as interesting unless they advance a new technique.

*Is your research rigorous?* Third, a focus on methodology can create an overemphasis on empirical articles, particularly those that study short-term marketing tactics (see the essay by Webster), and can encourage “marketer myopia” (see the essay by Sheth and Sisodia), perhaps at

the expense of big ideas (see the essay by Staelin), theory development, conceptualization, and integrative frameworks that have broader applicability and more time unbounded potential (Lehmann 2005; MacInnis 2004).

*Where's my hammer?* Fourth, categorization by method leads to the study of only those things that can be examined with a prevailing methodological approach. For example, because the behavioralists in marketing are overrepresented by experimental approaches to marketing and consumer behavior, there are major gaps in the understanding of important and underresearched domains that are difficult to understand with only an experimental approach, such as those applicable to broad economic, social, and societal issues. Several Association for Consumer Research presidents have noted such gaps (e.g., Andreasen 1993; Belk 1987; Lutz 1989; Richins 2000; see also the essay by Wilkie). This enhances our irrelevance to the applied constituency we serve and other disciplines because these underresearched domains address some of the more relevant, interesting, and difficult issues.

*Do you think like me?* Fifth, categorization by method leads to less intellectual stimulation because articles are reviewed by like-minded researchers who share a common methodological perspective rather than by those whose different perspectives might stimulate provocative thought.

*What do we really know?* Sixth, categorization by method leads to a narrowing of knowledge among people who study the same thing. Rather than becoming truly an “expert” on a given marketing phenomenon (e.g., consumer choice), regardless of the publication in which an article appears (*Marketing Science*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Journal of Consumer Research*) or of its focus (information processing, behavioral decision theory), we tend to read articles that are relevant only to a particular substantive interest that appears in certain journals. This often leads to a limited understanding of what is collectively known about a substantive topic and a failure to cite work that extends beyond our narrow purview.

*Are you with me or against me?* Seventh, at a cultural level, this trend toward categorization by method bifurcates the field into “camps,” which often view one another as irrelevant or even adversarial. For example, to hire a “modeler” to a faculty is viewed as offering little potential to enrich behaviorally oriented faculty members’ academic research programs and/or the intellectual environment. Rather than examining how someone different could offer unique and diverse perspectives that could enrich our understanding of a given marketing phenomenon, we view their presence, though potentially quite pleasant and enjoyable, as less intellectually relevant than someone whose methodological perspective resembles our own. As evidence of these camps, consider the nature of academic conferences and the kinds of journals deemed appropriate for a given academic piece.

*Could you ever work with me?* Finally, categorization by method has led researchers to view opportunities for joint research among those whose methodological perspectives differ from their own as limited.

## **Roadblocks**

If this trend toward categorization by method is indeed real, where does it come from? A potential cause is a limited understanding about the relative strengths and weaknesses of prevailing methodological paradigms (McGrath 1981). Depth training in a certain methodological perspective can lead to beliefs about the “right” way to do research and to disrespect and disregard research that is limited on the very characteristics we regard as critical to our own methodological paradigm (e.g., internal versus external validity). This attitude may perpetuate some of the “meanness” in our field that Wilkie describes. It may lead us to adopt rigid rules about what constitutes “valid” research (e.g., homogeneous versus heterogeneous samples, single versus multiple informants), “important” research (e.g., those that demonstrate interactions versus those that advance generalizations; see Leone and Schultz 1980), and research that advances theory versus practice and to use our expertise as reviewers to evaluate research more on fit with our own methodological approach than on its capacity to yield intellectual insights that help us understand a substantive domain. Another potential source of the current status is fear of accepting something unknown or unfamiliar. This problem is magnified when that unfamiliar thing is studied by people with whom we are not familiar.

## **Pathways**

Pathways to remedy the pitfalls of self- and other categorizations by methodology require instilling in doctoral students a more intellectually driven and a less methodologically driven approach to the pursuit of marketing phenomena. Doctoral training should help students view a particular method not as a philosophy of how to do research but as exactly what it is—a method by which a phenomenon can be understood. This requires helping students understand that all methodological approaches are flawed, none is better than the other, and intellectual advances can be made only by an approach that attempts to observe the bigger picture that emerges from diverse approaches. This requires that methods are approached from the standpoint of creatively addressing an interesting question rather than as the “right way” to approach a problem. We must let the dog wag the tail, not vice versa.

