

# Editorial: the past, present, and future of *JAMS*

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A new editor's first editorial is a time to reflect on the journal's past and future. As I begin my first year as editor-in-chief (EIC) of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)*, I want to take this occasion to thank Tomas Hult for his significant contribution to *JAMS* over his six-year term. In addition to moving from four to six issues per year and raising the *Journal's* impact—as discussed next in the “State of the Journal” section—he personally processed more than 3000 papers as EIC. These are some big shoes to fill. But with this editorial, I attempt to start making my contributions as EIC, by (1) providing a snapshot of *the state of the journal* across multiple dimensions, (2) describing the journal's *new review process*, and (3) commenting on *the future of the journal* in the form of some editorial initiatives.

## State of the journal

Under the leadership of its previous editors, *JAMS* has become a *highly regarded publication outlet for scholars seeking to publish high-quality, theoretically sound, and managerially relevant research in marketing*. As part of the process of preparing for my EIC role, I conducted—together with Anne Hoekman, Managing Editor—an extensive benchmark study that compared *JAMS* with the 45 journals currently included in the *Financial Times (FT)* journal list, five of which are marketing journals (the full report is available on the *JAMS*

website<sup>1</sup>). Overall, using objective indicators of journal performance, *JAMS* performed very well compared to the *FT* journals. Specifically, relative to all 45 *FT* journals, *JAMS* would rank:

- 24th overall (and 3rd among marketing journals following only *Journal of Marketing* and *Journal of Consumer Research*) in its five-year impact factor for 2014. It also achieved a low self-citation rate of just 6.5%.<sup>2</sup>
- 5th overall and similar to other premier marketing journals in terms of its acceptance rates in 2014 (7.5%).
- Equal to or better than 82% of all *FT* journals across six recent international ranking studies from four major geographic regions (Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Australia/New Zealand).<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, *JAMS* performs strongly when measured by other performance metrics, such that:

- Submissions to *JAMS* have grown from 319 in 2007 to 547 in 2014, with an average 37-day turnaround on first-round submissions.
- International diversity is strong, and non-U.S. authors accounted for 39% of all published authors in 2014.

Therefore, according to its impact factor, acceptance rates, ranking across multiple studies, submission growth, and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.springer.com/jams](http://www.springer.com/jams); to directly download a PDF copy of the report, please use the following link: <http://goo.gl/ntRnm7>.

<sup>2</sup> Data on the 2014 impact factors and self-citation rates were retrieved from Thomson Reuters' *Journal Citation Reports* via the Web of Science database in September 2015; see the *JAMS* Benchmark Report for further details.

<sup>3</sup> See the *JAMS* Benchmark Report for more information on acceptance rate comparisons, international ranking studies, and how the data were gathered.

turnaround time, the journal is on an excellent performance trajectory. On the basis of these data, we have already requested that *JAMS* be added to the *FT* list of journals.

## New review process

As part of the EIC transition, Tomas Hult and I have instituted an Area Editor (AE) structure, both to increase the level of expertise available across substantive and methodological domains and to add expanded editorial capacity, so that we can address the increasing rate of submissions. The AEs provide deep knowledge across diverse marketing areas and extensive experience successfully reviewing for and publishing in premier journals. The *JAMS* Area Editors are as follows:

Michael Brady, Florida State University	Constantine Katsikeas, University of Leeds
Dhruv Grewal, Babson College	V. Kumar, Georgia State University
Rebecca Hamilton, Georgetown University	Neil Morgan, Indiana University
Mark Houston, Texas A&M University	Linda Price, University of Arizona
Douglas Hughes, Michigan State University	Raji Srinivasan, University of Texas at Austin
John Hulland, University of Georgia	Rajkumar Venkatesan, University of Virginia
Satish Jayachandran, University of South Carolina	

## Review process: steps

The new review process at *JAMS* is designed to facilitate improved publications, to the benefit of authors, the editors, and the marketing community. Therefore, this section describes how our uses of desk rejections, reviewer assignments, and AEs seek to ensure that reviewers and especially the AEs help authors by serving as “enablers” for improving manuscripts (see Fig. 1).

