

Announcement

IJRM/MSI Special issue on

Evolving Marketing Competition in the 21st Century

Marketing competition is undergoing fundamental changes as markets are becoming increasingly global, the Internet is emerging as a catalyst for change in the competitive interplay between firms, while legislation on competition is falling behind. There is a realization that a better understanding of this evolution is needed.

IJRM/MSI invites people with diverse backgrounds to attend a conference and to submit papers for a special issue. Below we offer an **incomplete** list of issues in the area of competition but are also very much interested in papers tackling new issues.

1. New Competitive Species. The Internet seems to produce several new specimens: The long-tail market structure may fundamentally affect the way companies interact in market places that are affected by the Net. This competitive structure may allow for the heterogeneous preferences of a global set of consumers and may have variable costs close to zero. As a result, cost considerations, a key constraint in current competition, may lose importance. Similarly, the emergence of blogs leads to a new form of competition. For example, blogs (with “posts” and “comments”) amount to powerful new forms of word of mouth. To illustrate, lack of attention to blogs, posts, and comments almost killed the Kryptonite lock company when the management paid no attention to customers’ posts about a flaw of the Kryptonite lock. Obviously, it will be important to investigate how blogs should be managed to a firm’s advantage.

2. Global competition marks a crucial competitive form. Many European firms seem to run out of competitive advantages that rest in their product’s core. Thus, Europeans may be forced to focus to compete on heritage. Chinese firms are often perceived as mainly possessing a cost advantage. India may come out ahead due to her ability to combine heritage due to her European upbringing” yet being “hungry.” One might ask if this leaves American companies a bit “stuck in the middle”.

3. New Competitive Foci. In many markets, products and markets have matured. As a result, competitive foci seemingly move to augmentations including design, heritage, and even humor. Interestingly, competing for and winning on the humor side has proven successful for the German retailer *Media Markt*. That company is neither the cheapest nor the one with the best stores or locations. However, it is viewed as the “funniest” and consumers arrive in hordes. In short, “soft issues” such as humor may amount to an important source for competitive advantages in the future—a stark contrast to advantages like low costs or high quality. This development mirrors MSI’s research priorities as companies are interested in new ways of connecting to their customers.

4. Shifts in the Lead/Lag relation between Marketing and Legislation. What role will country of origin play as recent disasters such as the poisoning of pet food, the fatal contamination of toothpaste, and lead in children’s toys impact consumer preferences? What will legislatures do to protect their consumers and their economic bases in reaction to these and other events such as predatory competitive practices?

5. Shifting Balance of Power in the Supply Chain. Historically, there has been a shift in power from suppliers toward customers. Will this continue to be the case, or will upstream suppliers reverse this process? For example, will China integrate forward and seize more control over the entire supply chain rather than simply being a low cost supplier?

CONFERENCE:

The special issue will be preceded by a conference focusing on *Evolving Marketing Competition in the 21st Century*. The conference will take place in **Wiesbaden, Germany, on June 24-25, 2008** and will be globally co-sponsored by the Marketing Science Institute, EMAC, Singapore Management University, and the University of Mainz. The goal of the conference is to advance research on marketing competition in the 21st century. Contributions in the form of novel theory and methods are of particular interest. We expect researchers from all over the world who work on issues pertaining to competition and marketing. Additionally, we expect senior executives to discuss their insights and expertise on all facets of competition in the 21st century market place.

Conference papers are expected to reflect academic and practitioner views of different aspects of competition from various disciplinary backgrounds including strategic management, organizational theory, marketing, economics, psychology, public relations, organizational communications, and other backgrounds related to firms and industries. Ideally the audience would be fairly evenly split between academics and practitioners. Conference attendance will be 100 persons max. Longer presentations (30-40 minutes each) in no more than three tracks are anticipated. A registration fee of no more than \$290 will be charged. Qualified Ph.D. students will be charged a smaller fee.

The papers selected for presentation will be submitted for review toward publication in a special issue (of the *International Journal of Research in Marketing* (IJRM)) to be published in 2010. The high editorial standards of IJRM will apply.

The following time-markers are important:

1. Please submit an abstract of 200-500 words by **January 15, 2008** either to Oliver Heil, University of Mainz, Germany oliverheil@aol.com or David Montgomery, Stanford, montgomery_david@gsb.stanford.edu.
2. The abstracts will be reviewed and the authors will be notified of acceptance and/or reviewer's comments by **end February 2008**.
3. If a paper has been accepted for presentation at the conference, the authors should submit a complete paper. Due to a conflict with another deadline of IJRM, the original deadline of September 15, 2008 has been changed to the new deadline of **October 30, 2008**. Please note that submission of complete papers is also possible at that stage, without having submitted an abstract before. All papers will be submitted to IJRM (at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ijrm>) for review for publication in a special issue. When submitting, please mention the special issue. As we try to expedite the review process, authors should try to polish their initial submission as much as possible. Do not hesitate to contact the co-editors in case any questions arise.

Co-Chairs: Oliver Heil (University of Mainz)

David B. Montgomery (Stanford & Singapore Management University)