



The Emergence of *Industrial Marketing Management* as the Leading Academic Journal in Business-to-Business Marketing[☆]



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ABSTRACT

During 1994–2016, Peter LaPlaca served as editor-in-chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*, an era in which the research discipline surrounding business-to-business marketing showed remarkable growth and attracted the attention of scholars worldwide. This article traces the evolving maturity of the discipline during these years by analyzing not just statistics but also the content of the premier journal in this area, *Industrial Marketing Management*. The number of papers submitted and articles published per year, the growth in the journal's impact factor, the increased presence of international authors and editorial board members, and the arrival of meta-analyses and special issues on emerging research topics all indicate the level of maturity and scope of the business-to-business marketing research discipline attained during this period— thanks to the expert guidance and tireless efforts of Professor LaPlaca as editor-in-chief.

1. Introduction

Peter LaPlaca took over the duties of editor-in-chief of *Industrial Marketing Management* in 1994. Twenty-three years later, at the end of 2016, he stepped down, and the two authors of this article assumed his responsibilities as co-editors-in-chief. This statement by itself is indicative of Peter's dedication: His workload was enough to keep two editors busy. In tribute to his hard work over more than two decades of editorship, this article traces the development and maturity of the field of business-to-business marketing, according to the influence Peter has had in shaping our discipline through his expert guidance as the editor of *Industrial Marketing Management*.

The inaugural issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* appeared in September 1971, for which R. Derek Medford served as the first editor-in-chief. Prior to then, no single journal had been dedicated specifically to academic research in the growing area of business-to-business marketing. In the early days of the development of a body of literature, when the academic discipline is relatively new and becoming established, we expect basic research questions, basic research approaches, and analytical techniques. As the discipline begins to mature, researchers find solutions to the simple research questions, so the scope of their questions broadens. More researchers also enter the discipline,

pursuing a broader range of research interests and adopting a wider variety of analytical techniques. The simple methods applied to measure basic constructs (e.g., single-item measures of new product success) get replaced with better measurements (e.g., success can be measured relative to expectations, to competition, to company history, and so on). The expansion and extensions of simple conceptual models provide truer representations of reality; greater data availability both demands and supports improved analytical tools. These observations are hallmarks of the maturation of an academic discipline, along with the emergence of meta-analyses. When a research topic has attracted so much academic interest that it merits an overarching study to summarize what is known so far and direct further research, it has achieved a notable state of maturity. We certainly find such evidence of the continued growth and maturity of the business-to-business academic discipline under Peter's leadership, according to each of these criteria.

2. Journal demographics

A place to begin our assessment of the development of *Industrial Marketing Management* is with the journal demographics in Table 1. Under Peter's leadership, this journal has grown substantially in all quantitative measures. In his first year of editorship (1994), it published

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Table 1
Journal Demographics, 1994–2016.

Year	Volume	Issues	Articles	Pages	Articles Per Issue	Pages Per Issue	Submissions	Acceptance Rate
1994	23	4	41	365	8.50	91.25	164	25%
1995	24	5	43	458	8.60	91.60	203	21%
1996	25	6	51	602	8.50	100.33	232	22%
1997	26	6	47	556	7.83	92.67	327	14%
1998	27	6	39	528	6.50	88.00	268	15%
1999	28	6	53	652	8.83	108.67	271	20%
2000	29	6	51	624	8.50	104.00	244	21%
2001	30	8	52	660	6.50	82.50	263	20%
2002	31	8	69	728	8.63	91.00	300	23%
2003	32	8	67	730	8.38	91.25	295	23%
2004	33	8	74	785	9.25	98.13	315	23%
2005	34	8	82	876	10.25	109.50	335	24%
2006	35	8	87	1036	10.88	129.50	395	22%
2007	36	8	94	1042	11.75	130.25	456	21%
2008	37	8	89	1019	11.13	127.38	528	17%
2009	38	8	101	1024	12.63	128.00	598	17%
2010	39	8	137	1402	17.13	175.25	684	20%
2011	40	8	135	1385	16.88	173.13	717	19%
2012	41	8	119	1310	14.88	163.75	805	15%
2013	42	8	126	1410	15.75	176.25	804	16%
2014	43	8	131	1450	16.38	181.25	981	13%
2015	44–51	8	138	1616	17.25	202.00	574	24%
2016	52–59	8	132	1556	16.50	194.50	508	26%

four issues, containing 41 articles and 365 pages. By 2002, the number of issues per year had doubled to eight. By Peter's last year as co-editor-in-chief (2016), *Industrial Marketing Management* published more than triple the number of articles and total pages. The full information is provided in the tables; we illustrate the remarkable growth of *Industrial Marketing Management* by focusing on the first three years of Peter's editorship (1994–1996), the year the journal first went to eight annual issues (2002), and his last three years (2014–2016).

