

ISBM Research QUARTERLY

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SMEAL College of Business

ISBM
Institute for
the Study of
Business Markets

Volume 2, Issue 3 & 4

Summer / Fall 2009

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In This Issue . . .



Gary L. Lilien



Raj Grewal

If you are a regular reader of this Newsletter, we are sure you will enjoy this issue.

We are delighted to have welcomed Liam Fahey and Barton Weitz as the newest ISBM Fellows at our August Members Meeting. (For the complete list of Fellows, see: <http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/library/links/fellows.html>) It is an honor they both richly deserve and we are sure you will find

their comments here interesting and provocative.

Speaking of the Members Meeting, it was a great event, one that we are glad we did not miss. Ralph Oliva provides meeting highlights (and some associated research issues in his "From the Membership" column.

The remainder of the newsletter is devoted to some exciting announcements. We are delighted that the ISBM PhD Seminar Series (IPSS) will offer two courses in Spring 2010: Channel Management (offered by George John and Mark Bergen and Innovation Strategy offered by Gerry Tellis).

Abbie Griffin continues tirelessly in her role as ISBM PhD Camp Director and announces the 2010 Camp, to be held at the Harvard Business School (HBS) on Wednesday, August 11. That camp will partially overlap with our biennial ISBM Academic Conference, also held at HBS on 11 and 12 August, just prior to the AMA Summer Educator's Conference. Das Narayandas will join us (Gary and Raj) as conference co-chairs. Articles later in the newsletter give details on how to apply or where to send abstracts or session proposals.

The newsletter closes with other announcements and events that we hope will interest you.

Enjoy!

Gary L. Lilien
Research Director
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of Business Markets

Raj Grewal
Associate Research Director
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of Business Markets

Fahey and Weitz Inducted as Newest ISBM Fellows

At the Gala Dinner of our annual members' meeting on August 19 (see Ralph Oliva's synopsis elsewhere in this newsletter) the ISBM inducted Liam Fahey and Bart Weitz as the newest ISBM Fellows.

To be recognized as an ISBM Fellow, an individual must be a senior scholar/thought leader in one or more domains of B-to-B marketing who is dedicated to advancing both the theory and the practice of the discipline through their research, their scholarship, their teaching and their hands-on involvement with the practice community.

Both Liam and Bart exemplify what it means to be an ISBM Fellow; their contributions to theory and practice have been and continue to be enormous.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find remarks from both Liam and Bart; for more about the ISBM Fellows, see the full list at <http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/library/links/fellows.html>

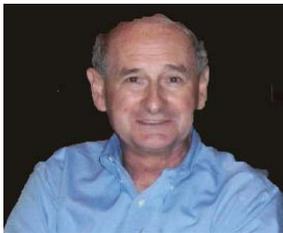
Please join me in congratulating Liam and Bart!

Gary L. Lilien
Research Director
Institute for the Study
of Business Markets



(Left to Right) Gary Lilien, Liam Fahey, Bart Weitz, and Ralph Oliva

Marketing Without Intelligence...



Liam Fahey

Marketing without intelligence is like a pilot flying in deep dense clouds without instruments. It's called flying blind—and aptly so. Yet my work in many B2B businesses over the last 20 years tells me without question that more often than not serious intelligence work is rarely a visible and vibrant hallmark of marketing—to put it nicely. So we must ask: Why is this so?

Let me offer what I think is the explanation. It involves a few related elements. First, firms have a very muddled conception of what intelligence is and is not. The language used in discussing intelligence betrays most dramatically the confused thinking. They talk about collecting intelligence. We can only collect data. Out of the data we create intelligence. Intelligence necessitates intervention of a human mind. For example, data on a competitor's current marketplace strategy—its products, how it competes, what it is trying to achieve—only becomes intelligence when we integrate the data to describe what the competitor's strategy actually is, to specify its core value proposition, to explain why the strategy is succeeding or failing against rivals. If we think we collect intelligence, we don't organize our efforts to create what should be intelligence.

