



## Letter from the co-editors-in-chief

## Farewell from Peter LaPlaca



This is the last letter from the editor that I will be writing as Editor-in-Chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*. I began my affiliation with IMM when I volunteered to be the Book Review Editor in 1977, (You've got to start somewhere!) I was appointed Associate Editor in 1979 and remained in that role until I was asked to start a new journal in industrial marketing in 1985. That new journal was the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*. In 1993 I was asked to be the Editor-in-Chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*.

IMM in 1993 was quite different from what it is today. Its quarterly issues featured 6–8 articles dealing with a variety of business marketing topics, but quite honestly it needed considerable improvement. IMM needed to greatly increase the number and quality of submissions as well as the number of reviewers to evaluate these submissions. I had heard of a group of academic researchers called the *Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group* that focused on researching industrial markets so I got on a plane and flew to the IMP conference in Bath, England. I met a great many researchers who did high quality research but needed broader outlets for their papers. I said to myself, "This could be an answer to my prayers!" But I needed more eyes and more brains to evaluate this potential flow of new manuscripts. So I proceeded to expand the review board from 24 people to 30, 50 then 100 by 1997. Today IMM has almost 700 reviewers; a quarter of them are members of the IMP Group. With unwavering diligence to excellence, it is the IMM reviewers who have made IMM what it is today... I thank you.

With an expanded ERB we were able to solicit an increased number of submissions, initially from members of the IMP Group, reviewers and their colleagues. In 1994 we only had 164 submissions (and published 41 articles in four issues); the number grew slowly but steadily over the next couple of years and by 2000 we were getting 300 submissions. Also growing was IMM's stature as a quality journal and in 2002 IMM was first listed in Journal Citation Reports and received its first impact factor of 0.500. Not great, but it was a beginning. Then submissions started growing significantly so that by 2008 we passed 500. Today IMM receives between 500 and 800 submissions annually. About a third of all IMM submissions come from researchers in the IMP Group. And papers submitted by IMPers are twice as likely to be accepted as papers submitted by other researchers. For this quantity and quality, I thank you. For the past 3 years IMM has published between 120–130 articles annually. I hope that this will continue and that IMM will continue to remain the top outlet for B2B research in general and for IMP research in particular.

*Industrial Marketing Management* is published by Elsevier, the largest journal publisher in the world. As such IMM enjoys the support of a very innovative publisher, a publisher that has invested millions of dollars in its systems to better convey the knowledge developed by academic researchers. IMM has steadily advanced in quality and its impact on marketing theory and practice. It is currently the highest

rated journal focusing exclusively on Business-to-Business marketing and according to its Google statistics is the fourth ranked marketing journal overall.

IMM will continue to look for world-class research focusing on B2B marketing and we will continue to move from descriptive research (such as single case studies) to more explanatory and predictive research. We will continue to put more emphasis on papers employing pluralistic research methodologies, especially those papers that adapt research methodologies from other disciplines to explain industrial marketing behavior as well as research focused on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of industrial marketing practitioners.

IMM will also be open to new and even risky views on novel theory development. We should remember that when 'interactionism' and especially 'networks' view were first introduced it took several years before they reached a 'legitimized' level (and enabled explanatory and predictive research). Complex and open systems are notoriously difficult to explain. So I would like to embrace, for example, the forthcoming theorizing on 'complex ecosystems' at the descriptive level (first) then followed by more explanatory and predictive studies.

As I step down after 24 years as Editor of IMM, I assure you the journal is in no danger. Adam Lindgreen, who became co-Editor in 2015, will be joined by Tony DiBenedetto beginning in January 2017. Let me reintroduce Adam and then introduce Tony.

**Adam Lindgreen** is Professor and Head of the Marketing Department at Copenhagen Business School. He has been Co-Editor of *Industrial Marketing Management* since January 2015. Like me, Adam studied chemistry in college. He received his Ph.D. in marketing from Cranfield University. His first appointments were at Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium) and Eindhoven University of Technology (The Netherlands). He then was Professor of Marketing at Hull University's Business School (2007–2010; UK), the University of Birmingham's Business School (2010; UK), and the University of Cardiff's Business School (2011–2016; UK) where he was the head of the school's Department of Marketing and Strategy.

Professor Lindgreen has been a visiting academic with various institutions, including Auckland University, Georgia State University, Groupe HEC in France, Melbourne University, and Monash University and is currently a visiting professor with Bradford University's Business School (United Kingdom). His research interests include corporate social responsibility and relationship marketing. His recent publications have appeared in *Business Horizons*, *California Management Review*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing*

*Science, Journal of Product Innovation Management, Journal of World Business, Psychology & Marketing, and Supply Chain Management: An International Journal.*

After working with Adam these past 2 years, I can honestly say that the journal remains in good hands. He will continue to build IMM's status and reputation.

