

EARLY HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION AND THE JOURNAL OF MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of the American Marketing Association is traced from the two decades preceding its formation to the early 1960s. Through its first two decades of publication, the Journal of Marketing reflected the diversity of the AMA membership and the changing interests of its readers.

Many marketing practitioners and academics are too young to recall the early days of the marketing discipline, and most have been involved in the discipline for only a small fraction of its scholarly history. Those without first hand knowledge of the discipline's history might be impelled to ask, "Where did we come from?" The focus of this review, based on early newsletter and journal publications, is on events which led to the formation of the American Marketing Association and on the few decades which followed [1, 2].

FOUNDING OF THE AMA

National Association of Teachers of Marketing and Advertising

The Journal of Marketing, first published in July 1936, was formed by the union of the American Marketing Journal and the National Marketing Review, foreshadowing the merger of the American Marketing Society and the National Association of Marketing Teachers on January 1, 1937 into the American Marketing Association. The developments which led to the formation of the AMA can be traced to a meeting at the 1915 Chicago convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World from which a group of teachers of advertising established the National Association of Teachers of Advertising. Twenty-eight practitioners and teachers of advertising were in attendance at that first meeting. Part of the discussion centered around what constituted advertising and what should be included in the study of advertising. Another meeting was scheduled in St. Louis in 1917, but only three members were in attendance with none of those on the program present. Another meeting was held in 1920, and there has been at least one meeting per year since. Membership in this association grew rapidly in the latter twenties, being approximately 47 in 1920, 70 in 1924, 448 in 1929, and 475 in 1932 (compare with commentary of Agnew 1941; Hobart 1965).

This association of advertising teachers changed its name several times as a reflection of changes in the field of marketing and of changes in the constituencies of this group. The Association's publication, the Bulletin, was published through 1925 as the N.A.A.T. Bulletin, and the Association referred to itself as the National Association of Advertising Teachers. Starting in 1926, the Association began to refer to itself as the National Association of Teachers of Advertising (N.A.T.A.) in the Bulletin. Agnew (1941, p. 376) provides a contemporary comment that the name N.A.T.A. was "fully descriptive of the activities of a large majority of the members. The teaching of marketing had not yet emerged as of great importance."

A group of members of the American Economic Association who were interested in the subject

of teaching marketing joined the N.A.T.A. sometime in 1923, and the name of the Association was changed in order to reflect this union (Agnew 1941). At a meeting in June 1926, a motion was passed to change the name of the association to the National Association of Teachers of Marketing and Advertising (N.A.T.M.A.) (N.A.T.M.A. 1926), although the new name was reflected earlier in this organization's May 1926 Bulletin. According to Hobart (1965), the name was again changed in 1932 to the National Association of Teachers of Marketing (N.A.T.M.). A new name does not appear, however, until the start of the May 1934 issue of the Bulletin and the March 1934 issue of Natma-Graphs, and appears instead as the National Association of Marketing Teachers (N.A.M.T.). According to Agnew (1941, p. 378), these changes in names are indicative of a "change in interest", and that "this name was shortened to National Association of Marketing Teachers . . . not to eliminate advertising as an active part of the Association's interest, but, inasmuch as advertising was one of the fields of marketing, it did not belong in the Association name any more than Salesmanship, Sales Management, Research, or Retailing" (p.378).

The Association seems to have been somewhat of a "melting pot" of various disciplines. Its annual meetings were apparently held initially in conjunction with the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, and apparently were held in conjunction with those American Economic Association for several years (N.A.T.M.A. 1931). The program for the annual meeting in December 1933 includes joint sessions with the American Economic Association, the American Farm Economic Association, the American Marketing Society, and the American Association of University Instructors of Accounting (N.A.T.M.A. 1933).

The Association published the Natma-Graphs "now and then" and the Bulletin. With the November 1932 issue of Natma-Graphs (N.A.T.M.A. 1932a), members received a questionnaire asking if these two publications should be combined into another bound periodical "similar to those now issued by other learned societies", and the adoption of a formal journal in place of these publications was to be considered at the 1932 annual meeting (N.A.T.M.A. 1932b). These two publications were replaced in the Spring of 1935 by a new publication, the National Marketing Review (Agnew 1941; Haring 1938a; N.A.M.T. 1935).