Firms often evidence some mysterious beliefs about data and its collection. A cross between James Bond and John Wayne exemplifies many firms' view of the data collection side of

intelligence: you need to engage in activities that cross legal and ethical bounds and you must do so with a tenacity that borders on bravado—otherwise you can't get the competitor and other types of data you need to do good analysis. This is simply not true. Many firms develop profoundly insightful projections of competitors' likely strategic moves, of customers' migration patterns, of a technology's possible evolutionary path—all with data legally and ethically obtained and using quite commonplace analysis frameworks. In fact, for competitors you have confronted for a number of years, I would say that 80 percent plus of the data required for most competitor intelligence projects already exists within your organization. But it exists within people's heads. Intelligence work is required to capture that data, organize it and extract valuable insights from it.

Intelligence efforts critically fail to deliver on their promise when information gets confused with insight. Analysis of competitors and customers and the broad market space in general typically results in a large PowerPoint deck. And, of course, the slides are immaculately manicured; beautifully laid out, and exhibit the attention to symmetry in design and style that can only be the product of hours and hours of dedicated attention! What a waste of professional talent and time. The next time you see such a deck, ask a very simple but powerfully revealing question: What insights are conveyed in this presentation?

Insights must be viewed as the crucial output of intelligence work. Intelligence Insights represent not just (new) understanding of the competitive context but also its implications for the business. Both elements are critical if we want intelligence to be something

continued on page 3

Marketing Without Intelligence... *continued*

more than just a proliferate generator of organized data and nicely tabulated charts and beautifully illustrated diagrams (did I say PowerPoint show?). Here are some examples of intelligence insights straight from some B2B cases:

- A major competitor is rapidly moving toward genuinely customized solutions (largely as a consequence of a new service alliance partner); some of our customers will quickly migrate to this competitor if we do not quickly move to build new value for these customers
- Recent entrants are concentrating on developing niche solutions and customers are responding by working with these rivals to develop the next solution generation; if this trend exploded, our relatively standardized solution would rapidly lose market share
- The larger OEMs will have to change their business model: their traditional value delivery capability is increasingly not valued by the users of products in this large market segment; we may need to bypass OEMs entirely if they seek a greater share of end customers' dollar.

Intelligence insights (and not just insights about the context) make a different to marketing decision makers. They can see what the intelligence might mean for specific decisions. They ask more pointed questions. They can quickly glean what the analysis may mean for their working assumptions. They can move the dialogue faster to issues that are important.

The emphasis upon intelligence insights alerts us to one other misconception about intelligence that merits attention. Frequently I hear marketing managers and others demand

that the intelligence professionals (such as market researchers, competitor and industry analysts) provide the "facts". The assertion is that we are into "fact-based decision making" around here. The implication, of course, is that the intelligence professional should not use his/her judgment, should not draw inferences, should not creatively think about what might be the future implications of a data trend or pattern or even a major discontinuity or disruption (such as the emergence of a new technology or a major shift in governmental policy). How ludicrous! What are the facts about the future? Not many. What if intelligence does not address the future? Intelligence insights would be severely circumscribed; the value of intelligence to marketing decision makers would be trivial. Thus, intelligence focuses upon the future—that is where marketing decisions play out. Without intelligence feeding in alternative futures, marketing decision makers cannot but be blind. And, the penalties for blindness are evident for all to see.

For academics, the link between intelligence and marketing is one that cries out for systemic research attention. Hypotheses that lead to investigating how and why different types of insights influence decision makers' view of the world (e.g. the assumptions they hold) and, in turn, influence how and why decisions get made (or don't get made) could help us understand the role and importance of intelligence as a marketing activity.

