In Pursuit of an Ideal:
The Editorial and Literary History of the Journal of Marketing

The occasion of the diamond jubilee for the Journal of Marketing affords an opportunity to chronicle its editorial and literary history in pursuit of an ideal, namely, the advancement of science and practice in marketing. This ideal has been expressed in different ways, variously manifested in over 3000 published articles during the past 60 years, and most recently embodied in the Journal of Marketing’s transformation into a scholarly-professional journal. The narration and explanation of this transformation is the subject of the author’s commemorative essay.

The Journal of Marketing (JM) will celebrate its diamond jubilee July 1996. During a 60-year span, JM has published over 3000 articles by more than 2200 authors on some 30,000 printed pages. Although impressive, the true measure of JM lies not in the number of manuscripts published, but in its past, present, and future role in furthering science and practice in marketing. Indeed, the American Marketing Association (AMA) was created to promote and advance science and practice in marketing, and JM was an initial step toward accomplishing this mission (Agnew 1941; Coutant 1938).

The occasion of JM’s 60th anniversary provides an appropriate moment for reflecting on its central place in nurturing science and practice in marketing. The formal study of marketing and marketing literature, as it is known today, surfaced at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bartels 1962). The body of marketing literature is, therefore, approaching its century mark, and articles in JM have often been an influential part of that literature. In fact, for 29 years (1936–64), JM was the only AMA journal and the only publication that exclusively featured research in marketing. It is also noteworthy that commentaries on JM have appeared nearly every two decades (Applebaum 1952; Grether 1976). Side-by-side, these commentaries document the changing landscape of marketing literature apparent in the topical contents of JM over its first 40 years. Because a 20-year interval is sufficient to identify change in a journal, and a 60-year review can provide perspective on its role in advancing science and practice in marketing, the present is a fitting time to look again at JM.

I write this commentary in the same spirit as my predecessors, albeit with a different accent. Rather than simply record the topical contents of JM, I emphasize the journal’s journey toward fulfilling its editorial mission. I focus initially on the development of editorial policy and then the change in the substance and form of marketing literature appearing in JM over 60 years. What emerges from this editorial and literary history of JM is a broad evolutionary outline of the marketing literature from the perspective of its most venerable journal.

JM Editorial History

Bartels (1976) observed that the history of marketing thought represents an account of the efforts of persons in successive periods to address the marketing problems and phenomena of their day. This observation also seems appropriate for JM. However, it is instructive to first examine the history of JM editorial policy to appreciate the manner in which these problems and phenomena have been addressed.

A journal’s editorial policy ideally manifests itself in each article it publishes. Editorial policy designates the type of articles that will be published, guidelines for the manuscript submission and review process, and publication standards. More broadly, an editorial policy communicates to authors what is valued by a journal and to readers what they can expect to find in its contents.

Origins of JM Editorial Policy

JM editorial policy can be traced to the American Marketing Society (AMS), founded in 1931 by marketing managers and researchers, and the American Marketing Journal, which the AMS first published in January 1934. The goals of this organization and journal, which were forerunners of AMA and JM, were to (1) advance science in marketing by providing for the systematic study and discussion of marketing problems and (2) formulate standards or principles in marketing. These goals mirrored those of the National Association of Teachers of Marketing and Advertising.
(NATMA) and its journal, the National Marketing Review, which was first published in the summer of 1935. The marriage of the two journals produced JM, with its inaugural issue in July 1936 followed by the merger of AMS and NATMA to create the AMA on January 1, 1937. Sixteen months later, Frank R. Coutant, AMA’s first president, commented, “The Journal of Marketing is a more influential publication than its predecessors. ... We have laid to rest the ghost that there are irreconcilable differences in the viewpoints of the teachers and the practitioners of marketing science” (Coutant 1938, p. 270). This observation was challenged frequently over the next half century.

From 1936 to 1954, no formal JM editorial policy existed apart from the founding ideals of advancing and promoting science and practice in marketing. Implicit in these ideals was the belief that if the study of marketing phenomena became more scientific, then the discipline itself could be a science. However, the late 1940s and early 1950s marked the beginning of change for JM as concern began to mount among prominent scholars about the status and progress of marketing literature (e.g., Alderson and Cox 1948; Grether 1950; McGarry 1953). These scholars argued that the tendency of their contemporaries only to observe and describe marketing phenomena had produced a surfact of isolated classifications and concepts as well as empirical-based insights of dubious generalizability that assisted little in theory building and practice improvement. Others chided the then JM Board of Editors for not being more critical in its choice of manuscripts (e.g., Applebaum 1947). Because of the normative status of the marketing literature at this time, it is not surprising that the issue of whether marketing was or could be a science surfaced (Alderson 1951; Bartels 1951; Brown 1948; Converse 1945; Hutchinson 1952; Stanton 1952; Vaile 1949). Views ranged from a qualified yes to a certain no.

