



Organization Science

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Editorial: Organization Science at 25

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Editorial: *Organization Science* at 25

This year marks the 25th anniversary of *Organization Science*. To celebrate this milestone, I invited the past editors-in-chief to write a short essay reflecting on their experiences as editor of the journal. Arie Lewin founded the journal in 1990 and served as editor-in-chief until 1998, when Kaye Schoonhoven stepped into the role. In Kaye's essay, she offers an insider's perspective about how the journal grew during and evolved after Arie's leadership. Linda Argote took over in 2004 and succeeded in moving the journal forward by increasing the number of published articles and inviting more scholars to join the senior editors board. Dan Levinthal became editor-in-chief in mid-2010 and continued Linda's efforts by maintaining and deepening the journal's commitment to quality research and increasing heterogeneity in both topics and methodologies. The following essays are the editors' reflections.—Zur Shapira, current editor-in-chief

On the 25th Anniversary of *Organization Science*: A Retrospective on the Aspirations of the Founding Editors

Arie Y. Lewin

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When I accepted the invitation from Zur Shapira to revisit the aspirations that Dick Daft and I had for *Organization Science* at its founding, I was mindful of the danger of falling into the trap of writing a revisionist history. However, fortunately, Dick and I published our views on the state of organization studies and of our aspirations for the new journal, *Organization Science*, in our introductory editorial essay “Can organization studies begin to break out of the normal science straitjacket? An editorial essay” (Daft and Lewin 1990).

After rereading this essay, I decided to excerpt a few key paragraphs that in my mind capture our aspirations and that I believe continue to hold true. However, I would like to encourage organization science scholars to review the original essay and to judge for themselves to what extent *Organization Science* has served the field of organization studies in breaking out of the normal science straitjacket that Dick Daft and I tried to transform 25 years ago.

Our Vision

We believe that a new era has emerged in which organizations are the prominent social institution affecting human existence and that an increasingly important role for the discipline of organization science is realizable. Because organizations are so all-pervasive, the mission of *Organization Science* is to stay open to and even encourage radical approaches, seek interesting work, encourage the joining of theory to practice, and anchor organization research in

relevant problems. The challenge for *Organization Science* is to uphold the tradition of rigorous science, while simultaneously embracing multiple disciplinary perspectives and methods that pursue divergent organizational realities. Our goal for *Organization Science* is to help the field avoid accepting a level of research too narrow for the scope of the organizational world we are investigating. (Daft and Lewin 1990, pp. 7–8)

Organization Science is based on a philosophy that interesting work can be cultivated and published, that such research can be informed by the problems extant in organizations, and that theories can influence and be influenced by the practice of management. (p. 7)

In a paradoxical way, future intellectual progress can be fueled by knowledge of organization practice, rigorous science can be enhanced by novel studies and methods. If our field's best efforts can employ no-holds-barred approaches to new knowledge, if the richness and breadth of our studies can keep pace with the world of organizations, then organization scholars are on the threshold of a wonderful adventure, an adventure that will be comparable in import to the organizations we investigate. (p. 8)

Editorial Structure

The structure of the journal reinforces this philosophy with multiple editors, a diverse review board, and the opportunity for authors to recommend reviewers. Multiple senior editors provide different perspectives through which articles can be published, and we expect to add editors to reflect organization research in other disciplines and emerging topics. Each editor has the autonomy to accept manuscripts for publication. Authors are encouraged to submit papers to the editor most closely aligned with their research topic or philosophy. Moreover, the opportunity to recommend reviewers to the editor increases the likelihood that a manuscript will be reviewed by at least one referee

who has a philosophy similar to that expressed in the manuscript. Maintaining diversity in the editorial structure of the journal and using diverse reviewers will help prevent a single mindset or point of view from dominating editorial policies and manuscript acceptances. (p. 7)

By any account, *Organization Science* has become the defining and most influential journal in its field, to a great extent not only because of a succession of editors who have stayed true to the founding vision but because each one, in his or her own way, has kept *Organization Science* on the leading edge. Successive editors have continued to employ and expand the decentralized editorial structure of autonomous senior editors, thereby opening up and adapting *Organization Science* to new ideas, theoretical perspectives, and empirical methods. However, as March (2005) notes and as Daft and Lewin (2008) discuss, counteracting creeping parochialism is a never-ending challenge for the editor-in-chief of the journal and its team of senior editors.