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Salespeople as Relationship Managers



Bart Weitz

I am honored to join the distinguished group of scholars who are ISBM fellows. This recognition is particularly significant to me because of the great respect that I have for the quality of the activities undertaken by ISBM. ISBM is internationally recognized for its leadership role in stimulating and supporting research on critical B-to-B issues. Its educational programs for practitioners and Ph.D. students improve both the conduct of B-to-B marketing and academic research. I am pleased to have been involved in some of these ISBM programs and look forward to assisting ISBM in its future endeavors. I will take this opportunity to provide my perspective on the evolving

role of salespeople.

Changes in the market environment, such as customers concentrating on a reduced number of key suppliers, globalization, and product commoditization, are changing the role of B-to-B salespeople. Increasingly, firms are focusing their efforts on developing long-term, partnering relationships with their best and most promising customers rather than broadening their customer base with more transactional relationships. Salespeople are playing a key role in the formation and management of these long-term, partnering relationships. Their role is evolving from influencer and problem-solvers to relationship manager and value creator.

As the primary link between the buying and selling firms, salespeople

have considerable influence on the customer's perceptions of the seller's performance and the value of the seller's services and consequently the customer's interest in continuing and expanding the relationship. Customers often have greater loyalty to salespeople than they have to the firms employing the salespeople. However, the responsibilities of key account salespeople goes beyond coordinating the activities of salespeople calling on a customer with multiple locations and developing and maintaining personal relationships with these key customers.

These key account relationship managers are becoming mini-marketing managers, developing the 4P's of a marketing program directed toward the customer. In addition to communicating the benefits offered by their firm's offering (Promotion), salespeople are

Salespeople as Relationship Managers *continued*

intimately involved in Pricing, Product, and distribution decisions (Place). For example, in response to increased product commoditization, firms are using services to differentiate their product offerings. Salespeople serve a key role both in identifying customized service opportunities and coordinating the delivery of these services. Offerings with a significant service component require greater coordination within the selling firm to meet customer needs thus requiring salespeople in this relationship management role to work closely with internal support staff.

While there is considerable research on the characteristics of effective salespeople in traditional sales roles and approaches for managing traditional salespeople (selecting, training, evaluating, motivating, and rewarding), research on issues related to salespeople in a relationship management role is limited. In the next sections, I'll discuss some of the challenges in identifying good candidates for these relationship manager positions and salespeople in this role.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities of Effective Relationship Managers

Many of the skills and abilities needed to be an effective relationship manager differ from those needed by traditional salespeople and are antithetical to the stereotypical view of salespeople as "lone wolves." Effective relationship managers need to complement their traditional knowledge base with an interest in developing relationships both with customers and support employees in their firms. In addition, they must develop and employ creative problem solving, conflict management, trust building, and team leadership skills.

Salespeople as relationship managers must have a sophisticated knowledge of the customer's strategic needs and the capabilities their firm brings to the potential relationship. Thus, ideal candidates for relationship manager positions might be effective salespeople who have worked in various functional areas of their firms. However, while traditional salespeople might have good customer knowledge, other employees in the selling firm, such as product

managers, may have superior industry and company knowledge and thus also be good candidates for relationship manager positions.

Some of the skills required for the partnering role are similar to the attributes of entrepreneurs; others are similar to those of effective brand managers. Relationship managers, such as brand managers, often must gain the support of their firms' employees without having the authority to direct employees' activities.

Managing Relationship Managers

A recent conversation I had with a salesperson (let's call her Betsy) working for a Fortune 50 firm illustrates the challenges in motivating, evaluating, and compensation relationship managers. Betsy is responsible for managing her firm's relationship with a major account that purchases the firm's systems and support services – systems and services that she initially sold to the customer and continues to sell upgrades. She is middle aged and works for a younger, high potential manager. Betsy has developed close partnering relationships with the key decision makers in the customer's organization – relationships that are so strong that the decision makers wonder why their partner works for a younger, relatively naive manager.

The first issue is: how should her firm evaluate her performance? Traditional salespeople are typically evaluated on some short-term performance measure such as sales to quota.