American Marketing Society

Another organization, the American Marketing Society, was founded in the Fall of 1931, growing to approximately 250 active members by 1935 (A.M.S. 1935). This organization first began publication of the American Marketing Journal in January 1934. In the second issue, Paul Nystrom, president of the American Marketing Society, expressed the need for "an association for the advancement of science in marketing." He also expressed a need to find ways of lowering the costs of marketing, a concern for criticisms against marketing, and an interest in finding "useful tools and devices in marketing practice." (p. 107).

By the fourth issue, the stated purpose of the A.M.S. was "to develop sound thinking on current problems of distribution . . . promote the interchange of experiences and ideas among members . . . encourage research . . . make important contributions to economic understanding and welfare . . . weaken the force of ignorant or demagogic attacks on marketing methods" (p. 224). It was proposed that the Society "(1) synthesizes views and practices drawn from many separated fields and (2) supplies a common meeting-ground for all who are working to make marketing more efficient and more useful to the entire community" (p. 224).

American Marketing Association

The N.A.T.M.A. and the A.M.S. appear to have been quite cordial toward each other. The 1932 annual meeting of the N.A.T.M.A. was held in Cincinnati on December 28-30, "only a few miles" from Dayton,

where the A.M.S. meeting was being held on December 27, which "makes it possible to attend both of these interesting meetings on the same trip" (N.A.T.M.A. 1932b). From the A.M.S. in regard to their meeting of that year, "A cordial invitation is also extended to members of the N.A.T.M.A. whether they are members of A.M.S. or not" (N.A.T.M.A. 1932c). The two had discussed the joint publication of a journal (N.A.T.M.A. 1933).

The N.A.T.M. began to classify its members in 1924 according to :

-Active members: teachers or others devoting their time to research.

-Sustaining members: those interested in advancing the study of advertising by paying \$10 membership dues.

-Associate members: those employed in business who were given a special invitation to join due to the high quality of their work.

The fourth issue of the American Marketing Journal (A.M.S. 1934), described the members as including (emphasis added):

-administrative officers of business enterprises in a great variety of lines - retailing, wholesaling, manufacturing, banking, transportation, and so on;

-sales, advertising, and merchandising executives;

-professional or semiprofessional practitioners - particularly marketing or sales counselors, principals engaged in marketing research, teachers, writers, editors, heads or other executives of business or government departments or bureaus, and others who are primarily concerned with developing or applying scientific methods in marketing."

Hobart (1965) indicates that A.M.S. members were interested primarily in marketing research, while the N.A.M.T. organization was made up primarily of marketing teachers.

There was a large overlap in the subscription lists of the journals published by the A.M.S. and the N.A.M.T., and the two organizations decided to merge. The vote for this merger was an overwhelming 427 to 27, and the merger into the American Marketing Association became effective on January 1, 1937 (Agnew and Coutant 1936). The first two issues of the Journal of Marketing (JM) were published jointly by the two organizations, starting in July 1936. AMA president Frank Coutant (1938, p. 270) reported that, "It may now be said that merging the National Association of Teachers and the American Marketing Society has proved successful. . . We have laid the ghost that there are irreconcilable differences in the viewpoints of teachers and the practitioners of marketing science."

The new American Marketing Association began its existence in 1937 with a combined membership of 584. By 1938, it had a membership of 624, and the JM had an additional 136 non-member subscribers (Haring 1938b). By 1939, membership had grown to 695 members and to 773 members by 1940 with an additional 200 non-member subscribers to the JM (Haring 1940).

