

# ISBM Research

## NEWSLETTER



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### In This Issue . . .



Gary L. Lilien



Hari Sridhar

**A**s summer comes to an end and Fall classes loom, it is a time for change for all of us, ISBM, included.

Our feature this issue is from the ISBM's new Executive Director, Suzanne Lavin, in her first communication to the ISBM academic community in this newsletter. You will be hearing from Suzanne regularly in upcoming issues as she discusses her plans and vision for the ISBM moving forward.

Talking about change, in the next article, Lilien comments on the changes that have occurred at the ISBM in recent months involving Suzanne, Ralph Oliva, Raj Grewal and the ISBM's new Associate Research Director (and co-editor of this Newsletter) Hari Sridhar.

Suzanne has a second piece in this newsletter concerning our upcoming ISBM Member's Meeting, September 15 and 16, 2015 at the Penn State University Park Campus. She discusses the theme and the contents of the meeting: "Big Talk: The Innovative Marketer" The meeting will be an outstanding combination of talks by leading academics (including talks from the most recent ISBM Fellows George Day and Mohan Sawhney), and case studies from ISBM Members. As an encouragement for academics to attend, the ISBM offers a discount registration price to academic participants. Please visit <http://bigtalk.isbm.org/> for more information and to register. It will be well worth your time to attend!

Hari (who has taken over from Raj as IPSS director) reminds us of the Fall ISBM PhD Seminar Series (IPSS) offerings—please bring this information to the attention of your PhD students. He also discusses ongoing efforts to identify new course offerings.

And finally, the ISBM meeting start date, September 15, corresponds with the due date for entries in the 25th ISBM dissertation support competition. Please bring that information to the attention of your PhD students as well.

We wish you all a wonderful rest of your summer and hope to see many of you in State College next month!

Gary and Hari

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As always, we hope you find this issue a valuable resource to connect with the ISBM community (practitioners, faculty, and students) around the world. If you would like to suggest or contribute items, please let either of us know. This issue and past issues or our newsletter can be found at <http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/research/newsletter>

# Survey Finds A Strong, Loyal Membership That's Hungry for Change



Suzanne Lavin

**H**ello ISBM academic community. I am delighted to meet you and be part of the ISBM.

I am now entering my fourth month as Executive Director. I joined the ISBM straight out of industry, where I was the VP of Marketing for UL (formerly Underwriter's Laboratories), a billion dollar safety organization. While my move to academia has been a bit of a cultural shift for me, it's been a fantastic experience and I've enjoyed meeting so many smart and friendly people.

My priority has been to spend as much time as possible with our academics and members to best understand the value the ISBM offers. Through these conversations it has become abundantly clear that there is nothing like the ISBM. We are the only organization wholly committed to advancing the practice of B2B marketing, and the only organization backed by world-class academic insights and research. I've learned that our collective insights have delivered real and sustainable value to many impressive brands in the B2B space. For example, one of our members acquired a pricing tip during an ISBM member's meeting that ultimately delivered an easy, incremental \$1M+ of revenue.

It is absolutely vital that we continue to add value to our membership base, as they fund our research efforts. That's why we decided to conduct a brief, five-minute survey of our membership. We asked a series of questions designed to learn more about what's working and where we could do a better job. We sent the survey to 370 individuals who have leveraged the ISBM within the last three years. We received a 20% response rate and some invaluable insights. Not only will these insights shape the future of ISBM, but they will also be useful in continuing to make connections between academia and the practice. Here's a snapshot of what we learned:

## **Finding 1: Digital Communication Is the Way to Go**

ISBM members prefer digital communication. 92% of survey respondents said email is the most convenient method for receiving news and updates, with conferences and websites a distant second. Very few members see value in searching social media or brochures/pamphlets for information. They want the content to come to them in an easy, useable format. We also saw that 10% of the respondents took the survey on their smart phone, indicating that our membership is within the industry average of smart phone usage.