A second issue is: how should her firm reward her successes with this key customer? Promotions are often used to reward and motivate salespeople. Two problems arise in using promotions as an incentive in firms with salespeople in a partnering role. First, the traits and actions that lead to make traditional salespeople successful differ from those of successful relationship managers. Thus, salespeople who perform well in the traditional roles might not be effective when they are promoted to relationship management positions. Second, the relationship manager plays an important role in developing the customer's trust and commitment. Therefore, it is important for the seller to maintain continuity between

the relationship manager and the buying company. Firms need to develop ways of recognizing and rewarding effective relationship managers without promoting them to larger accounts or higher level sales management positions. We need to avoid the Peter Principle here. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Principle

In light of this relationship-oriented objective, many firms with salespeople in partnering roles are complementing the traditional output measures of sales effectiveness such as sales to quota with measures of customer satisfaction and even using these satisfaction measures as part of the incentive compensation. However, some scholars question the usefulness of satisfaction as a measure of relationship quality¹. Some of the distinct but related constructs that researchers have considered in their conceptualization of relationship quality are trust, commitment, ethical conduct, customer orientation, willingness to invest, expectations of continuity, share of customer, and growth in customer value.

In conclusion, as the role of salespeople evolves into relationship managers, firms need to consider the criteria used to select these relationship managers and the approaches used to evaluate and reward their performance. This changing role provides opportunities and challenges for academics and practitioners alike.

¹ Gale, Bradley. 1997. "Satisfaction Is Not Enough." *Marketing News*, October 27, p.18

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“From the Membership” B-to-B Marketing: Tough Tactics for Fast Payback in Today’s Markets...



Ralph Oliva

At the ISBM summer meeting, August 19-20 here at Penn State, we were focused on bringing our Member audience practical, actionable insights that would enable them to better “weather the storm” of the economy we’ve been navigating through the fourth quarter of 2008 and on through the first half of 2009.

And, I must say, our speakers didn’t disappoint.

Our speakers reached into their trove of ideas, insights, and toolkits, and provided us some very interesting food for thought and action. The presenters and summary charts from their presentations can be found on the ISBM website at www.isbm.org

Rather than try to summarize speaker by speaker, I tried to think through some of the key themes that seems to be part of all of their presentations. The boiled down take away that I was able to synthesize from the presentations might act to inform business-to-business research as we move onto the end of this year -- and the launch of a new decade.

From my view, the “Toughest Tactic for Fastest Payback” may be customer segmentation.

Although not called out specifically by name, segmentation to allow understanding of customer “value connection” to supplier firms was part of many presentations. Working with customers you know very well is very important as price pressure through today’s markets continues. As market conditions change rapidly, clarity on how, where, and when a firm might sell “naked offerings” - or more expanded solutions - is critical. Additional and ongoing focus on tools and outcomes of better segmentation in B-to-B markets is a perennial area for further research -- especially in down markets.

Tough Strategies for Today’s Markets?

A downturn may be time to fundamentally change the rules of the game.

Steve Ligouri from GE pointed to the fact that when a downturn hits, GE historically has explored opportunities to explore fundamental new opportunities. Over the past few downturns they’ve created solution platforms enabling whole new sorts of business when the upturn comes. GE is deployed around health care, water, energy, and other “mega market trends.” It’s clear that as they work to get today’s numbers, they really have their eyes on market leadership in 2012. Although the literature has insights on the merits of investing in marketing during a downturn -- additional insights on the investment in long-term R&D during a downturn might provide the impetus for a more balanced mixed of investment in long-payout projects during a downturn.

“Sharpening the Saw”

Leading-edge firms think this is a time to continue to investment in giving professionals navigating this market the sharpest possible tools. GE, Granger, Kimberly-Clark Professional -- as well as other Member firms -- are maintaining (or stepping up) their

focus on training. This might be an interesting area to research -- is there a correlation between training investment in a downturn, and how rapidly firms emerge on the other side? An interesting set of hypotheses come to mind here.

REAL Voice of the Customer...