THE JOURNAL OF MARKETING: 1936 - 1964

Since its inception in 1936, significant changes have occurred in the content of articles in the Journal of Marketing. At least two writers have tracked these changes (Grether 1976; Applebaum 1952). Trends in the content of JM [3] seem to reflect the diversity of AMA membership and the changing

interests of that membership. While no classification of subject or content is ideal, the discussion below will rely on Grether's (1976) twelve category scheme [4] as well as his proportion of total content calculations (Table 1).

Interest in marketing research was to dominate the American Marketing Journal and the JM from the very beginning. The second issue of the American Marketing Journal (the earliest available to the authors) includes three articles concerning marketing research out of eleven total articles, entitled "Marketing Research Technique," "Marketing Research in the Academic Field," and "New Marketing Research of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce."

TABLE 1
SUBJECT MATTER AREAS REPRESENTED IN THE JOURNAL OF MARKETING
BETWEEN 1936 AND 1967 (stated as a percent of total content)

	1936 - 39	1940 - 43	1944 - 47	1948 - 51	1952 - 55	1956 - 59	1960 - 63	1964 - 67
HISTORICAL	2.8	2.0	3.0	1.3	0.8	1.4	1.1	0.0
INDUSTRY STUDIES	6.5	6.1	12.0	3.8	3.9	5.0	1.1	3.8
MARKETING EDUCATION	13.7	4.7	5.3	8.3	3.9	3.6	2.7	3.3
SOCIETAL ROLE	2.9	2.7	1.5	0.6	0.0	1.4	2.2	2.2
INTERNATION AL MARKETING	2.2	5.4	3.8	7.0	3.9	7.1	13.7	12.6
MARKETING INSTITUTIONS	4.4	2.7	6.0	5.7	9.3	14.3	8.2	8.2
ROLE OF GOVERNMENT	23.4	12.2	12.0	13.4	10.1	2.9	8.2	6.0
CONSUMER ROLE AND BEHAVIOR	6.5	7.4	11.3	10.2	6.2	11.4	4.4	7.7
MARKETING MANAGEMENT	7.2	10.1	10.5	8.3	7.8	12.1	17.6	14.3
MARKETING MIX VARIABLES	14.4	14.2	21.8	22.9	20.9	20.7	21.4	32.4
MARKETING RESEARCH	19.7	18.2	28.6	46.5	49.6	32.1	37.9	20.3

SOURCE: Grether, E.T. 1976. The First Forty Years. Journal of Marketing 40 (July): 63-69.

Articles centering on marketing research dominated the JM from the very beginning. According to Applebaum (1947), about 34% of the articles in the first ten volumes of the JM are classified as marketing research in the April 1946 index. While Grether's tabulations result in somewhat different percentages, the early interest in the topic is obvious. Interest in marketing research was so great, that a department titled "Research in Marketing" appeared in the JM starting with the very first issue. Wholesaling, teaching, theory, and government regulation were also popular topics during the first decade of JM's publication.

After 1945, the JM's editorial content placed a greater emphasis on managerial activities, research techniques, and marketing theory. The growth of marketing research as a topic area for JM articles continued throughout the 1940s and 1950s, finally reaching a peak of 49.6% of total content in the mid-1950s. This increased interest in research techniques, survey design, and analysis techniques eventually led to the creation of a second AMA journal, the Journal of Marketing Research, in 1964. However, articles about market research in the early 1950s were more frequently related to qualitative issues, such as research methodology, rather than quantitative or analytical ones. During this same period of time, there was also a steady increase in the number of articles focusing on management issues, reaching the ultimate proportion of total content of 17.6% by the early 1960s. Applebaum (1952) has noted that wholesaling was a topic of considerable interest immediately following World War II. This is in marked contrast to the JM's first decade in which wholesaling was only of moderate interest to the JM's readers.

The JM of the 1950s reflected the issues related to an expanding post-war economy and burgeoning markets both in this country and abroad. It is not surprising to find that the proportion of JM content devoted to marketing theory, marketing institutions, and international marketing increased to peaks of 14.3%, 12.1%, and 13.7%, respectively, towards the middle and end of the decade. Bartels (1988) has referred to this period as the Period of Reconception, during which time the "management approach" was integrated into all areas of marketing thought and the theoretical aspects of marketing was of growing interest. This perception of the period is obvious in the trends found in the JM during this same period. Even JM's indices demonstrate this trend, as they change in 1953 (Volume 17) to reflect the functional and managerial aspects of marketing, including such headings as "Sales Management" and "Retailing" for the first time.