A preference for digital communication is no surprise, given the increasing interconnectivity of our world. But it still has some major implications for how we engage members and how we share research and insights. Going forward, we will make research, articles and insights available in digitally friendly sound bites or via downloadable links. We are also in discussion with a few academics to create team-based online learning workshops in lieu of in-person training where it makes sense from a content perspective. And we are exploring ways to create on-line learning modules to supplement and reinforce the in-person workshop delivery and create a blended learning experience. As we pursue digital communications, we welcome any and all insights, posts and digital content our academics wish to make available to practice.

## **Finding 2: More Tools, Templates and Methodologies**

Members are asking for more models, frameworks and concepts that they can use in their every day jobs. When asked if there is one thing we can do better, a survey respondent said, "Build on practitioner sharing. More tools, frameworks, methodologies to help marketing practitioners execute effectively." I don't think this desire for more frameworks is unique to the ISBM community. I recently went to a B2B conference and every time a speaker projected a methodology, the iPhones were up in the air to take a photo of the slide.

In fact, during my short tenure with ISBM, I have sat in on more than two-dozen calls with practitioners. I estimate that more than 50% of those calls included a request for a model or a framework on topics including branding, digital platforms and segmentation. I've often heard from a number of members who have used an ISBM-endorsed model or framework that has delivered significant bottom-line growth. The implications are clear. When producing new content, or summarizing research, it is best to create descriptive frameworks that are practical and implementable.

## **Finding 3: Content, Networking and Curriculum Reign**

We asked members what ISBM services they are aware of and which they value. More than 80% of respondents are aware of our B2B marketing and sales courses, content and annual networking meetings. Only 58% are aware of the advice and counsel available from academics, and even fewer know about our recently launched Customer Analytics Program (which is new, so that's to be expected). This tells us that there is enormous opportunity to revisit with members the full portfolio of offerings so they can maximize benefits of membership.

## Survey Finds A Strong, Loyal Membership That's Hungry for Change (cont)

The most valued offerings by far are: papers, articles and books on relevant topics, two annual networking meetings and the B2B marketing and sales courses. As a result, we will be working with our academics to identify, curate and disseminate new data and information. Although members are less aware of the advice and counsel available from academics, those that have used the service find it enormously valuable. If you are interested in being on the “on-call” list for practitioners, please let us know.

### Finding 4: Our Intimate and Non-Commercial Environment is Key

Our intimate and non-commercial environment is a key differentiator and possibly Ralph Oliva's greatest legacy. At every ISBM meeting, Ralph has required attendees to meet a “three-friend minimum.” This means attendees have to make at least three new friends who are willing to take calls at any time, even on a Friday night. Ralph's philosophy has really worked, as many of the members know one another personally and can call on each other at any time for support, advice and input.

Members also value the non-commercial feel of the ISBM. Unlike many other like-minded organizations, we don't allow for the selling of goods and services at our meetings. We will often connect members with key vendors and suppliers, but that's always done upon their request. I think this is why academic insights are so valued by members. Marketers view academics as objective and committed to helping solve problems, versus seeking to gain revenue.

It is clear that our non-commercial feel is a key differentiator and one that must be continued.

### Finding 5: Most Members Highly Value and Recommend ISBM

An astounding 71% of respondents recommend ISBM, and more than half say ISBM offers high value to their organizations. This is a bit of a conundrum for us, as high referral rates typically equate to perceptions of high value. Yet, in our case, 45% of respondents rate the ISBM as offering medium-to-low value.

### What It All Means

- Digitize our efforts and engagement: Whenever possible, we will eliminate paper communications and move to digital. This means providing books, papers and other content via links and downloads.
- Shore-up the value of membership: We will continue to communicate all the ISBM services, and encourage our members to utilize them. We will be running more strategic planning sessions with Members to understand their biggest challenges for the year and how we can help. Many of these strategy sessions result in requests from members to connect with academia for advice and consultation.
- Build an online community: In order to facilitate networking and the sharing of information, we will be creating a members-only online community. In this community, both members and academics can easily share and obtain content and ideas. This community will be a great platform for academics to share new insights or pulse industry for input.

