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Editor-in-Chief's Introduction

Summer issue intro: new ideas on survey question point of view, competitive strategies, leadership education, and non-profit certification

William P. Ferris

Editor-in-Chief

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Beginning with the Spring issue of 2012, readers of *OMJ* will be migrated to a new publisher's platform. Palgrave Macmillan will no longer be our publisher. Rest assured that all subscriptions and archival issues will be present on the new platform and that our new publisher will take just as good care of all individual and institutional subscribers or site licensees. Your passwords may change but your access will not. Furthermore, we expect that generally the same databases will support us as have done so with Palgrave. We expect to name our new publisher by the time of the next issue. If you have any questions about any of this, please e-mail me at bferris@wne.edu. Please also notice that our *wne* domain for my address and our submissions address, now omj@wne.edu, have both lost their "c" because our host academic institution has become Western New England University (WNE) following unanimous approval of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. In sum, we have some institutional changes coming our way that should not affect *OMJ* substantively, but that will require our attention. In the meantime, let me get to the important matter of the articles in our summer issue.

This issue's initial article comes from the Current Empirical Research section. In "Interpreting Organizational Survey Results: A Critical Application of the Self-Serving Bias," by Hausdorf, Risavy, and Stanley, the authors contend that, in the employee surveys often brought by management or management-engaged consultants, an important bias can lurk in the formatting of the questions. If questions are focused on the respondent's behavior, answers may tend to be more positive than if they are focused on employees in general. For example, responses to a question like "In my job, I strive to do my best." can be expected to be more positive than "My work group is committed to doing quality work." Consequently, managers, usually the ones using the surveys to make organizational or managerial changes and improvements, can get a distorted view of what needs to be done based on the underlying self-serving bias of questions focused on the respondents' self-perception of behavior or desire to manage impressions. It is far too easy for respondents to knowingly or unknowingly engage in self-glorification or impression management strategies

when survey questions hit close to home. This article is well worth reading, as I think all *OMJ* readers are interested in how difficult it is to rely on empirical evidence to guide our understanding of human behavior in organizations, or in general, for that matter.

In the Emerging Conceptual Scholarship section, we have a stimulating piece entitled "A Multilevel Model of Market Contact: Competence Depletion and Punctuated Forbearance Hypotheses," by Thomas Will, who takes a macroscopic view of firm behavior in the area of multi-market contact (MMC). The question pits the "forbearance hypothesis" – firms will better achieve long-term goals by colluding tacitly in one market on small things or in a smaller market in trade for forbearance on the part of their competitors in other markets – against the "distinctive competencies" or resource-based approach that firms do better in the long term by relying on their own inimitable and unique innovativeness and abilities to achieve long-term goals. In search of a dynamic, multi-level model of MMC will develop a new model with its own framework that is informed by economic and organizational evolution theories. Using the airline industry among other examples, he suggests that mutual forbearance may be necessary at the outset in MMC but that competition is inexorable so that firms must and will exploit their competence advantages. His framework rests on seven propositions in which he integrates parts of the forbearance approach, but in which the competence model plays more of a role by the time short-term performance turns into long-term performance. Implications for managers as well as future research are discussed.

In the Thinking & Learning section, Maxwell and Greenhalgh present "Images of Leadership: A New Exercise to Teach Leadership from a Social Constructivist Approach," in which they describe their approach in teaching leadership in a very large course of undergraduates at The Wharton School over the past decade. On a website set up for their use, their students have collected over 5000 images depicting student-held beliefs of leadership over the years. In groups of 10 at the outset of the course, students select an image representative of their beliefs about leadership and begin a course-long process of tagging the image with keywords that embody their beliefs. As they read theories of leadership in the course, they continue a process of tagging and re-tagging. In this way, students' ideas are given credence (social constructivist theory of

leadership, in which objective accounts of observers normatively become the theory) while students are encouraged to modify their theories throughout the course as they read articles describing extant leadership theories from the literature. The authors point out that their approach does not rely on the existence of a website, but only on the ability of students to select images and share them with their classmates. This is a fascinating approach to teaching leadership that gives student ideas a great deal of respect, and I think readers may be encouraged to try it for themselves.

This issue's article from the Linking Theory & Practice section, "Accreditation and Certification in the Nonprofit Sector: Organizational and Economic Implications," by Slatten, Guidry, and Austin, presents the argument for why non-profit organizations can benefit from the certification and accreditation processes, nationally and internationally. Using institutional and agency theories, they discuss how non-profits from museums to churches to day-care centers to universities to food and health providers can gain credibility as well as more donor resources by subjecting themselves to an accreditation process. This article analogizes from the profit sector's use of ISO standards and presents a cogent and reasoned academic argument, which should be of interest to members and participants involved heavily in non-profit sectors.

Finally, we present two reviews of recently published books in our Reviews & Research of Note section. *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful Web tools for classrooms* (2010) by Will Richardson is reviewed by Keith Hamon. This book describes a number of information technologies that can be used by educators from all levels – from K-12 to university to corporate classrooms. The second book reviewed is a textbook entitled, *Organizational Behavior and Work: A Critical Introduction* (2010) by Fiona M. Wilson and reviewed by Sambhavi Lakshminarayanan. This is a textbook outside the norm of those usually used in that it adopts a critical management studies approach critiquing each of the management theories usually presented in our organizational behavior texts.

Before I close, I would like to mention that we have three recently appointed new co-editors here at the journal. Craig Seal of California State University San Bernardino (California, USA) joins Donncha Kavanagh as a co-editor of Emerging Conceptual Scholarship. Joel Harmon of Fairleigh Dickinson University (New Jersey, USA) replaces



Alvin Hwang as a co-editor of Linking Theory & Practice. And Catherine Giapponi of Fairfield University (Connecticut, USA) joins Steve Meisel as a co-editor of Teaching & Learning. We have also begun looking for a new co-editor of Current Empirical Research (CER) to replace Don Gibson, who has become the Interim Dean of Fairfield University. If you are interested in joining Kristin

Backhaus as a co-editor of CER, please let me know by e-mail. You may also nominate someone for that position.

In the next issue, I will provide our readers with some statistics about the increasing reach of *OMJ* globally. I hope you enjoy this issue in the interim and await further news about our new publication platform.