

## Journal of Consumer Psychology Reflections

Notes compiled by Vicki Morwitz in January and February 2012 for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of JCP commemoration

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Email from John Cacioppo on February 4, 2012

Vicki,

SCP was struggling for an academic foothold, as historically it has been more an applied than scientific division. I have always been an advocate of full-cycle social psychology, so the applied focus was fine, but I felt the society needed a stronger, more rigorous scientific presence. That's why I established the Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award and the Journal of Consumer Psychology. Needless to say, I've been very pleased by the increase in the scientific rigor and presence of SCP.

All the best,  
John

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Email from Richard Petty on February 2, 2012

Hi Vicki:

Sorry for the delay in responding, but your e-mail got misplaced. In any case, JCP was started during the residency of John Cacioppo and getting a journal for SCP was primarily his idea and a major accomplishment of his Presidency (you might contact him for any further details he can recall). I was chair of the publications committee then and John and I negotiated the contracts for the new journal. Once that was set, as chair of the pub committee, I set about searching for the first editor of the journal. It was Thom Srull whom I had worked with when I was editor of PSPB (he was one of my associate editors). As I recall, there was some concern at the time about whether the journal would be successful, compete with JCR, etc., but I guess things ultimately turned out well.

I hope that helps a bit.

Regards,  
Richard

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Email from John Cacioppo on January 31, 2012

Vicki,

When I was SCP President, I started the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award, the Distinguished Service Award, and the Journal of Consumer Psychology. Larry Erlbaum and I worked out the

arrangements and contract, and the journal was established as a SCP journal (in contrast to an APA journal) to give SCP a flexible asset.

Hope this is helpful.

John

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Information from phone conversation with Dipankar Chakravarti on January 30, 2012

- Dipankar was not involved when people discussed the idea of a new journal, but thinks the idea was to have a journal that would serve as a focal point for the efforts of psychologists who did research in consumer psychology
- He thought that the idea was to create a journal that was different from JCR, not as broadly rooted in consumer behavior - rather where psychology was the core discipline featured in the research. The basic point was that the work reported in JCP should be rooted more centrally in psychology.
- The early proponents were interested and well-recognized in CB, but were mostly in psychology departments, not in business schools.
- Lawrence Erlbaum was a preeminent publisher in the field of psychology. The late Martin Fishbein was a very strong supporter of the journal and initiated and oversaw the early relationship between SCP and Erlbaum (as publisher).
- The journal started in 1991 with Thom Srull (then back on the psychology faculty at Illinois) was selected as the first editor.
- Thom asked Dipankar (who was a former colleague at Florida) and John Lynch (who was a graduate school classmate at Illinois and also a former colleague at Florida) to be the AEs.
- About a year or into the start of the journal, Thom had health issues and the journal faced some difficult times. The SCP board requested John and Dipankar to take over as co-editors in 1993.
- Shortly thereafter John became an AE for JCR under Brian Sternthal. Dipankar then was appointed as sole editor. He requested Eric Johnson and Gerry Gorn to join him as AEs and expanded the ERB to include top scholars from both psychology and business schools.
- Challenges in the early years included getting submission rates up. There were 4 issues a year so they needed a submission rate of about 100 manuscripts a year. There was therefore a big focus in the early years on getting good submissions and working with authors who submitted to develop their papers into high quality publications. This required a close working relationship between the Editor/AEs and the authors.
- Dipankar felt it was important in his term not to oversell the journal since it was new, and was careful not to mislead authors, even though the journal had a stellar ERB. He felt that the journal's reputation and credibility would grow steadily as high quality papers were published. It was therefore important to prioritize the high quality reviewing and editorial support.
- From its early years, a core focus of JCP was to have an author-friendly review process. Whereas other journals often required 3, 4, even 5 rounds of revisions, Dipankar's goal (strongly supported by AE's Johnson and Gorn) was to give clear signals and helpful guidance to authors. If in the first round, they felt the article had a chance to make it, they gave the authors extensive advice on how to revise it. Their feeling was if a research question was ex ante interesting and the empirical work was done well, the results should be interesting ex-post, even if they did not necessarily support the

original predictions. The authors were encouraged to explain and discuss such findings to help stimulate future work.

- In those days it would often take a long time to get reviews back, but authors who were given a revision were almost guaranteed that the editors would work with them to get their articles accepted and published. The goal was to work with the authors to make their articles as strong as possible. Indeed, the manuscripts ultimately published were dramatically improved by encouraging authors in this way.
- The editors of other journals at that time supported JCP and it was not viewed as competition. Rather, these senior leaders in the field saw the need for another strong journal to emerge in the field. In particular, Brian Sternthal (then JCR editor), was very helpful in identifying potential submissions.
- Dipankar completed his term in 1996 and the SCP board placed the journal in the capable hands of Paul Herr and Frank Kardes to take it to the next level.
- In sum, Dipankar felt there was a clear need for this journal, but that those who worked on it faced a real uphill battle. They started with very little and the odds were against them. But with lots of help from lots of people the journal got stronger and is now here to stay.