The ISBM is a special organization that offers enormous, unique value to practitioners. Members who derive the most value from ISBM understand our offerings, and connect with our academics and fellow practitioners to problem solve. We will continue to create stronger connections between academia and practice, finding ways to enhance the engagement opportunities resulting in profitable growth for our members and research ideas and opportunities for B2B academics.

I look forward to continuing the conversation next month. In the interim, please reach out with suggestions or ideas. I look forward to partnering with you to grow the ISBM!

**Suzanne J. Lavin**  
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- Rebrand ISBM: Get ready for a new ISBM brand—one that's more progressive and modern, yet effectively conveys our unique balance of academia and industry. We have begun to share potential new brand positioning with key stakeholders and hope to launch the new brand in September.

# ISBM in Transition

The ISBM was founded in 1983, 32 years ago. Its founders were Irv Gross, founding Executive Director, the late Dave Wilson, founding Managing Director and me, founding Research Director. Irv retired in 1996, when Ralph Oliva took over as Executive Director. Dave retired a bit over a decade ago, and his duties were added to those of the Executive Director. The growth of the ISBM research portfolio (and my laziness) lead to our adding the position of Associate Research Director, which Raj Grewal assumed in 2005.

The above represents remarkably little change in leadership for over three decades of activity. Until now.

As I noted in the last issue of the newsletter, Suzanne Lavin took over for Ralph in April, as ISBM's third Executive Director. She has hit the ground running and you will be hearing a great deal from her in the weeks and months ahead, including two articles in this newsletter. She promises to bring about numerous changes to the ISBM, many with the goal of tighter connections between the B2B academic and practitioner communities. I am excited to be able to observe those changes firsthand.



I did not say that Ralph Oliva had retired, rather that he stepped down as Executive Director. What Ralph views as retirement would be a full time job for almost anyone else. In any case, Ralph will continue to be intimately involved with the ISBM, but as Executive Director Emeritus and Associate Director.



After a decade of distinguished and creative work as Associate Research Director, Raj Grewal has decided to step down. He left Penn State last year to take a position at the University of North Carolina and felt that it was most appropriate if he were to vacate the Associate Research Director role, given his new location. After a lot of my arm twisting, he agreed to stay on for a year. That year is now up and he has just stepped down as Associate Research Director as well as as director of the IPSS (ISBM PhD Seminar Series) program. However, he has agreed to retain his role as director of the ISBM research program in B2B Buying<sup>1</sup>.



That brings me to the last announcement. I am delighted to report that Hari Sridhar, just promoted to Associate Professor at Penn State, has agreed to take on the Associate Research Director position as well as IPSS director. He will also retain his position as director of the ISBM CAP (B2B Customer Analytics) research program. Congratulations and thanks in advance to Hari! (The reader might wonder what role Lilien plays besides delegator-in-chief).



I hope readers will reach out to Ralph, Suzanne, Raj and Hari, joining me in thanking them for all they have done and will continue to do for the B2B profession!

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

<sup>1</sup> Note: For those interested in B2B Buying, the following article has just been published. Contact Raj or Gary for a copy if you do not have easy access to CNS for a copy.

Grewal, Rajdeep, Gary L. Lilien, Sundar Bharadwaj, Pranav Jindal, Ujwal Kayande, Robert F. Lusch, Murali Mantrala, Robert W. Palmatier, Aric Rindfleisch, Lisa K. Scheer, Robert Spekman, and Shrihari Sridhar (2015), "Business-to-Business (B2B) Buying: Challenges and Opportunities" *Journal of Customer Needs and Solutions*, #2 pp 192-208

From the Membership:

## **New Markets. New Marketing. New Marketer. Join Us at the Fall ISBM Members' Meeting**

**T**hese are exciting and turbulent times for businesses, as markets become increasingly globalized, customers become ever more demanding and cost cutting has become a way of life. Companies must continuously innovate and find better ways to deliver sustainable value in the race to stay fresh, relevant, and profitable.