Toward this end, we might consider organizing seminars by substantive areas (e.g., materialism, advertising effects, branding) rather than by whether they take a behavioral, strategy, or quantitative approach. Such seminars could be led by researchers whose different methodological orientations, yet shared substantive similarities, offer the capacity to spawn intellectual discussions. A similar approach may be taken for academic conferences, which could be organized and attended by people who share a similar substantive interest. In the review process, strong editors could seek broad-minded reviewers who appreciate research based on its substantive contribution rather than on its adherence to methodological paradigms.

Pathways also include actively seeking out others whose perspective (quantitative versus behavioral) is different from our own (behavioral versus quantitative) yet who share a common substantive interest (Staelin 2005). Several

articles in the discipline demonstrate the value of this perspective (e.g., blending the theoretical strengths of behavioral researchers with the modeling techniques of more quantitatively oriented researchers). Such alliances focus not on how we differ but on the substantive commonalities that join us. Efforts such as these would make people in the “other camp” seem less like strangers and more like others we can respect and with whom we can personally interact.

Another pathway involves the reformulation of recruiting of both doctoral students and faculty candidates. Too often, we categorize potential recruits in terms of their methodology (e.g., quantitative versus behavioral). Labeling people in this way alters the way we understand both them and their work and may blind us to potential substantive interests we might share. Finally, new pathways mean taking a more open-minded approach, learning more about how problems are approached from various perspectives, and appreciating research for what it is rather than for how similar it is in approach to our own.

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## Unleashing Potential<sup>11</sup>

*Leigh McAlister*

**T**he potential for scholars to contribute to marketing thought and practice has never been greater. The MSI research priorities indicate that marketing practitioners have a pressing need to understand return on marketing spending, branding, new products and growth, nontraditional research tools and methods, customer management, and the role that marketing should play in an organization. When clear articulations of practitioners’ problems are combined with an increasing number of well-trained marketing scholars, the result should be great strides forward in marketing thought and practice. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily the case. The very expansion of well-trained marketing scholars, which offers such promise, has led to a division of the field. As MacInnis notes in this collection of essays, the field is divided into “camps,” each with its own definition of “good research,” each viewing other camps as irrelevant or even adversarial. These divisions are exacerbated by the lack of expansion in the number of pages in marketing’s “premier” publication outlets. When one camp is in control of a journal, articles from other camps are unlikely to be accepted, and regardless of which camp is in control, articles that address the kinds of important (and inherently messy) problems that make up the MSI research priorities are discouraged. In this essay, I draw on Ellison’s (2002) qr theory of the academic review process to help explain the evolution of publication standards for premier marketing journals and to help motivate my call for the premier marketing journals (i.e., *JM*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Marketing Science*, and *Journal of Consumer*

*Research*) to increase the number of pages they publish each year and to move away from “rigid rules about what constitutes ‘valid’ research” (see MacInnis, p. 15) toward review criteria that ask, Does this article provide new insight? Is this article “not wrong”?

I begin my elaboration of these ideas by first noting that I refer to *JM*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Marketing Science*, and *Journal of Consumer Research* as the “premier journals” in marketing because these are the journals that tend to be considered in marketing promotion and tenure decisions. Although there are several other excellent U.S.-based and non-U.S.-based marketing journals, promotion and tenure committees are familiar with only a few journals from other disciplines (Henderson, Ganesh, and Chandy 1990), and such committees use journal quality as a proxy for the quality of a candidate’s publications because research quality is difficult to evaluate outside a person’s discipline (Swanson 2004).

As do others before me, I take as a given that our field has a limited set of premier journals and turn my attention to the issues related to “research quality” in those journals. Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Glen Ellison (2002) developed qr theory to describe the academic review process. According to Ellison’s theory, academic articles are evaluated on two kinds of quality: q quality, which is related to the importance and interest of the main ideas in the article, and r quality, which is related to the execution of the article (e.g., exposition, links to the literature, robustness tests, extensions, methodology). In particular, Ellison posits a social norm for publication ( $\alpha, z$ ), where  $\alpha$  is a value judgment parameter ( $0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$ ) and  $z$  is an overall quality requirement. Articles are accepted for publication if  $\alpha q + (1 - \alpha)r \geq z$ . Assuming that q quality is determined by the initial work and that r quality is refined in the review process and assuming that reviewers continuously try to learn the current social norm for quality, the qr model predicts that, over time, r quality standards (i.e., execution) will receive increasing focus and q quality standards (i.e., related to the importance of the idea) will receive decreasing focus. This happens because reviewers, being human, overrate the r quality of their own research, and therefore, on the basis of reviews of their own work, they learn that the r quality emphasis is greater than they believed. Other forces that contribute to the increasing emphasis on r quality standards that Ellison mentions are reviewers’ attempts to impress editors by requiring complex revisions and reviewers’ competitiveness, which can lead reviewers to impose r quality standards above the norm to hold others back. Ellison’s qr theory suggests that editors can reverse this process by accepting articles that reviewers have rejected, thereby providing reviewers with new information about the appropriate balance between q quality (ideas) and r quality (execution). However, Ellison notes that editors are reluctant to overrule reviewers because they rely on reviewers to evaluate articles, and they do not want to be viewed as “lowering standards.”

