



Introduction

Past, present, and future business-to-business marketing research

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ABSTRACT

This editorial summarizes both the development and impact of Peter LaPlaca, in terms of his work with and for the industrial and marketing purchasing research community, using several different perspectives. It also offers an overview of what (former) editors of other business-to-business marketing management journals think of Peter LaPlaca. Following that, this editorial briefly reviews dominant topics in *Industrial Marketing Management*.

1. Personal reflections from Adam Lindgreen

When Peter LaPlaca decided to step down as co-editor-in-chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*, I knew instantly that a special issue of the journal needed to be devoted to him. I can think of few academics who have dedicated such effort, over 45 years, to the research field of business-to-business marketing while simultaneously ensuring the enviable status of *Industrial Marketing Management* as the top specialized journal in the field. Naturally, the journal's other co-editor-in-chief Tony Di Benedetto, special issue editor Jens Geersbro, and Thomas Ritter—who all know Peter very well—all were as excited about this idea as I was.

The first time I got to know Peter—like so many other academics—was after I submitted my very first manuscript to *Industrial Marketing Management* for publication consideration (Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005). I still remember my delight at receiving his e-mail, informing me that the manuscript would be accepted, subject to certain changes. For a young, inexperienced academic, the encouraging

message was inspiring to receive. Soon thereafter, I met Peter in person at the Industrial and Marketing Purchasing conference in Milano in 2006. The editor of a journal as influential and important as *Industrial Marketing Management* might be expected to have been distant to young academics or surround himself solely with other top scholars. Nothing could be further from the truth. He immediately engaged with me and introduced me to his wife Sheryl. Over the next few years, we interacted via e-mail, discussing manuscripts and reviews but also exchanging personal notes and photos—Peter sharing updates about his grandchildren Andrés, Dylan, Hailey, and Rafael, while I offered details about my daughters Elizabeth and Victoria. In 2009, something changed in my relationship with Peter: Together with my colleagues Michael Beverland and Francis Farrelly, I started working on guest editing my first special issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* (Lindgreen et al., 2010). During the process, Peter guided us diligently and knowledgeably, ensuring that we could deliver, on time, a special issue that offered strong, pertinent contributions to academic theory and managerial practice. Peter's encouraging support even led me to develop three

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more special issues for the journal. And then came the next big step in our relationship: In 2015, I become co-editor-in-chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*, and for the next two years, I worked very closely with Peter. Our regular telephone conversations and e-mails covered the challenging transition of the journal, from an offline to an online submission system (the old EES system), that required us both to find our ways. The system was not always (at least in our view) logical. But it also was imperative during this period for Peter to pass on as much information as he could about the journal's history, vision, mission, and procedures, because he knew that at some point, he would step down. Trust me when I say that Peter had a lot to pass on! As Tony Di Benedetto and I highlight later, the very fact that Peter's replacements required two co-editors-in-chief is indicative of his dedication; his workload was more than enough to keep two editors busy. Without any doubt, I can say that Peter's help, encouragement, and mentoring has been utterly significant to me.

This tribute to Peter consists of three sections: (1) past, present, and future business-to-business marketing research; (2) *Industrial Marketing Management* topics, past, present, and future; and (3) personal tributes to Peter LaPlaca. In all, this tribute features 18 articles and statements. Please note that this is a very special issue of *Industrial Marketing Management*—a tribute to Peter LaPlaca. The procedure we followed for assembling this issue differed a little from normal procedure. The editors considered who would be good authors to invite to contribute a tribute article, and even asked Peter for his ideas on influential researchers in business-to-business marketing. Most of the articles you will see in this tribute issue were invited especially for that purpose by the editors, and went through a “friendly” edit (that is, the editors made comments and suggestions on the invited manuscripts, but the normal, rigorous review process was not used).

2. Past, present, and future business-to-business marketing research

2.1. The development of *Industrial Marketing Management*

The first section of this tribute to Peter LaPlaca features six articles that combine different perspectives to describe the development and impact of Peter LaPlaca and his work with the industrial and marketing purchasing research community. These contributions from (former) editors of various journals—this journal's current two co-editors-in-chief, Wesley Johnston (*Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*), J. David Lichtenthal (*Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*), and Arch G. Woodside (*Journal of Business Research*)—offer unique insights into his impact and importance to the field.

