Writing an Outstanding Review

Christine Moorman, Duke University, Editor in Chief
Harald van Heerde, UNSW, Editor

JOURNAL OF
Marketing

JOURNAL of Marketing

The *Journal of Marketing* develops and disseminates knowledge about real-world marketing questions relevant to scholars, educators, managers, policy makers, consumers, and other societal stakeholders around the world.

Questions

- Type your questions into the chat function to "Everyone" so that both presenters can see the question.

- This will also minimize redundancy in questions asked.

- Don't be shy—we are here to help!

Agenda

- Why you should review

- Approaching the review

- Recommended review mind-set

- Maximize the impact of your review

- Writing the review

- After the decision

Agenda

- **Why you should review**

- Approaching the review

- Recommended review mind-set

- Maximize impact of your review

- Writing the review

- After the decision

Why should you review?

- Contribute to the field

- Reciprocity is how the system works

- Stay in touch with the emerging literature

- Great learning experience for writing a strong paper

Agenda

- Why you should review

- **Approaching the review**

- Recommended review mind-set

- Maximize the impact of your review

- Writing the review

- After the decision

Avoid conflicts of interest

- Read these carefully in the invitation letter (each journal is different).

- If applicable, disqualify yourself and/or communicate knowledge of the authors to the editor.

- *JM:* We prefer full transparency (that you know the authors) even if you do not have an actual conflict of interest.

- If you have seen the paper elsewhere (e.g., reviewed for another journal), you should let the editor know.

Journal of Marketing conflicts of interest
(details on the JM website)

- You are presently a coauthor or have previously coauthored a paper with any of the authors.

- Any of the authors was or is your thesis advisor.

- Any of the authors is a business partner or relative.

- Any of the authors was or is at the same institution at the same time as you—either as a student or faculty.

- Any of the authors was or is one of your PhD students or you served on any of the authors' dissertation committee(s).

Be clear about the editorial mission of the journal

- This should be clear from the formal editorial statements and materials published by the editors.

  - If you are not clear contact the editor in charge of the paper for clarification.

- The *Journal of Marketing* is focused on <u>marketing</u> and so research that contributes primarily to psychology, economics, sociology, or anthropology is not a good fit.

  - Practically, this means that we want authors to focus on (i) <u>marketing problems/questions, (ii) marketing interventions, and/or (iii) marketing outcomes</u>—not all are required.

  - A full range of stakeholders, including consumers, policy, firms, and other societal stakeholders engaged with marketing can be the subject of research published in *JM*.

Keep the paper confidential

- Do not share papers in the review process or your review with any outside parties. This ensures that ideas are protected when submitted to journal.

- You should never ever ask anyone to do your reviewing work for you.

- You can ask colleagues for help if you have a question. As you do, be sure to protect the ideas in the paper.

Commit the necessary time

- Doing a review can take 6-8 hours and sometimes more than a whole day. Revisions can take even longer.

- Be prepared to read other papers, consult colleagues.

Be timely and responsible

- Respond as promptly as possible to review invitations.

- If you accept a review, you are then responsible for completing it in the scheduled time frame.

- Do not cancel at the last minute, and avoid very late reviews. Both behaviors harm the review process because they either delay papers or leave authors and editors with a smaller set of reviewers.

Respect the author's objective and not try to hijack the paper

- "Hijacking" means the review team takes too much control from the authors.

- This is generally done with the goal of helping the authors improve their contribution.

- Be careful to not take your recommendations beyond a reasonable level.

Agenda

- Why you should review

- Approaching the review

- Recommended review mind-set

- Maximize the impact of your review

- Writing the review

- After the decision

IMPORTANT

Cut more slack for papers that address important issues, while still maintaining a threshold level of acceptability.

Be open to organic/indigenous marketing theories

- "Borrowing" theories from other disciplines is common and well accepted.

- Be open to organic/indigenous/homegrown theories. These are uniquely or largely about marketing phenomena.

- In marketing, this theory-building approach has generated some of the highest impact papers in this field (e.g., service quality, brand equity, market orientation).

Recommended review mind-set

Do not forget about conceptual rigor

- Conceptual rigor is more than using theories and frameworks from other disciplines.

- It means:

  - Being clear and precise about construct definitions and theoretical propositions/hypotheses

  - Providing strong arguments for propositions/hypotheses

  - Using terms consistently in the paper

  - Having a level of coherence across the ideas in the paper

Ensure that models and empirical rigor are in the service of marketing insight, not an end in themselves.

Never make it about you or your work

- Don't be a selfish reviewer that touts your own work.

- If your important work is overlooked, you can note this privately to the editor or in a broader set of references offered to the authors.

Accept some weaknesses

- We must work to create the best papers possible while also acknowledging that all papers have limitations.

- As noted by former *JM* editor Kohli (2011, p. 1), that "The perfect paper does not exist."

- Similarly, former *JMR* editor Gil Churchill used to say, "There are no perfect papers—only published and unpublished papers."

Review the paper the way you would like your own paper reviewed!

KEEP CALM AND FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE

Recommended review mind-set

Agenda

- Why you should review

- Approaching the review

- Recommended review mind-set

- **Maximize the impact of your review**

- Writing the review

- After the decision

It is unlikely that every paper you review should be rejected

- Always recommending "accept" or "reject" suggests you are probably not a careful reviewer.

- <u>Most common first round recommendations</u>: Reject and major and risky revision.

Be specific

- A lazy reviewer offers generalities.

- It is easy to offer a set of standard criticisms about papers, such as lack of conceptual framework, endogeneity threats, or lack of managerial or theoretical contributions.

- Instead, work to identify the specific problems.