Another recurrent theme: If a firm would develop one competency above all others to provide competitive advantage in a down market, it would be developing a “gold standard” competency -- better than any competitor -- in “Voice of the Customer”.

In almost every presentation -- practitioner or researcher -- this surfaced as an essential theme.

And, of course -- Abbie Griffin focused on this. To do VOC well it’s time to get beyond more “sloppy and convenient” approaches to VOC -- on to the more disciplined approaches Abbie was advocating in getting:

- Customer words,
- Clearly stated,
- Concisely focused, and
- Contextually specific

Voice of the Customer done the right way involves educating a broad base of professionals inside a firm on how to use a suite of tools together, rather than individual tools applied haphazardly or one at a time. Better tools and approaches for the discernment of the opportunities to add real long-term value to customers are needed, along with some evidence of how the implementation of better methods impact the short and long term success of a firm.

The Importance of B-to-B Relationships...

Member firms presenting -- as well as researchers -- stressed that deep customer relationships that enabled you to adjust solutions on the fly were especially valuable through the downturn. This was made especially clear in Don Scheibenreif’s presentation from Grainger -- a firm constantly walking the price/commodity “tightrope.” He provided insights from Grainger’s approach to continuing a solutions approach in the face of pressure to pick off their products based on price:

- Firm leadership commitment to stay the course,
- Constantly asking your customers the right questions to stay in touch with their changing needs,
- Investing in platforms that enable flexible and rapidly-assembled solutions, and
- Patiently and consistently educating customers on how you might create more value for them.

There still appears to be plenty of opportunity for research insight on the nature of business-to-business relationships, and how to navigate them through dynamic markets. When do you really want a deep relationship -- and when is a more transactional relationship appropriate? Are there ways to smoothly transition between the two? And is the ability to navigate between these sort of relationships tied in a fundamental way to increased

“From the Membership” B-to-B Marketing: Tough Tactics for Fast Payback in Today’s Markets... *continued*

business success -- especially in a downturn? Interesting questions for further research?

The Price is Right...

All of the presentations at the Members meeting had nuggets of insight, but Dr. Tom Nagle from The Strategic Pricing Group “hit the bells” many times. He zeroed in on common pricing mistakes that often ensue when markets turn down -- including:

- Cutting price premiums that reflect real differentiation -- negating what might be called your “secret sauce” and moving it toward commodity.
- Sweetening the deal with free services you normally charge for -- lowering their value in the future.
- Providing large discounts to “piggy” customers who demand them, while exploiting the patience of your best customers who might continue to work with you without discounts -- for a short time.

Tom suggested better strategies that can defend share and drive incremental sales without undermining long-term value. Things such as:

- Creating less featured offerings enabling customers to “trade down”,
- Adding free incentives which can be scaled back or taken away later,
- Offering “fenced” discounts in price-sensitive markets you may not have formerly served, and
- Enabling your customers -- and importantly your sales force -- to create trade-offs on price for long-term loyalty.

It’s long been a part of ISBM’s research agenda to continue to produce insights on how to better quantify, communicate and capture value. The quest continues.

The Quest for the Right Metrics...

Business marketers find that today’s markets provide additional pressure to be more accountable, and to move towards implementing stronger metrics in their B-to-B Marketing practice. Dr. Roger Best offered everyone at our Meeting a free copy of his “Marketing Metrics Handbook.” This is a powerful, powerful tool enabling better understanding and selection of marketing metrics. The handbook is actually an active, flexible dashboarding tool that lives in a very clever computer environment -- downloaded to your windows PC. The tool enables marketers to sort through metrics to better understand them -- and select those that will enable better decisions, rather than those that might just be convenient or easy to gather.

The interesting question facing many practitioners is -- just what metrics are most important -- most telling -- most indicative of the impact of marketing. Another area for research?

Relationships and tough markets...

