



# Publishing in Top Tier Journals: Tips and Guidelines

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A Discussion Facilitated by:

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# Tips from Experience

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- Editorial Board Member
  - *Academy of Management Journal* (1993-2000)
  - *Human Factors* (2000-2003)
  - *Journal of Applied Psychology* (1994-2003)
  - *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (1998-2003)
  - *SIOP Frontiers Series* (2003-2008)



# Tips from Experience

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## ■ Editorial Experience

- Associate Editor, *Journal of Applied Psychology* (2002-2008)
- Incoming Editor, *Journal of Applied Psychology* (2008)
- Editor, *Journal of Applied Psychology* (2009-2014)
- Editor, *Oxford Handbook of Organizational Psychology* (current)



# *Journal of Applied Psychology*

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## **Editor**

Steve W. J. Kozlowski, *Michigan State University*

## **Associate Editors**

Tammy D. Allen, *University of South Florida*

Neil R. Anderson, *University of Amsterdam*

Gilad Chen, *University of Maryland*

David V. Day, *University of Western Australia*

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Sharon K. Parker, *University of Sheffield*

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Quinetta M. Roberson, *Villanova University*

Eduardo Salas, *University of Central Florida*

Jing Zhou, *Rice University*.

*Steve W. J. Kozlowski*  
*Michigan State University*

***Publishing Tips***



# Major journals are huge enterprises - Fast Facts

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- Editor, 10 Assoc Eds (AE), ms coordinator
- 900 + new manuscript submissions per year
- Plus 450 – 500 revisions per year
- 200 “Consulting Editors” (Board Members)
- Many, many Ad Hoc reviewers
- Point: There’s a system behind the review process and it’s worth understanding something about how the system works



# The Goal

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- Of the 900 + new manuscripts per year, 85-90% are “not accepted” (i.e., the R word – rejected)
- 10-15% are “desk rejected” and never go to review
  - Don’t be a DR!
- If you get an R&R, the odds are more like 30-60%, and they improve at each step of the process
- GOAL: Get an R&R!
- Point: Most ms’s are rejected ... goal is to get an opportunity to revise based on Ed & R feedback



# Know your target

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- Read the Description and Instructions to Authors
- Make sure your topic is appropriate!
  - If you have no citations to the journal, rethink!
- Follow the journal “formula”
  - All journals have a style ...
- Editor and Associate Editors
  - Your paper will be assigned based on expertise
- Editorial Board members
  - Who are likely reviewers? Anticipate ...



# A clear and compelling research question is essential!

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- Contribution: Problem statement, gap in the literature, how your approach will close the gap *and* extend theory
  - Needs to be clear in the first 1.5-2 pages
- Wrong approach: “No one has done this before”
- Test question: Ask, so what?
  
- *Answer needs to be interesting, provocative, and theoretically compelling*



# Theory Development

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- Theoretical framework has to be coherent – (*Why these constructs?*)
  - Not a collection of pieces with empirical support
- Theory has to drive the hypotheses
- Theory has to be consistent with the literature, but has to extend it as well
  - *If prior lit supports every H, what's new?*



# Methodology

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- Rigorous, tight, transparent
- Sampling design to get variance and representation of the phenomenon
- High quality measures (construct valid)
- Manage method variance
  - All self-report data is the second most frequent reason for rejection
- Watch out for time
  - Many studies hypothesize processes, but use a cross sectional (static) design



# Analyses

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- Make sure they fit the data and hypotheses
- Fancy analyses are not a substitute for a compelling question and theory!
- If relevant, deal with levels and/or time
- Effect sizes ... not just significance
- Findings have to support the rationale



# Discussion

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- Keep it calibrated to your research question and your data
  - Sure it's great, but be realistic!
- Be transparent (but not overboard) about limitations
- Back to contribution to the science



## Getting that R&R ...

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- On-line submission means many manuscripts, but wide range of quality
- Follow the tips ... interesting question, compelling contribution, quality data are key
- Get input on theory and methodology before submission
- Get a colleague or copy editor to check format, presentation, and language before submission



# Managing the R&R

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- Be thoughtful, thorough, & responsive
  - *Listen to the Action Editor!!!*
  - Read between the lines
  - No matter how negative it *seems*, persevere!!
  - It's a dialog, but you need to respond with precision and detail
  - *Care and craftsmanship during the revision process is what separates successful authors and those who are not!*



# Ways to improve your skills

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- Work on publications – beginning to end – with an experienced author
- See it from the other side -- Get experience as a reviewer
  - Chicken & egg problem
  - Reviewer can get permission for a supervised review
- As author, try, try, and try again!



# Mindset

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- It's an exploration in scholarship
- Learn from the experience
- Think like a reviewer, not like an author!
- Be persistent
- 'It's not personal, it's business'
  
- *May your journey be successful!*