Publishing IS Research in Practitioner Outlets

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What is an article?

• A contribution to a current, important conversation.
• The contribution is made up of an AHA (a new idea) and its actionable implications, called the SO WHAT.
“Actionable Implications” = Changes to Practices

- Dials and levers practitioners can operate
  - Performance metrics
  - Policies
  - Procedures
  - Rules
  - Resource allocations
  - Training
  - Hiring/firing
  - Buying/acquiring/selling
  - Reorganizing/reassigning
What are not “practices”?

- Things in manager’s heads
  - New ideas
  - Understandings
  - Realizations
  - Thoughts
  - Recognitions

These are AHA!‘s,

They are not SO-WHAT’s.
Making Contributions: The Ouroboros

1. Unity and
2. Creative Destruction
1. Unity

- A single thread of logic linking each of these bones
  - Problem statement
  - New knowledge
  - What to do next to solve the problem

2. Creative Destruction
In academic articles

- A single thread of logic linking these bones
  - Motivation
    - [practical problem, maybe]
    - theoretical gap
  - Existing knowledge (Lit review)
  - New idea (hypotheses)
  - New evidence (data & analyses)
  - Limitations to generalization
  - New knowledge (discussion)
  - What researchers should do next
In practitioner articles

- A single thread of logic linking these bones
  - The practical problem
  - What we know so far (definitions)
  - The new idea/view/practice...
  - Practical supporting evidence or illustrations
  - What practitioners should do differently
Contributing to a conversation: Changing old behavior with new ideas

- **Research articles**
  - Old research ideas
  - Data/analysis/discussion
  - Implications for future researcher behavior

- **Practice articles**
  - Old practice
  - Data/analysis/discussion
  - Implication for future managerial behavior
Projects vs. Articles

What are the differences?

Research Papers

Your research projects: ideas, data, cases, findings

Practice Paper
The Advice Section

Get out your grain of salt...
Advice #1: Use outlines

• Use an abstract or “executive summary” to identify the bones of the work – one sentence for each bone.
• Use a slide deck to “flesh out” each bone.
• Develop tables and figures first.
• Outline what you have written periodically. Check your logic.
• Use presentations to refine your logic.
Advice #2: Look forward and reason back

• Chose a motivation that matches your contribution (draft that last bit first).
• Write for a specific outlet and its readers (and editors).
• Expect reviewers/editors to be human.
• Don’t follow reviewer/editor advice slavishly.
• Always, ALWAYS revise & resubmit.
• Celebrate every submission.
Advice #3: Get feedback

• Get feedback frequently and systematically.
  – on the abstract or executive summary
  – on the slide deck or outline
  – on the many drafts
  – on a seminar/workshop presentation
  – Only in the end, from the reviewers

• Have a feedback plan.
  – What do you need to know at each point?
  – Use “cold” readers, ask specific questions.
Advice #4a: Specifically for practitioner articles...

• Pick one imaginary reader.
  – Like a CXO or a CEO.
  – Write simply but passionately directly to this individual.

• End with concrete, actionable lessons - “do this, don’t do that” -- for this individual.
  – Keep in mind the reader’s mapping problem (from your context to theirs).
  – While the paper ends here, the writing might start here.
Advice #4b: Specifically for practitioner articles...

• Have at least one great figure or diagram that captures the essence of the AHA!
  – From the old best way to the new best way
  – From one-best-way to the best way for you, for now
  – Steps to reaching a seemingly unattainable goal
  – A bigger frame for a problem
Advice #4c: Specifically for practitioner articles...

- Background your theory and methods for readers, but **include it** for reviewers.
- Rigor is the source of your authority and your competitive advantage over consultants, so let it peep through.
- **DO NOT** hide the scope of your sample, which is key to the reader’s ability to map their situation with the one you studied.
- Flesh out your research results with examples from other sources to illustrate applicability in other contexts.
Advice #5: Project design implications

- Be guided by a practical problem.
- Collect data both intensively and extensively.
- Be willing to be surprised.
- Expose results to both researchers and practitioners.
- Assume that some contributions will emerge that will address different problems than the one you started with.
- Do most what you enjoy most.
Three things to remember:
QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

GOOD LUCK!