Formalization of JM Editorial Policy

By 1954, AMA and the JM Editorial Board found it necessary to establish formal guidelines and criteria for choosing manuscripts for publication (Journal of Marketing 1954, 1955). For the first time, an article published in JM needed to demonstrate why and how it would advance science in marketing either by providing (1) a better understanding of marketing problems or (2) new or improved methods for addressing marketing problems. This policy also stated: “A manuscript which constitutes a substantial contribution to the ‘advancement of science in marketing’ is given precedence over another manuscript making a lesser contribution, even though the former may appeal to fewer readers” (Journal of Marketing 1954, p. 67).

The editorial policy articulated in 1954 and 1955 remained unchanged for 25 years, though there appears to have been considerable editorial latitude in the interpretation of what constituted an advance in the science or practice of marketing. Indeed, throughout much of this period, the criteria for publication in JM seemed to focus more on the topical, readable, and practical aspects of manuscripts than on advancing science in marketing (Grether 1976). By the late 1960s, JM began to be criticized for what seemed to be a lack of scholarship in the articles published and apparent author and reviewer ignorance of prior marketing literature (Lockey 1968). In the 1970s, questions about the “theory versus application” emphasis in JM, the relative balance between practical and academic articles, and the rigor and relevance of what was being published in general surfaced regularly (e.g., Bartels 1974; Grether 1976; Jacoby 1978; Keane 1976; Mauser 1980). Concerns were also voiced that, with important exceptions, JM had devoted little attention to theory development in marketing and research and had only modestly advanced marketing knowledge and practice (Leone and Schultz 1980; Myers, Greayer, and Massy 1979; Welch 1981).

Criticisms of JM and marketing literature in general in the late 1970s bore a striking resemblance to the situation in the early 1950s. JM editorial policy was revised in 1979 and again in 1985 in response to these criticisms. In 1979, the policy expanded subtly, but significantly, including two additional expectations: (1) manuscripts submitted to JM should be scholarly in nature, and (2) readers should be able to rely on the ideas and findings reported in the journal without hesitation (Wind 1979a, b). Although it was controversial at the time, this policy change was foreseen by Grether (1976) in his commentary on the 40th anniversary of JM. Describing what he termed “the business-academic controversy,” Grether argued that the distinction was unproductive in advancing science or practice in marketing, for it would be “...an enormous mistake to replace the ‘scholarly,’ the ‘theoretical,’ and the ‘academic’ with something more ‘practical’ at the time when the sharpness of this dichotomy is becoming blurred or even meaningless” (p. 69). Although Wind (1979a, b) never defined what was meant by a scholarly manuscript, it has since come to be characterized as one that (1) addresses an important marketing phenomenon in a sophisticated, provocative, and original fashion, (2) demonstrates critical thought and rigorous analysis and builds on other relevant literature, and (3) is logically argued and well-written, regardless of the topic studied or research emphasized (cf. Kerin 1989).

The scope of inquiry published in JM narrowed in 1985. Specifically, editorial policy mandated that manuscripts exclusively dealing with statistical modeling, marketing research techniques, and measurement were to be omitted from publication in JM and directed to the Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), which expressly accommodated these topics in its editorial mission (Hunt 1985). Approximately 15% of JM articles dealt with these topics at that time (Wahlers and Dunn 1986). This action limited publication in JM to scholarly manuscripts that made an empirical or conceptual/theoretical contribution to the advancement of science and practice in marketing. Editorial policy was refined in 1992 when standards for authors and reviewers were further formalized with regard to the manuscript submission and evaluation process (Journal of Marketing 1992).

Effects of JM Editorial Policy

The history of JM editorial policy shows that though the original mission of advancing science and practice in marketing has remained intact, the means for accomplishing this
mission have become more explicit. As expectations for publication in JM formalized and expanded, at least three related developments became apparent. Most notably, JM gradually transformed itself into a scholarly-professional journal. As such, it aimed at improving marketing thought and practice by first advancing science in marketing through publishing only scholarly manuscripts that made a demonstrably significant empirical or conceptual/theoretical contribution to the extant knowledge of marketing phenomena.

The transformation of JM into a scholarly-professional journal, in turn, had a perceptible effect on the reputation of JM and its impact on research in marketing. Surveys of marketing faculty over the previous 25 years document that JM, along with JMR, have become the two most prominent repositories of marketing literature. Journal of Marketing, in particular, has risen in academic prestige (e.g., Browne and Becker 1979, 1991) and exhibits the least variability in perceived quality among marketing journals (Heischmidt and Gordon 1992).

