

Editorial

Brian T. Ratchford

Faculty of Marketing, 3467 Van Munching Hall, Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742-1815, bratchford@rhsmith.umd.edu

As I write this, I am finishing my third year as Editor of *Marketing Science* and entering the final year of my term. The fun part of the job has been the constant challenge of finding a solution to all sorts of problems, including what manuscripts to accept and when, how to get the journal out in a timely fashion, and what direction the journal should take. Perhaps the most gratifying part, however, has been the chance to work closely with many very talented people, especially Cindi Privitera, who has done a fantastic job as Business Manager; the current and past Area Editors; and Patricia Shaffer at INFORMS. Although I know I've made mistakes, hopefully most of the decisions I have made are positive and have left the journal in good condition.

Current Status

Largely through Cindi's efforts, we reduced our average turnaround to 72 days for the first 10 months of 2000, the last point at which we tabulated turnaround. Thus, *Marketing Science* continues to provide a turnaround that is very competitive with that of other journals in our field. If only we could eliminate the last few outliers, we would fare even better. Although a solution to this problem is elusive because the long cycles are usually a result of illness or other unpredictable circumstances, we will continue to work on this problem. Sometimes, unanticipated reviewer defaults leave us in a predicament of either having both a long turnaround and one review or needing to lengthen the process further by seeking another reviewer at a late date. I very much prefer that reviewers state up front that they are unavailable or return manuscripts at the beginning, if they have any doubt about their ability to do a review, rather than have reviewers default at the end of a long process.

In 1998 we had 112 new submissions for regular issues, and last year we had 107. So far this year, we have had 113 submissions through the first 10.5 months, so we are well ahead of the rate of submission at a comparable date last year. Because the number and timing of submissions appear to have a large stochastic component, I am not sure how to interpret this year's increase. Perhaps I should turn the data over to one of our experts in time series analysis. Pending this, the most reasonable conclusion is that annual submissions to *Marketing Science* have been stable for some time, in the range of 105–120 manuscripts annually.

There have been a number of changes to the Editorial Board since my last editorial. As noted in my last editorial, Wagner Kamakura became Editor of the *Journal of Marketing Research*, so he had to be replaced as Area Editor. Michel Wedel replaced Wagner last summer and has continued to provide very high-quality work. In addition, to lessen the workload on Area Editors who specialize in theoretical manuscripts, Jim Hess has been added as a new Area Editor. To reward a sizable number of people who had been providing quality reviews for *Marketing Science* for some time (in many cases they handled a heavier workload than most board members), nine people were added to the board this past summer. They are Barry Bayus, Rabikar Chatterjee, Anne Coughlan, Fred Feinberg, Peter Lenk, William Putsis, Gary Russell, Miklos Sarvary, and Gerard Tellis. Several others who do excellent reviews are good candidates for addition to the board in the near future.

Welcome news is that JSTOR has recently agreed to include *Marketing Science* as one of the journals included in its library of back issues (*Management Science*, *Operations Research*, and *Organization Science* will be there as well). Not only will this make it easier for members of the marketing community to access back

issues, but it will also make these issues much more accessible to members of the economics and statistics fields. This will make our work more visible to researchers in these areas and will improve our prospects to be cited by researchers in these fields.

Future Initiatives

This past spring Dave Reibstein and Dick Wittink contacted me with a proposal for a special issue on competition that would publish papers from a Marketing Science Institute (MSI) conference. After considerable refinement of the original proposal, which was helped greatly by the input of the Area Editors, this idea evolved into a conference and special issue on Competitive Responsiveness. A call for papers has been circulated, and the MSI conference on this topic will be held this spring. Papers submitted to the special issue will follow the normal *Marketing Science* review process, except that Dick and Dave will act as coeditors of the issue. As with other recent special issues, papers will be assigned to appropriate Area Editors and will go through the normal *Marketing Science* review process. Unlike other recent special issues, this special issue is planned as a fifth issue of the publication year, with its printing and mailing funded by MSI. Editorial work on the special issue should be completed in early 2002. Given the normal lead time between acceptance of papers and publication, the issue will probably appear in late 2002. Because the conference topic is quite appropriate for *Marketing Science* and should attract high-quality papers, I believe that publishing this issue is clearly to our advantage.