The problem that Ellison’s (2002) qr model outlines for all academic fields is even worse for the marketing field. In the period between 1980 and 1999, the annual number of articles published in premier marketing journals actually

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<sup>11</sup>I thank Ajay Kohli for noting the problem caused by the lack of expansion in our premier journals and an anonymous reviewer for directing me to Swanson (2004). That article, which builds on Ellison’s (2002) article, helped reframe this essay.



declined by 2.71 articles per year (Swanson 2004).<sup>12</sup> During this same time period, the supply of well-trained marketing scholars increased. Furthermore, the pool of well-trained marketing scholars targeting premier journals is set to increase again as business schools in Europe and Asia adopt U.S. standards for faculty promotion (Montgomery 2005). As I have written elsewhere, I am concerned about the implications of a rapidly expanding number of well-trained scholars who are faced with a shrinking number of slots in premier journals (McAlister 2005). Even if the field was not divided into “camps” and even if the naturally evolving process of setting journal norms was not driving increased focus on execution and decreased focus on ideas, this combination of an increasing pool of scholars aspiring to a decreasing number of slots in premier journals would cause a narrowing of work that appears in those journals. Think about the problem in terms of Type I and Type II error.<sup>13</sup> Since the early 1980s, the supply of potential submissions to premier journals has gone up by an estimated factor of five,<sup>14</sup> but there is no reason to believe that the average quality of that supply has changed. If we assume that premier journals have focused on the job of avoiding Type I error (i.e., accepting articles that might be “wrong”), the greatly increased supply structurally determines an increase in Type II error (i.e., rejecting papers that might be “right”).<sup>15</sup>

However, our field *is* divided into camps. Staelin (2005, p. 149) tries to reunite those camps:

When reviewing others' work (e.g., for a journal, for promotion, for hiring), screen for breadth and depth and show tolerance for approaches that differ from yours. Do not rule something out just because it is not “sophisticated.” Instead, try to determine whether the work has impact and the ability to modify the existing core of knowledge.

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<sup>12</sup>Swanson included only *JM*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Journal of Consumer Research* in the set of premier marketing journals for his analysis. I do not believe that adding statistics for *Marketing Science* to his data set would change his finding that the annual number of articles published in premier marketing journals has fallen steadily since the early 1980s.

<sup>13</sup>I thank John Hauser and Don Morrison for suggesting that it is important to realize that the review process generates both Type I and Type II errors.

<sup>14</sup>Swanson (2004) reports Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business statistics that show that the number of doctoral-level marketing faculty positions roughly doubled from approximately 1000 to 2000 between 1980 and 1999. However, only a small percentage of those 1000 doctoral-level marketing faculty in 1980 were well trained in the sense that their research skills prepared them to publish in premier journals. Since 1980, a growing percentage of graduating doctoral students have those research skills. Thus, although the total number of doctoral-level marketing faculty only doubled between 1980 and 1999, I estimate that the number of well-trained marketing professors has grown by at least a factor of five.

<sup>15</sup>As a simple test of the increase in Type II error hypothesis, I pose this question: Is there any person reading this essay who has not had a paper rejected by a premier journal for reasons that did not compromise the contribution of that paper?

In addition, our field *is* using review standards that favor execution over ideas. Lehmann (2005, p. 142) calls for restoring balance between execution and ideas:

[T]he pendulum may have swung too far in terms of black-belt methods when simple ones would suffice (and be easier to communicate). A consequence of this is that even the topic-oriented journals are increasingly insistent on the latest methods.... [There is a disturbing] tendency to avoid addressing important problems that are inherently messy.