These perceptions are supported by bibliographic research that consistently indicates the widespread influence of JM on marketing and business literature. An objective measure of JM’s influence as a scholarly publication is the frequency with which its “average article” is cited in other published articles in a particular year. The Institute for Scientific Information annually computes this measure, called an impact factor, for approximately 7000 publications. The impact factor is essentially a ratio of the number of citations to the number of citable articles published in a journal in a specific year. A journal’s impact factor reflects the “scientific significance of the material it publishes (as reflected by citation)” (Garfield 1972, p. 475). (See Figure 1 for charts of JM and JMR impact factors for the period of 1977 through 1993.) The impact factor for JM exhibits an upward trend since 1979, and JM and JMR are frequently ranked among the top ten business journals in the world (excluding finance and economic journals) on this measure. Furthermore, JM is the most frequently referenced marketing journal in other business-related scholarly journals and practitioner-oriented publications and the second most cited marketing journal overall after JMR (Cote, Leong, and Cote 1992; Jobber and Simpson 1988).

Coincident with these developments was a decline in the incidence of marketing practitioner involvement. Approximately 42% of published articles were written by business people during the first 16 years of JM’s existence and prior to a formal editorial policy (Applebaum 1947, 1952). After a formal policy was enacted and for the period of 1960 to 1981, 22% of authors were marketing practitioners (Marquardt and Murdock 1983). Since 1982, and following JM’s transformation into a scholarly-professional journal, practitioner authorship dwindled to less than 1% of the articles.

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1The impact factor is superior to total journal citations as a measure of journal influence for two principal reasons. First, it tends to discount the advantage of journals with many articles over those with fewer articles and of frequently published journals over less frequently issued ones (e.g., monthly versus quarterly) (Garfield 1972). Second, citation analysis, in general, is viewed as more objective than such reputational methods as surveys of professionals in a discipline (see Weisheit and Regoli 1984), but is not itself without shortcomings. For a review and comparison of different approaches for assessing the scholarly influence of journals, see Johnson and Podsakoff (1994).
published. (The most recent article authored solely by practitioners appeared in 1991.) *Journal of Marketing* editorial board membership evidenced a similar trend. Marketing practitioner board membership has declined from its peak in the early 1960s when approximately 60% of the board members were practitioners. This percentage decreased in each succeeding decade until practitioners constituted less than 5% of the *JM* board by the mid-1990s.

Finally, change and formalization in editorial policy were manifested in the substance and form of articles that would subsequently appear in *JM*. I elaborate on this view by tracing the literary history of *JM*.

**JM Literary History**

Marketing history is characterized by the change in the content of marketing (Savit 1980). For 60 years, *JM* has contributed to the literary content of marketing and served as a gauge of how marketing literature has developed and evolved and, indeed, what the character of marketing literature is today.

A narration of *JM*’s literary history can assume a variety of forms. I have chosen to recount the prominent themes and metaphors that have nurtured science and practice in marketing in each of its six decades (see Table 1). In doing so, I acknowledge, as did the historians Durant and Durant (1968, p. 97), that “History is so indifferently rich that a case for almost any conclusion from it can be made by the selection of instances. Choosing our evidence with a brighter bias, we might evolve some comforting reflections.”

**Marketing as Applied Economics: 1936–1945**

Approximately 500 articles appeared in *JM* during its first decade. One-half of these articles focused on marketing research and governmental regulation of marketing. The marketing research articles typified commodity, institutional, and functional approaches to the study of marketing, which were then considered by many as applied economics. The marketing research articles described data collection techniques and uses of statistical methods. The 83 articles on regulation primarily addressed aspects of the Robinson-Patman Act (enacted in 1936) and the states’ fair trade laws and their implications for marketing practice.

Articles published in this decade were short (typically fewer than five pages) and, in a limited sense, illustrated the then-conceived marketing principles and concepts through case studies. A great majority of these articles described, explained, and often justified prevailing marketing practices and institutions, particularly in light of new government legislation and regulations pertaining to trade practices, contemporary thought in economics (Chamberlain 1933; Robinson 1933), and early criticism of marketing (e.g., Stewart, Dewhurst, and Field 1939). Nevertheless, a small number of articles addressed the conceptual foundations of marketing. Motivated by the passage of fair trade legislation, for example, Alderson (1937) authored “A Marketing View of Competition,” which contained clear reference to two concepts that were described in his future work (Alderson 1957, 1965), namely, organized behavior systems and heterogeneous supply and demand. The notion of product differentiation, its role in pricing and advertising, and its theoretical and practical framework for marketing thought were often addressed (e.g., Canoyer 1942; Hawkins 1940; Knight 1939). Borden (1942b) outlined the principal findings from his seminal study on the economic effects of advertising that appeared concurrently in his landmark book, *The Economic Effects of Advertising* (1942a). Also, Jones (1943) challenged the universality of marketing functions, which by this time had grown to 120 in number, noting that marketing functions depend on the definition of marketing.

By 1944 and 1945, attention in *JM* was monopolized by World War II and the unique circumstances affecting marketing practice by a wartime and post-war economy. Nevertheless, as the next decade dawned, some scholars (notably Bartels 1944; Converse 1945) singled out the importance of theory and science in marketing for the future development of knowledge and the growth of marketing as a discipline and profession in its own right.

