I would like to use some precious Journal space to report to you the state of *Marketing Science*, and to share with you some of my thoughts on the review process and subsequent issues of the Journal.

I have now completed the second of my three years as Editor. In general, I believe things went well. New submissions remained above 120 for the second year, an increase of 15 to 20% from previous years. The backlog of unpublished but accepted papers was reduced to about six months by (a) increasing the number of manuscript pages published yearly and (b) reducing the number of papers accepted. Also, the average turnaround time for a new submission remained fixed at just under 80 days (78.8 days to be exact), although the variance increased somewhat.

Table 1 provides more detail on the disposition of the submitted papers depending on whether they were an initial submission or a revision. As can be seen from this table, we have continued to follow our editorial policy of quickly screening out papers that we do not believe have the potential to be published in *Marketing Science*. This allows more time for the editorial team to work with the authors who are asked to revise and resubmit. Our goal is to provide constructive advice so that the authors can craft a high impact, readable and technically correct paper.

Currently, the rejection rate is running about 72% for new submissions and 30% for revisions. This first figure is a little higher than I would like. However, given that the Journal is budgeted to publish about 20 full-length papers per year, the rejection rate must, by necessity, run about 85%, assuming 120 submissions a year. This ultimate rejection rate figure is comparable with other major journals in our field.

The Journal has also seen some changes in the editorial review team. Russ Winer and Dipak Jain both resigned to take on editorial responsibilities at *Journal of Marketing Research* and *Management Science*, respectively. Both have done an outstanding job over the years. I would like to use this space to publicly thank them for their help. In response to these resignations, I have asked Scott Neslin and Dick Wittink to be Area Editors.

On a less positive note, the Journal's publication schedule slipped badly in 1996. Thus, the first issue did not appear until July of 1996 and the last issue did not get mailed until mid-February of 1997. As best as I can determine, the responsibility for this delay falls almost entirely on the reorganization of INFORMS. The only good thing that came out of the experience is that the new INFORMS leadership is now aware of the problems and steps are being taken to make sure that it will not happen again. Still, as Editor, I must apologize to you, the readers of *Marketing Science*.

The above discussion is very internally focused. As we all know, it is also important to measure the quality of our offerings from the eyes of the customer. One way of doing this is to assess the impact of articles published. I know of no one good metric for this, although a number of measures are possible. For example, circulation for the Journal is down about 300 from the high water mark of almost 2,000. This decrease occurred simultaneously with the reorganization at INFORMS, and may have resulted from inadequate billing and/or marketing efforts. Fortunately, new initiatives are just now being instituted with the goal of expanding the circulation back to at least 2,000. The plan is to feature two attributes of our Journal, these being the expanded abstracts.
and the relevancy of the papers published. Hopefully, this campaign will help facilitate the growth in circulation. (As an aside, readers can take an active role here by suggesting to others that they subscribe. Possible people to talk to include new Ph.D. students, libraries, relevant practitioners and academics.)

A second measure of the state of the Journal is the willingness of one of our customer groups, i.e., the authors, to submit their best work to Marketing Science. Here, the metric is much noisier, but it is my impression that many researchers target their best papers to this Journal. Still, it appears that about 10% of the papers submitted have previously been submitted to another journal, usually the Journal of Marketing Research. Moreover, in reading other journals in our field, I find a number of papers published in these journals that I would have been proud to publish in Marketing Science. Thus, I feel that we still have room for improvement here.

A third measure that I believe has some merit is an index number compiled by Bill Starbuck at New York University. He looks at the number of cites in years t+1 and t+2, to articles published in a journal in year t, and then divides this number by the number of papers published in year t. Next, he does some smoothing of these time series data. The net result of all this is that a Marketing Science article averages about 1.52 cites in the following two years. This is compared to 2.36 for an article that appears in Journal of Marketing Research and 2.95 for an article in Journal of Consumer Research and 0.70 for Management Science.

Another study, published by SSCI, reports an impact factor of 2.28 for JCR, 1.89 for JMR, 1.11 for MS and 0.71 for Management Science. Thus, although the ratings are somewhat different, the rank order, and proportional differences, are still the same.1

How should one interpret these numbers? One interpretation is that the average article in Marketing Science appeals to a smaller audience and, thus, is referenced less often than papers in more widely read journals. This lack of appeal could be due to a plethora of factors, from the articles being too hard to read, to not addressing problems of interest to more than a few people. Another interpretation is that JCR and JMR are the wrong frame of reference since the content of the articles and the target markets are so different. Instead, we should be comparing Marketing Science's numbers to our sister journal, Management Science. Here we find that Marketing Science's figures look good compared to those for Management Science.

A third interpretation is that two years is too short a time to gauge a paper's value and, thus, these cite numbers are very misleading. Although I am not sure on how to interpret these average cite count numbers and familiarity survey numbers, we need to be aware of the fact that fewer people are building on our work, at least in the short run. Moreover, our Journal is less well known and viewed less positively compared to other marketing journals when the target market is expanded

1 Another study, just published by Hult, Neese, and Bashaw (1997), analyzed the responses of 309 marketing faculty. These respondents were asked to rank journals in terms of popularity/familiarity and importance/prestige. Marketing Science was ranked fourth (behind JM, JMR and JCR) by faculty with Ph.D. programs, but only 10th if they taught at an institution without a Ph.D. program. Interestingly, these results indicate a substantial increase in Marketing Science's ranking when compared to a similar survey published in 1987. Thus, there is a positive trend.
Table 2

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<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Cites</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guadagni and Little</td>
<td>184</td>
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<td>Hauser and Shugan</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeuland and Shugan</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>McGuire and Staelin</td>
<td>60</td>
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to marketing academics in general. With this said, we all know that *Marketing Science* has published some very important papers. For example, in 1983, the Journal published at least four papers, based upon cite count, that generated considerable interest. (See Table 2.) Yet, a similar analysis of subsequent issues shows that only a few papers have more than 20 cites, and most are less than 10. One of my goals as Editor is to attract and publish more papers that act as catalysts for subsequent ongoing research and/or become classics in our field. Hopefully, we can do this by providing a review process that is viewed to be the best in our field.