When I became Executive Director of MSI, Don Lehmann passed the responsibility for MSI's working paper series to me and suggested two simple criteria for paper acceptance: Does the paper provide new insight? Is the paper “not wrong”? With the luxury of a working paper series that has essentially no page constraint, these criteria work quite well. If the premier journals adopted similar acceptance criteria, we could rebalance the “execution versus idea” quality standard. If our premier journals, which have begun to expand pages, would accelerate that trend and substantially expand the number of articles published each year, reviewers might find it easier to show the tolerance for different perspectives called for by Staelin in his essay. I believe that doing these things would unleash the potential that resides in the growing body of well-trained marketing scholars. By boosting the incentive for those scholars to produce important and interesting new ideas, we could accelerate the process of addressing those messy problems with which marketing practitioners struggle.

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## Revitalizing the Role of Marketing in Business Organizations: What Can Poor Academics Do to Help?

*Jagmohan S. Raju*

**M**any essays in this volume have convincingly argued that as a practice profession, marketing faces many challenges and dangers. Several leading organizations have abolished, or have seriously considered abolishing, marketing departments, partly because academics and other thought leaders have convinced companies that “marketing is far too important to be left only to the marketing departments.”<sup>16</sup> In a recent conference at Wharton, it was suggested that the life span of a CMO is relatively short, and many CMOs believe that one of the more serious challenges they face is justifying their own existence. Marketing budgets are being cut in many corporations because it is difficult to justify the return on such expenditures. Thus, marketing professionals no longer have a “seat at the table” (Webster, Malter, and Ganesan 2003). All in all, these are not good signs.

Conversely, it appears that marketing as a discipline in the world of academics is not doing badly. Indeed, a fairly

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<sup>16</sup>Although many have used similar phrases in different contexts, this particular phrase is assigned to Jack Trout.

strong case can be made that it has never been better. Casual observation, discussions with colleagues from other universities, and anecdotal evidence lead me to the following conclusions:

- In general, over the past 20 years, the average size of marketing departments has increased at major business schools.
- More marketing courses are being taught, and furthermore, marketing courses are in great demand.
- Marketing academics hold important leadership positions at many business schools. Indeed, the list of marketing academics holding leadership positions (deans, deputy deans, vice deans, associate deans, and similar important administrative titles) has never been greater.
- The number of manuscripts being submitted to major marketing journals is at an all-time high. In the past few years, there have been some of the most dramatic increases. Numbers reported at *Marketing Science*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Management Science* suggest increases of up to 100% over the past five years.
- The number of doctoral degrees granted in marketing worldwide is at healthy levels. Furthermore, the demand for these graduates, though varying from one year to the next, remains quite strong.

It appears that the life on one side of the street is quite different from the life on the other side. It makes me wonder why the two are so different, but it may also explain why some academics are surprised (if not shocked) when they become aware of what is happening on the other side. Should marketing academics care about what is happening on the other side? This essay attempts to argue that we should, and it provides some ideas as to what can be done.

Why are marketing practitioners in trouble? It can be argued that marketing in the world of practice is floundering because practitioners do not fully use the tools that academics and other marketing thought leaders develop. Therefore, they deserve to be in their current state. However, there is the possibility that what we have given them is not good enough, or not potent enough, compared with what other disciplines receive from their thought leaders. To determine which of the two explanations is the cause requires considerable work. A more pragmatic approach is to reconcile that there is some truth to each of these reasons. If there is some truth to the latter argument, academics may need to change. Furthermore, no matter what the reason is for the “plight of the practitioners,” to the extent that marketing is an applied discipline and one of the key end customers is the practitioner, we need to do what we can to make sure the customers are healthy. It is with this objective I humbly make the following suggestions.

### **Choosing Our Audiences**

Most marketing academics live and thrive in a university setting. Our colleagues are people from basic disciplines, and this lineage has done wonders for our field. However, rather than focusing on pleasing economists or mathematicians,<sup>17</sup> we need to keep in mind that one of our key constituencies is the practitioners. We are grateful when our work gets published in *Journal of Applied Mathematics*, but

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<sup>17</sup>The word “economist” or “mathematician” can be substituted by the word “psychologist” or “statistician” if the reader prefers.

we need to be equally proud of studying problems that matter to practitioners, and we must provide solutions that they can implement. Another issue worth thinking about is who the right audience is within a company. In general, our audience in companies historically has been people engaged in marketing research. I believe that we need to go further than this.

### **Doing it Right Versus Doing the Right Thing**

Our discipline pays great attention to the precision of arguments and the methodology used, but often, this can lead to incrementalism. We should be more open to studying problems that matter, even if we need to make some limited compromises in terms of the precision with which we study these. As my esteemed colleague Len Lodish (1974) suggested many years ago, approximate answers to important problems or issues are just as useful (if not more useful) than precise answers to wrong, well-defined, narrow problems. This balance will also enable us to appeal to senior levels in the organization; our current audience is at a more junior level.