**Marketing as a Managerial Activity: 1946–1955**

A noticeable change in *JM*’s orientation occurred in its second decade as practitioner and academic attention coalesced to focus on the management of marketing processes. Although approximately 50% of all articles published dealt with market(ing) research topics, the post-World War II period can be characterized by attempts to improve marketing institution and system efficiency and achieve greater productivity of marketing functions (e.g., Alderson 1948; Cox 1948). Marketing functions were viewed as activities to be planned, organized, staffed, directed, and controlled. Central to this idea was that marketing activities and attendant costs needed to be identified, measured, and assigned if they were to be managed efficiently. Building on the seminal work of Alderson and others, such as Charles Sevin at the U.S. Department of Commerce in the 1930s (Anderson 1979), 28 articles addressing distribution cost analysis or functional-cost accounting in some form were published. This line of inquiry culminated in an AMA Task Force report published in

**TABLE 1**

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<th>Decade</th>
<th>Prominent Theme(s)</th>
<th>Predominant Metaphor</th>
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<tr>
<td>1936–1945</td>
<td>Illuminating Marketing Principles and Concepts</td>
<td>Marketing as Applied Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946–1955</td>
<td>Improving Marketing Functions and Systems Productivity</td>
<td>Marketing as a Managerial Activity</td>
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<td>1956–1965</td>
<td>Assessing Marketing Mix Impact</td>
<td>Marketing as a Quantitative Science</td>
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<td>1966–1975</td>
<td>Uncovering Buyer and Organizational Processes</td>
<td>Marketing as a Behavioral Science</td>
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<td>1976–1985</td>
<td>Crafting Market/Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>Marketing as a Decision Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986–1995</td>
<td>Identifying Market/Marketing Contingencies</td>
<td>Marketing as an Integrative Science</td>
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the April 1957 issue (AMA Committee on Distribution Costs and Efficiency 1957).

Coincident with the emergent view of marketing as a managerial activity was the belief that to advance science and practice in marketing, practitioners and scholars alike needed to engage in theory building. Alderson and Cox (1948) were the principal proponents of this view; they argued for an interdisciplinary approach to marketing theory development. Although they did not propose a formal theory, they were remarkably prescient in many of their observations. For example, Alderson and Cox (1948, p. 145) speculated that “a radical revision of competitive (marketing) theory may revolve around overhead costs and differentiated market position in a heterogeneous economy ... these two factors can provide the basis for dynamic equilibrium.”

The decade concluded with a debate over whether marketing was or could be a science, the drafting of *JM*’s first formal editorial policy, and the creation of the Alpha Kappa Psi Award. Consistent with the newly adopted editorial policy, this annual award was to be given to the article appearing in *JM* “that made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of science in marketing, resulting in a better understanding of marketing problems and the methods for solving them” (*Journal of Marketing* 1955, p. 160). The first recipient of the Alpha Kappa Psi Award was Robert Ferber (1955) for his article, “Sales Forecasting by Sample Surveys.”

As this decade closed, the seeds of the next were already sown. Interest in formal marketing theory and theory building had been sparked. A movement toward more analytical work being published in *JM* had begun, as was evidenced by the emerging research on product and brand choice (e.g., Banks 1950; Brown 1950; Haire 1950; Klein and Lansing 1955), retail gravitation models (Converse 1949; Reynolds 1953), and quantitative analysis (Ferber 1954; Magee 1954). Deming (1953, p. 428, emphasis in the original) also published one of his earlier articles on statistical quality control, emphasizing that “good quality and the right uniformity have no meaning except with reference to the consumer’s demands.”

**Marketing as a Quantitative Science: 1956–1965**

It is generally said that the modern period for *JM* and the marketing literature began in the mid–1950s (Grether 1976; Myers, Greyser, and Massy 1979). Smith (1956), in his seminal work, addressed market segmentation, Keith (1960) addressed the “marketing concept,” Borden (1964) elaborated on the concept of the marketing mix, Alderson (1957, 1965) articulated his comprehensive view on market(ing) behavior, and Howard (1957) published what might be viewed as the first modern text on marketing management. This decade also marked a general shift in *JM* and the marketing literature from normative (i.e., prescriptive) approaches to the study of marketing phenomena to positive (i.e., explanatory) efforts in a philosophy of science sense; from static classification of marketing phenomena to probabilistic expositions; and from descriptive empiricism to causal analyses.

