

# Some History of the TIMS/INFORMS College on Marketing as Related to the Development of Marketing Science

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## Background

At the International Meeting of The Institute of Management Sciences (TIMS) in Athens, Greece in the summer of 1977, it was announced that I had been elected president-elect of TIMS. It was a proud moment for me. I was to become the twenty-fifth president of an organization whose founding members included George Dantzig and Nobel laureates Kenneth Arrow, Tjalling Koopmans, Wassily Leontief, and Herbert Simon. The list of earlier presidents of TIMS was replete with the names of distinguished scholars such as William W. Cooper, Abraham Charnes, C. West Churchman, Kenneth Arrow, George Dantzig, Ronald Howard, Leonard Arnoff, Robert Thrall, Richard Cyert, and Harvey Wagner. As the successor to such a distinguished list, I came to the visceral realization that there was great opportunity to advance ideas that I deeply believed in.

Although marketing was only a minor area in TIMS, its influence and role were on the increase. The TIMS College on Marketing was 10 years old, and marketing sessions at TIMS meetings were growing, along with the appearance of marketing papers in *Management Science*. The fact that I was the first marketing professor elected president of TIMS was of some significance symbolically with respect to the future direction of management science and of marketing (science). As fate would have it, John D. C. Little became vice-president of publications of TIMS at the same time that I became president, and the two marketing professors quickly set about making plans for initiatives that would advance management science in

general and marketing science in particular. (See Little 2001).

In advancing marketing science there were three primary objectives, having to do with the need for: (1) a journal, (2) a conference, and (3) recognition and funding of research by the National Science Foundation. The first two of these had to do with the deteriorating relationship of the marketing modeling community and the American Marketing Association. There were complaints from some that *JMR* was "too technical." This, coupled with the growing number of statistical papers and the increase in papers employing mathematical modeling methods, produced the need for another marketing journal more oriented to the interests of the growing marketing modeling community. (See Morrison 2001.) In addition to the schism with respect to journals, there was growing disaffection in the marketing modeling community with the AMA's Marketing Educator's Conference. It had become too large and too diverse to accommodate the need for presentation of marketing models and for serious discussion and interaction among marketing modelers. Hence, as with the need for a specialized journal, there was growing awareness of the necessity for a specialized marketing conference. (See Wittink 2001.) As president of TIMS I was inspired to promote the further development of marketing models within the TIMS framework through the creation of a conference and a new journal.

## On Cowboys and Objectives

Given the background conditions just described, it was apparent to me that it was important that the group that I have defined as "the marketing modeling community" evolve within the TIMS framework into a comprehensive society with a journal and a confer-

ence. John Little and I discussed the term "marketing science" as being identified with such a society. There was a need to build credibility in the general academic and scientific community for the scholarly merit of basic research in marketing and of other subjects taught in business schools. Moreover, funding for research in these areas was in short supply and badly needed. Following this train of thought, the idea occurred to me that recognition and funding of research in marketing (and other areas in business schools) by the National Science Foundation was highly desirable.

The ambitious goals that I set out to achieve during my tenure as president of TIMS required bold plans. In my initial "Message from the President" (OR/MS Today, September 1978) the opening paragraph was:

When I was a young man I had a choice to make. I could have been a cowboy or I could have been a professor. For the cowboy, the truth is simple and direct and, unlike the professor, he will know with little ambiguity whether he has succeeded or failed. I now realize that I was guided by what has come to be called a multiple criteria objective function. I valued the direct honesty of the cowboy, intelligence in my associates, and money. Not only do cowboys dominate on the honesty dimension, but they are, perhaps, slightly more intelligent than professors. Alas, however, professors make a lot more money than cowboys. Hence, I became a professor. The choice, however, has not always been without regret. As President of TIMS, I hope that the cowboy's truth will prevail so that you will know clearly whether success or failure characterizes the pursuit of objectives.

With John Little leading the way through the morass of ORSA/TIMS politics, *Marketing Science* was established as an ORSA/TIMS journal, and under my initiative the Marketing Science Conference was approved and established. Both of these activities, of course, required the leadership and hard work of numerous members of the TIMS College on Marketing. Some other essays in this volume have contained expressions of regret that the conference has not succeeded as well as it might have in enhancing interaction between academics and practitioners. In my judgment, however, the conference has not been a complete failure in this respect. As a forum for the presentation of scholarly papers and the exchange of ideas it has been a roaring success and is now generally regarded as the premier conference in market-

ing, at least for the marketing modeling community, in both the academic world and in business.

## The National Science Foundation Initiative

For marketing science to secure legitimacy within the broader scholarly community, it was essential that recognition and support of NSF be obtained. This turned out to be a far more difficult and lengthy process than I had imagined. The space available does not permit a full discussion of all of the details associated with establishment of the Decision, Risk, and Management Science Program (with marketing as a component) in the National Science Foundation, but I will attempt here to describe the essential elements of this history.

The story begins in 1977 when I was president-elect of TIMS. I had been advised by some of my predecessors that because the tenure of the presidency was only one year it would be wise to develop a plan for initiatives early and to start the process as soon as possible. With this in mind I began thinking of ways to approach NSF concerning the establishment of a Management Science Program in NSF. In an inspired state, I made dozens of telephone calls from my summer home seeking advice about strategy from those I thought would be knowledgeable about NSF matters. Among those called was Donald B. Rice, president of the Rand Corporation. I had known Don well when he was a Ph.D. student at Purdue University. At that time he was a member of the National Science Board and was a former president of TIMS. After several attempts I was able to get through to him. I shall omit details of how this was accomplished, but the essential point is that Don was ideally suited to provide advice about appropriate and inappropriate strategies for approaching NSF, and the information he provided was invaluable.