### **Directing the Output of Our Doctoral Programs**

Our doctoral programs are designed to train future academics, and this is a desirable motive because demographic changes suggest that there may be an acute shortage of marketing academics in the future. However, we should encourage (and if not encourage, at least not discourage) doctoral students to enter the business world. Many leading corporations are led by people who have doctoral degrees in chemistry, life sciences, and engineering. Why not doctoral degrees in marketing? Corporations can gain if they are led by people who have an in-depth knowledge and an appreciation of how to understand customer needs and develop products, services, and programs that enable a company to satisfy such needs profitably. Furthermore, it does not hurt if members of the audience understand our language, because they have been taught to do so.

### **Valuing Consulting Activity**

Virtually all academics in medical schools spend some time taking care of patients. Indeed, in most cases, it is a part of their responsibility. This not the case in business schools. Do our “patients” not need any help, or are we incapable of helping them? Do we not care one way or the other? These are questions that we need to address directly.

### **Teach What We Study and Discover in Our Research**

We all want to teach what we study and discover in our research, and we try hard to do so. However, the structure and design of our courses often limits our intentions. A large majority of students take just one course in marketing; this course goes by different names in different schools, but it is often referred to as “Introduction to Marketing.” In most schools, this course teaches the development of a marketing plan using some well-known and useful frameworks that have stood the test of time. However, in comparing our approach with the first courses taught in other disciplines, there appears to be some differences. The first course in

finance does not address the development of a financial plan for a company. The first course in operations management also does not attempt to write an operations plan. I believe that we try to cover too much and therefore focus more on breadth than on depth, thus limiting our ability to link teaching with research. What if our first course was titled “Customer Analysis”? Such a course should put equal weight on behavioral and quantitative methods, and it could be cotaught if necessary.

### Measure the Value of Marketing Decision Aids and Models

Many other contributors have commented on measuring the value of marketing inputs. Our focus should be to measure not only the value of a particular marketing input (e.g., advertising) or a particular marketing asset (e.g., brand) but also the value of better methods and models we develop. For example, what is the value of better allocation of resources, such as sales force across territories and advertising across products.

Finally, we should be more comfortable with our own identity. Our field has made many important contributions to the business world, to society, and to science. We need to be more comfortable with who we are. We could even be more proud of who we are. If we have a good article that fits equally well in two outlets, we may want to consider publishing it in a marketing journal rather than in an economics journal. If we have two equally good doctoral students who we are considering hiring, one from psychology and the other from marketing, we may want to hire the student from marketing. If we are more comfortable and possibly more proud of our own identity, it will surely help us, and it may also rub on to the practitioners.

## Readability and the Impact of Marketing

Ronald J. Bauerly, Don T. Johnson, & Mandeep Singh

If marketers want to communicate across specializations, across functional areas, and outside the marketing discipline and if marketing science is to influence practice, readability is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition to bridge these audiences. We examine the readability levels of *JM* over its history and find a dramatic decline in the 1966–1971 period. We explore the reasons this occurred and offer suggestions for enhancing readability and thus the impact of marketing.

### JM’s Readability 1936–2001

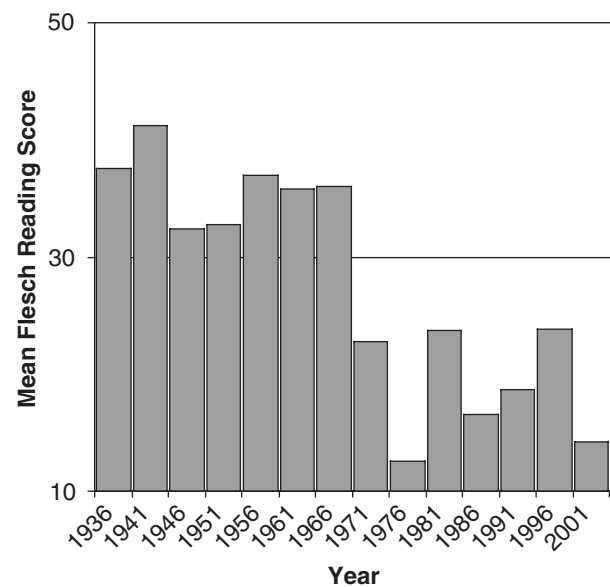
Klare (1963, p. 1) defines readability as “the ease of understanding or comprehension due to the style of writing.” To measure the readability of *JM*, we took samples from the introductions of the first five articles in the first issue of *JM* in each five-year period from 1936 to 2001. We measured the readability of the passages using the Flesch (1948) for-