Ed O’Boyle at Gallup spoke to the importance of building

relationships that enable you to move from “price” to “advice” -- to create real impact for your customers. In describing what “impact” means he cited:

- Do you know your customer’s business better than the competition?
- Are you bringing them new ideas -- not just new offerings, and then...
- Are you making it work for them? -- Are you offering innovations that enable your customers to take new approaches to their markets -- and provide them insights enabling them to be successful?

In summary, our ISBM summer meeting for 2009 was more tactically focused than most, but did deliver the goods in providing a spectrum of insights, new ideas, and tools to enable firms to better navigate the difficult markets through the fourth quarter of 2009 -- perhaps in to 2010. Researchers are invited to build on these insights --and continue advancing this cause.

Most ISBM Member firms feel that they are “feeling the shape of the bottom” right now, and through market noise, the upturn is already underway. It may be quite a few months before a clear upturn becomes visible.

“Tough Tactics for Fast Payback In Today’s Markets” will probably be the path taken by many ISBM Member firms over the next few months. But speakers at our recent ISBM Members Meeting left us with this common overall theme:

- Don’t mortgage the future to make it through today,
- Do implement tough tactics to get today’s numbers, but...
- Also invest and implement strategies that will enable you to ride the upturn ahead of competition.

The overall theme for research might be to investigate the real business impact of maintaining a balanced focus, balanced investment, and deploying a suite of tools which focuses on long-term as well as short-term impact as downturns hit.

Leading-edge firms in our ISBM Membership are focused on riding this upturn better than their competitors. Several members mentioned “a downturn is a terrible thing to waste.” They’re taking actions now to set the stage for a greater level of success as things turn up. We invite the ISBM research community to consider this -- and how we might focus our research to help firms optimize for today, while delivering the capabilities they need to succeed as the decade turns.

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IPSS Update: ISBM Ph.D. Seminar Series Spring 2010 Offerings



Mark Bergen



George John

Spring 2010 will be the eighth semester of IPSS and we will be offering two courses: Mark Bergen and George John (University of Minnesota) will teach *Channel Management*. This course is designed to provide a foundation for doctoral students interested in examining channels issues (designing and/or managing channels). It will identify, review and critique a variety of theoretical topics in the channels field.

Gerry Tellis (University of Southern California) will teach *Innovation Strategy*. Innovation—the use of new technology to create new business models, products, and services—is a powerful force in world economies that is responsible for the steady improvement in consumers' standard of living throughout history. This seminar will give students an appreciation

of the issues, competing viewpoints, research methods, major findings, and unresolved problems in the area of innovation strategy.

(Note: both of these courses were taught in 2008 and were extremely popular and successful)

Please bring these two seminars to your promising BtoB Ph.D. students. Student should register online at <http://ipss.isbm.org>. Additionally if there is any other feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Gerard Tellis

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Ph.D. Student Camp for Research in B-to-B Markets to be held August 2010

We are pleased to announce that the next Ph.D. Student Camp for Research in Business-to-Business Markets will be held in Boston, MA at the Harvard Business School on Wednesday, August 11, just prior American Marketing Association's Summer Educator Conference. Students are encouraged to attend the ISBM Business-to-Business Markets Academic Conference that begins on the afternoon of August 11 and continues through August 12, which also will also be held at Harvard Business School.

The camp is designed for students who have completed at least one year of doctoral work and have interest in or are thinking of pursuing work in BtoB marketing and management. There are no geographic or field restrictions; we anticipate that students studying in fields including marketing, strategy, management, R&D management, information systems, and business logistics/supply chain management will find the Camp attractive and beneficial.

The purpose of this event is to enable students to interact with prominent faculty members and young, promising scholars, get acquainted with research paradigms and topics in business-to-business strategy, marketing, and management, understand how to develop and publish quality business research articles in top academic journals and give students opportunities to have their research ideas and projects constructively critiqued.

The camp is jointly sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Business Markets (ISBM) at Penn State and Harvard Business School. There is a small fee to attend and breakfast and lunch will be provided. Attendees and their schools will be responsible for travel and lodging costs.