I believe B2B marketers are uniquely positioned to lead this innovation charge. Not only do marketers have extensive product knowledge and the ear of the customer, but we also understand the power behind a value proposition that sings. Being this new kind of marketer—one that embraces the spirit of disruption and invention—requires stretching your mind, looking at problems from unpredictable angles and having the courage to make a few carefully placed bets.

In our fall member's meeting, held at Penn State on September 15th and 16th, we'll tackle the topic of disruptive innovation. We've got a cadre of powerful academics and practitioners lined-up to share their stories, advice and experiences driving innovation.

### **The Speaker Line-Up**

Mohan Sawhney, world-renowned scholar, teacher and consultant in innovation from Kellogg, will kick-off the meeting. He'll share powerful ideas from his new book, *Fewer, Bigger, Bolder: From Mindless Expansion to Focused Growth* and why the world is calling for new markets, new marketing and new marketers.

Then we'll hear from Christi Pedra, Senior Vice President, Marketing & Customer Solutions at Cardinal Health. For Christi, innovation goes well beyond technology and embraces risk taking, diversity of thinking and taking ownership. We will have both Mohan and Christi take center stage to debate the intersection of academic theory and marketing practice; they will then take hard-hitting questions from the audience about the application of academic research.

Next up we'll hear from Wharton's George Day on Innovation Prowess. George will talk about what separates growth laggards from growth leaders such as IBM, Nike, LEGO and American Express. He'll touch on the importance of leadership and talent, and he'll also invite attendees to complete a survey to see how they stack-up in innovation prowess.

We will then introduce a series of presentations from heavyweight companies such as Corning, Nalco, Veeco and Briggs & Stratton. They'll share insights on how they

structured their teams to drive innovation, and launched brave programs that captured unexpected market share. We'll close the meeting on day two by pairing the VP of Marketing, North America from Stratasys, an additive manufacturing company, with Aric Rindfleisch of the Illinois MakerLab. Together they'll leave you with a deep understanding of how 3D printing is transforming B2B markets and how it can benefit your company.

In the spirit of innovation and experimentation, this year's meeting will have a new and improved format. Be prepared to hear intimate leadership interviews, engage in brainstorms, watch thought provoking videos, and learn how to 3D print. You don't want to miss it!

### **A Long History of Compelling Events**

Did you know that we've been running B2B events for 30 years and have stacked-up an incredible group of world-class speakers, including: Phil Kotler, Bob Cooper, Charlie Peters, the Senior Executive Vice President at Emerson and Neil Rackham, the world's leading authority on consultative selling? Over time these experts have shared road-tested insights that helped improve the B2B marketing practice. We hope you can join us at the fall meeting and keep that legacy going.

If you have ideas on how we might be more effective in building stronger linkages between your work, and the work of our practitioner Members, please connect with me any time at [suzanne.lavin@psu.edu](mailto:suzanne.lavin@psu.edu), or call (814) 863-2782.

*Note: Academics with a focus on B2B are encouraged to attend ISBM Members meetings at a special academic rate, as noted on the meeting registration page (<http://bigtalk.isbm.org/>). If you encounter funding issues with your academic institution, please contact me as noted above.*

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# 2015 Doctoral Awards Competition

## Call for Submissions

Penn State's *Institute for the Study of Business Markets* announces its twenty-fifth annual Business Marketing Doctoral Support Award Competition.

Up to three candidates in accredited doctoral programs will receive dissertation support awards. Dissertations in any area of business-to-business (industrial) marketing or in any of the methodological areas that support advances in business marketing will be considered. See "[Research Priorities](#)" under the ISBM Research section of the ISBM website for more information: Particular consideration will be given to proposals that address the areas of (1) *Marketing's Role in B2B Innovation* (2) *B2B Buying Behavior* and (3) *B2B Customer Analytics*.