During 1994–1996, the number of articles published increased from 41 to 51, boosting the number of issues from four to six and the page count from 365 to 602 pages. We also note a respectable increase in the number of articles submitted for review (from 164 to 232), such that the acceptance rate remained in the range of 21%–25% during this period. Also during this same period, manuscript flows began to increase substantially, reaching 300 submissions by 2002 (an 82% increase in eight years). Furthermore, 2002 marked the first year that *Industrial Marketing Management* published eight issues, including 69 articles and 728 pages, representing increases of 68% and 99%, respectively. In the succeeding decade, growth in submissions, articles, and page counts continued at a rapid pace. Since 2014, more than 130 articles and 1400 pages have been published yearly (in Peter's last year as co-editor-in-chief, 132 articles appeared, totaling 1556 pages). The submission count peaked at 981 articles in 2014—a remarkable growth rate of nearly 500%! This growing popularity of *Industrial Marketing Management* as a target journal is detailed further in a subsequent section. A changeover to the online submission system in 2015 led to a temporary decrease in the number of submissions, but as of 2016, the submission count remained steady at 508. Throughout this period, the acceptance rate ranged from 13% to 26%.

Submission and page counts provide one indication of the growing popularity of *Industrial Marketing Management*, but another benchmark is the extent to which the articles are used by the academic community. For example, with regard to the number of downloads (Table 2), *Industrial Marketing Management* articles were downloaded almost 179,000 times in 2004 (the first year for which these data were available)—an average of 2418 downloads per article. By 2014, this number increased to more than one million downloads annually, and most recently, we find more than 1,150,000 downloads in 2016 alone. In the last three years that we consider, the number of downloads per article averaged around 8000 (e.g., in 2016, it was 8738). This impressive total suggests a widening membership of the academic community that is

Table 2
Article Downloads by Year, 2004–2016.

Year	Downloads	Submissions	Articles	Downloads Per Article
2004	178,934	315	74	2418.03
2005	214,725	335	82	2618.60
2006	252,876	395	87	2906.62
2007	316,532	456	94	3367.36
2008	442,992	528	89	4977.44
2009	534,594	598	101	5293.01
2010	651,483	684	137	4755.35
2011	715,031	684	137	5219.20
2012	805,976	717	135	5970.19
2013	897,926	804	126	7126.40
2014	1,045,110	981	131	7977.94
2015	1,105,157	574	138	8008.38
2016	1,153,398	508	132	8737.86

finding *Industrial Marketing Management* content useful for their own research.

Another familiar benchmark of journal impact is the Thomson ISI Impact Factor, which measures the number of citations of a journal's articles in later publications. Fig. 1 depicts the two-year Thomson ISI Impact Factor for *Industrial Marketing Management* for the period 2002–2016. It increased most noticeably from 2002 to 2008, from 0.500 to a very respectable 1.403 in 2008. Since that time, the impact factor has climbed even further, remaining around the 1.9 level since 2012. Most recently, in 2016, its Thomson ISI Impact Factor was exactly 1.900.

Although the growth of the Thomson ISI Impact Factor in Fig. 1 is impressive, it only hints at the growth and expanding influence of *Industrial Marketing Management*. With the introduction of the Google Scholar search engine, these citation counts have offered an alternative measure of journal impact that provide additional insight. A 2010 article, ranking marketing journals using Google Scholar citations, placed *Industrial Marketing Management* fifth out of 69 marketing journals (Touzani & Moussa, 2010). Table 3 lists the top 20 journals according to this study, as well as the top 20 journals in other commonly cited rankings (Baumgartner & Pieters, 2003; Franke & Schreier, 2008; Guidry, Hollier, Johnson, Tanner, & Veltos, 2004).

Touzani and Moussa (2010) note specifically that *Industrial Marketing Management* earns a substantially higher ranking in their study,

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