The time period of 1945-1955 saw JM place a steadily decreasing interest on the societal role of marketing, the governmental impact on marketing, and industry studies, each reaching lows of 0-3% by the end of the 1950s (Table 1). The change in interest with respect to the effect of government on marketing is most startling. The pre-war JM devoted as much as 23.4% of its total content to this topic, but the post-war JM never devoted more than 13.4% in any three year period examined by Grether (1976). The growing interest in research methodology and techniques continued throughout the late 1950s and into the 1960s. There was also evidence of the increasing importance of the social and behavioral sciences as sources of theories, research methodologies, and research directions.

During the 1960s, the JM's interest in marketing mix variables, consumer behavior, and societal aspects of marketing began to grow. The specific subjects of interest related to the marketing mix variables varied from advertising to sales management to product management over the course of the decade. The increased recognition of the interaction between marketing process and the external environment appears to be reflected by the increased discussion of the societal role of marketing. This topic area constituted nearly 10% of the JM's total content by the late 1960s. There was also growth in the area of consumer behavior, possibly reflecting the increased "borrowing" of techniques and theories from the behavioral sciences. The general trend in the JM during this period reflects, in part, a broadening of editorial effort to attract a broader readership and to appeal to the business membership of the AMA.

As the first paid editor of the JM (1958-1967), Stuart Henderson Britt's goal to appeal to the

dominant business membership of the AMA can be seen in the JM's continued interest in marketing management and management related issues. The JM contained a fairly consistent level of articles related to international marketing, the government, marketing institutions, and industry studies. It is under Britt's editorship that the proportion of articles concerning marketing education, history, and marketing theory decreased. After the publication of the Journal of Marketing Research, the research orientation of the JM declined markedly, constituting less than 21% of the JM's content by the end of the 1960s.

The Journal of Marketing Research was introduced to allow the JM to better meet the "informational needs of the growing segment of membership engaged in marketing management or administration" by providing another outlet for articles in the field of marketing research (Davidson 1964, p. 9). The emerging field of marketing research was clearly defined in a broad sense in this introduction to the first issue as "the application of problem-solving methods and techniques to the solution of marketing problems. . . Essentially, the focus of JMR is on methodology and on the philosophical, conceptual, and technical problems in research in marketing" (p. 9).

Sheth and Gardner (1982) describe the changes that occurred in the discipline of marketing as the broadening of the marketing concept from one of economic exchange to one of exchange of value and the recognition that the "initiator of marketing activities and programs" (p. 212) was not necessarily the marketer. This broadening of the marketing concept parallels the expansion of articles in the JM focusing on social responsibility. Bartels (1988) has described the period as the Period of Differentiation (1960-1970). With the publication of JMR, the AMA appeared to acknowledge its inability to serve its multiple constituencies with only one journal.

Even in its beginnings, the interests of the readership of the JM was diverse (Lockley 1941). A problem associated with such a diversity, however, is apparent from Lockley's readership survey, which identified "a dual audience of theorists and practitioners." Lockley reported that practitioners "want articles that are more practical, more real, and shorter. And they are the ones who have no interest in making The Journal more professional or scientific. . . The academic group appeared to be more interested in the more theoretical aspects of marketing" (p. 515-517).

Although most respondents to the survey seemed to be satisfied with the content of the survey, Lockley felt that the diversity of the survey results indicated that "possibly a wider coverage of fields and materials by The Journal is suggested here" (p. 516).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The marketing discipline has adapted over the years to changes in the marketing environment, to the changing needs of consumers, to the changing needs of marketing practitioners, and to the changing needs of marketing academicians. The discipline has been forced to respond to the changing demands of the diverse constituencies who study, develop, and use marketing knowledge. The field and study of marketing grew out of other disciplines, and the initial organization which dominated the discipline was a splinter of other organizations. As the field of marketing has itself become a discipline, it has grown in diversity to where it, too, has begun to splinter off new disciplines and specialized organizations.