In another project, Joel Steckel is working on an article-length "History of the TIMS/INFORMS College on Marketing," which is scheduled for the fourth issue of 2001. This project is the outgrowth of extensive discussions between Joel, myself, and the Area Editors. Joel has asked Frank Bass, John Little, Dave Montgomery, Don Morrison, Lew Pringle, and Dick Wittink to write brief essays on major events in the College's history that they were involved with. Examples of such events are the birth of the College, the first Market Measurement and Analysis (Marketing

Science) Conference, the advent of the NSF decision and management sciences program, and the launching of this journal. Contributors have been asked to comment on why these events happened at the time and on their influence on future research and the practice of marketing science. I believe that a readily accessible account and discussion of these important events is well worth publishing in *Marketing Science*, and I appreciate Joel's willingness to undertake these projects.

Concerns

One outcome of Joel's project should be an appreciation of how quickly the area of marketing science has gone from a new product to the mature stage of the life cycle, the conditions that enabled this rapid change, and the key role of the people who pioneered this development. We hope that the project will help us to focus on the threats and opportunities that our field is facing at the present time.

To be sure, the field of marketing science has progressed greatly over the past few years. We have been pioneers in developing and applying methods for handling heterogeneity and state dependence in panel data, particularly Bayesian methods. We now know a great deal more about the effects of promotions and advertising. We have developed theoretical models that provide insight into a wide variety of institutions and practices, including the provision of information, reward programs, the Internet, unauthorized channels of distribution, and various pricing schemes. We have learned much more about consumer purchases of market baskets of items. We have been in the forefront in the development of empirical methods for assessing supply-side behavior as well as demand. Numerous other areas of recently developed knowledge could be listed.

Despite this impressive record, in which we justifiably take pride, there are some potential threats to our continued success. Although there is some indication that this is beginning to change, we seem to concentrate a disproportionate amount of effort on packaged goods and to do relatively little work in some areas important to practitioners, such as direct

marketing, business-to-business marketing, and services marketing. One obvious reason is that data on packaged goods has been relatively more accessible.

At the same time, people in other disciplines are engaging in what we would recognize as marketing. Management science people are employing data-mining techniques to help direct marketers; strategy people are teaching about positioning and segmentation; operations people are measuring customer satisfaction; MIS people are studying consumer behavior on the Internet; economists have become interested in scanner data; and I have even run across a case of an organizational behavior group studying the idea generation process for new products. This attests to the importance of our field and to the value of our past research in these areas. However, it also raises the possibility that, if our interests become too narrowly focused, ultimately we could lose our franchise with practitioners in some areas we have neglected.

This threat also suggests an opportunity. There is a great potential for synergy and cross-fertilization with the scholars in other areas who engage in marketing-related research. Perhaps we are taking too much of our inspiration from our core disciplines of economics and statistics and not paying enough attention to work in other areas that is directly related to marketing. This other work is certainly a potential source of good articles for this journal; in fact, we often publish articles authored or coauthored by scholars in related areas. I would like to see more high-quality work involving researchers in related fields and more attempts to develop ideas proposed in these areas. An example would be high-quality ap-

plications of data mining to direct marketing. That others are doing marketing-related work also creates a potential audience for the work of those in the marketing area. We could do more to disseminate marketing ideas by publishing more in such areas as MIS, strategy, operations, and organizational behavior and also by making our work more accessible to practitioners.

In sum we could get into difficulty if we become too narrow and, ignoring the needs of practitioners, leave certain areas of our field to others. Also, we could benefit greatly from working with others who are interested in our problems and have some new approaches. There are other ways to ensure our competitive success. One is through contact with practitioners and their problems. Toward this end, a major objective of the MSI conference discussed above is to involve practitioners and to obtain their viewpoints. Another way to preserve our franchise is to foster work in relatively underresearched areas of marketing, especially by finding ways to make it easier to obtain data. Ready access to scanner data revolutionized our field, and easy access to other types of data could have a similar impact.

As I am sure that Joel's article will attest, people in marketing science have always risen to the challenges facing the field at any given time, and they have always taken the steps needed to ensure that the field will prosper. I am sure that this will continue to be the case.¹

¹Although not necessarily representing their point of view, this editorial has benefited greatly from the comments of William Boulding, Pradeep Chintagunta, Rajiv Lal, Scott Neslin, Sridhar Moorthy, Michel Wedel, Charles Weinberg, and Dick Wittink.