**Anthony Di Benedetto** is Professor of Marketing and Supply Chain Management and Senior Washburn Research Fellow at Temple University, Philadelphia, USA. Prior to his position at Temple, Tony was at the University of Kentucky (USA) and at McGill University (Montreal, Canada) where he taught in French. He received his BS, MBA and PHD degrees from McGill University and has held visiting professorships at Bocconi University and Politecnico di Milano (Milan), European School of Economics (Rome), Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien (Vienna), Kansai University (Osaka, Japan), WHU (Vollendar, Germany), St. Petersburg State University (St. Petersburg, Russia), and IESEG (Lille, France). In 2010, Prof. Di Benedetto was named the Fulbright-Kathryn and Craig Hall Chair in Entrepreneurship, and spent a semester teaching and doing research at the Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien and St. Petersburg State University.

Tony was Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 2004–2012; Prof. Di Benedetto has been named one of the 50 leading research scholars worldwide in Innovation and Technology Management by the International Association of Management of Technology. In a 2012 article in the *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, he was named one of the top 10 scholars worldwide in innovation management. He was previously named one of the leading scholars worldwide in innovation management in a 2007 article in the *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, and also in a 2006 article in *R&D Management*. He has over 100 refereed academic articles published in journals including *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Management Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Operations Management*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *Decision Sciences*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Columbia Journal of World Business*, *Interfaces*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, and elsewhere. A paper published in *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* was named the Best Paper in that journal for 2008. His research has been primarily in the areas of new product development and industrial marketing management and strategy.

What are some research trends impacting industrial marketing theory and practice? In the past few years IM research has broadened to focus on “innovation networks and their management”; “the role of management cognitions and activities in making sense and orchestrating networks”, “better understanding of the dynamics of the network development” involving process and longitudinal case research, addressing the management of business and innovation networks. IMM will continue to publish this kind of research.

Clearly any discipline needs innovation to stay fresh. These new developments need not only be in theory, but can also encompass innovative research methodologies. So I think we are in for a period of consolidation, where we test and confirm/refute the theoretical developments that have been made in the past. In terms of methodological developments, an obvious one all those years ago was structural equation modeling. But there are new developments – for example, in latent growth curve modeling for the quant jocks, and in applying fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis or in expanding what we know about using network pictures as a research tool for the qualitative people. IMM will continue to publish research using new research methodologies applied to industrial marketing as well as new theories of how business markets work.

It seems to me that there are two large research perspectives that dominate industrial marketing research. Much of the IM research in North America applies a functionalist's use of quantitative methods focused on observable phenomena. For example much of the research sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Business Markets (ISBM) uses this approach. On-the-other-hand, the IMP Group which is prevalent in Europe uses an interpretivist approach preferring qualitative methods that explore meanings from different human perspectives. Both of these approaches produce excellent research that broadens our understanding of business-to-business marketing and advances the science and practice industrial marketing. There have been a handful of persons bridging these institutions (David Wilson was maybe the first, Kris Möller, Wesley Johnston, Peter Turnbull, and hopefully myself). Yet the mainstream of both IMP and ISBM has remained ‘true’ to their own research orientations. I don't know why there has been so little interaction between IMP and ISBM, but I do know that the field of industrial marketing would be advanced if the two groups, using different theoretical foundations and different methodologies could work together. IMM will continue to publish both functionalist and interpretivist research.

I developed a definition of marketing for my MBA class in 1977 that I continued to use until my last class in 2012. It stated.

*Marketing is a process by which customers and their needs are identified; products and services are developed and exchanged between buyers and sellers such that a mutually beneficial relationship is established.*

I think this definition still applies today. It applies in Europe and in the United States, in Asia, Australia and the rest of the world; it applies globally. We need more globally focused research on business relationships. IMM will publish research that helps understand how mutually beneficial relationships develop and thrive among business organizations across the world. It will also publish research that helps improve the efficiency of global B2B exchanges and the effectiveness of industrial marketing managers.

During the past year I have written a series of editorials with the ongoing theme of “Publish or Perish” in which I have presented some ideas on how to prepare better papers for submission to journals. I have had considerable favorable feedback from this series, especially on the editorial discussing methodologies from this past May (IMM 55). In preparing that essay I am deeply indebted to three senior members of the IMM Editorial Review Board: Ghasem Zaefarian, Aino Halinen and Stephan Henneberg. I discussed using different research and analytical methods, being careful of the assumption inherent in different methodologies and analytical tools, being too wedded to a specific methodology, not being aware of a methodology's limitations or just going along with the current methodological trend. Methodology that uses multiple methods in a step-wise progression normally delivers added value. Each step complements the preceding one(s), builds on them and adds a specific contribution. This can include mixed methods (e.g. a qualitative study to define concepts and overall model, followed by a quantitative survey using SEM), or the use of the same method in different steps. IMM seeks and will publish this kind of research.

The mantle of IMM has been passed to a new generation. With the help of our outstanding Editorial Review Board, hundreds of ad hoc reviewers and researchers dedicated to quality research, the new Co-Editors-in-Chief, Adam and Tony, will continue to grow and improve *Industrial Marketing Management*.

## Regular Editorial

This issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* consists of two sections. The first, a special section of six articles that focus on “Performance Contracting,” was edited by Michael Essig, Andreas H. Glas,

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