First, at the initial submission of a paper, the EIC evaluates it to determine if it fits the positioning of *JAMS* and has a viable chance of acceptance within a few revision rounds. Failure to meet these two hurdles results in the paper being desk rejected; typically, 40–60% of submissions are desk rejected. At first glance, this rate may seem high, but it is critical to ensuring sufficient bandwidth for the AEs and editorial review board members, such that they may focus on the remaining 200–300 submissions. A sufficiently large, qualified, and motivated reviewer pool simply does not exist to support processing all the papers received, including those with a very low probability of publication success, despite our strong desire to provide feedback to as many authors as possible. Second, the paper is distributed to three to four reviewers, with a request for a 25-day review window. Third, the EIC evaluates the received reviews and determines if the paper

should be sent to an AE or rejected. Accordingly, the AEs do not expend considerable time “enabling” papers that, according to the reviews and the EIC’s evaluation, would not receive a revision opportunity. A paper sent to the AE should reach an approximately 30–40% chance of publication, which means that each AE has the flexibility to spend considerable effort helping authors improve their contributions. After the AE writes a report (with a 10-day turnaround target), the paper returns to the EIC, who creates a decision letter for the authors.

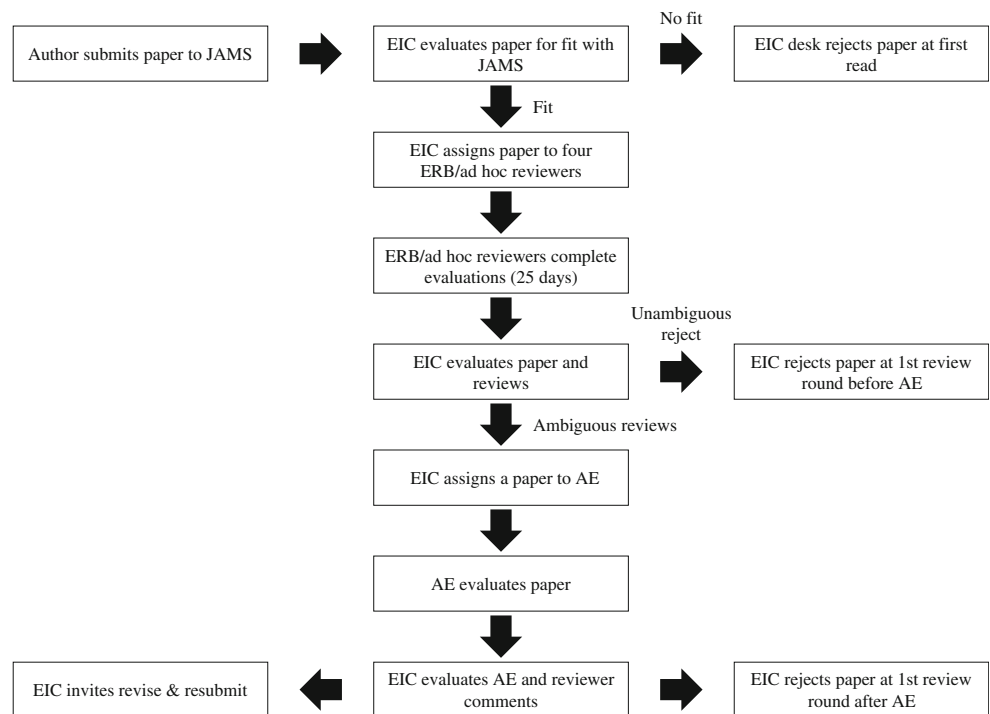
The subsequent review rounds are more typical; the revised manuscript goes to the reviewers, AE, and EIC in each round. As key strengths of this new process, the AEs and editorial review board members—who represent the primary resources for improving any paper—can devote more of their time to papers that ultimately may be published, rather than spending the overwhelming majority of their time on papers that have little chance of being published, as is often the case. In addition, this process gives authors quicker feedback on their papers, including those with a low probability of being published in *JAMS*, rather than keeping manuscripts circulating in a lengthy editorial process.