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Organization Science, Late 1998 to Early 2004

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Arie Lewin was the founder and first editor-in-chief of *Organization Science* from 1990 to 1998. I became its second editor-in-chief in the fall of 1998. Most of us cannot appreciate the extensive resources and energy required for Arie to start *Organization Science* from scratch, de novo, from a standing start. Most editors transition into a well-established, institutionalized journal with thousands of readers and an editorial board and reviewers whose knowledge and numbers increase over time, whose budgets grow to support a first-rate blind, peer-reviewed journal with hard-to-achieve respectable Thomson Reuters Web of Science citation numbers.

Arie completed all of the impossibly difficult work in the founding and survival of *Organization Science* in eight years. Behaving like a prototypical entrepreneur, he was enthusiastic, convincing, enterprising in the best

sense of the word, adept at marketing, and, importantly, skilled in building legitimacy for the new journal.

Initiating the *Crossroads* section, Arie also welcomed papers on controversial topics. One of the more infamous was John Van Maanen's article "Fear and loathing in organization studies" (Van Maanen 1995). In the second installment of what became known as the "paradigm wars," Van Maanen argued to "let a thousand (theoretical) flowers bloom" in contrast to Jeff Pfeffer's article "Barriers to the advance of organizational science: Paradigm development as a dependent variable" (Pfeffer 1993).

Arie also established the annual *Organization Science* Winter Conference, always in desirable locations, especially for those who enjoy sunshine, snow, and skiing. This too served the goal of attracting new, innovative ideas, as well as lively conversations and an enlarging cohort of dedicated *Organization Science* contributors. Furthermore, Arie was amenable to publishing special issues organized around a given topic. He launched a series of special issue mini-conferences of the most promising submitted papers. At these, good papers became better via the presence of scholars gathered to critique and improve the papers. Although miniconferences added an additional loop to the turnaround timetable, they nonetheless contributed greatly to the quality of special issue publications.

By its eighth year, as a result of Arie's extraordinary efforts, *Organization Science* had a very respectable Web of Science citation score and had gained acceptance from the macro-organization theory scholars of the world. However, *Organization Science* was distinguished from other major journals by its commitment to publishing innovative research. *Organization Science* was among the few journals helping to establish rigorous publication standards for qualitative research, for research not driven by prevailing paradigms, and for research seeking to establish new ideas and horizons. These attributes helped to broaden the *Organization Science* author pool substantially when compared with other journals.

Organization Science's one downside was the relatively long turnaround times (from manuscript submission to acceptance and publication)—too long from the authors' perspective. This attribute was especially troubling for young, untenured scholars faced with creating a portfolio of publications in the short five years before a tenure review. Although our turnaround time was not close to the long review times for a well-known strategy journal, we nonetheless were not competitive with other topflight organization and management journals. Therefore the primary challenge for the new *Organization Science* editor-in-chief, *moi*, was to reduce the lengthy review cycle times. With delays in getting innovative and interesting research in print, this undermined the journal's goal of building its citation scores as rapidly as possible, which in turn undermined the likelihood that it would become a

first-choice publication outlet. This means that my first three years as editor-in-chief were dedicated to improving our turnaround times.

Given that *Organization Science* was a highly decentralized journal, this involved the counternormative centralization of submissions, a close tracking of manuscript progress, a process analysis of our workflow, a selective changing of our editorial board and editors, and a recruitment of senior editors dedicated to a new emphasis on turnaround times. Although this sounds straightforward, it was nonetheless fraught with political minefields. Unlike established journals, which routinely replace senior editors and editorial board members when editors change, the young journal was faced with creating new norms for challenges not previously addressed.

When the journal transitioned to the care of Linda Argote, the third editor-in-chief, *Organization Science* continued to face a changing set of competitive circumstances: the launch of more journals—good for authors, more challenging for incumbent journals—and the globalization of authors. On this latter issue, Arie was ahead of his time, appointing senior editors in multiple countries to stimulate manuscript flow from scholars throughout the world. Working with such highly talented scholars—authors, editorial board members, and senior editors—was an opportunity not to be missed. It was an incredibly stimulating period in my life and an honor to have served *Organization Science*.

