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Passing the Baton

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The *Journal of Retailing* has many old friends. It should! *The Journal of Retailing* is the oldest marketing journal, first published in 1925. It predates the *Journal of Marketing* by ten years, *Journal of Marketing Research* by 38 years and the *Journal of Consumer Research* by 49 years.

We, too, are old friends of the *Journal of Retailing*. (Yes, Michael is much older than Dhruv. Although those who know us would say that Dhruv is making Michael old.) Dhruv and Michael have been working together since 1989 when Dhruv joined the faculty at the University of Miami. Dhruv and Michael have both recently moved to Babson College in 2000 and 1999, respectively. Michael joined the Editorial Board in 1982, and Dhruv joined in 1995. We have enjoyed our association with *JR* as reviewers and as contributors. Now, as co-editors, we bring our long-standing association with *Journal of Retailing* to a different level. We are excited about our new responsibilities and aspire to maintain *JR*'s upward momentum initiated by the previous editors with whom we have been associated.

We inherit the editorship of *Journal of Retailing* from many distinguished colleagues. It is because of their leadership, foresight, mentoring, and plain hard work that *Journal of Retailing* is now recognized as one of the top academic marketing journals. A recent survey of over 300 marketing academics, ranked *Journal of Retailing* fourth in terms of perceived importance to the discipline among 63 marketing-related journals (Hult, Neese & Bashaw, 1997).

We would like to thank *JR*'s most recent editor, Pete Bucklin (1996–2001) for thoughtfully weaning us into this job. We believe the transition has been relatively seamless, and hope you will agree. We owe a special and personal debt to Chuck Ingene (Editor 1992–1996) for encouraging Dhruv to get involved with *JR* as a Board Member as well as being a good friend and research collaborator of Michael's since their days together in Dallas. Avijit Ghosh (Editor 1985–1991) served *JR* for many years, not only as Editor, but also on the Executive Board. As Avijit moves from New York University to become the new Dean of the College of Commerce and Business Administration at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, we want to recognize his many accomplishments and contributions to *JR*, thank him and wish him the best as he faces his new challenges. Bill Darden (Editor 1983–1985) is sorely missed by those who knew him. Bill passed away in a plane crash in

Table 1
Articles in Recent Issues of *JR*

Topic	Regular Articles	Special Issue Articles	Total Articles
Services	6	11	17
Pricing	10	7	17
Consumer Behavior and Patronage	16		16
Channels/Supply Chain	5	5	10
Assortment Planning		6	6
Modeling	6		6
Strategy/Productivity	3		3
Legal/Public Policy	3		3
Sales Management	3		3
Promotion	3		3
Atmospherics	2		2
Trade Area Analysis/Location	2		2
E-commerce	1		1
Scanner	1		1
Economics	1		1

1999. We can all aspire to his zest for life and his love for *Journal of Retailing*. Finally, Michael would like to thank Beth Hirschman (Editor, 1980–1983) for taking a chance and putting him on *JR*'s Board when he was a young assistant professor in 1982. We would like to give special thanks to Sam Craig, chair of the Executive Board of *Journal of Retailing* at New York University for entrusting the Journal to us.

Lastly, our job would be much more difficult without the support our home institution. We are grateful to Mike Fetters, Academic Vice President and our colleagues in the Marketing Division at Babson College for their support and encouragement. Finally, we would have made little progress as editors if it weren't for the help of Giao Nguyen, our Managing Editor. For those who have already interacted with Giao, you will know how pleasant and efficient she is.

1. History of themes

Some things change, while others stay the same. A casual perusal of *JR* issues from the distant past reveals some topics that we might expect to appear in today's Journal. For instance, "Why Aren't Salesclerks Experts?" (Jensen, 1926); and "Comparative Prices," (Edwards, 1930) are titles that could appear in a recent *JR* on knowledge structures, store atmospherics, and legal issues, respectively. Other topics are clearly dated: "Hours of Doing Business," (Furstenberg, 1939), or "Trend Toward Self-Service," (Collins, 1940). A recent compilation of articles published under Pete's editorship indicates a wide variety of topics spanning the retailing/marketing spectrum. We are certain that the assignment of articles to categories would be different, depending on who handled the assignment. Clearly, many of these articles could fall into more than one category. For instance, a modeling paper could also be classified in pricing. A services article could be placed in the consumer behavior column. But the list provided in Table 1 should provide a glimpse of the balance of articles published in *JR* over the last five years.