*Journal of Marketing*’s third decade witnessed the emergence of more sophisticated quantitative analysis as an integral element in the study of marketing phenomena. This change in orientation coincided with Gordon and Howell’s (1959) and Pierson’s (1959) reports, which advocated for more analytically rigorous, science-based, and professional/managerial training in the business curriculum; the Ford Foundation sponsored program conducted at Harvard University by the Institute of Basic Mathematics for Applications in Business (1959–60); and the founding of the Marketing Science Institute in 1961. All three events later shaped the nature of research appearing in the marketing literature and *JM.*

The application of quantitative analysis in marketing research became evident as empirical research on advertising effectiveness (e.g., Coffin 1963; Ferber and Wales 1958; Tull 1965; Zietske 1959) and the introduction of management science and operations research concepts and approaches into the marketing literature began (e.g., Ansheh 1956; Maffei 1957). In a five-year span (1960–1964), 15% of *JM* articles examined and applied management science perspectives to marketing phenomena. Representative examples include applications of operations research techniques (e.g., Doherty 1963; Magee 1960), bayesian analysis (e.g., Buzzell and Slater 1962; Green 1963), and simulation (e.g., Pessemier 1964; Weiss 1964). Model building was given the greatest attention. Although many articles examined the merits of modeling in general (e.g., Kotler 1963; Lazer 1962; Massy and Savvas 1964), others contained specific applications, including marketing programming (Willet 1963), market penetration models (Barclay 1963; Fourn and Woodlock 1960), trading area models (Huff 1964), and media selection models (Moran 1963). Behavioral models also appeared in the forms of the probabilistic learning theory model described by Kuehn and Day (1964) and the hierarchy-of-effects model proposed by Lavidge and Steiner (1961). Much of this work subsequently appeared in Kotler’s (1971) seminal text, *Marketing Decision Making: A Model-Building Approach.*

By 1965, marketing phenomena, originally addressed by intuition and judgment, were increasingly studied with fundamental tenets of the scientific method. Because marketing literature had become more scientific in its manner of inquiry, which early thinkers in the field had envisioned, some scholars could now claim, with modest justification, that progress toward advancing both science and practice in marketing was occurring (Howard 1965; Taylor 1965). Moreover, the prospective challenges for advancing science in

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2Marketing faculty attending the Harvard program included Frank Bass, Robert Buzzell, Philip Kotler, William Lazer, Jerome McCarthy, Edgar Pessemier, Donald Shawver, and Abraham Shuchman. A direct result of this program was a collection of original papers applying mathematics and statistics to marketing problems (see Bass et al. 1961). The Marketing Science Institute subsequently played an important role in initiating and supporting research in marketing and as source of research and commentary appearing in *JM* (see Bloom 1987). More than 50 Marketing Science Institute-sponsored, funded, or related studies appeared in *JM* during the period from 1970 to 1995, beginning with Buzzell’s (1970) commentary on the future of marketing management in the 1970s.
marketing were being voiced frequently in a more deliberate manner, thus establishing agendas and expectations for future inquiry (Buzzell 1963; Halbert 1965; Schwartz 1965; Starr 1964). A tangible example of the importance assigned to improving research methodology as a means to advancing science in marketing and the growing interest in marketing research practice was AMA’s publication of JMR in 1964 (Davidson 1964).

Marketing as a Behavioral Science: 1966–1975

Journal of Marketing’s fourth decade is best described as a transition phase for the journal and marketing literature as a whole. This decade corresponds roughly to what Bartels (1976, p. 159) referred to as a “period of differentiation” in the marketing discipline in which “centripetal rather than centrifugal patterns predominated as emphasis turned toward specialization and away from generalization in marketing thought.” This period also ushered in fundamental questions related to the domain of marketing theory and practice.

Just as scholars in the previous decade adopted quantitative techniques and courted management science and operations research concepts that resulted in the publication of JMR, scholars in this decade embraced the social and behavioral sciences, which subsequently led to the launch of the Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) in 1974. From 1966 through 1975, almost 30% of the articles published in JMR examined behavioral aspects of marketing. Prominent topical examples include 19 articles discussing the social-psychology of retail store/center patronage and image, 10 identifying product innovators and opinion leaders, 8 debating social class (versus income) as correlates of purchase behavior, 6 examining cognitive dissonance theory in post-purchase evaluation, and 5 addressing fear appeals in advertising, in addition to attendant measurement issues related to each topic.

The marketing discipline was introduced to a comprehensive consumer behavior theory (Howard and Sheth 1969), and JMR published two models describing industrial buying behavior (Sheth 1973; Webster and Wind 1972) in addition to articles emphasizing behavioral variables for market segmentation (e.g., Haley 1968; Plummer 1971, 1974). There were also articles that instructed readers on the use of behavioral models for decision making (Aaker 1970) and application of behavioral science to marketing problems (Zaltman 1970). Behavioral aspects of sales management (e.g., Jolson 1974; Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1975; Webster 1968), product management (e.g., Gemmill and Wilemon 1972; Luck 1969), and marketing research management (e.g., Keane 1969) also appeared with increasing regularity. By comparison, only 2% of JMR articles addressed management science applications to marketing.

Theoretical issues relating to the domain of marketing theory and implications for practice were also raised in this decade. In a series of articles, Kotler and other scholars (Kotler 1972; Kotler and Levy 1969a, 1969b, 1973; Kotler and Zaltman 1971) argued that both the boundaries and core concepts of marketing theory and practice need broadening. Although controversial, this view proved to have three direct consequences. First, it renewed interest in the nature and scope of exchange relationships (Bagozzi 1974, 1975) originally sketched by Alderson (1965) in his Law of Exchange. Second, it pioneered new avenues for the application of marketing perspectives, such as not-for-profit and services marketing. Third, it spurred thought on directions for further development of marketing theory and reenergized thinking about advancing science in marketing within a broader context (Hunt 1976).

