

Doctoral Student Consortium - International Management Division
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Making an Impact: Building a Research Program and Getting Published

AN EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON GETTING PUBLISHED: LESSONS FROM JIBS
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LORRAINE'S TOP 10 "DO" LIST

1. A paper motivated by a puzzle. Motivate your research question with a paradox – a puzzle unexplained in the current literature –that your paper can help solve.
2. A clear and succinct Title and Abstract. (Old joke: the longer the paper title, the less important the paper.)
3. Write and rewrite your Introduction. It's the key to your paper:
 - a) Have a clear research question that appears on the first page.
 - b) Explain why your paper should be of interest to readers of this particular journal (e.g., referencing earlier controversies and publications in the journal).
 - c) Explain how your paper fits into existing research and builds on work by others.
 - d) Clearly state your contribution to the literature (what you did that is new).
4. The Literature Review should be comprehensive but to the point. Don't wander.
5. Your Theory Development section should have propositions that are interesting (not obvious) and testable. Spell out any counterfactuals in the propositions.
6. Include a graph of the theoretical model, showing the hypothesized relationships.
7. Empirical work should be thoroughly done, including all validity tests and robustness checks.
8. How you handle surprises (unexpected results) can be an important theory-building contribution to the paper.
9. In your Conclusion, come back to where you started. Summarize what you did and what was new. Be very clear about your contribution to the literature.
10. Discuss implications of your work for (a) future research, (b) public policy and (c) firm strategies, as appropriate.

LORRAINE'S TOP 10 "DON'T" LIST

1. No clear -- or interesting -- research question.
2. A paper that is inappropriate for the journal (e.g., for JIBS: no IB link, not international business, no citations to papers previously published in JIBS).
3. No unique contribution to the literature (either the contribution is too little or not clear).
4. Case study – a “red flag” – hard to get published in most top journals. Will be scrutinized more heavily than typical positivistic empirical research. Harder to find good reviewers that understand qualitative methods.
5. “Kitchen sink” approach to research – no logical theory development – variables are added haphazardly based on pulling from a variety of literatures.
6. Testing old theory on a new database (belongs in a B journal, not an A journal).
7. “Spinning the methods” – no theory contribution, no new database - only contribution is to use additional methods.
8. Hasn't read and doesn't cite key works in the literature on this topic.
9. A paper with poorly written English, full of grammar and spelling mistakes. (It's like going on a job interview wearing dirty clothes – sends the wrong impression.) If English is not your native language, some journals will help but most will not so get help with your writing before submitting the article. More generally, all of us (native English speakers or not) can use help improving our writing style.
10. Paper doesn't follow the journal's Style Guide (e.g., paper too long, references formatted incorrectly).