Obviously, citation counts and journal rankings are only one side of the coin. Three other measures that come to mind immediately are the number of *Marketing Science* papers read in doctoral seminars, the number of times a researcher is contacted by industry to further explicate his/her published work, and the number of textbooks that refer to work published in *Marketing Science*. These measures are hard for me to document, but in evaluating manuscripts, they are dimensions that are “estimated” when the editorial team is asked to assess the paper’s contribution.

**Review Process**

As is evident from the above discussion, I view the major control variable available to me to enhance the prestige/health of *Marketing Science* is the review process. Moreover, given the importance of this process to the careers of many academics who look to *Marketing Science* as an outlet for their research, I would like to briefly discuss what I ask each reviewer and Area Editor to do when evaluating a paper.

As stated in a previous editorial (Staelin 1996), every paper is evaluated on four dimensions: the importance of the topic, readability, significance of the contribu-

tions, and certification that the paper is not wrong. Although reviewers go about this evaluation differently, their general task is quite simple. First, they need to assess the contributions of the paper, assuming the current formulation is correct. How many of our readers would find the paper to be interesting? What are the key insights? Are these insights obvious, or do they provide new and deep understanding? How innovative is the approach? How much is already known about the phenomena being studied? How useful is the proposed theory?

If the contribution assessment is favorable, the next set of tasks requires the evaluators to understand the key drivers, i.e., those factors which, if modified, would greatly alter the results, conclusions, etc. For analytic papers, and papers that start with a theoretical model, these are often the assumptions used to abstract the situation of interest, e.g., the rules of the game, the assumed consumer behavior, etc. For empirical papers, these key drivers often involve how the data are collected or analyzed.

Once these key aspects of the paper are identified, the evaluators are asked to do three things. First, assess if these key drivers are technically correct (or at least not wrong). Perhaps more importantly, if wrong, can they be corrected, and how? Admittedly, this can be a judgment call, in that the “art” of modeling requires one to abstract away part of the problem being studied. Still, the evaluators are asked to assess the competency question of the abstraction. Do the key drivers capture reality? For example, in an empirical paper, this might revolve around whether the error terms are correlated with an independent variable. In an analytic paper, the question might be whether or not the basic model set-up “makes sense.”

A second task for evaluators is to assess the readability of the paper and make suggestions on how it can be improved. This is especially important for papers that make it past the first round. How can concepts be simplified or more clearly explicated? Can sections be moved around to improve the flow of the discussion? What can be deleted?

Third, they are asked to make other constructive comments that could help the author, regardless of whether they believe the review process should continue at *Marketing Science*. 

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What does this mean to authors who want to submit their work to this Journal? First, given the emphasis we place on contribution, it is critical to state clearly the contributions of the research. Why should someone read the paper? What will they learn? How does the research fit into the existing literature? What are the comparative advantages of the proposed approach over existing approaches? Second, provide strong support for the key drivers of the model set-up. Often, this can be done by developing a theory or by providing some supporting facts. Third, make sure the paper is clearly written and focused. Don’t get side-tracked. All this does is confuse the evaluator. Finally, keep in mind who will be reviewing your paper. Although most will be leading experts in the field, these experts are also very busy. Make reading the paper enjoyable. Help them through the paper. Don’t make them figure everything out for themselves.

Future Special Issue

Marketing Science has not published many special issues. However, I believe special issues have the potential of attracting a broader set of papers than normal. They also can provide some momentum and/or direction to a field of research. Finally, they are a vehicle for someone (me) to make a statement. Consequently, I am proposing the following:

I would like to publish a special issue where the emphasis is on “managerial decision-making.” By this I mean any paper where the emphasis of the paper is helping managers make a “marketing” decision. Thus, the paper could put forth a decision support system, provide insights as to how the firm could better organize to make decisions, how it should analyze available data to better understand (and take action on) some phenomena, or how it should respond to competitive actions. Note that in each case, emphasis is on facilitating some decision or action. Thus, it is not enough to postulate a normative model for action. It is also necessary to show that the parameters of the model can be estimated so that a decision can be made. Likewise, it is not enough to analyze consumer purchase history data. One also needs to embed these analyses in a system where managers can take some action, i.e., the results of these analyses need to be linked to how a firm will do something different. In a Bayesian sense, this information has to have value.

More information will be provided on this special issue. However, I hope to adopt the general process used by Jerry Wind when he acted as editor for special issues in Marketing Science, Management Science, and Journal of Marketing Research. Thus, I envision a call for extended abstracts, i.e., five pages. The AEs and I will evaluate these abstracts and choose manuscripts we feel have potential. The authors of these manuscripts will be asked to complete the papers and present them at a conference in the fall of 1997. Based upon this presentation and the paper, we will ask some of the presenters to go forward with their papers with the goal of publishing the research in issue number 3 of 1998.

In summary, I feel positive about our Journal, yet I recognize that we can still do better by broadening our impact on the field of marketing. My goal in my last year as Editor is to continue to work with my editorial team to attract and constructively evaluate the best research generated in the field of marketing, broadly defined. Any comments or suggestions are welcomed.

References