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A Community of Organizational Scholars

Linda Argote

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I had the privilege of serving as the editor-in-chief of *Organization Science* from 2004 to 2010 and building on the excellent foundation that Arie Lewin and Kaye Schoonhoven established for the journal. From its start, *Organization Science* has had a reputation for publishing innovative ideas. I aimed to continue this tradition by publishing high-quality, innovative research about organizations from scholars in different disciplines who used a variety of methods. Indeed, when asked to choose an image for the cover of *Organization Science*, the senior editors and I chose a bridge to symbolize the bridging of disciplines and perspectives that we encouraged.

The decentralized editorial structure of *Organization Science* is key to its ability to attract and publish high-quality, innovative papers. At *Organization Science*, senior editors are responsible for handling all aspects of a manuscript from deciding whom to invite as reviewers to determining whether to accept the manuscript for publication. The decentralized structure increases the likelihood that the editor has expertise in the area of the manuscript. The decentralized structure also promotes the diversity of articles that we publish. I was fortunate to work with outstanding senior editors during my tenure and thank them for their exceptional contributions. We were supported by a talented and dedicated editorial review board, whose contributions I would also like to acknowledge.

Special issues are a mechanism through which *Organization Science* explores new areas and shapes existing areas. Many of the issues we published focused on topics central to organizations, including organizational design, information technology, innovation, strategic renewal, corporate governance, organizational ambidexterity, organizational learning, culture, social networks, and status. Other issues focused on new phenomena with important implications for organizations, such as the impact of digitalization on innovation. Other special issues were on theoretical perspectives, including *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, as well as organizational economics and organizational capabilities. These issues contributed greatly to the vibrancy and impact of the journal and enabled *Organization Science* to influence future research in these important areas. I would like to acknowledge the contributions that the guest editors of these issues made to the journal and to the field.

In addition to exploring new ideas, a system also needs to exploit existing ideas in order to be effective. Thus, we welcomed not only manuscripts that explored new ideas but also ones that recombined or exploited existing knowledge. Although we were not interested in publishing minor tweaks on a theory or phenomenon, we were interested in publishing articles that exploited existing knowledge to determine its boundaries as well as articles that explored new terrain.

A dramatic increase in the number of submissions occurred at *Organization Science* over the last decade. We were faced with a decision about whether to reduce the acceptance rate to less than 10%, where it hovered, or to increase the number of papers published. We decided that we wanted to publish papers authors submitted to us that met our standards of being both interesting and high quality. Thus, in response to the increased number of submissions and with the support of INFORMS, we significantly increased the number of pages published in the journal while retaining our selective acceptance rate.

Another change that occurred at *Organization Science* during my tenure was the introduction of an online

system for processing manuscripts. Though not perfect, the system performed many clerical functions and freed up editors' and reviewers' time for intellectual issues. The system also enabled us to keep track of and view how many manuscripts each reviewer and editor was handling. This transparency enhanced the decentralized editorial system because senior editors could monitor reviewers' assignments and not overload them with requests. In addition, the online system facilitated our ability to respond to authors in a timely fashion.

In addition to publishing, *Organization Science* plays a central role in creating and nurturing a community of organizational scholars. We hope that our publications disseminate important findings to the community and that our review process provides constructive and high-quality feedback to authors. *Organization Science*, the journal, is loosely connected to two other institutions, the INFORMS College of Organization Science Best Dissertation Proposal Award and Workshop and the *Organization Science* Winter Conference. The proposal workshop provides feedback to Ph.D. candidates on their dissertations as well as a sense of belonging to the community. In addition, the Winter Conference creates a space where members of the organization science community share new ideas and build research connections with other members of the community. I would like to thank the organizers of these two events for their important contributions.

These community-building institutions and the shared identity they foster have several advantages. Individual scholars benefit from opportunities to discuss ideas with others and to feel part of a larger whole. The sense of community can enhance knowledge sharing and innovation, which benefits the journal and the field. When individuals share an identity, they are likely to be open to each other's ideas and accept and build on ideas that have merit. The identity shared by members of the organization science community promotes the transfer of knowledge across the disciplinary and methodological boundaries that often impede transfer.

