A tribute to our heroes and thoughts about collaborative relationships

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Accepted: 28 April 2021 / Published online: 12 May 2021
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If nothing else, the pandemic taught society to value human connections and social networks. As editors, we have relied heavily on researchers, academics, and practitioners to send creative work to *Journal of Marketing Analytics*. In this editorial, we want to thank and honor all authors, reviewers, and publishers for their great efforts in 2020 and mention the editorial awards for last year:

- **Best paper of the year:** “*Protecting survey data on a consumer level*”, Schneider and Iacobucci (2020);
- **Most popular paper of the year:** “*Cutoff criteria for overall model fit indexes in generalized structured component analysis*”, Cho et al. (2020);
- **Best paper in a special issue:** “*The impact of mobile customer relationship management (mCRM) on sales collaboration and sales performance*”, Rodriguez and Boyer (2020).

The publication process requires more than creative content, and relies heavily on the dedication of many “behind the scenes” heroes who perform gratis service to the academy for the purpose of building the knowledgebase of the world. As such, we also want to thank the editor of our special issue on Analytics in Sales, Dr. Ricky Fergurson, and all our reviewers who worked extremely hard in 2020, including our best reviewers Dr. John Girona and Sheen Kachen.

After studying the papers selected by our editorial team as the best for 2020, checking downloads and reading analytics, we noticed an increase in popularity towards quantitative, applied studies that can easily be transposed and relevant

to both analytics research and practice. This again teaches us the importance of good relationships among researchers, academics, and practitioners in the development of the marketing analytics field.

Previous researchers have already noted the need for collaborative relationships between marketing research and practice to ensure research rigor to advance the field and gain practitioner audiences (Gauri and Grewal 2021; Iacobucci et al. 2019; Petrescu and Krishen 2017). Collaborative partnerships can be vital for the development of the field of analytics too, especially considering the fast and dynamic development of new technologies and methods of data management based on artificial intelligence (Grewal et al. 2021; Roggeveen and Sethuraman 2020).

Considering the importance of rigor, relevance, timeliness, and usefulness in our marketing research, we want to encourage a more thorough and systematic view of the practice of marketing analytics, management of big data, and use of artificial intelligence in analytics (Bolton 2019; Dekimpe and Geyskens 2019; Gauri and Grewal 2021). For this, we invite both researcher and practitioner commentaries on cutting-edge technologies and data management methods, as well as reviews of software options and books that propel our field forward. We also encourage collaborative teams of researchers and practitioners to submit proposals of special issues on key contemporary topics in the field of marketing analytics.

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Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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