

**PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING
RESEARCH**

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ABSTRACT

This editorial summarizes both the development and impact of Peter LaPlaca, in terms of his work with and for the industrial and marketing purchasing research community, using several different perspectives. It also offers an overview of what (former) editors of other business-to-business marketing management journals think of Peter LaPlaca. Following that, this editorial briefly reviews dominant topics in *Industrial Marketing Management*.

Keywords: case study, human resource management, *Industrial Marketing Management*, IMP, *Industrial Marketing and Purchasing*, industry clusters, international scope, internationalization, journal demographics, journal positioning, networks, Peter LaPlaca, purchasing and supply management, scientific legitimacy, technology mindset, unit pricing, value.

1. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS FROM ADAM LINDGREEN

When Peter LaPlaca decided to step down as co–editor-in-chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*, I knew instantly that a special issue of the journal needed to be devoted to him. I can think of few academics who have dedicated such effort, over 45 years, to the research field of business-to-business marketing while simultaneously ensuring the enviable status of *Industrial Marketing Management* as the top specialized journal in the field. Naturally, the journal’s other co–editor-in-chief Tony Di Benedetto, special issue editor Jens Geersbro, and Thomas Ritter—who all know Peter very well—all were as excited about this idea as I was.

The first time I got to know Peter—like so many other academics—was after I submitted my very first manuscript to *Industrial Marketing Management* for publication consideration (Lindgreen & Wynstra, 2005). I still remember my delight at receiving his e-mail, informing me that the manuscript would be accepted, subject to certain changes. For a young, inexperienced academic, the encouraging message was inspiring to receive. Soon thereafter, I met Peter in person at the Industrial and Marketing Purchasing conference in Milano in 2006. The editor of a journal as influential and important as *Industrial Marketing Management* might be expected to have been distant to young academics or surround himself solely with other top scholars. Nothing could be further from the truth. He immediately engaged with me and introduced me to his wife Sheryl. Over the next few years, we interacted via e-mail, discussing manuscripts and reviews but also exchanging personal notes and photos—Peter sharing updates about his grandchildren Andrés, Dylan, Hailey, and Rafael, while I offered details about my daughters Elizabeth and Victoria. In 2009, something changed in my relationship with Peter: Together with my colleagues Michael Beverland and Francis Farrelly, I started working on guest editing my first special issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* (Lindgreen, Beverland, & Farrelly,

2010). During the process, Peter guided us diligently and knowledgeably, ensuring that we could deliver, on time, a special issue that offered strong, pertinent contributions to academic theory and managerial practice. Peter's encouraging support even led me to develop three more special issues for the journal. And then came the next big step in our relationship: In 2015, I become co-editor-in-chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*, and for the next two years, I worked very closely with Peter. Our regular telephone conversations and e-mails covered the challenging transition of the journal, from an offline to an online submission system (the old EES system), that required us both to find our ways. The system was not always (at least in our view) logical. But it also was imperative during this period for Peter to pass on as much information as he could about the journal's history, vision, mission, and procedures, because he knew that at some point, he would step down. Trust me when I say that Peter had a lot to pass on! As Tony Di Benedetto and I highlight later, the very fact that Peter's replacements required two co-editors-in-chief is indicative of his dedication; his workload was more than enough to keep two editors busy. Without any doubt, I can say that Peter's help, encouragement, and mentoring has been utterly significant to me.

This tribute to Peter consists of three sections: (1) past, present, and future business-to-business marketing research; (2) *Industrial Marketing Management* topics, past, present, and future; and (3) personal tributes to Peter LaPlaca. In all, this tribute features 18 articles and statements. Please note that this is a very special issue of *Industrial Marketing Management*—a tribute to Peter LaPlaca. The procedure we followed for assembling this issue differed a little from normal procedure. The editors considered who would be good authors to invite to contribute a tribute article, and even asked Peter for his ideas on influential researchers in business-to-business marketing. Most of the articles you will see in this tribute issue were invited

especially for that purpose by the editors, and went through a “friendly” edit (that is, the editors made comments and suggestions on the invited manuscripts, but the normal, rigorous review process was not used).

2. PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING RESEARCH

2.1. The development of *Industrial Marketing Management*

The first section of this tribute to Peter LaPlaca features six articles that combine different perspectives to describe the development and impact of Peter LaPlaca and his work with the industrial and marketing purchasing research community. These contributions from (former) editors of various journals—this journal’s current two co-editors-in-chief, Wesley Johnston (*Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*), J. David Lichtenthal (*Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*), and Arch G. Woodside (*Journal of Business Research*)—offer unique insights into his impact and importance to the field.

The two co–editors-in-chief take the privilege of starting this issue with “20 Years of IMM: Past, Present, and Future,” in tribute to Peter LaPlaca’s hard work over more than two decades of editorship of *Industrial Marketing Management*, since 1994. By tracing the development and maturity of the business-to-business marketing field, we offer insights into the influence Peter has had in shaping the discipline through his expert guidance. Before the inaugural issue of *Industrial Marketing Management* in September 1971, no single journal was dedicated specifically to academic research in business-to-business marketing. In these early days, when the academic discipline was new and becoming established, basic research questions, approaches, and analytical techniques were the norm. Then as researchers began to find solutions to simple research questions, the scope broadened, more researchers entered the discipline, and

simple measures of basic constructs (e.g., single-item measure of new product success) were replaced by better, more complex measurements (e.g., success measured relative to expectations, to competition, to company history). The simple conceptual models gave way to truer representations of reality, and increased data availability demanded better analytical tools. Along with these hallmarks, another signal of a mature discipline is the emergence of meta-analyses, revealing that the field has attracted so much academic interest that it merits an overarching study that summarizes what is known so far. We explore each of these criteria in more detail in our article.

In the next article, “Patterns of Knowledge Outflow from *Industrial Marketing Management* to Major Marketing and Specialized Journals (1999-2013): A Citation Analysis,” Anthony Di Benedetto, Shikhar Sarin, Mustapha Belkhouja, and Christophe Haon analyze the patterns of citations of articles from *Industrial Marketing Management* by top marketing journals. The authors conduct a longitudinal review of article citations by top-tier and second-tier marketing journals as well as specialized B2B marketing journals, between 1999 and 2013. The authors discover that citations in second-tier and specialized journals are significant factors driving *Industrial Marketing Management*’s increasing impact factor during the time period under study. Of the top-tier journals, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* has the most consistent citation patterns for *Industrial Marketing Management*. To gain additional insights, the authors conduct post-hoc analysis that extended the scope of analysis to examine trends among non-marketing journals. They find that the impact of *Industrial Marketing Management* has been steadily increasing in related fields such as innovation and product development, and operations and supply chain management, as evidenced by citations in publications such as *Journal of Product Innovation Management* and *Journal of Operations Management*. The time

period included in the study overlaps closely with the tenure of Peter LaPlaca as editor, and the results serve as a kind of external validation of the increased impact of *Industrial Marketing Management* during this time.

Kristian Moller and Aino Halinen suggest that knowledge about the thematic development of the business-to-business marketing research is expansive, whereas much less is known about how major research contributions emerge and spread—that is, how academic value gets constructed by human and institutional actors in combination. To address this gap, in “IMP Thinking and IMM: Co-creating Value for Business Marketing,” they examine the relationship of *Industrial Marketing Management* with the industrial marketing and purchasing research community, according to a framework of the creation of business-to-business marketing theory from the early 1990s to today. This relationship, led by Peter LaPlaca over the past 23 years, provides a living laboratory for studying academic value creation. Using documents and citation data over an approximately 30-year period, they detail how different parties created new academic knowledge and value, through their intensive collaborations. The forms of this coordination between *Industrial Marketing Management* and the research community also suggest an outlook for the future.

