

# Guest Editorial from a Previous Editor-in-Chief: Twenty-Five Years of Eclectic Growth in *Marketing Science*

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The journal *Marketing Science* is now twenty-five years old and has accomplished much more than we had ever dreamed. I recall debates, often on bus rides at the early Marketing Science conferences, about the editorial structure. The AMA journals, the *Journal of Marketing Research* and the *Journal of Marketing*, were potential outlets for marketing science research, but these journals changed editors every three years. Each editor brought his or her perspectives—sometimes advocating marketing science and sometimes not. This system ensured diversity as each editor made his or her imprint on the journal, but many young researchers (yes, we were young once) faced three years in limbo. There are many advantages to the AMA system, but the *Marketing Science* founding committee sought a more stable editorial structure. We sought eclecticism in which there were many ways to succeed. One model was *Management Science*, which had nearly autonomous departmental editors—a system that made sense for a mature field. But marketing science was in a rapid growth stage. We needed a better hybrid that balanced the many viewpoints with an entrepreneurial editor.

From these debates was born the area editor (AE) system. Each AE would work with the reviewers and report to the editor, who would make the final decision. The editor would maintain a field-wide perspective and encourage new directions. The goal was diverse perspectives with two sets of editorial evaluations. The number of AEs would grow as the journal attracted more papers and covered more subfields. We began with three; we now have over twenty (with a list of over thirty-five guest AEs). We hoped that the shared load would prevent the dreaded editor-in-chief-burnout phenomenon, at least with the submission volumes we anticipated in the early 1980s. Following the ORSA/TIMMS (later INFORMS) system, editors were appointed for three years, but with

the option of reappointment. This system has its flaws but, on the whole, it has served us well.

We made the strategic decision to empower the editors and review team to judge a paper publishable (or not) without worrying about page constraints. Each year the INFORMS Society on Marketing Science (ISMS), or its predecessors, has supported additional pages as necessary and special issues when appropriate. A final strategic decision was to actively court an international perspective. The Marketing Science conference plans a rotation of one of every three years outside of North America. *Marketing Science* is now strongly international and has benefited from that diversity (Stremersch and Verhoef 2005).

The last strategic decision was to grow the field in general, not just the journal per se. We all shared the goals that marketing science methods should evolve and that new ideas would come from the most unexpected places. We hoped that ISMS and its predecessors would view the AMA, the ACR, and now QME as synergistic to the growth of the marketing science field. Today marketing science papers often appear in other journals. *Marketing Science* authors cite and publish in AMA, ACR, and QME journals, join those societies, and serve on other editorial boards. In return, many new ideas have come to ISMS and *Marketing Science*.

We also made tactical decisions. *Marketing Science* was one of the first journals to compete on turnaround time. While there is still variance, average turnaround time is now less than three months, with decisions made on most papers within the first two rounds of reviewing. More recently, we were the first journal to publish in color.

Together, these strategies seem to be working. Papers are published today with methods, perspectives, and topics we never anticipated. Authors routinely analyze rich data such as scanner panels, use

and generate new perspectives on consumer behavior, employ computational statistics such as hierarchical Bayesian analysis, use formal game- and agency-theory models to highlight new insights, and explore empirical generalizations. Indeed, if I chose to do so, I could fill many pages listing insights drawn from *Marketing Science* papers. From modest beginnings, submissions have grown to over three hundred papers per year with authors drawn from around the world and from a deep set of universities and from industry. Of all of the marketing journals, we are the only journal to publish six times per year.

I am proud of ISMS as a society and *Marketing Science* as a journal because of their eclecticism. When I was appointed editor, I sought the advice of my predecessors, Subrata Sen and Don Morrison. From Subrata I learned to listen to the AEs; from Don I

learned the Morrison Doctrine—a journal is judged by its best papers. I have always interpreted his doctrine to mean that we should listen and support new ideas and avoid philosophical battles. If there is a paradigm shift, then we want *Marketing Science* to facilitate publication of the paradigm-shifting papers. I have been following the marketing science field for more than thirty years, and if there are two things I learned, they are that the “right” thing to do today will be questioned tomorrow and that new methods, perspectives, and problems are waiting to be discovered.

#### Reference

- Stremersch, Stefan, Peter C. Verhoef. 2005. Globalization of authorship in the marketing discipline: Does it help or hinder the field? *Marketing Sci.* 24(4) 585–594.