The community-building activities enhance the journal's ability to achieve its primary mission of publishing high-quality, innovative research. *Organization Science* provides an umbrella under which researchers from different disciplines share knowledge and build on each other's contributions to advance understanding of organizations.

Strategy and Structure: The Continuing *Organization Science* Journey

Dan Levinthal

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

It was a great honor to serve as editor-in-chief of *Organization Science* from mid-2010 to 2013. The journal

plays a distinct role in the field, and the journal itself has a distinctive structure that poses particular challenges and opportunities for an editor-in-chief. From its founding, the journal has nurtured and provided an outlet for important work that enriches our understanding of organizations. As much of the field has segmented into, on the one hand, rather macro discussions of organizational fields or populations and, on the other hand, analysis of individuals or groups, *Organization Science* continues to encourage work that treats organizations as multilevel systems embedded in larger social structures. *Organization Science* continues its commitment to keeping the "O" in organization studies.

The journal also continued its commitment to methodological eclecticism, with a particular strength relative to other elite journals in qualitative work, and support of a wide variety of theoretical approaches. The structure that supports these qualities is the large and intellectually diverse set of senior editors. *Organization Science* has a structure that is "flatter" than other leading journals in the organizations domain. There is a single editor-in-chief, and then below her or him a set of senior editors who take primary responsibility for the evaluation and review of manuscripts. One of my key initiatives was to further expand this team of senior editors. Having a large team (27 individuals) of senior editors allows for a tight match between the topical and methodological approach of a manuscript and the skills and interests of the senior editor. In addition, the increase in size allows for the maintenance of a reasonable workload for the senior editors in the face of an increasing volume of manuscripts that the journal was receiving. Further, to sustain a high-quality review process for those manuscripts that we consider for full review, it was necessary to increase the tightness of the screen as to whether a submitted manuscript was appropriate for the journal and merited a full review. I am deeply grateful for the contributions of all the senior editors with whom I worked. They are really the key element in the journal's success, providing the specific content knowledge that allows for a thoughtful consideration of a manuscript.

Whereas senior editors have a wide variety of distinct domain expertise, it is important that the journal maintain some consistent overall perspective or sensibility. In that light, in the spirit of Herbert A. Simon's work on administrative behavior, I offered up some basic "decision premises" that I hoped each of us would adopt and share, and thereby give the journal some shared overarching values while maintaining its intellectual diversity. First, by what general criteria should we consider a manuscript as meriting publication? Broadly speaking, there is a dual criterion of substantive contribution to our understanding of some important organizational phenomena and that the work met a high standard of technical correctness. Technical quality is not sufficient for publication, but

a high threshold must be met. At the same time, it is important to recognize that all work is imperfect—measures are measures and models are models, neither are the phenomenon itself, and the world typically provides us with imperfect quasi experiments. Scholars should operate at the frontier of what available data and methods allow, and the limitations of data and methods should be acknowledged, but those limitations themselves should not preclude publication. Thoughtful judgment by an intellectually open-minded domain expert, a judgment informed by leading scholars serving as reviewers, is the hallmark of a journal that truly informs and helps drive the “conversation” in the field. As I often noted, we want to maintain and reinforce the fact that *Organization Science* is not only a journal in which scholars wish to be published but also a journal that scholars eagerly read as the work contained therein informs their understanding of organizations and excites their imagination regarding their own research efforts.

Special issues have played an important role in the journal’s history, often galvanizing attention and energy around important emerging topics in the field or causing us to think differently about more established topics. I was proud to initiate two special issues during my tenure. The first was on the psychology of organizational networks, with Sigal Barsade, Tiziana Casciaro, Amy Edmondson, Cristina Gibson, David Krackhardt, and Joe Labianca as the editors. Their creative and important proposal was to look at the interplay between structural views of network relations and the psychological and social psychological processes at the individual level in the context of such networks. Reflecting this multilevel approach, this outstanding and intellectually diverse editorial team operated as “dyads” with a more micro and more macro scholar paired for each manuscript to ensure that both perspectives were given a full and proper treatment. The second special issue was on the dynamics of routines, with Luciana D’Adderio, Martha Feldman, Nathalie Lazaric, and Brian Pentland serving as editors. The special issue pushes further the emerging understanding of practices and routines not as fixed objects but as patterns of behavior undergoing frequent change. These are challenging issues both theoretically and empirically, and the journal was fortunate to have this outstanding set of scholars in this domain lead this effort. Both of these special issues add important vitality to the journal as well as to the broader field.