In their effort to explicate “Unit Pricing and Its Implications for B2B Marketing Research,” Wesley Johnston and Roberto Mora Cortez start with an early investigation of the use of unit pricing to facilitate consumer decision making: Monroe and LaPlaca (1972). This article and subsequent research ultimately confirmed the benefits of this “new” pricing phenomenon, but whether they are sustainable in business-to-business settings has remained somewhat unclear. These authors therefore propose combining unit and value-based pricing, in a new approach termed “unit value-based pricing.” Unlike classical unit pricing, it shifts the perspective from

cost to customer perceived value. Unit value-based pricing thus may help suppliers capture a fair share of the value created and make purchasing procedures by industrial customers more robust and efficient. Along with a review of the impact of Monroe and LaPlaca's (1972) article, this contribution offers nine propositions for further research and sheds some light on the proposed benefits of unit value-based pricing with a case study.

The fourth article examines journal differentiation in industrial or business marketing, to clarify the complexity of the proliferation of journals and associated titles. In "Organizational Marketing at the Cross Roads: Journal Positioning Meta-Issues and a Tribute to Peter J. LaPlaca, Second Editor-in-Chief of *Industrial Marketing Management*," J. David Lichtenthal, Nektarios Tzempelikos, and Thomas Tellefsen take the perspective of an individual scholar, considering the mix of journals and scholarship, and rely on both quantitative and qualitative analyses to evaluate article outlets and their effects on institutional and industry constraints over the past 45 years. These authors offer some pertinent criteria for sorting out the meta-dilemma, which also highlight Peter LaPlaca's influence on business-to-business marketing and *Industrial Marketing Management*. The findings reveal that the quantity of options can both constrain and enable the acumen of individual scholars and their students, with notable implications for education and its management. These criteria should guide practitioners' decision making about title uses, diplomas sought, and sensemaking in work settings, as well as the direction for the field's future.

Finally, Arch G. Woodside promises to "Have Your Cake and Eat It Too: Achieving Scientific Legitimacy." He notes that Peter LaPlaca, alone and with colleagues, has contributed more than 100 articles that have advanced industrial marketing management—a remarkable scholarly legacy that reflects various milestones in the pursuit of scientific contributions and informing scholars about what the field needs to achieve scientific legitimacy. Specifically, it

must engage in a true paradigm shift, to advance discovery beyond from sheer descriptive analysis to the development of explanatory schemata and theoretical frameworks that support accurate predictions of business-to-business phenomena. This article identifies research advances in theory and analytics that have contributed successfully to the primary need that LaPlaca and colleagues identify. For example, the explosion in case-based predictive model-building in the first decades of the twenty-first century represents a response to the goal of making accurate predictions about business-to-business phenomena. Few scholars became truly renowned through their scholarly contributions; Peter LaPlaca is one such, because his mapping of paradigm shifts has brought the field closer to an overarching objective of scientific legitimacy.

2.2. *Industrial Marketing Management* topics: Past, present, and future

The second section of this tribute features eight articles that review the dominant topics in previous *Industrial Marketing Management* volumes and propose some future research agendas.

To start, Eric M. Olson, Stanley F. Slater, G. Thomas M. Hult, and Kai M. Olson, in “The Application of Human Resource Management Policies within the Marketing Organization: The Impact on Business and Marketing Strategy Implementation,” note that substantial research has described the characteristics of the marketing organization (e.g., structure, culture, processes, influence, leadership) and its relationship with strategy. Yet less attention centers on human resource management policies for marketing personnel, even though such policies can effectively motivate appropriate behaviors. The application of human resource policies varies significantly in practice for mid-level marketing managers (i.e., selection, training, appraisal, and compensation), depending on the firm’s business strategies (i.e., Prospectors, Analyzers, Low Cost Defenders, and Differentiated Defenders) and, within each business strategy type, the type of marketing strategy they adopt (i.e., Aggressive Marketers, Mass Marketers, Marketing

Minimizers, Value Marketers). If their business and marketing strategies align, overall firm performance scores are significantly better than those whose business and marketing strategies do not align.

