

## HOW TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING PUBLISHED IN ACADEMIC JOURNALS

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Journal editors see hundreds of manuscripts--at all levels of quality. All who have a desire to publish should know the essentials of publishing; sadly, they do not. This special session educates contributors on how to plan, execute, and submit manuscripts so they have the best chance for acceptance.

Bruce Stern discussed the importance of matching manuscripts with the proper outlet. A wonderful message, outside a journal's focus or readership interest, will be a wasted effort for all parties. Authors should choose an outlet before the research/concept piece is undertaken and craft the project to the journal's norms, guidelines, and needs of readership. How does one find the proper outlet? Start with a publication such as Cabell's Guide. This and other guides list most business journals and provide information about focus, audience, and submission. Select potential outlets and examine prior issues, look at style sheets for a statement of focus, and/or examine a journal's web site. If questions about fit still exist, contact the editor to discuss the gist of the manuscript. Once the best outlet is chosen, consider sending the manuscript to a few professors for a pre-review. This can provide feedback on potential fit and suggestions that might lead to changes to the offering before formally submitting the manuscript.

Craig Kelley discussed addressing reviewer comments. Before revising a manuscript, authors should make sure they understand what the reviewers are asking. If there is any question, they should get clarification from the editor. Authors should identify reviewer comments requiring minor, largely editorial, revisions vis-à-vis reviewer suggestions requiring major changes (e.g., additional data collection/analysis; repositioning the manuscript). Often the editor will indicate on which reviewer comments authors should focus. Ultimately, however, it is up to authors to determine how to best accommodate the comments of the reviewers.

Authors should reconcile reviewers' comments looking for commonality. Often reviewers are consistent in their suggestions for improving a manuscript; however, there may be conflicting comments. If conflict arises, authors need to resolve it. They may contact the editor, explain the conflict, and ask for the editor's

guidance. Alternatively, authors could decide which comments seem most important in strengthening the manuscript and address those comments. Authors should explain in their responses to the reviewers why they felt particular comments were in conflict and why they choose to address one reviewer's comments over another's. Authors should also note the conflict in reviewers' comments and their resolution in the authors' letter to the editor. Sometimes authors may feel they are not able to address a reviewer's comment. This may arise when a reviewer suggests authors collect additional data or expand the manuscript beyond the focus of the study. Authors should thank the reviewer for the suggestion and explain in a professional tone why they disagree. In some cases, authors may decide it makes more sense to pull the manuscript from the review process and submit it elsewhere.

Lastly, authors need to report how they handled each reviewer comment. One method is to put reviewer comments in one column of a table and the authors' responses in another. This format makes it very easy for reviewer and editor to track revisions.

Doug Lincoln reviewed major reasons why manuscripts submitted to journals fail to reach the publication stage. While the overall reason for rejection is often stated as a failure to make a significant contribution to marketing education literature, five more specific reasons were shared and examples given. Reasons were categorized as a(n): (1) lack of proven need for the manuscript's content/ focus, (2) incomplete and/or poorly organized literature review, (3) inadequate explanation of methodologies and/or the existence of major methodological flaws, (4) weak overall readability, and, most importantly, (5) failure to develop and offer meaningful implications for marketing educators. Also discussed was the importance of drawing upon previously published marketing education research in "making a case" for their manuscript and how the journal's reviewers/readers look for application value. While not all manuscript deficiencies can be eliminated, if authors would spend a few more hours on their manuscripts prior to submission, the odds of a more favorable review would be considerably raised.