The two co-editors-in-chief take the privilege of starting this issue with “20 Years of IMM: Past, Present, and Future,” in tribute to Peter LaPlaca's hard work over more than two decades of editorship of *Industrial Marketing Management*, since 1994. By tracing the development and maturity of the business-to-business marketing field, we offer insights into the influence Peter has had in shaping the discipline through his expert guidance. Before the inaugural issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* in September 1971, no single journal was dedicated specifically to academic research in business-to-business marketing. In these early days, when the academic discipline was new and becoming established, basic research questions, approaches, and analytical techniques were the norm. Then as researchers began to find solutions to simple research questions, the scope broadened, more researchers entered the discipline, and simple measures of basic constructs (e.g., single-item measure of new product success) were replaced by better, more complex measurements (e.g., success measured relative to expectations, to competition, to company history). The simple conceptual models gave way to truer representations of reality, and increased data availability demanded better analytical tools. Along with these hallmarks, another signal of a mature discipline is the emergence of meta-analyses, revealing that the field has attracted so much

academic interest that it merits an overarching study that summarizes what is known so far. We explore each of these criteria in more detail in our article.

In the next article, “Patterns of Knowledge Outflow from *Industrial Marketing Management* to Major Marketing and Specialized Journals (1999–2013): A Citation Analysis,” Anthony Di Benedetto, Shikhar Sarin, Mustapha Belkhouja, and Christophe Haon analyze the patterns of citations of articles from *Industrial Marketing Management* by top marketing journals. The authors conduct a longitudinal review of article citations by top-tier and second-tier marketing journals as well as specialized B2B marketing journals, between 1999 and 2013. The authors discover that citations in second-tier and specialized journals are significant factors driving *Industrial Marketing Management*'s increasing impact factor during the time period under study. Of the top-tier journals, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* has the most consistent citation patterns for *Industrial Marketing Management*. To gain additional insights, the authors conduct post-hoc analysis that extended the scope of analysis to examine trends among non-marketing journals. They find that the impact of *Industrial Marketing Management* has been steadily increasing in related fields such as innovation and product development, and operations and supply chain management, as evidenced by citations in publications such as *Journal of Product Innovation Management* and *Journal of Operations Management*. The time period included in the study overlaps closely with the tenure of Peter LaPlaca as editor, and the results serve as a kind of external validation of the increased impact of *Industrial Marketing Management* during this time.

Kristian Moller and Aino Halinen suggest that knowledge about the thematic development of the business-to-business marketing research is expansive, whereas much less is known about how major research contributions emerge and spread—that is, how academic value gets constructed by human and institutional actors in combination. To address this gap, in “IMP Thinking and IMM: Co-creating Value for Business Marketing,” they examine the relationship of *Industrial Marketing Management* with the industrial marketing and purchasing research community, according to a framework of the creation of business-to-business marketing theory from the early 1990s to today. This relationship, led by Peter LaPlaca over the past 23 years, provides a living laboratory for studying academic value creation. Using documents and citation data over an approximately 30-year period, they detail how different parties created new academic knowledge and value, through their intensive collaborations. The forms of this co-ordination between *Industrial Marketing Management* and the research community also suggest an outlook for the future.

In their effort to explicate “Unit Pricing and Its Implications for B2B Marketing Research,” Wesley Johnston and Roberto Mora Cortez start with an early investigation of the use of unit pricing to facilitate consumer decision making: Monroe and LaPlaca (1972). This article and subsequent research ultimately confirmed the benefits of this “new” pricing phenomenon, but whether they are sustainable in business-to-business settings has remained somewhat unclear. These authors therefore propose combining unit and value-based pricing, in a new approach termed “unit value-based pricing.” Unlike classical unit pricing, it shifts the perspective from cost to customer perceived value. Unit value-based pricing thus may help suppliers capture a fair share of the value created and make purchasing procedures by industrial customers more robust and efficient. Along with a review of the impact of Monroe and LaPlaca's (1972) article, this contribution offers nine propositions for further research and sheds some light on the proposed benefits of unit value-based pricing with a case study.

The fourth article examines journal differentiation in industrial or business marketing, to clarify the complexity of the proliferation of journals and associated titles. In “Organizational Marketing at the Cross Roads: Journal Positioning Meta-Issues and a Tribute to Peter J. LaPlaca, Second Editor-in-Chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*,” J. David Lichtenthal, Nektarios Tzempelikos, and Thomas Tellefsen take the perspective of an individual scholar, considering the mix of journals

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