Attention given to theory development in this decade led to the creation of the Harold H. Maynard Award in 1974, which is given annually to the article that makes the most significant contribution to marketing theory. The first recipient of this award was W. T. Tucker (1974) for his article, “Future Directions in Marketing Theory.”

Simultaneously, and to counterbalance JMR’s growing emphasis on behavioral and theoretical issues in marketing and a perceived need to accommodate the more applied interests of marketing practitioners, AMA experimented with a new special section in JMR, namely, “Applied Marketing.” This section was a journal within a journal that published (1) descriptions of current marketing practices in business, (2) practical applications of techniques and methodology, (3) case studies of successful and unsuccessful marketing programs, (4) trends in marketing, and (5) comments by leading executives (Cundiff 1974). Articles for “Applied Marketing” were sought from marketing practitioners, were reviewed by a separate editorial review board composed of practitioners, and accounted for almost one-sixth of the articles in JMR during the next four years.

This experiment, as part of what had been viewed as a trend toward making JMR an “everything publication for everyone in marketing” (Lazer 1976, p. 78), had unintended consequences. Grether (1976, p. 69), for example, cautioned that the trend toward a more topical, readable, and practical orientation could lead to JMR becoming overly practical: “There is an important, if sometimes subtle distinction between a trade periodical and a scholarly-professional journal.” His concern proved prophetic. Within three years JMR faced criticism from both marketing practitioners and academicians, again revised its editorial policy, and subsequently became the journal that it is today.

Marketing as a Decision Science: 1976–1985

The period that marked the beginning of JMR’s fifth decade had much in common with what had transpired 20 years previously. As before, concerns about limited progress in knowledge development were raised. Paradoxically, though JMR had attempted to become more topical, readable, and practical in content, it, like much of the marketing literature during the previous two decades, was judged as having only a modest impact on practice-improvement. A change in JMR editorial policy ensued in 1979, with an emphasis on publishing only scholarly articles and the announced AMA view that JMR would serve as a “bridge between the scholarly and practical ... for the thoughtful marketing practitioner and academician.” This action in turn led to the deletion of the “Applied Marketing” section in 1979. With these editorial changes, research published in JMR returned to the modeling
emphasis that first appeared in the early 1960s, but it had a greater appreciation for the complexity of marketing phenomena and a broadened scope of the problems (e.g., Charnes et al. 1985; Webster 1978). Articles addressing marketing planning and strategy issues appeared with increased frequency, including the first articles in the marketing literature using the Profit Impact of Market Strategy (i.e., PIMS) database (Buzzell 1981; Farris and Buzzell 1979; Phillips, Chang, and Buzzell 1983; Thorelli and Burnett 1981).

Almost 35% of the articles published in this decade had an application, implication, or evaluation of marketing planning and strategy perspectives as their focus. A large percentage of these articles incorporated a modeling component, including models for product design (Green, Carroll, and Goldberg 1981), new product introduction (Narasimhan and Sen 1983; Mahajan and Muller 1979; Tauber 1977), and product portfolios (Day 1977; Wind, Mahajan, and Swire 1983). Still others contained models for price-cost planning (Day and Montgomery 1983; Dolan and Jeuland 1981; Fogg and Kohnken 1978; Monroe and Zoetemers 1979); advertising, sales, and promotion practice (Choffrey and Lilien 1978; Levy, Webster, and Kerin 1983; Lodish 1980; Weitz 1981); and retailing strategy (Corstiens and Doyle 1985; Ghosh and Craig 1983). The development and use of marketing decision support systems (Chakravarti, Mitchell, and Staelin 1981; Larréché and Srivivasan 1981; Little 1979), methods for uncovering product-market structure (Day, Shocker, and Srivastava 1979; Srivastava, Alpert, and Shocker 1984; Srivastava, Leone, and Shocker 1981), and approaches to market segmentation (Assael and Roscoe 1976; Blattberg, Buesing, and Sen 1980; Dickson 1982; Doyle and Saunders 1985; Winter 1979) further demonstrated the variety of marketing planning and strategy issues addressed. Fifteen articles addressed intra-organizational issues associated with planning, strategy, implementation, and organizational structure. Additionally, research addressing consumer behavior issues exclusively declined to less than 10% of JM articles published in this decade.