In addition to applications from PhD students in marketing, we encourage applications from students in economics, management science, organizational psychology, statistics, anthropology and other disciplines whose developments help advance our understanding of the operation of the business marketplace.

### The award consists of:

- Up to \$7,500 in financial assistance to be used for travel, conference attendance, data collection, and other expenses of conducting and presenting the results of the research.
- Assistance, as needed, in gaining the cooperation of both [ISBM member firms](#) and non-member firms for data, interviews, etc.

The outstanding submission, if awarded, will receive the ISBM Dissertation Proposal Prize, an additional award of \$2,500.

### Submission Information:

PhD candidates interested in the competition should submit an abstract of their research *not to exceed five double-spaced pages*, along with a current vita and a vita of their dissertation advisor. The abstract should address the potential importance of their work to business marketing practice, its theoretical contributions, the research methodology, and the amount and kind of support requested. The abstract must be submitted by email no later than **September 15, 2015**. An email will be sent confirming receipt of your abstract. See special note on instructions for [Electronic Submissions](#).

Proposals will be judged by an academic panel, consisting of representatives of the ISBM and qualified faculty members from other universities. The panel will not provide feedback to the entrants at this stage. Finalists will be notified by **October 10, 2015**.

Final proposals *not to exceed 15 double-spaced pages* are due on **November 15, 2015**. Winners will be announced by **February 15, 2016**. All finalists will receive feedback from the academic review panel.

Any pages of the abstract and/or proposal (not including reference pages) exceeding the page limits will not be considered in the review process. Request samples of abstracts or proposals by sending an email to [LNicolini@psu.edu](mailto:LNicolini@psu.edu).

Academics interested in requesting research funding other than the competition should see [research proposal funding](#) for information.

*Instructions on submission requirements as well as more information about the ISBM and the competition may be found on the ISBM website [www.isbm.org](http://www.isbm.org) under the ISBM Research, Research Funding.*

## IPSS Update

I want to join the students in thanking both Mike Ahearne, and Hans Baumgartner for teaching this past Spring for the ISBM PhD Seminar Series (IPSS). Both Mike's seminar on *Personal Selling & Sales Management* and Hans' seminar on *Structural Equation Modeling* were extremely well received and well attended.

IPSS will offer two courses this Fall semester...Abbie Griffin will teach the course *Qualitative Research Methods* and Kersi Antia will teach the course *Distribution Channel Relationships*. Thank you to Abbie and Kersi for returning to teach their courses; we appreciate your time and support of this program. The details on both courses are available from

<http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/research/ipss>. Please bring these Ph.D. seminars to the attention of your promising B-to-B Ph.D. students. Students should register online at [http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/research/ipss/app\\_ipss.pdf](http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/research/ipss/app_ipss.pdf).

Finally, we are working on a survey to prospective students and instructors, with the aim of developing new courses and timeline for the IPSS program. If you have not received a survey and would like to give us your input, please email Lori Nicolini [LNicolini@psu.edu](mailto:LNicolini@psu.edu).

Additionally if you have any other feedback or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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## Upcoming Events

2015		
Sept. 15 - 16	ISBM Members' Meeting	Penn State University State College, PA
Sept 23 - 24	Winning at Product Innovation	Pittsburgh, PA
Oct 1 -2	Profitable Pricing Management	Chicago, IL
Nov 3 - 4	Fundamentals of B2B Marketing:	Chicago, IL
Dec 8 - 9	Competitor Analysis and Market Intelligence	Pittsburgh, PA
Sept - Dec	IPSS Qualitative Research Methods	Online
Sept - Dec	IPSS Distribution Channel Relationships	Online
2016		
*Jan - May	IPSS Relationship Marketing	Online
*Jan - May	IPSS Metrics & Statistical Models in B2B CRM	Online
*Aug 2016	ISBM PhD Camp	Emory University Atlanta, GA
*Aug 2016	ISBM Biennial Academic Conference	Emory University Atlanta, GA

\* Look for an announcement in our next newsletter

### 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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