One key piece of information provided by Don Rice was the name of an official in NSF who would be sympathetic to a program in management science. I shall identify this person here only as "Deep Throat." He agreed to a luncheon meeting in Washington, but

made it clear, for reasons that I can only surmise, that the luncheon could only take place at a location outside the NSF building. Although "Deep Throat" was very sympathetic to my proposal for a program in management science, he was also very pessimistic about the chances for success. Nevertheless, he did recommend that the best course of action would be for the presidents of TIMS, ORSA, and AIDS (American Institute of Decision Sciences, now Decision Sciences Institute) to write a polite letter to the director of the National Science Foundation requesting a review and evaluation of funding for management science. On the surface it would appear that drafting the letter and obtaining the signatures would be an easy task. However, the relations between TIMS and ORSA at that time were, to put it mildly, somewhat strained and after several drafts and redrafts, the letter finally went forth after more than a year of negotiations.

The letter, reinforced by constant needling by me, had the desired effect, but only after a period of time. NSF sponsored a workshop on July 12–13, 1979 in Washington for the purpose of evaluating the current status of research in management science. Presumably, the outcome of this assessment would have some bearing on the decision by NSF concerning the establishment of a program in management science. Papers were prepared on the current status of research in queuing theory, mathematical programming, operations management, decision theory, finance, strategic planning, inventory and production models, and marketing science. The list of attendees included many of the most prominent names in the various areas of management science and NSF officials from several divisions and directorates. In side discussions with NSF officials at the workshop it was clear to me that, although most of the NSF people were sympathetic to the idea of a management science program, the economists were strongly opposed. They argued that: (a) much of what was involved in management science was really economics and therefore a separate program was not needed, and (b) that which was not economics was covered in other programs. These positions reduced, of course, to the argument that management science was not a distinct field.

After (much) further delay I was informed that a management science program would be created in the Division of Social Sciences and that a small amount of money would be available in the 1981 budget for management science. It was too early to rejoice, however. After Ronald Reagan assumed office in January 1981 there was severe budget cutting in selected areas of NSF, including Social Science.

### Winning By Losing

Following the budget cutting, a decision was made by economists in the Division of Social Sciences to utilize the funds budgeted for management science to support grant proposals in economics. This was done without announcing the new program, apparently in the belief that the management science program was dead. None of those involved in the management science initiative were notified of this action. I learned about it, however, from "Deep Throat," and proceeded to register strong objections with high-level NSF officials with respect to the action and the manner in which it was carried out. As a consequence, a meeting was held in August 1981 of NSF officials from the director's office and of four directorates: Engineering; Mathematical and Physical Sciences; Scientific, Technological and International Affairs; and Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences. At this meeting a decision was made to establish a program in decision and management science in the Division of Social Sciences and to fund the program in the FY 1982 budget with \$500,000, the funds coming from the director's discretionary fund and from each of the four directorates. An announcement of the new program was carried in the March–April issue of *OR/MS TODAY*. Trudi Miller was named acting program director and was subsequently appointed director.

### Post-Announcement Developments

It had taken five years from the time I began working on the creation of management science as a distinct field within NSF until the program was in place, and

there was still work to be done to ensure that the program would be properly organized and oriented.

Trudi Miller worked closely with members of the management science community to establish procedures and policies for the new program. It was felt by many that the program should be focused on empirical studies utilizing management science models and that results should be generalizable. A subpanel of the Decision and Management Science Program consisting of Frank M. Bass (Business Administration), Hillel J. Einhorn (Industrial and Organizational Psychology), James G. March (Political Science), Sanjoy K. Mitter (Electrical Engineering), and Elliott W. Montroll (Physics) in a statement issued September 1, 1982 said:

In the conduct of research, processes will typically be characterized by mathematical, logical, and statistical models. These models will be derived from empirical observation, or from theory that is subject to empirical verification. Empirical analyses should be pursued in some operational context, but the emphasis should be on theories, findings and methods that are generalizable to other contexts.

An NSF workshop was held in 1984 at The University of Texas at Dallas to define further the areas to be supported by the new program. In 1986 Trudi Miller was succeeded by Robert Thrall as director, and the name of the program was changed to Decision, Risk, and Management Science (DRMS), the name it bears today. By 1987 the DRMS budget had increased to \$2.35 million.

Today DRMS is located in the Division of Social and Economic Sciences in the Directorate of Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences. Two marketing professors, Eric Johnson (University of Pennsylvania) and J. Edward Russo (Cornell), are members of the advisory panel. The research philosophy established in 1982 as indicated above remains intact, and over the years many research proposals in marketing have been funded by DRMS. I recently received a letter from Tulin Erdem (University of California, Berkeley), who has received two NSF grants from DRMS, that concludes with:

In short, I have had so far great experience with NSF and I feel that the young generation owes a great deal to pioneers like yourself who worked hard with (and probably at times "against") NSF to put marketing on the map for NSF!

## References

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