***Organization Science* at 25: A Milestone on a Long Journey**

Zur Shapira

Stern School of Business, New York University

I became the editor of *Organization Science* on January 1, 2014. New York City was freezing that day, but

the flow of manuscripts that greeted me in the morning warmed and welcomed me to a new journey that still challenges and excites me daily. The large number of manuscripts that are submitted to *Organization Science* is an indication of its continuing status and eminence in the scholarly community. I concur with the former editors about the journal’s mission, the role of the academic community, the team structure of both the senior editors and the editorial review board, and the importance of maintaining our commitment to high-quality research that allows for a variety of topics and methodologies. Now, I’d like to present some statistics. The journal was published quarterly from 1990 until 1995, when it became a bimonthly publication. Twenty-two articles were published during the first year, and that number gradually increased to 39 during the fourth year, 52 in 2007, and settled into the high 90s this decade. We now print some 1,900 journal pages per year. As of September 10, 2014, 1,300 research articles—including those in 22 special issues, 4 focused issues, and more than 20 *Crossroads* articles—have been published in the 25 years since *Organization Science*’s inception. Manuscripts have been submitted from scholars in 42 countries. The impact factors of *Organization Science* have climbed continuously, and the most recent five-year impact factor is 5.512, ranking it 9th among 172 scholarly journals in the Management category of Thomson Reuters’ 2013 Journal Citation Reports (Social Sciences Edition).

I plan to continue the trajectory that my predecessors established by publishing high-quality articles where organizational mechanisms and/or processes play a key role. We will keep publishing articles that employ a variety of methodologies ranging from narratives to computer simulations and closed-form modeling. Our mission is to present conceptual, empirical, and theoretical articles that contribute to knowledge in the organizational sciences. The table below lists the top 10 most cited articles in *Organization Science*’s history as ordered by citation counts on Web of Science. The titles of these articles highlight the core areas that our journal endeavors to explore. They include knowledge, learning, search, innovation, capabilities, coordination, communities of practice, technology, trust, and, of course, exploration and exploitation. Like the other editors, I am very proud of our journal’s achievements. These achievements are largely due to our highly motivated and accomplished senior editors. *Organization Science*’s first 25 years were a decisive success. With our ever-growing community of scholars, contributors, and editors, I am certain that the journal will continue to thrive in the future.

The 10 Most Cited Articles in *Organization Science*'s First 25 Years (as of September 10, 2014)

Rank	Author(s)	Year of publication	Article title	Volume/issue/ page numbers	Permalink
1	March JG	1991	Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning	2(1):71–87	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.71
2	Nonaka I	1994	A dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation	5(1):14–37	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.5.1.14
3	Kogut B, Zander U	1992	Knowledge of the firm, combinative capabilities, and the replication of technology	3(3):383–397	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.3.3.383
4	Huber GP	1991	Organizational learning: The contributing processes and the literatures	2(1):88–115	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.88
5	Brown JS, Duguid P	1991	Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation	2(1):40–57	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.40
6	Grant RM	1996	Prospering in dynamically-competitive environments: Organizational capability as knowledge integration	7(4):375–387	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.7.4.375
7	Zollo M, Winter SG	2002	Deliberate learning and the evolution of dynamic capabilities	13(3):339–351	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.3.339.2780
8	Zaheer A, McEvily B, Perrone V	1998	Does trust matter? Exploring the effects of interorganizational and interpersonal trust on performance	9(2):141–159	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.9.2.141
9	Orlikowski WJ	1992	The duality of technology: Rethinking the concept of technology in organizations	3(3):398–427	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.3.3.398
10	Zander U, Kogut B	1995	Knowledge and the speed of the transfer and imitation of organizational capabilities: An empirical test	6(1):76–92	http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.6.1.76