

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

STRATEGIZING ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES INTEREST GROUP ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT (AOM)

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STATE OF THE INTEREST GROUP

The scholarly community driving the Strategizing Activities and Practices (SAP) Interest Group (IG) has expanded our understanding of what can be considered ‘strategy’ through a practice-theoretical consideration of strategy as something people do. Empirically focusing on the day-to-day work, activities, and practices related to strategy, the SAP IG invites a variety of theoretical perspectives and the application of a wide range of methodological approaches, with a particular importance of qualitative, often ethnographic methods.

As of 2022, the SAP IG had 690 members (454 of which are international) and was bouncing-back from two years of membership decline during the pandemic years of 2020-2021. Also, 2022 recorded an all-time high of 182 student members, indicating a healthy age structure among the members. Representing a truly global community of scholars, SAP has continuously expanded activities for and by its members even during the times of the pandemic and beyond the AOM Annual Meeting. Innovative formats include the Early Career Program, the SAPience Circle, the SAP Reading Club and the SAP Global Citizen Program.

In Nov 2022, SAP started an internal strategy process, involving current and former SAP executives as well as early-career scholars, for revisiting the scope and mission of the Interest Group. This strategy process was triggered by members’ broadening of the understanding of strategy, evidenced by an increasing number of submissions that dealt with practices that are in some way important or consequential but not necessarily (or even explicitly) understood and framed as ‘strategic’ by neither researchers nor practitioners in the cases under study. Such a broadening has led SAP scholars to use the practice-theoretical sensitivities of their research approaches to apply to other important phenomena in contemporary organizations, such as, how actors engage with grand challenges, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), artificial intelligence (AI), new forms of organizing, and so forth. Results of the most recent membership survey strongly encouraged us to continue down that road.

This widened scope of phenomena under study over the past decade has been complemented by a continued and reflective application of qualitative methods, helping to refine existing methodological approaches (e.g., ethnography, case studies) and to introduce new ones (such as video ethnography of strategy processes) into the realm of practice-theoretical management research. In light of this, SAP increasingly invites members to submit their work, even if it does not pertain to phenomena explicitly labelled as ‘strategy’ and our reviewers to be more open towards new phenomena that SAP scholars are studying. In addition, SAP seeks to deepen ties to other DIGs, such as ENT, OMT, TIM, CTO, that also host scholars pursuing practice-theoretical approaches.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Explanatory note: When we present key SAP activities alongside our strategic goals, this should not obscure the fact that many activities serve more than one of those goals.

Connecting and supporting SAP scholars around the globe

Asked the open question what SAP's strengths are one answer was by far the most frequent one in the most recent membership survey: "community". For the majority of SAP members who took the survey SAP is its primary home in the AOM context. Fostering and sustaining this spirit is a key strategic priority for SAP, with the following activities being particularly relevant for reaching this goal:

- SAP Membership committee: an engaged and committed committee of SAP scholars that focuses on growing and servicing the SAP membership base across the globe. They are driving the recruitment and organizing of volunteer contributors.
- [SAP Newsletter](#): packed with information on the Annual Meeting, on other SAP-related conferences and events, on SAP scholars and on all the other activities listed below, the SAP Newsletter is the key communication device for our interest group.
- SAP Social Media channels: in addition to AOM Connect, we inform and connect SAP scholars via [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#). On the latter channel we also feature videos of the annual Distinguished Keynote Lecture at the AOM Annual Meeting as well as recordings of several other virtual activities such as Webinars.
- SAP Dinner, SAP breakfasts, and the SAP Social at the annual AOM meeting to foster informal connections and serendipity among members.

Supporting early-career scholars in becoming part of the SAP research community

Securing a constant influx of young and early-career scholars to SAP is not just a precondition for a healthy and growing membership base but also necessary for intellectual openness and scholarly development. Specifically, we aim to support early-career scholars with following activities:

- [SAP Early Career Program \(ECP\)](#): The ECP, which takes place as part of the annual conference, is designed to foster the development of a supportive community of SAP scholars and provides a full day of panels, workshops, roundtables, and networking opportunities for accepted participants.
- [SAPience Virtual Coffee Chats](#), taking place throughout the year on a monthly basis, are dedicated to connect senior and junior scholars to foster SAP-related discussions on theory and methodology as well as on career-related topics. In response to the limited opportunities for networking, especially for early-career scholars, this match-making initiative was set up.
- Travel Grants: We support members through the conference waiver and scholarship program (available for virtual and in-person attendance) for individuals experiencing circumstances of financial hardship and/or coming from under-represented groups within the AOM SAP community (for example, under-represented geographical regions

or in terms of career stage such as early-career and PhD scholars). In 2022, we offered a limited number of additional travel stipends to scholars with an accepted paper in the SAP program in Seattle.

Initiating and strengthening ties with practice scholars within and beyond AOM

Over the past decades, we could observe a growing interest in practice-theoretical approaches in fields other than strategy such as entrepreneurship or HR, including even disciplines outside the traditional scope of the AOM such as marketing or accounting. Activities particularly targeting this goal have been:

- Joint symposia and PDWs with other practice-theoretical communities (e.g., SAP meets Entrepreneurship-as-Practice)
- Joint (virtual) cafes with other divisions (e.g., joint SAP/ OMT cafe on sustainability and grand challenges)
- Conversations between the executive leadership team of SAP and other divisions (e.g., with OMT, ENT etc.)
- EGOS sub-themes and EURAM tracks: since its foundation, core members of SAP also convened sub-themes dealing with themes of the IG in the context of major European organization and management conferences such as the annual Colloquium of the European Group of Organization Studies (EGOS) and EURAM.
- Local community days (e.g., SAP community day at BI Norway in 2021, SAP Austria community day in 2022).
- In recognition of the volunteers that take the lead in organizing initiatives like the ones listed above, the Executive Committee introduced a new award in 2023: the ‘SAP community service award’.