mula:  $206.835 - (.846 \times [\text{number of syllables per 100 words}]) - (1.015 \times [\text{average number of words per sentence}])$ . This commonly used and highly validated measure of readability is standard on word processing software. The longer the words and sentences, the more difficult the passage is presumed to be. A Flesch score of 100 represents the easiest readability, and 0 represents the most difficult readability. As we depict in Figure 2, readability levels dropped abruptly and significantly ( $p < .01$ ) during the 1966–1971 period and fell into the “very difficult to read” range thereafter. The Flesch formula is just one measure of readability, but Severin and Tankard (1992) find that better Flesch scores lead to better reader comprehension.

### From Where Does Difficult Reading Come?

We believe that difficult reading stems from a confluence of factors. Benson (2004) notes the ten-year period following the Carnegie (Pierson 1959) and Ford (Gordon and Howell 1959) Foundation reports as a time of radical change in business education. Benson reports that, on average, a new doctoral school in business was opened every 73 days during that decade and that faculty positions were filled with properly degreed professors. Business degrees were refocused from training workers to training managers; business colleges responded to demands for rigorous research and theory development. Since that time, the evolution of marketing thought, ideas, and issues has increased the complexity of the discipline, and specializations have caused a widening separation among subareas of the discipline. This specialization has also been associated with a proliferation of publication outlets based on various target audiences.

FIGURE 2  
JM’s Readability (1936–2001)



Notes: The Flesch readability test can be used to classify documents as having different levels of readability. The “very difficult” category is the classification for any document that scores lower than 30 on the Flesch scale.

Another factor affecting the level of readability is the authors themselves. Most authors are trained in doctoral programs devoted more to the development of research skills than to the development of writing skills. New professors learn through the interactive research process that writing skills are given limited attention. Professors read published articles, and to increase their chances of being published, they mimic what they read.

Could reviewers be unwittingly contributing to the belief that difficult writing increases the likelihood of publication? In his seminal article about journal readability, Armstrong (1980) finds some support for the proposition that high-prestige publications are expected to have low readability. Armstrong rewrote passages from articles in ten highly ranked management journals to be more readable and then asked groups of faculty participants to read the different versions. Participants rated the less readable versions as being of better quality. In a similar vein, Metoyer-Duran (1993) finds that articles accepted at *College & Research Libraries* had worse readability scores than rejected articles. Such evidence is a disquieting reminder of the virulence of the difficult-to-read phenomenon.

What contributed to the decline of readability in *JM*? In his examination of the literary history of *JM*, Kerin (1996) details the evolution of *JM* from a largely descriptive journal to a scholarly and professional one. *Journal of Marketing* has witnessed dramatic stakeholder realignments over the years (see Table 2). Its editorial staff, editorial review board membership, and authors have all moved dramatically away from practitioners to academicians. As a consequence, merely descriptive articles have been replaced with articles that make a meaningful scholarly contribution. As Kerin (1996, p. 9) notes, this was “determined, in large measure, by logic in argumentation and thoroughness in documentation in both qualitative and quantitative terms.”

By the early 1970s, surveys of *JM* subscribers found that many subscribers had come to view the journal as too “academic” and lacking in “marketing applications” (Grether 1976). More recently, Crosier (2004) found that *JM* is not alone; readability is quite difficult in other major marketing journals as well. As Staelin (2002) asserts, when

articles are written in an academic style, the information must be diffused through other outlets before it is likely to be directly usable by practitioners.

### **Suggestions for Improving Readability**

Nothing less than a true commitment to improved readability is required. We outline several worthwhile options. There is evidence that the editing and review process improves readability (Roberts, Fletcher, and Fletcher 1994). Excellent advice on how to improve readability has been provided by editors (e.g., Kover 2002; Mick 2005; Staelin 2002). Authors can also have their papers professionally edited before submission. Some institutions already provide such services for their faculty either through in-house staff or by paying for external copy editors. Major journals such as *JM* could assign readability management to an assistant editor whose focus would be to improve the readability of provisionally accepted papers. The motivation for authors would be strong if only an improvement in readability stood between them and publication. Doctoral programs could require a technical writing course with a commitment to helping students develop more readable writing styles. We must train new scholars to recognize that good, readable writing defines good scholarship.

