

The reviewers' role in the publication process

The cornerstone of the editorial process [...] is the willingness of colleagues to provide each other feedback through peer review (Treviño, 2008, p. 10).

Following our previous editorials on the publication process, in this edition, we aim to present some guidelines for the reviewers on how to write good reviews. Throughout the literature, we can notice there are several suggestions for authors on how to respond to the recommendations from *ad hoc* reviewers. However, only a few references are given for reviewers on how to write a proper review.

In fact, there is no training for a student or a scholar to become a reviewer, or as quoted by Lepak (2009) "there is no formal training for referees, who usually pick up their review skills through learning by doing" (Tsang and Frey, 2007, p. 129). In general, graduate programs seek to encourage their students to read well-known articles critically to promote this type of learning. Nevertheless, undoubtedly, the learning process takes place when this student submits his/her articles to good journals and receives some feedback, possibly in the form of a rejected paper.

The invited reviewer is an expert on the theme of the article. The editor's invitation itself represents the recognition of the reviewer's work. Therefore, he/she is considered able to evaluate whether the article is to be published. The editor and associate editors also have the important role of choosing reviewers who fit the theme and the research methods used.

Writing a good review is not an easy task: it requires time and competence. By accepting to be a reviewer, scholars take great responsibility in presenting the editor the adherence and relevance of the article to the respective journal. The main point here is to help the publisher decide whether to publish the article, as well as help the author(s) improve the quality of the article.

We have tried to summarise the main aspects or principles of writing a good review:

- (1) Know the journal and the subject. Be sure that you are a good choice as a reviewer. Although not ideal, quitting is an option, if you are not comfortable with reviewing. It is better now than later. Journals have specific guidelines, not only for authors but also for reviewers.
- (2) Read the article as many times as you need. Through a first reading, the reviewer should check whether the manuscript brings any relevant novelty, challenges the mainstream approaches on the topic, presents the proper structure, an interesting context and clear objectives; the literature review is appealing and updated; the findings are relevant and conclusive; and the methods are adequate. In the following rounds, pay attention to other specific points and make in-depth analyses of your first notions.
- (3) Have clear and objective criteria for evaluation regarding:
 - the contribution to the literature and the practice;
 - the quality and appropriateness of the methodologies;



- the quality of the logical arguments and the consequent conclusions; and
 - the quality of the language and the presentation.
- (4) Be clear, specific and constructive. Make your points concisely and directly. Make sure the authors know what are the most fundamental changes or corrections to be done and which ones are less important. Your suggestions will help the authors have the paper published in this journal or elsewhere.
- (5) Be respectful, but assertive. You can make critics without disrespecting one's work. In fact, these critics are the basis to enhance someone's paper. Nevertheless, there are several ways of making these critics. Do not forget that the article has undergone a previous desk review, such as we have at in *RAUSP Management Journal*, indicating its potential for publication and initially checking for its quality. If it has passed the desk review, the editors saw some potential for publication. Always use polite language and clear arguments.
- (6) Organize your review:
- briefly summarise the main points of the paper;
 - list essential flaws and suggested changes; and
 - provide a recommendation for or against publication.
- (7) Make your recommendation clear for both the author and editors. There are several options for the final recommendations (e.g. accept, revise and resubmit, minor adjustments, major adjustments, reject). This option should be compatible with your arguments and explanations listed in the text of your review. Remember that there are different channels to communicate with the author and the editor, if necessary and convenient.

In short, a good review can be considered as an art (Lepak, 2009). As such, it will for sure require a lot of effort, competence and inspiration.

Maria Sylvia Macchione Saes and Flavio Hourneaux Junior

School of Economics, Business Administration and Accounting of the University of São Paulo (FEA/USP), São Paulo/SP, Brazil

References

- Lepak, D. (2009), "Editor's comments: what is good reviewing?", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 375-381, available at: <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.40631320>
- Treviño, L.K. (2008), "Editor's comments: why review? Because reviewing is a professional responsibility", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 8-10, available at: <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2008.27744831>
- Tsang, E.W.K. and Frey, B.S. (2007), "The as-is journal review process: let authors own their ideas", *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 128-136.