Developing innovative SAP activities within and beyond the AOM Annual Meeting

Even before the pandemic hit, SAP had tried to continuously offer opportunities for scholarly exchange and development also beyond the AOM Annual Meeting.

- [SAP Reading Club](#): we invite community members to meet like-minded peers to explore potential research opportunities together, read and discuss articles of interest, and share experiences, questions, and reflections on their research.
- SAP Community Day at EGOS: for more than 10 years now, SAP members organize an SAP Community Day as an official pre-conference workshop prior to the annual EGOS Colloquium, which offers another opportunity to connect for those who don't make it to the AOM Annual Meeting in a given year.
- [SAP Global Citizen Program](#): SAP membership is dominated by European and North American scholars. This initiative aims to enlarge the SAP community and include a more diverse field of scholars to further broaden the community's horizon by (inter-) regional meetings.

Investment in theoretical foundations and methodological competences of our members

- [SAP webinar series](#): leading SAP scholars introduce SAP newcomers to the foundations of SAP research and provide more advanced participants with added clarity around core issues related to strategizing activities and practices
- [The SAP Vlog](#) features interviews with authors of work that has substantially contributed to research on practices of strategy-making as well as interviews with SAP Award winners.

Secure sustainable funding sources and financially support SAP activities

Our sources of funding consist of two main sources and one minor element:

- 1) *AOM DIG Financial Allocation*: Over the past five years (2017-2021), SAP IG has received a total allocation of \$53,417 from AOM with an annual average of \$10,683.40. The total operating fund available as of 1 January 2021 was \$75,923.73.
- 2) *Sponsorships*: We also raise funds through sponsorship. Over the past five years (2017-2021), SAP IG has received a total of \$75,762 with an annual average of \$15,152.40 from various sponsors. We are committed to maintaining our sponsorship to ensure sustainable funding sources and to financially support the activities of SAP.
- 3) *Miscellaneous income* (e.g., PDW): Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we also raised some funds from PDWs. Between 2017 and 2019, we raised a total of \$6,330 from PDWs.

INNOVATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Of the activities listed above, we consider the following to be particularly innovative:

- *Innovative I: [SAP Reading Club](#)*. During these developmental gatherings, new or prospective SAP members have the opportunity to engage with SAP members over core SAP readings and emergent new research themes. These online gatherings are inclusive, open for our (prospective) members around the globe and aid incubating new SAP research, developing the methodological and theoretical competences of our members, and growing the SAP membership. The SAP Reading Club is very popular with events attracting up to >300 registrations.
- *Innovative II: [Travel Grants](#)*. We offer financial support to members of the AOM SAP community that would otherwise not be able to participate in the conference. In 2022, we piloted a new travel award scheme offering further financial support for travel related costs of attending AOM in-person to a limited number of eligible individuals. Travel awards are intended to make a contribution towards travel related expenses such as airfare and accommodation and are limited to a max. amount of \$500 (in addition to registration fee waivers or scholarships).
- *Innovative III: [SAP Global Citizen Program](#)*. This initiative aims to attract a more diverse membership, moving beyond Europe and North America, which serves one of the strategic objectives of AOM regarding internationalisation. This is a recent initiative and generated initial success in South-America and South Africa and encourages international participation at SAP.

Another innovative approach not mentioned above has been the SAP strategy process: in Nov 2020, we launched an inclusive process for revising the mission and strategy of the SAP IG, involving current and former elected SAP officers, volunteer contributors and ordinary members in open online brainstorming and discussion sessions. Using online whiteboard software, we sketched various different development paths for the IG and invited all those interested in the future of the SAP IG to comment, adapt and evaluate respective ideas. The final report of this SAP strategy process is [publicly available at the SAP website](#).

In addition to the innovative and partly experimental activities, we are confident that the activities listed below qualify as best practices in the context of our IG:

- *Best Practice I: [Early-career program](#)* (see description above): Over the years, the ECP program has consistently received positive feedback from participants and been continuously refined in order to ensure a maximum of interaction, networking and development of young scholars. It facilitates welcoming new SAP members at AOM.
- *Best Practice II: [Joint Symposia, PDWs and cafes with other DIGs](#)*. Responding to calls to counter the silos in academia, these cross-DIG activities aid building the bridges and span boundaries between the sub-disciplines in management. SAP actively seeks and leverages opportunities for such cross-DIG activities and helps the AOM community address new academic policies and scientific grants that propagate cross- and interdisciplinary research.
- *Best Practice III: [Video content on YouTube](#)*. The [SAP YouTube channel](#) with close to 600 subscribers offers a broad array of video content, ranging from Vlogs (interviews with authors of seminal SAP studies), Webinars & Reading Clubs to videos of keynote lectures and panels hosted at the AOM Annual Meeting, the SMS conference and EGOS Colloquia.