

The will to still manage: over a half-century of *Management Decision*

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Fifty-five years ago the first editorial in *Management Decision* (MD) appeared in volume 1 of the first issue. In this article, Hugh Parker (who at the time was the Managing Director of McKinsey & Company) stated, “[. . .] that the will to manage is a much deeper and more enduring motivation than the mere desire for short-term profits [. . .].” One of the overarching goals of the newly rebranded MD journal was to provide the missing conceptual structure in the management literature of the time or as Parker (1967) puts it, “a philosophical framework for thoughtful managers.” Although much has changed since Parker’s words were published, in many ways MD’s focus has remained the same.

The current form of MD was born in 1967 when a group of academics from the University of Bradford, UK, School of Management, created Management Consultants Bradford (MCB) to host business activities, which included academic publishing. Dissatisfied with the publishing outlets offered to management scientists of the day, they acquired their first academic journal for only £1 from the publishers of the *British Journal of Management* (not to be confused with the journal of the same name founded in the 1990s). The MCB group then renamed the journal MD and began over with volume 1. Dr Keith Howard, a founding member of the MCB group, remained with the firm until his death in 2021 (see <https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/behalf-emerald-group-family-dr-keith-howard-obe>).

The first editor of MD was David Ashton followed by a number of editorial changes until John Peters became the editor in 1988, and remained the editor for 23 years until 2011 when Domingo Soriano took the reins for about three years followed by the coeditor team of Andy Adcroft and Patrick Murphy and then Patrick Murphy who was the editor when I took on the role in January of 2020. Over the years, much like the management science discipline more generally, growth at MD was at times slow and uneven. Volumes 1–4 of MD started with four issues, then volumes 5–8 disappeared without an increase in time, only to return with three issues in 1971–1973, with an increase to 6 issues in 1973, and eight issues in 1977, followed by a decrease to seven issues in 1981 with a further decrease to five issues in 1982 and back to six issues in 1983. Six issues was the norm until 1990 when the journal was finally back to eight issues again. By 1994, the journal went to nine issues which were bumped up to ten issues the following year. In 2018, the issues increased to 11, with 12 issues the following year. Finally, in 2021, 13 issues were published with the 13th only consisting of open access articles. The number of articles published per issue has also been varied with as few as one monograph being published per issue (e.g. Beaumont *et al.*, 1980) including non-authored reviews of all the growing management journals found in the MCB group of the time (e.g. *Management: A Selected Annotated Bibliography*, Volume III, MD, Vol. 23, pp. 1–155).

These ebbs and flows that are reflected in the changing number of issues and articles across the years can also be seen in the content of the articles published in MD. Parker (1967) stated in the first issue of MD that the editorial strategy was to, “[. . .] publish articles on management subjects that will be of interest and value to the growing class of managers [. . .].” Such policy was reflected in the practitioner-focused papers published for about the first decade of MD. Although various resurgences of including the practicing manager perspective have come and gone through the years (e.g. Craven and Dallas, 2009, see also Chen and Randolph-Seng, 2021), MD has steadily become more systematic and science based with an increase emphasis placed on building theory grounded on not only



quantitative research, but also qualitative (e.g. the *Journal of Management History* was merged into MD in 2001 and spun back out a few years later). With this increase in science-based content also came a similar change for the publisher of MD which was eventually reflected in a name change from MCB to Emerald in 2002.

The increase in the number of reputable science-based articles published in MD has also been reflected in the higher ranking of the journal across the years. The journal was accepted into the Social Science Citation Index in 2007 and was given its first impact factor in 2009 with a steady increase in impact factor rankings and citations over the last few years. In 2015, for example, the impact factor was 1.134, while in 2020 the impact factor jumped to 4.957. Similarly, in 2017 the number of citations was 4,317, while in 2021 the number of citations has more than doubled to 10,109.

Ten years ago, in a special issue to celebrate volume 50, the editor of the time [Soriano \(2012\)](#) said it best, “The success of MD is, was and will be due to the ongoing, dedicated efforts of a team [. . .].” None of what MD has been able to become would be at all possible without the extremely dedicated team of people who willingly give their time and talents as editors, reviewers and publishers of the journal. Now that the 60th volume of MD is a reality, a fitting addition to the journal is being added called: “Over a Half-Century of *Management Decision*.” The purpose of this new section is to highlight all of the research presented within a specific topic (leadership, strategy, entrepreneurship, marketing, operations etc.) in MD over all relevant issues. The new section will commence with a forthcoming bibliometric analysis of MD across all 50+ years of existence. Those interested in writing for this new literature review section are required to send a proposal to the editor-in-chief before a formal manuscript is submitted. Articles for this new section must conform to the general outline for writing review papers found in [Bem \(1995\)](#). In particular, as Bem states that review articles should be understandable to a broad audience so that those that read the article can not only comprehend, “what you think the accumulated evidence demonstrates [. . .] [but] to appreciate why someone—anyone—should give a damn.” In addition to this new section, other ways we are celebrating our 60th volume include a new cover that better reflects both the increased recognition of diversity in management and the modern way decision making is conceptualized. Further, for volume 60, we have also added a new symbol for MD that puts a face to the description on the website of the journal having, “the distinction of being the oldest and longest-running scholarly publication focused specifically on the area of management” (see [Figure 1](#)). Here’s to another 60 volumes!



Figure 1.
New symbol for MD

References

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