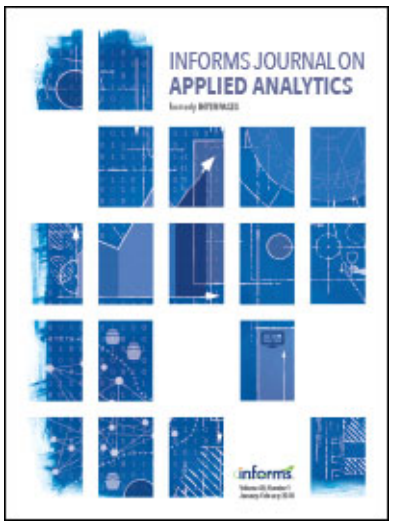

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Letters to the Editor

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

March 15, 1976

To the Editor:

It's a damn shame that *Interfaces* is being used as a forum for such confusions as those of Berliner, Hamelman, Reisman, Smith and Zalkind on as dead an issue as by-line construction.

Long has it been established that the sole, only and unique sane criterion is alphabetic.

Sincerely,
A. Ackermann Aardvark

To the Editor:

"What have you published lately?"

An untenured, young (though balding) Assistant Professor, I had heard that question once too often. So I asked myself:

"Self, what is it about that question that bothers you so? After all, you do 'publish' regularly."

There were several reasons:

1. More gets published than I have time to read.
2. The good stuff gets lost or overlooked, obscured by an extremum of excruciating existence theorems.
3. All this publishing leads to splintered work, biting off nice, safe paper-length chunks, then going on to the next most do-able problem.

But more than any of the above, the pressure to publish places unbalanced emphasis on certain stages of problem solution. A number of authors have outlined some rough stages associated with solving management science problems. Ackoff and Sasieni [1] suggest:

1. Problem Recognition
2. Model Formulation
3. Model Solution
4. Model Testing
5. Implementation.

But so much of what I read leaves off at step 3 above: no mention of testing and implementation. The reason for that lack of mention is that implementation in particular is very hard work (harder, I suggest, than any of the earlier steps except, maybe, problem recognition) and it is not rewarded with promotion and tenure.

So where does that leave academics? Open, I would say, to the most usual comment leveled against us: we publish obscure material in our journals that cannot and should not be implemented.

But what about the implementation? I have several colleagues who don't have publication lists down to the floor but who honestly begin their work with a problem (and not a model in search of a problem), develop, solve and test models and implement the results, i.e., improve organizations. Many of their peers refer to them, with disdain, as "consultants."

I can't think of a more important job for an academic in an applied field to do than to implement his work. If he does a few good things, they will improve the operations of some organizations, and his value will be recognized. If he publishes many mediocre articles, no one will use his work and his lack of value will become apparent.

I do not suggest we overlook the importance of publications in promotion and tenure decisions; I do suggest that explicit support and recognition be given to the individual who disseminates his work, who makes an honest effort to change management practice. *He's* more valuable in an applied field than his owlish colleagues who publish article after article in the Journal, *Mathematicus Obscurus*. Better mousetraps, every article, but they don't seem to be "selling."

Implementation is part of our job, not something to be avoided. Management Science does not get implemented without an active, knowledgeable change-agent. And who can implement better than the creator himself?

I'm not too sure how to measure implementation performance. I'm thinking of the poor academic promotions committees that might have to evaluate a candidate for promotion on "Ability to Implement." I'm looking now for an appropriate measure.

In the interim, make a friend (or an enemy), or at least stir up trouble. Ask a colleague,

"What have you implemented lately?"

Gary L. Lilien
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

REFERENCE

1. Ackoff, Russel L., and Sasieni, Maurice W., *Fundamentals of Operations Research*, Wiley, New York, 1968.

To the Editor:

Upon noticing the interest which readers of *OR/MS Today* have recently evidenced in the writing style of journal papers, I have concluded it is now both fitting and proper that the presentation style of individuals giving papers at society meetings also receive due attention.

During the course of attending various ORSA/TIMS meetings, I have identified a number of principles (I have come to think of them as Noyd's Principles) which seem often to be followed by individuals presenting papers at these meetings. With the thought that these principles may perhaps be of some edification, particularly to young and aspiring members of the profession, I herewith set them forth.

1) Never have a dry run of a presentation; doing so inhibits spontaneity and - far worse - tends to leave the impression you know what you are talking about.

2) Begin your presentation with several bad jokes; Dale Carnegie recommends it.

3) Arrange to be first in your session, and then exceed your alotted presentation time. You are certain to endear yourself to the speakers who must follow you.

4) Have your paper written beforehand, and read it verbatim to your audience. It is unlikely your audience will be literate.

5) Alternatively, distribute copies of your paper prior to giving your presentation. What literate members of the audience there are need

not listen to you, while other members of the audience can use the blank spaces left on the paper for doodling.

6) If a blackboard is available, use it instead of an overhead projector. It is well known that blackboards available at society meetings are large, sturdily constructed, and visible to everyone in the audience.

7) If you must use an overhead projector, consider the following.

a) Drop a few of your first slides on the floor, or place them on the projector upside down and backwards. Audiences almost always are attentive to such mishaps.

b) Avail yourself of every opportunity to use transparency overlays, with each transparency prepared in a different color. If you overlay enough such transparencies successfully, you are certain to impress your audience.

c) There will be one spot on which to stand, adjacent to the projector, that will minimize the number of individuals whose view of the screen you obstruct with your body. Do not stand on this spot.

8) Do not deign to use a microphone. Someone may hear you.

9) Obtain a pointer, the bigger the better, and gesticulate with it at random during your presentation. Audiences invariably find pointer waving more interesting than presentation content. If no pointer is available, wave your hands instead.

10) Pace about while giving your presentation. This way the audience will pay less attention to what you say.

11) State the problem you consider briefly and abstractly; this impresses your audience with your professional sophistication.

Likewise, under no circumstances provide any insight into the problem you discuss, for someone may then understand you and ask questions. In particular, avoid like the plague the use of drawings and charts.

12) Assume your audience knows all the literature upon which your work is based and simply refer to such literature as trivial, well known, or classic. (Exceptions may be made in cases where you run across a truly obscure reference.) However, be gracious enough to acknowledge the presence of anyone in the audience whose work is made obsolete by your results.

13) Refrain from using conventional terminology. There is little more stimulating than a good argument about proper terminology. Such arguments are also quite effective in diverting your audience from the main points of your talk.

14) Be certain to mumble at key points in your presentation. This is an invaluable means of convincing your audience you know more than you are saying.

15) Alternatively, make your key points in the form of rhetorical questions. If your questions are sufficiently obscure, only you can answer them.

16) Insert a number of tangential, unplanned remarks into your presentation. Doing so forces you to make your concluding remarks at a good fast clip.

With the hope, Sir, that others may find the above principles of interest, I am, Sir,

Arthur Nolan Noyd
Box 12867
University Station
Gainsville, Florida 32604
Editor of *OR/MS Today*
General Chairman, Miami Meeting