In summary, this collection of invited essays concurs on a critical premise. If marketing is to enjoy its central organizational role, we must collaborate across specialized silos within marketing (see the essay by MacInnis) and across functional and discipline-related areas (see the essay by Raju) and to conduct and disseminate research that is customized to the world markets (see the essay by Steenkamp). Furthermore, as this essay contends, if marketing science is to influence marketing practice, we must work toward making it not only relevant but also readable. Readability provides a critical bridge among specialized silos, functional areas, global markets, and marketing practice. We believe that the English language is a wonderful, flexible, supple tool; in the hands of an experienced and properly motivated writer, it should allow for the effective communication of complex ideas to readers.

**TABLE 2**  
***JM* Stakeholders**

	Year	Academic		Practitioner	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Editorial staff</b>	1966	2	25	6	75
	1971	6	75	2	25
	2001	4	100	0	0
<b>Review board</b>	1966	24	35	41	65
	1971	38	63	22	37
	2001	102	98	2	2
<b>Contributing authors</b>	1966	32	58	23	42
	1971	63	91	6	9
	2001	68	97	2	3

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## Influencing the Practice Through Big New Ideas

*Richard Staelin*

**W**e all enter the academy believing that our efforts will have an impact. Some of us center our attention on teaching, aiming to diffuse our acquired knowledge to students who act as change agents; others view the creation of new ideas as the best way to modify the practice; and still others attempt to influence the practice through consulting. Yet it is not always clear that marketing academics have had their desired impact. Indeed, this is a recurring theme in all the essays of this issue. Bauerly, Johnston, and Singh worry that our current publications are not readable and therefore are less likely to affect the practice. MacInnis believes that the bifurcation of our profession leads to silos, and as a result, knowledge is lost across these different branches of our profession. She suggests that the people in different areas be open to other perspectives and appreciate research for what it is. Steenkamp also worries about silos. He argues that most of our theories are too U.S. centric, and as a consequence, we are not able to address important global issues. After detailing several of these issues, he calls for marketing scholars to become more international in their research. Kerin calls for marketing academics to broaden their interests so that they can address multifunctional and business-level issues rather than only marketing issues. This theme can also be found in Brown's essay. He believes that we need to expand our target market to managers in all parts of the firm and not only marketing managers. Wilkie believes that most marketing academics focus their attention on helping the firm and thus do not consider societal issues. He points to the possible negative impact that can result from this narrow focus. Raju conjectures that the demise of marketing departments in corporations is partly due to academics not providing practitioners with the correct tools and knowledge. He suggests that we interact more with practitioners and that we modify our core marketing course to provide deeper knowledge. McAlister is less concerned about knowledge generation and more concerned about the knowledge creators who do not have enough outlets for publishing their new findings. She calls for the journals to expand the number of pages published each year. Webster believes that we tend to tackle only part of the problem at any one time and that we need to encourage senior faculty to take on complex issues that simultaneously address tactics, strategy, and organization. Sheth and Sisodia summarize the views of 17 speakers by pointing out that marketing needs to reform. They believe that the field needs to regain the trust of customers, make better use of technology, broaden marketing's perspective, and learn from other disciplines.

Running throughout many of these essays is the need for academics not only to be aware of others' work but also to show tolerance and respect for others' work and to broaden their own perspective. Implicit is the assumption

that marketing is a complex discipline that requires people to be open to many difference approaches and ideas, many of which may come from disciplines other than marketing, if our profession is to provide successful solutions. In addition, these essays imply that without this breadth and tolerance, our field will become insular and lose its relevance and impact. With this in mind, I discuss a few ways to broaden our scope of issues and tolerance for new ideas and thus positively influence the practice of marketing.

### ***Big New Ideas***

Our field has come a long way since the mid-1960s. Entire new fields have developed. Some of these fields have had a direct impact on the practice of marketing (e.g., the analysis of scanner data, brand equity studies), and others have had a much more indirect effect (e.g., analytic model building, the study of how consumers make decisions). In addition, many of the concepts developed within the field of marketing have migrated into other disciplines. Still, there is a growing perception that our field is closing in on itself and not having any impact on the practice. Wilkie refers to this as a "meanness" that has crept into our field. Raju believes that our field is searching for incremental ideas rather than big ideas. McAlister believes that we are rejecting manuscripts that are not wrong just because there is a page constraint. Using citations, Baumgartner and Pieters (2003) find that other disciplines rarely build on the knowledge developed in marketing journals. The question then becomes, What can be done to make sure our field progresses and broadens its influence?

