

The argument for consumer-based strategy papers

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Rebecca Hamilton's editorial provides a strong definition and compelling argument for consumer-based strategy research. She distinguishes this type of work as follows: (1) it provides strategic recommendations based upon consumer insights, (2) consumer insights inherent in this type of work are not specific to one firm or consumption context, and (3) the consumer is the unit of analysis (regardless of methodology employed in the work). She argues that work using multi-methods is especially conducive to this type of research and empirically validates that the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)* is an outlet that is interested in and supportive of publishing this type of scholarship. In my mind, this definition has real validity, and the call to action for *JAMS* is powerful and distinctive. I would like to comment directly on two of the central points Hamilton makes.

The translation of consumer insights into strategy

As noted in the editorial, consumer insights do not always translate into a strategy discussion—sometimes consumer insights are a simple window into a consumption behavior with no real application to an organization. And that's okay. In other instances consumer insights are directly transferable to a strategic frame and the strategic implications are readily identified. And that's okay. Unfortunately, it seems that sometimes members of our field wed themselves strongly to one approach or another. Such a dogmatic view limits the potential

value from both approaches to defining and utilizing consumer insights. This editorial is strong in making the case for moving consumer insights into a strategic context that has application to an organization.

Indeed, sometimes it seems we are tentative in translating consumer insights into strategic application or we only pay only lip service to the effort. This is a mistake. Perhaps some believe that our journals do not value this type of discussion and see it as less of a contribution. Interestingly, our leading journals indicate that this type of discussion is meaningful, and this editorial highlights that *JAMS* is one such journal that is centered in this type of research approach.

The editorial provides good counsel on how to better bridge consumer insights into a strategic discussion. Bringing strategic considerations up-front in a paper, utilizing dependent variables that lend themselves to strategic interpretations, and choosing research contexts that are more strategic in nature are all excellent avenues to enable this goal. I would add a few other thoughts in this regard. First, it is important to be bold in seeing the strategic possibilities in the consumer insights one identifies. Avoiding the obvious, being creative in application, and putting intellectual energy toward the application of consumer insights will pay off in the realization of meaningful discussion. Second, sharing identified insights with others, specifically members of industry, will provide additional understanding and input for effective translation. In my interactions with industry I have always been pleasantly surprised how interested these stakeholders are in the consumer insights we generate. Leveraging this interest to produce better strategic discussion makes sense.

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Using multiple methods to tackle consumer questions

It is a long held belief that utilizing multi-methods is a difficulty way to conduct effective research. Common refrains are:

it is tougher to do, it takes more resources and expertise, it faces a tougher ride in the review process, the field has little interest in this type of research, etc. These views—if they were ever true—are largely no longer the case. Editors at our journals are looking for this type of work. Hamilton's editorial makes it abundantly clear that work of this nature will be welcome and very much encouraged at *JAMS*.

Beyond this stated call to action, Hamilton argues that research that embraces multi-methods will be more effective in bridging the gap between consumer insights and strategy. The use of multi-methods provides a more rounded view and cross-validates conclusions that authors seek to articulate. The editorial further argues that multi-methods can foster work across contexts and enhance the external validity of the dialogue that seeks to bridge consumer insights to strategy. I would endorse this view and encourage authors to look for

opportunities to add additional methods and approaches to their work.

I believe that multi-method work is typically more interesting to the reader. It is almost always more creative, memorable, and convincing in conveying its contribution, and I would contend that this type of work is more impactful over time. As a final point of advice, it is important that authors clearly convey how their use of multiple methods achieves goals of facilitating a strategic understanding of consumer insights and enhance contribution. Conveying why multiple methods are valuable in this regard needs to be articulated throughout a manuscript and even in the cover letter at submission. When editors and authors are clear on the research intent of the authors, they will be better able to see the contribution of multi-methods and see how this type of research approach can effectively bridge the gap between customer insights and strategy discussion.