BE SPECIFIC

Explain your criticisms

- How will the problems you identify explain the pattern of ideas or results in the paper?

- Too often reviewers raise questions about a paper they consider fatal. However, absent from the review is an explanation of how the critique explains the pattern of ideas or results.

- Lynch (1998) calls this the "fundamental reviewer error."

Don't criticize the paper in areas where you lack expertise

- If you feel you are in over your head, share this with the editor or ask the editor for guidance about where s/he would like you to focus. Sometimes editors will select you to focus on one aspect of the paper.

Be constructive

- This means you should be willing to offer recommendations to solve some of the criticisms you raise.

- If, for example, a theory is lacking, what literature or concepts would be useful? If a model is missing a critical element, what is required to rule out competing explanations?

- This type of feedback requires you to engage deeply in the paper and helps improve the quality of papers published.

Be tolerant

- If the author does not do something the way you would, that does not mean it is wrong.

- Be tolerant of approaches that are different from yours, and do not force the author to follow your idiosyncratic choice of methods or paradigms.

- Remember that marketing is a multidisciplinary field and respect the author's paradigm and objectives.

Be reasonable about what you request the author to do

- For example, demanding collection of new data to correct minor flaws, or demanding additional robustness checks that take months to do may not be in the interest of the journal.

- Distinguish between things that are essential for the paper to be acceptable and those that would be nice to have in your review.

Be dispassionate

- Avoid emotionally-charged language.

- Avoid absolutes.

- Refer to, e.g., "the paper is …" or "the model is …" rather than "the authors are…"

Seek to raise your concerns as early as you can in the review process

- This will help the authors move forward efficiently and not cause major delays later in the process

Be consistent across reviews of a paper

- Don't flip flop unless you have had a revelation or if the authors introduce new information in between submissions that requires new comments.

Agenda

- Why you should review

- Approaching the review

- Recommended review mind-set

- Maximize the impact of your review

- Writing the review

- After the decision

Format

- Length: 2 single-spaced pages is generally sufficient.

- Number each comment (this helps the Editor, AE, and authors).

- Do <u>not</u> write comments in the order in which they come up in the paper, e.g., page 1 comments.

- Do <u>not</u> communicate your editorial vote in your review.

- See next slide for one recommended order.

A typical set of review categories (and recommended order):

- A short <u>synopsis</u> of the paper and its findings

- Evaluate the <u>contribution</u>: Suggestions to improve contribution (if needed)

- Identify major <u>conceptual</u> strengths, weaknesses, recommendations

- Identify major <u>empirical</u> strengths, weaknesses, recommendations

- Evaluate <u>readability</u>

- Minor comments and suggestions

Take a step away and revisit your review to ensure it contributes and is reasonable.

Offer unvarnished views to the editor while being polite to authors

Be careful!

- Do not type your review into the box provided.

- Create it in a WORD document so you can easily proof read and spell check it.

- Only after proofing should you paste into the box or attach.

The second round and beyond

- Review the revision notes so you understand what the editor asked the authors to do.

- At *JM* we ask authors to offer a list of their major revisions which can serve as a guide to the review team.

- If the editor tells the authors not to follow your advice, it is best to back down. You may express private concerns to the editor if they are important.

- Read the paper with the revision in mind and look for progress. Toggle between review notes and the paper to ensure you are clear what the authors were trying to do.

- Revisions can take a day (or more) to complete.

Agenda

- Why you should review

- Approaching the review

- Recommended review mind-set

- Maximize the impact of your review

- Writing the review

- After the decision

Seek to understand the Editor's decision

- Do not take it personally if the Editor makes a different decision than your recommendation.

- Overruling the review team's recommendations is often required to publish innovative or risky research.

- The editors are the only ones with a truly global view of the journal and its requirements.
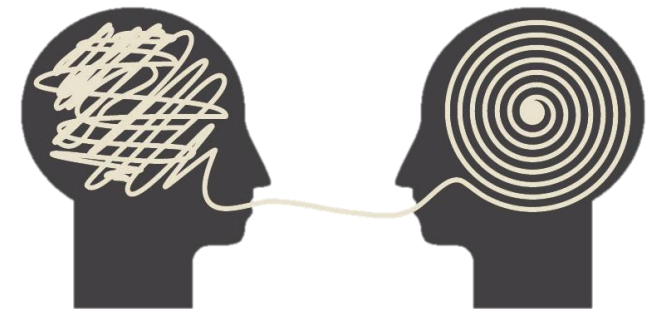
After the decision

Learn from the review process

- Read the AE and Editor's letters and see if they pointed to your comments.

- Find out what you missed and review the paper to see if you now recognize the problem.

Questions

- Type your questions into the chat function to "Everyone" so that both presenters can see the question.

- This will also minimize redundancy in questions asked.

- Don't be shy—we are here to help!

Next JM Webinar:
(May 27, 1PM Eastern)

JOURNAL of Marketing
WEBINAR FOR MANAGERS

Featured Speakers:

- **"Branding Cultural Products in International Markets":**
  Weihe Gao and Li Ji (Shanghai University of Finance and Economics), Yong Liu (University of Arizona), and Qi Sun (Shanghai University of Finance and Economics)

- **"The Customer Experience Secrets of Leisure Brands":**
  Anton Siebert (Newcastle University), Ahir Gopaldas (Fordham University), Andrew Lindridge (Newcastle University), and Cláudia Simões (University of Minho)

Thank you for your service to the field
We will post a revised version of these slides to the reviewing section of the *JM* website by 5/1.

- *JM* on Twitter: @JofMarketing
- *JM* on LinkedIn: ama-journal-of-marketing
- *JM* website: https://www.ama.org/journal-of-marketing/