This period also witnessed the most vigorous interest in theory building and the role of theory in marketing in JM’s history. For example, articles assessed the political-economy paradigm for analyzing exchange structures and processes within and between organizations (Achrol, Reve, and Stern 1983; Arndt 1983; Stern and Reve 1980). Other research articulated the concept of domesticated markets, focusing more on market coalitions than competition (Arndt 1979), and the concept of market evolution (Abell 1978). Scholars also explored the theory of the firm from a marketing perspective (Anderson 1982; Day and Wensley 1983; Howard 1983). Citing the limitations of earlier efforts to develop theory in marketing, Hunt (1983) and Bagozzi (1984) proposed guidelines for doing so. This period marked the initial questioning of the use of quantitative methods as an approach to research in marketing (Anderson 1983; Arndt 1985; Deshpandé 1983; Leong 1985; Peter and Olson 1983) and initiated a philosophy of scientific debate that continued into the next decade (e.g., Hunt 1990, 1992, 1993; Peter 1992; Zinkhan and Hirshheim 1992).

The decade closed with another change in editorial policy, which this time excluded articles whose primary contribution to the marketing literature was in the areas of statistical modeling, marketing research techniques, and measurement. Coincidentally, Marketing Science, a publication focusing on this subject matter, first appeared in 1982.

**Marketing as an Integrative Science: 1986–1995**

With the two major changes in editorial policy in the previous decade, JM entered its sixth decade with a primary focus on advancing science and practice in marketing through scholarly inquiry that made an empirical and conceptual or theoretical contribution to marketing knowledge. This shift in emphasis, begun in the previous decade, manifested itself in a different type of article being published in JM (see Figure 2). Average article length was greatest during this decade and had more than doubled since 1975; similarly, the number of references per article, on average, had increased by almost 600%. The Journal of Marketing had become a literature-based journal partly because of the editorial policy changes made in the previous decade and continued into the present.

Nearly 25% of the articles appearing in JM during its sixth decade featured integrative conceptual frameworks that explicated a coherent structure of interdisciplinary knowledge pertaining to a particular domain of marketing phenomena. These frameworks, based on comprehensive literature reviews, frequently embraced a contingency approach to the study of marketing phenomena and emph-
sized moderating conditions that attenuated or amplified the relationships being investigated. This expositional form not only synthesized a particular body of literature, but also sought to understand, explain, and sometimes predict marketing phenomena, often through propositional inventories that were frequently subjected to empirical testing.

The prominence of conceptual integrative frameworks was apparent through the variety of marketing phenomena being addressed. For example, in strategic marketing, attention focused on sources of sustainable competitive advantage (Bharadwaj, Varadarajan, and Fahy 1993; Day and Wensley 1988; Kerin, Varadarajan, and Peterson 1992), business strategy implementation (McKee, Varadarajan, and Pride 1989; Walker and Ruekert 1987), and modeling competitive business strategy (Gruca and Sudharshan 1995; Ramaswamy, Gatignon, and Reibstein 1994).

In marketing management, integrative frameworks appeared pertaining to sales effectiveness (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986), price-quality-value relationships (Zielithaml 1988), relationship marketing (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990; Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987), just-in-time exchange relationships (Frazier, Spekman, and O’Neal 1988), marketing control (Jaworski 1988; Jaworski, Stahtakopoulos, and Krishnan 1993), marketing channel communications (Mohr and Nevin 1990), and product design and innovation processes (Bloch 1995; Gupta, Raj, and Wilemon 1986; Olson, Walker, and Ruekert 1995). Readers were also introduced to integrative frameworks for assessing (1) competitive effects on technology diffusion (Gatignon and Robertson 1989; Robertson and Gatignon 1986), (2) marketing knowledge and technology as competitive assets (Capon and Glazer 1987; Glazer 1991), (3) the role of trust in buyer-seller relationships (Anderson and Narus 1990; Ganesan 1994; Moorman, Deshmend, and Zaltman 1993; Morgan and Hunt 1994) and service environments (Bitten 1992), and (4) the use of marketing information and learning by organizations (Menon and Varadarajan 1992; Sinkula 1994). Pioneering efforts to elucidate the concepts of market orientation (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990; Slater and Narver 1994, 1995), brand equity (Keller 1993), and service quality (Parasuraman, Ziemthaml, and Berry 1985; Ziemthaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1988), which were based on integrative frameworks, also appeared in JM.

Two parallel developments occurred during this period. First, greater sophistication in the means used to understand, explain, and predict marketing phenomena became apparent. Concurrent with the development of conceptual frameworks of marketing phenomena was the application of structural equations modeling and path analysis to uncover causal relationships among variables and the use of meta-analyses to assess the generalizability of relationships among variables. Second, in 1992, AMA launched a new publication, Marketing Management, directed solely to marketing practitioners and others interested in applied marketing issues. Thus, JM could publish research that was “more theory based, more literature based, and more rigorously empirical than articles in Marketing Management” (Kinnear 1992, p. 2). The American Marketing Association entered its seventh decade as it began its first decade, with two journals reflecting the allied, but nevertheless different, interests and priorities of academicians and practitioners.