At least two organizations, the Academy of Marketing Science and the Council of Logistics Management, and two associated journals have emerged from some frustration with the AMA and AMA publications. For example, the Council of Logistics Management (CLM, formerly known as the National Council of Physical Distribution Management) is described by Bowersox (1989, p. 51) as "a splinter organization that grew out of the American Marketing Association" (although LaLonde [personal conversation] recalls that a larger portion of the initial core of this organization was more closely aligned with the American Management Association). The journal which is now under CLM administration, Journal of Business Logistics (JBL), emerged out of a frustration by logistics researchers to find an

outlet for the scholarly dissemination of their work (LaLonde, personal conversation).

While the AMA has struggled to maintain a bridge between practitioners and academicians, the Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) was founded as a professional organization of academicians and as an alternative for academicians to the AMA (Ladner 1989). Although the articles of the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS) appears to be oriented more toward an academic readership, then Editor Darden (1988) indicated that the JAMS audience is both academic and practitioner, and implies that JAMS articles should bridge the gap between the academic community and practitioners.

Although these two recent examples of groups which have splintered away from the AMA might strike some as reflecting a new and dangerous trend in the discipline, the diversity that underlies such a trend has existed in the organization since its inception. Such change appears to be a necessary and positive requirement in an interdisciplinary field such as marketing if the full spectrum of its constituencies is to be adequately and efficiently served.

ENDNOTES

1. Although we presume our synthesis to reflect the majority of interests and trends in the discipline during the period of review, we do recognize that organizations and publications outside of those associated with the AMA did exist. Our presumption is that the American Marketing Association (AMA) and the JM almost wholly dominated the first half-century of efforts to organize the discipline and disseminate the results of scholarly activity, and it can be argued that it still remains the dominant influence on the discipline today, ranking highest in popularity/familiarity (Luke and Doke 1987), perceived quality (Browne and Becker 1985; Fry, Walters, and Scheuermann 1985), and number of citations in other publications (Jobber and Simpson 1988; Michan and Gross 1986).
2. One reviewer noted that our synthesis does not provide details regarding all of the marketing-related organizations that existed prior to the formation of the AMA, nor does it reflect political battles or tensions that may or may not have existed between various constituencies. Our synthesis is based primarily on early publications of the AMA and its direct predecessors, the American Marketing Society and the National Association of Teachers of Marketing. Admittedly, reliance on these newsletters and other published sources is based in large part on availability. Although information or speculation regarding political battles might be interesting, there is little evidence in our published sources (perhaps excepting a comment by Coutant [1938, p. 270]) that documents any serious rivalries within or among the specific organizations that led to the formation of the AMA and the subsequent publication of the Journal of Marketing. Hollander (1986) has compiled a list that includes several organizations that are not part of our discussion; although an exhaustive search for documents associated with these additional organizations might provide fascinating insights regarding tensions among constituencies, the focus of the present synthesis is specifically on trends as documented in the newsletters, etc. of the organizations most directly associated with the formation of the AMA.
3. The concern expressed by Applebaum (1947, p. 357) in his review of the first ten years of the Journal of Marketing is still relevant to our perspective: "[whether the] distribution of articles by subject matter is commensurate with the relative importance of each subject, or whether it reflects the emphasis of interest of the authors or editors of the Journal is a matter deserving further study." In a review of the first forty years of the JM, Grether (1976, p. 64) noted that allowance for some amount of fallibility in reporting and interpreting such material must be made. The present authors also admit to the same fallibility in their assumptions and in their interpretation of events.
4. Grether defined twelve content categories as a means of analyzing JM articles. Those categories are historical, industry studies, marketing education, societal role, international marketing, marketing theory, marketing institutions, role of government, consumer role and behavior, marketing management,

marketing mix variables, and marketing research.

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