Let me begin by addressing our journals. I agree with others that if we are to make strides in developing new knowledge, we must learn from others. One way to enhance this learning is for our leading marketing journals to publish articles that cover a wide range of topics and use multiple approaches. Such a view is consistent with the data provided by Baumgartner and Pieters (2003), who analyze the citations from 49 marketing journals. They find that the most influential marketing journals are those that have a broad span of influence; that is, such marketing journals publish articles that are cited by works published in a wide array of marketing journals. This leads me to suggest that at least the editors of our core set of journals should try to attract the best articles in our field, regardless of topic or method. It also leads me to suggest that the authors of such articles should emphasize the substantive or conceptual aspects of their work (versus the methods used) because these aspects tend to be of greatest interest to the largest group of readers.

Now, consider the creation of big ideas. We all teach our students that one of the best ways to learn is to experiment. Experimentation implies some unanticipated variance. This variation is useful because it enables a researcher to begin to understand the underlying forces that influence a particular situation and thus to improve the work. However, this unanticipated variance can also lead to some undesirable outcomes because for every positive draw, there is also a negative draw. Researchers (especially young researchers) tend to be risk averse. Because new ideas are also different

ideas, many researchers shy away from looking for the unexpected. This is particularly evident in the selection of potential research projects and in the review process (i.e., in the input and output stages of research).

I certainly do not have the magic bullet to solve this problem, but I believe that it is possible to influence directly the generation and adoption of new ideas. Consider two examples: The first took place in the mid-1980s when MSI provided seed money to a group of researchers who were interested in how consumers actually used the products that firms sold to them (versus the standard paradigm at the time of helping the firm influence consumers to buy the product). Using a diverse set of new (at least to marketing) approaches—now referred to as interpretive research—these researchers traveled from coast to coast one summer in a Winnebago to observe product use (for a description of the trip, see Belk 2005). This resulted in several manuscripts, many of which were sent to *Journal of Consumer Research* for possible publication. Because this type of research and the questions it asked were new to the field, there was much debate about the relevance of the topics and the appropriateness of this new field to marketing. Many people advocated that the papers should not be published in *Journal of Consumer Research*. However, the editor at the time, Rich Lutz, was supportive and guided these papers through the review process. As a result, a whole new field of inquiry gained the visibility and legitimacy necessary to sustain its long-term viability.

A second example of the use of seed money and an editor willing to support a budding new field is the case of customer relationship management (CRM). Approximately four years ago, Duke received funding from Teradata, a division of NCR, to foster CRM research and curriculum design. Rather than using the money to fund internal operations, the Duke faculty decided to provide overall guidance and seed money to a large number of researchers throughout the world who were interested in studying different aspects of CRM. Four years later, enough research had been generated that Ruth Bolton, as editor of the *JM*, decided to dedicate a significant number of journal pages to this one issue. She appointed Bill Boulding and me to usher articles through the review process with the goal of establishing a cohesive body of research that could act as a foundation for further exploration.

These two examples indicate that the field is still open to new ideas. However, in both cases, it took strong leadership to ensure that ideas “saw the light of the day.” Because I was part of the review process for the CRM issue, I can safely note that many of the articles would not have been published if the editor (and consulting editors) took only the advice of the reviewers. My conversations with Rich Lutz confirmed that he also played a major role in ensuring that the initial interpretive research papers made it through the review process. In both cases, the editors were willing to experiment, knowing full well that they could be accepting a paper that would not meet the market test for impact.

Editors are not the only people who need to foster new ideas. Senior faculty across our discipline must take it on themselves to facilitate new ideas and approaches. This is certainly the major theme of Webster’s essay when he calls for integrative research. However, it goes beyond this. The idea of facilitating new ideas also extends to the establishment of centers that act as umbrellas for a diverse set of scholars and that address major substantive issues. Often, these issues cut across functional lines and require collaborative research. The process of facilitating big new ideas also pertains to those asked to evaluate others’ work for possible publication and during the promotion and tenure process. Here, emphasis should be given to the generation of big ideas and approaches versus technical sophistication or the number of publications. Reviewers need to look for the good in a paper rather than view their task as finding the bad. The same issues apply to teaching. We should quickly diffuse new ideas into the classroom and tie these ideas to other areas of business, and we need people to step up and develop new ways to deliver our knowledge to the practicing managers.

Finally, there is the issue of doctoral training. We must prepare these new scholars to have deep knowledge in a particular area of marketing. However, we also need to ensure that they have enough understanding of the diverse approaches found in our field that they respect others’ work. Moreover, if this new breed of marketing academics is to make an impact, they will need to understand how our field is integrated into the broader discipline of business. Without this respect and this broader knowledge, there is less chance that they will be able to solve the next set of big problems facing our profession.

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