Although there is a smattering of topics from several sides of the marketing spectrum, we see some not so surprising concentrations. Services came out on top. Services research includes retail services such as a bank or airlines, as well as the service aspects of selling physical products to consumers, such as complaint behavior. The number of papers in this area is relatively high even without the two special issues. Pricing, consumer behavior, and retail patronage are also high—not surprising considering pricing has always been within retailing’s primary domain and the number of people in marketing doing research in consumer behavior.

We would like to use this content analysis of the articles that have been published in recent *JR* issues as a springboard for what we would like to see come through the pipeline in the future.

2. Editorial Position

Unlike other general marketing journals such as *Journal of Marketing* and *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *JR* has traditionally been bound by the confines of its name, both because of its explicit editorial policy set by previous editors and by the perception of its contributors and readers. During our tenure as Editors, we wish to continue the tradition of publishing articles that appeal to academics and practitioners with an interest in retailing and related topics. To clearly delineate *JR*’s domain, we must first define retailing—a commercial enterprise that sells products and/or services to consumers for their personal or family use. We also include within this framework the interface of retailers with vendors up the distribution channel, as well as issues that impact retail operations and strategies. *JR*’s domain *does not* include topics or data sets where retailers are not involved or are only superficially involved.

Prospective authors who find this position unnecessarily restricting are invited to discuss their concerns with the editors. We believe, however, that the practice and study of retailing is replete with numerous topics and data of interest that are just begging to be examined.

What encompasses research in retailing? To answer this question, we must look at the retailer, and ask what a retailer does.

- They analyze their customers.
- They develop strategies.
- They choose markets and channels in which to compete.
- They make location decisions.
- They find, design, purchase, price, and promote merchandise and services.
- They organize their operations and manage their employees and stores.
- They create an atmosphere that is inviting to customers and conducive for buying.

All of these issues have been and will continue to be within the domain of research in retailing, and by extension, *Journal of Retailing*.

Other topics that go beyond the operational walls of a typical retailer are also appropriate for *JR* so long as retailing is the focus of the paper. This does not mean, however, that every article has to be explicitly about retailers per se. Consider the following topics:

- Emerging technologies are enabling conventional retailers to better integrate multiple channels to create and deliver value to customers. Manuscripts that examine this increasingly important topic are encouraged.
- Supply chain management articles whose findings impact retailers or should be of relevance to retailers are appropriate.
- Articles that deal with a measurement issue, such as service quality, that should be important to retailers are welcomed.
- There is little substantive difference between research in retailing and services. Indeed, much of what distinguishes retailers is service based. Further, *JR* has supported two special issues on services research in recent years, and will continue to do so in the future. Manuscripts submitted to *JR*, however, should be limited to those examining vendor-to-retailer or retailer-to-customer service issues.
- Relationships with service suppliers, such as third party logistics providers (transportation and public warehousing), site selection (GIS) firms, and promotion/advertising agencies are welcome as long as the focus of the paper is to improve the operations, efficiency, or innovative abilities of the retailer.
- Public policy issues, such as consumer rights, retailer ethics, green-marketing, purchasing from firms utilizing child labor or other human rights violations, deceptive price promotions, Americans with Disability Act violations, anti-trust, competitive and environmental issues, are just a few of many potentially interesting topics.
- In addition, we continue to reach out to marketing scientists. This group has been strong contributors to *JR* for the last decade or so, mostly because of the encouragement of the last two Editors, Chuck Ingene and Pete Bucklin. We have taken the additional step of adding an Associate Editor of Marketing Science, Jim Hess of University of Illinois at Champagne. Jim has had considerable editorial experience on the review boards of *Journal of Retailing* and *Marketing Science*. We welcome him to our team.
- The topics chosen for exposition here represent only a partial sampling. We welcome your comments, either by email or phone, regarding any submission issue.