## Common causes for desk rejections

Manuscripts that fail to advance past the EIC’s desk to enter the *JAMS* review process generally fall into two main categories. The first includes papers that are not positioned to match *JAMS*’s editorial focus, such as behavioral research without meaningful managerial insights. Behavioral effects can be very relevant to managers, but only if they are linked to key performance outcomes or managerial interventions. When behavioral studies do not establish these connections, they simply are not a good fit for *JAMS*. Similarly, scale development or pure methodological papers usually are not well aligned with the journal’s positioning. The second category consists of papers that fail to generate sufficient contributions, such as offering a model that includes mostly main effect hypotheses, tested using cross-sectional survey data, for which common method variance often undermines the contributions of the majority of the main effect findings. Similarly, articles that test known effects or theories in a different context (e.g., just varying national settings or product) often fail to reach publication.

My recommendation for new authors (or authors new to *JAMS*) is to model their papers on recent publications in *JAMS* and *Journal of Marketing (JM)* that use a similar research design and method. Not only does this modeling inform the positioning, formatting, and expectations of the study, but reviewing recent papers in the same substantive domain also will help authors ensure their submission is sufficiently linked to extant managerial research. Papers that fail to reference *JM* or *JAMS* are often poorly tied to relevant research and thus exhibit a poor fit with the journal.

**Fig. 1** Overview of the new *JAMS* review process



**Editorial directions**

My mission as the new EIC is to reinforce and expand *JAMS* as a premier journal for academics aiming to publish marketing research that is of high quality and is theoretically sound and managerially relevant. Some specific editorial objectives that I believe will make a positive impact are (1) author and domain expansion, (2) review and conceptual paper focus, and (3) an effective review process. I outline some of the ongoing initiatives in each of these three areas.

**Author and domain expansion**

Each year, we actively reach out to a specific marketing domain with a targeted conference and related special issue, invited editorials to provide domain-specific guidance, and recruitment of potential platform/review papers. The first three targeted domains under my editorship will be “Customer Engagement and Customer Relationship Management” (co-edited by Tomas Hult and me), “Service Marketing Strategy”

(co-edited by Michael Brady and Todd Arnold), and “Consumer-Based Strategy” (co-edited by Rebecca Hamilton and Linda Price). Each of these domains is fast growing, highly important to managers, and potentially underrepresented in *JAMS*. For example, marketing strategy research at the consumer level represents an important area of potential growth. Key initiatives to encourage such input include adding dozens of new editorial review board members with expertise in this domain, planning forthcoming editorials on positioning consumer research in *JAMS*, and hosting a 2017 Paris conference and special issue on this topic. Table 1 provides a summary of key dates associated with each special issue.

**Review and conceptual paper focus**

Some disciplines host premier journals known as the primary outlets for their conceptual, review, or meta-analytic papers. From an editorial policy standpoint, *JAMS* is especially interested in well-conducted research that synthesizes, integrates, and advances marketing theory; serves as a platform for future

**Table 1** Special issue timelines

	Customer engagement and customer relationship management	Service marketing strategy	Consumer-based strategy
Open for submissions	September 1, 2015	February 1, 2016	September 15, 2016
Paper submission deadline	January 15, 2016	July 1, 2016	July 15, 2017
Targeted special issue publication	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Fall 2018

research; or summarizes a body of emerging research. To facilitate such valuable research, I encourage potential authors to contact me directly with proposals or discussions of new contributions along these lines. When I receive potentially high impact papers, I also may ask an AE to shepherd it and serve as a facilitator of the review process.

### **Effective review process**

Consistent with our new review process, I believe effective reviews are critical to the success of *JAMS*. One element of such effectiveness is pursuing continuous realignments and refreshment of the editorial review board and AE teams, to match the profile of submissions, editorial directions, and targeted turnaround times. We will use metrics-based feedback to help reviewers achieve appropriate responsiveness, quality, and helpfulness in their reviews. We also plan to initiate a process to “clean up” the reviewer database: re-

moving inactive, consistently late, or lower quality reviewers and updating the records reflecting the reviewers’ domains and methodological areas of expertise.

### **Conclusion**

It is my privilege and honor to serve as the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. It is now on me to continue the journal’s positive trajectory over the next three years by leveraging the strong foundation and implementing the initiatives outlined herein. I look forward to the challenge of leading *JAMS* in an effort to assert and expand its position as a leading publication outlet for top quality, high impact, managerially focused marketing research.

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*Editor-in-Chief*