We will be accepting applications for the camp beginning April 1, 2010. Look for further announcements on elmar and the ISBM website (<http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/researcher/academic-conferences-and-events>) in early 2010.



Abbie Griffin

If you have any additional questions, please contact Abbie Griffin at abbie.griffin@business.utah.edu. We hope students and faculty from all over the globe will attend this event.

Abbie Griffin
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Other Announcements:

2010 CBIM Annual Academic Workshop

The 16th CBIM (Center for Business and Industrial Marketing) Academic Workshop focusing on "Marketing Value Creation: Process, Service, Brands and Relationships", scheduled for January 15-18, 2010. Each year the CBIM Workshop is a candid and friendly discussion among academics, professionals and doctoral students from around the world. In 2009, research and insights from more than 12 countries were presented providing a dynamic discussion of current B2B marketing. We welcome you to join us in 2010.

For further details, please email CBIM Workshop Director, Tom Brashear, brashear@mktg.umass.edu

Special Issue Call for Paper from the *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*

India, considered to be an emerging market, is also a prominent BRIC country (Brazil, Russia, India and China), and fast becoming an important hub of the global economy.

The promise of the India-focused special issue of JBIM New B2B marketing practices should engender new B2B marketing theories, which, while originating from Indian practice and context, are expected to have wider applicability and relevance. Most B2B Marketing literature presents theories and models that are grounded in B2B marketing practices in developed countries, which are characterized by mature markets. Very little research has been carried out on the issues and challenges facing B2B marketers in different sectors in India. Many of these sectors are growing rapidly, taking up important positions in the global context as well.

This India-focused special issue of JBIM seeks to highlight intriguing practices and resulting theory relating to B2B Marketing and Sales in some of the key industries in India.

For further details, submission guidelines, and deadlines, visit <http://info.emeraldinsight.com/authors/writing/calls.htm?id=1536>

Harvard to Host 2010 ISBM B-to-B Academic Conference, August 11-12th

Mark your calendars! We are pleased to announce that the Harvard Business School will be hosting the 2010 ISBM BtoB Academic Conference, scheduled to begin at noon on 11 August 2010 and continue through the end of the day on 12 August. That time is just prior to the AMA Summer Educator's Conference which will be held in Boston beginning on 13 August. Raj Grewal and Gary Lilien from the ISBM and Das Narayandas from the Harvard Business School will be acting as conference co-chairs.

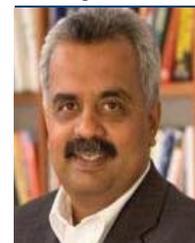
Some features of the conference:

1. **Overlap with the 2010 BtoB PhD Camp.** Elsewhere in this issue, please see the announcement of the 2010 ISBM BtoB PhD Camp—which will be held on 11 August, also at the Harvard Business School. The half day overlap means that we will be mixing with PhD students at least during the early part of the conference and that many of the PhD students will stay around for the Academic Conference as well.
2. **Senior BtoB Marketing Executive Plenary.** Das Narayandas will organize and chair a Plenary session with 3-4 Senior BtoB Marketing Executives who will identify key issues that they face in their practice and what those issues mean for business marketing academics.
3. **Invited plus competitive paper sessions.** We are entertaining proposals for special sessions on any relevant BtoB topic immediately. Please send your proposals before November 15 (when a general call for papers will be opened) to Lori Nicolini LNicolini@psu.edu, and include topic, participants and proposed format.

Again, this is an early warning only—a more general call for papers, registration details, hotel options and the like will be posted on November 15. Information will be posted as it becomes available at <http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/researcher/academic-conferences-and-events>. In the meantime, if you have any questions or suggestions for the conference, please feel free to contact any one of us.

We hope to see you there!

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Das Narayandas

COMMENTS... IDEAS...

We would love to hear from you. If you wish to comment on any of the articles (or have thoughts for future articles), please pass them on. Your suggestions will make the newsletter better and more responsive to your needs. Please email your correspondence to:

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