Grether Revisited and JM Today
This literary history demonstrates that much has transpired since Grether’s (1976) retrospective commentary that marked JM’s 40th anniversary. Notably, the passage of 20 years provides additional perspective on what Grether termed the “Modern Period” for JM (i.e., 1958–1976) and what preceded and followed this period. The literature appearing in JM’s first decade was consistent with a still nascent discipline seeking structure, meaning, and a distinct identity within the field of economics from which early marketing thought emerged. However, JM’s second decade can be rightfully considered a precursor to what followed in the next 50 years. The emergent view of marketing as a managerial activity and a discipline distinct from economics, which would benefit from a conceptual base of its own, was remarkably modern in orientation. Indeed, two examples illustrate the modernity of marketing thought at that time. Alderson and Cox (1948) discussed at length the role of a differentiated market position and overhead cost in the context of competitive strategy. These insights were resurrected and expanded over 30 years later when each became central concepts for strategic marketing and management in the 1980s (e.g., Day 1984; Porter 1980). The coverage given distribution cost analysis or functional-cost accounting in JM during the 1940s and 1950s, again spearheaded by Alderson’s seminal work (Anderson 1979), reappeared 40 years later under the guise of activity-based costing applied to marketing channel activities (Cooper and Kaplan 1988, 1991).

The Modern Period can also be viewed through a lens made clearer by time. As was described previously, this period witnessed a formalization of JM editorial policy, a greater infusion of quantitative and behavioral analysis into marketing research, and broadened applications of marketing concepts and practices. This period also proved to be a fertile interval in marketing thought, with approximately 64 examples of new theories, concepts, methods, and techniques appearing in the marketing literature between 1952 and 1977 (Myers, Greyser, and Massy 1979), many of which initially appeared or were subsequently developed in JM. Although Myers, Greyser, and Massy (1979) judged marketing literature in this period to have had a modest impact on knowledge development and practice improvement in marketing, it is worth noting that five of the ten most referenced JM articles to date appeared during the Modern Period (i.e., Haley 1968; Kotler 1972; Kotler and Levy 1969a; Kotler and Zaltman 1971; Sheth 1973).

Through a series of changes and refinements in editorial policy and the manuscript review process, a perceptible transformation in JM became apparent over the next 20 years. Journal of Marketing became a scholarly-professional journal in outlook and content. As such, articles derived their inspiration and relevance from carefully deduced short-comings in the extant knowledge pertaining to marketing phenomena and/or observed anomalies in marketing phenomena for which the need for new knowledge or perspec-
tive could be demonstrated. An article’s contribution to existing or new knowledge was judged by the strength of its inferences made about marketing phenomena—determined, in large measure, by logic in argumentation and thoroughness in documentation in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Not surprisingly, this focus prompted a philosophy-of-science debate centering on the sources and means for making knowledge claims pertaining to marketing phenomena. So too, the emphasis on conceptual frameworks to bring order and interpretation to an increasingly large and interdisciplinary literature applicable to a particular marketing phenomenon was a likely consequence of JM’s editorial evolution, at least in retrospect. Indeed, it seems that the interdisciplinary approach to marketing theory development originally envisioned by Alderson and Cox (1948) had come to pass.

Although only the future will show what effect these efforts will have or have had on furthering science and practice in marketing, an initial assessment is positive. Not only has JM grown in scholarly influence and become the most cited marketing journal in business-related scholarly journals and practitioner-oriented publications, but the remaining five of the ten most referenced JM articles to date appeared during this period (Cooper 1979; Day 1977; Green, Carroll and Goldberg 1981; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985; Zeithaml 1988).

Concluding Comments

This editorial and literary history of JM is only a “pen-and-ink” sketch. Errors of emphasis and omission in narration and explanation most certainly exist. Nevertheless, when the historical record of JM is viewed broadly, a portrait emerges of a journal that has struggled and sometimes stumbled, but never wavered for long from pursuit of an ideal, namely, furthering science and practice in marketing. It may well be that this quest, expressed in different ways and variously manifested in over 3000 published articles, has been one of JM’s overriding legacies to the marketing literature and discipline. Whether JM has guided thought in marketing or simply mirrored prevailing thought at any point in time is a moot issue. The relationship among marketing thought, marketing literature, and JM has and will likely remain symbiotic. In this regard, it is an indispensable archive for those wishing to track developments and change in marketing thought and literature over time.

Journal of Marketing’s archival role, however, is secondary to its original and continuing mission. The Journal of Marketing was created to advance science and practice in marketing, and this is the basis on which it ultimately must be judged. On this score, the historical account of the editorial and literary transformation of JM into a scholarly-professional journal shows that changes in both represented less a series of choices with honorific overtones than a necessity that progressively defined its responsibility to the marketing discipline. The primary responsibility of a scholarly-professional journal lies not in issuing papers and building an archival literature, but in guaranteeing that the contents of published papers advance knowledge in a manner that furthers science and practice in a discipline (cf. Thomsen 1994). It is perhaps again time for AMA to formally assess the progress JM has made toward fulfilling this responsibility to the community of thoughtful marketing scholars and practitioners that it seeks to serve.

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