3. Evaluation Criteria

Manuscripts submitted to *JR* will be evaluated on its expected contribution to retailing and related topics as outlined in the Editorial Position above. We will attempt to balance our assessment of a manuscript's contribution versus its length when directing revisions. Submitting authors should carefully examine previous issues of *JR* for format and style. Other useful information can be found at <http://www.babson.edu/jr>.

We would like to explicitly encourage manuscripts that integrate both multiple research topics and multiple methods. For example, a study may examine the role of inventory levels in a retail store and their effects on perceived stock-outs, customer satisfaction and store image (multiple research topics). This research may utilize an analytical model that is tested using survey and experimental data (multiple methods).

The literature on retailing-related topics is rich. Yet, there have been very few published replications, and as a result, even fewer meta-analyses. We encourage *significant* replica-

tions, and meta-analyses. There are two areas where a replication may be of interest to *JR*. The first is where a replication finds different results and can correct prior findings. The second is where the initial study has findings that are so counter to accepted theory that replications are needed to insure that the first findings were not due to error or random chance. A replication whose fundamental contribution is the use of a different sample is less likely to be viewed as a significant contribution.

By performing meta-analyses, authors should explicitly synthesize the findings of the new study with the original on both qualitative and quantitative issues. The quantitative synthesis should explicitly compare the effect size of the studies (cf. Fern & Monroe, 1996 and Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984). By so doing, differences in findings could be attributed to variations in method, sample, substantive domain, etc. If such reporting becomes standard practice, it will enhance the ability to do meta-analyses. We believe that such studies could result in a synthesis of research streams and indicate crucial gaps requiring further exploration. Prospective authors are cautioned, however, that replications and meta-analyses must provide fresh knowledge. Unlike in Hollywood, remakes won't fly.

Research published in *JR* should clearly justify the relevance of the sample used *vis a vis* research objectives. There has been a rich debate on the issue of student versus non-student samples (see Calder & Tybout, 1999; Calder et al., 1981, 1982, Lynch, 1999, 1982). We believe that both sample types are appropriate under certain circumstances. For instance, student samples may be appropriate for theoretical research where the results can be generalized to a broader population. Students would not be appropriate when used for the convenience of the researchers. We expect to see and encourage the use of online samples drawn from appropriate frames. The technology is readily available. Respondents appear to be particularly receptive to this media. Finally, online samples are particularly appropriate for studying e-tailing issues.

4. Review Process

The procedures for the selection of articles for *JR* is similar to other refereed journals. The manuscripts are generally sent to three reviewers who are either members of the review board or ad hoc reviewers who are experts in one or more of the domains covered in the paper. The review process is "double-blind." All identification of authors and reviewers are removed prior to correspondence to insure that the paper is judged based solely on its contribution.

We are highly motivated to facilitate the review process. Reviewers are chosen carefully on the basis of their expertise, insight, constructive comments, and timeliness of their reviews. The length of our review process compares favorably with other leading marketing journals. Reviewers are asked to return their completed manuscripts within 30 days.

We act decisively once the review process is complete. If a revision is requested, our instructions to authors are designed to move the authors toward a successfully published manuscript. In our notes to authors, we will emphasize reviewers' comments that we believe are most important to address. Every effort will be made to mediate conflicting reviewer comments. Our goal is not to send papers back to reviewers' for third round decisions.

To keep abreast of the review process, please visit the *JR* web page at <http://www.babson.edu/jr>. Click on “Manuscript Status,” and authors can track the progress of the review process. The *JR* web page will also contain other useful information such as Executive Summaries of recent articles and Publication Guidelines.

5. Conclusion

We look forward to working with manuscript authors, the Editorial Review Board, ad hoc reviewers, and our publisher, Elsevier. Together we believe we can accomplish the following goals:

- Insure *Journal of Retailing* is the first choice option for publishing the best research on retailing and related topics.
- Further solidify the editorial policy of previous editors of encouraging the submission of manuscripts that deal with important and creative topics that are theoretically based, methodologically rigorous, and draw from a wide variety of disciplines.
- Provide a pleasant and constructive experience to submitting authors.

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