Editorial

Journal of Marketing Analytics (2013) 1, 63. doi:10.1057/jma.2013.10

The marketing analytics profession is rapidly expanding and diversifying. For some time now, there has been a shortage of talent. Our profession is evolving rapidly. Data sources are proliferating. New platforms like Hadoop and other NoSQL sources are coming into play. Analytics professionals need to be more versatile, and stay abreast of a bewildering array of innovations in analytics platforms, software innovations, visualization products and more.

Few data analysts will have the luxury of receiving cut and dried data sets, which are ready to be used 'as is'. Not only do data analysts need to know about the sampling frame that led to the data set they are working with, they are often (increasingly) expected to play a significant part in *generating* those data sets. As volumes of data are exploding, both structured and unstructured data get used, and they reside on a bewildering array of systems, considerable technical expertise is often expected from data analysts to integrate all of these sources.

To reflect this changing reality in marketing analytics, we have scheduled a special issue on 'Big Data', and we are proud that Sunil Soares, an international thought leader on Big Data, and author of several books in that domain, has accepted our invitation to act as guest editor for this upcoming special issue.

Because of the expanded skill set that practitioners need to bring, it is likely that talent demand will continue to outstrip supply. Training and coaching of junior analysts will be more important than ever. In software development, a concept of 'pair

programming' was introduced (as part of the Agile methodology Extreme Programming) to facilitate knowledge sharing, and safeguard quality. Maybe similar practices could serve data analysts as well.

Universities all over the world are now beginning to offer Marketing Analytics educations, up to Master degree level. As a new generation of professionals begins to enter the workforce, hopefully they will drive further innovation. Given the rather diverse skill set that is required to excel in this field, it is anybody's guess how our profession will evolve.

Marketing analysts are at the frontier between IT and business lines. They may interact with research agencies and campaign managers to set up carefully controlled experiments. All this requires written and verbal communication skills, but also statistical, methodological and technical skills to help design real-life tests. To find all these skills in one person is obviously a rare find, so sharing of insight and expertise may well be the highest leverage activity.

We are a fledgling journal and are delighted to receive papers from both academics and practitioners. We have so far received some fine papers and look forward to many more.

Tom Breur
XLNT Consulting, Tilburg,
The Netherlands.

E-mail: tombreur@xlntconsulting.com