Thomas Ritter and Jens Geersbro, in “Multidexterity in Customer Relationship Management: Managerial Implications and a Research Agenda,” suggest framing the managerial challenge of customer relationship management in terms of multidexterity, that is, the simultaneous management of (potentially) competing agendas. Building on arguments in the literature about ambidexterity, the authors explore the existence of multidexterity in customer relationship management, as well as the managerial implications of multidexterity. A research agenda for deriving additional insights about customer relationship management is presented in the article.

Because creating and communicating customer value is the basis for business-to-business marketing, in their article “Conceptualizing and Communicating Value in Business Markets: From Value-in-Exchange to Value-in-Use” Andreas Eggert, Wolfgang Ulaga, Pennie Frow, and Adrian Payne offer a conceptual review of the value construct and ways to communicate customer value propositions, tracing its roots to early economic literature that distinguishes value-in-exchange from value-in-use. Accordingly, these authors argue that value literature has evolved, from a focus on resource exchange and value-in-exchange to an emphasis on resource integration and value-in-use. With this lens, they identify several stages in the conceptualization of customer value and articulation of customer value propositions; they consider understanding how value is created in customers’ idiosyncratic use situations increasingly important in modern, competitive marketplaces.

Taking an industrial marketing perspective instead, Thomas Johnsen uses a systematic review of *Industrial Marketing Management* articles to demonstrate the large and growing number of purchasing and supply management articles published therein, as well as how many of them rely on an industrial and marketing purchasing interaction approach as their theoretical foundation. With “Purchasing and Supply Management in an Industrial Marketing Perspective,” he discusses themes that arise in purchasing and supply management research and proposes three avenues for continued research by industrial marketing scholars: (1) theory about the concept of supply networks, (2) revisiting the management of supply networks, and (3) debating established best practices in purchasing and supply management. More research also should be dedicated to developing further theory on supply networks and how to manage them, considering the surprising lack of conceptual clarity about the meaning and management of supply networks. Greater supply network complexity and risks, especially associated with sustainability issues, requires new thinking about how to influence and manage them.

According to Torsten Ringberg, Markus Reihlen, and Pernille Rydén, modern managers also face pressures from both within and outside the organization to innovate in their processes, products, and services. Faced with these challenges, they tend to adopt either a technology-driven or managerial mindset perspective. Thus, in “The Technology–Mindset Interactions Leading to Incremental, Radical, or Revolutionary Innovations,” these authors provide an overview of the roles of technology and mindsets, which are fundamentally co-constitutive but still able to be separated analytically. The resulting meta-theoretical framework consists of four possible technology–mindset outcomes—incremental innovation, radical technological/mindset innovation, and revolutionary innovation—associated with different innovative transformation paths in business-to-business organizations. Case examples and conceptual frameworks reveal

the core issues that managers face when choosing among the transformative paths, as well as an agenda for further research in the field of radical innovation.

Next, in “Internationalizing through Networks from Emerging to Developed Markets with a Case Study from Ghana to the U.S.A.,” Irene Kujala and Jan-Åke Törnroos scrutinize the internationalization processes of small- and medium-sized enterprises, from an emerging African market to the affluent U.S. consumer goods textile market. They adopt a network and effectuation approach, and to detail the internationalization process as it unfolds over time and in context, they rely on a qualitative, dynamic, event-based methodology. With a case study, this article also highlights the relevance of the conceptual framework in practice. The combined network and effectuation approaches add to literature pertaining to small- and medium-sized enterprise internationalization from emerging to affluent markets, as well as offering a critical evaluation, key conclusions, and implications for further research.

Noting that case study research is central to *Industrial Marketing Management's* identity, Michael B. Beverland offers “Peter LaPlaca: A Case Study.” He draws on Hirsch and Levin’s (1999) description of the lifecycle of theoretical domains to identify how sustained editorial support for theoretical exploration, through case study research, enabled the development of rich theory and ensured the innovative character of the field over time. The shift from descriptive cases to theory building ensured a balance, between the identification of new constructs and the development of a shared understanding of key industrial marketing constructs, thus driving subsequent testing and legitimation. The commitment by Peter LaPlaca, at a time when support for case-driven work was waning, prompted theoretical innovations that ensured the journal’s subsequent influence on the wider field of marketing theory, as particularly evinced in the shift to the service-dominant logic of marketing.

In a longitudinal analysis of the Chilean salmon industry, Christian Felzensztein, Eli Gimmon, and Kenneth R. Deans suggest, “Coopetition in regional clusters: Keep Calm and Expect the Unexpected Changes.” The ten-year study, detailing changes over time in the interfirm cooperation in an export-oriented regional cluster, reveals that as the cluster matured, the firm’s members tended toward more individual behavior, rather than strategic interfirm cooperation, though they did engage in more basic cost-reducing strategies. In an extension of industry clusters literature, this article provides insights into cooperative and competitive changes that take place over time.

2.3. Personal tributes to Peter LaPlaca

Finally, the third section of this issue features three personal tributes to Peter LaPlaca: Michael Kleinaltenkamp’s “Peter LaPlaca: The Best Marketer of Industrial and B2B Marketing Research”; Joonas Keränen’s “Inspiring Future Generations of Industrial Marketing Scholars”; Gert Human’s “Tribute to a ‘Good Fella’”; and Margherita Pagani’s “‘Chance Favors the Connected Mind’: Tribute to a World-class Editor.” They all testify to the wide regard in which Peter is held, not only as a leader in the development of a rich, insightful, and important body of business-to-business marketing literature, but also and throughout his career as an academic of the highest integrity, always willing to help others—especially young and aspiring academics.

3. THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING AS A RESEARCH DISCIPLINE

As the invited reviews, research articles, and personal statements reveal, issues surrounding business-to-business marketing constitute a rich area of inquiry for both academics and practitioners. In particular, these articles testify to the enormous influence that Peter LaPlaca has had on the development of business-to-business marketing as a scientific field, as well as in

nurturing, developing, and positioning *Industrial Marketing Management* as the world's top specialized journal in this field. It takes a knowledgeable, dedicated, and special academic to achieve all of this. Not surprisingly, in these pages, Peter is characterized as “the best marketer of industrial and B2B marketing research in the world,” a “good fella,” “an excellent journal editor,” “an astute marketing academic,” and “a leader.” Thus it has been deeply satisfying to organize this tribute to Peter, as a sign of the research field's awe of and gratitude toward him for his dedication over the past many years.

The reviews, research findings, and personal statements in this special, informative issue also illustrate the myriad of ways organizations design and implement their business-to-business marketing initiatives; in effect, they build a solid business case for business-to-business marketing. This special issue therefore offers key insights into the conditions for implementing successful business-to-business marketing. We hope sincerely that it leads to continued, ongoing, and additional research on topics in the field that have remained under-researched thus far.

We warmly thank all of the authors who submitted their manuscripts to this special issue of *Industrial Marketing Management*. We appreciate and are grateful for the authors' desire to share their knowledge and experience with the journal's readers—and for having their views put forward for possible challenge by their peers. We are confident that the articles in this special issue contribute to a greater, more detailed understanding of business-to-business marketing. As well, we hope the selected articles generate the kind of continued dialogue that is necessary to further understanding in this important area.

Finally, finally: Thank you, Peter, for all that you have done. We shall be looking forward to meeting you at future conferences, workshops, and PhD defenses. And thank you

Sheryl, for allowing Peter to undertake all of this. Without you, that surely would not have been possible.

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