



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

STRATEGY EXPANDING: MAKING SENSE OF SHIFTING FIELD AND FIRM BOUNDARIES



PROGRAM CHAIRS

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Since its inception in the early 1980s, the field of strategic management has expanded greatly as researchers, managers and consultants have worked to develop and apply a knowledge base to inform the decisions of strategic leaders. The Strategic Management Society now includes more than 3000 members and the flagship journal, *Strategic Management Journal*, receives over 1000 submissions a year from authors all over the world. Moreover, two new academic journals, *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* and *Global Strategy Journal*, have been added reflecting the expanding interest of the Strategic Management Society's membership. This developing and expanding knowledge base reflects the complicated and complex business world today that scholars and managers seek to understand and lead.

Our field now embraces a broader plurality of research questions, units of analyses and modeling tools. Many sectors face significant shifts in firm boundaries as mechanisms for accessing the market change the value creation functions of firms and the role of intermediaries. The rise of social media, B corporations, interconnectedness, and big data further illustrate why some basic assumptions about firm activities as well as what the boundaries of the field of strategy deserve renewed attention. These developments beg the question of whether the foundational questions that drove our field at its inception are still at the center of it, or whether there are new unifying themes that may drive future knowledge creation.

We call for proposals that help us make sense of our expanding field and the firms that we seek to understand. As the field grows, are we still trying to answer fundamental question of "why do some firms outperform others?" Have we answered the questions that led to the development of our field in the first place? Are those questions still relevant? Or alternatively, have evolving organizations and field boundaries created a need for new and different fundamental questions?

CONFERENCE THEME TRACKS

Track A: Is Fragmentation of the Field Inevitable?: In Search of Unifying Frameworks

Track Chair: Thomas Brush, *Purdue University*

The literature of strategic management is growing rapidly and in different directions. Some scholars build upon fundamental questions that have long driven the field, while others consider new questions altogether. Traditional theories continue to get refined and even revised, while new perspectives emerge. All the while, the methods used by strategy researchers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and theory testing now seems to involve data collected from all around the globe. Is this explosion of research questions, ever increasing expansion of theories and new advances in method and data, making the field more fragmented? Has the increasing breadth and depth of our research threatened any consensus of what strategy research is? Do we, and should we, have a unifying framework that defines our field? We seek papers that pose new research questions and help us understand how theory development and knowledge is evolving. Papers that examine change drivers in the field as well as integrative frameworks are particularly desirable.

Track B: Linking Strategy Implementation to Organizational Change

Track Chair: Inger Stensaker, *Norwegian School of Economics*

The field of strategic management has focused a great deal on the organizational tools that firms use to implement various strategies. However, when firms change strategies they often have to change their organization to implement those new strategies. How strategic activity is initiated, championed, and developed, with the potential of change and renewal can transform firms and enable them to lead in this new ever changing environment. The ability to proactively change may help firms to retain a competitive advantage. This track focuses on the actions, practices, decisions, and relationships that help support successful strategy evolution. How do new strategies emerge? How are they inter-related with one another? How does the firm's relationships with its key constituents impact upon the implementation and organizational change relationship? This track encourages work that examines the practices of how new strategies are initiated, championed, and integrated into the firm.

Track C: Alternatives to For-Profit Firm Logics: Learning from Family Firms, NGOs, Non-Profits and Beyond

Track Chair: Carlo Salvato, *Bocconi University*

The vast majority of our research has focused on the standard for-profit organizational form—the large public company. Research on NGOs, non-profits, B corps, family firms and other evolving organizational forms can help us to better understand the underlying assumptions, boundary conditions, and overlooked issues in our research to date. In this track, we encourage work that examines, challenges and extends the boundaries of our knowledge about organizations through the exploration of strategy within alternative organizational forms that do not exclusively enact for-profit logics.

Track D: Beyond Scholarship and Practice: Strategy's Broader Responsibility

Track Chair: Subramanian Rangan, *INSEAD*

Strategy scholars have long sought to create a rich body of work to inform theory and practice related to what drives one firm to outperform another. What, though, are the broader responsibilities of our field? Societal expectations about companies' accountability for the implications of their actions beyond their own boundaries are shifting. How does our scholarship and practice direct organizational decision-making in a way that may affect human, social, and/or environmental factors? Should the implications of our work on these factors affect our research questions and prescriptions? If so, how? Do we have a responsibility to economies and societies to develop knowledge to inform higher level value creation and societal questions? This track encourages work that examines the responsibilities of our field and the implications of our work to society more broadly.

INTEREST GROUP TRACKS

Track E: Competitive Strategy

Track Chair: Samina Karim, *Boston University*

The Competitive Strategy Interest Group (CSIG) focuses on questions concerning firms and their interactions within product and factor markets over time. As one of the largest and most internationally diverse IGs within the SMS, our group tackles a broad set of questions regarding competitive strategy in different regions around the world. For example, What is competitive advantage? How can firms build and maintain a competitive advantage in a changing world? What role do resources and capabilities play in shaping firms and industries over time and in different regions of the world? Within the context of the upcoming annual conference, we call for contributions aimed at exploring the competitive dynamics and implications of strategy as industries and firms change their boundaries. For example, we welcome work addressing questions such as: What are the implications to firm scope as industry boundaries morph and converge? How should firms adapt their competitive strategies to account for multi-market competition? How do non-traditional organizations such as NGOs, non-profits, and family businesses achieve a competitive advantage against their rivals?

Track F: Corporate Strategy

Track Chair: Douglas Miller, *University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign*

Research in the Corporate Strategy IG Track addresses firm scope, drawing on a range of theories and methods to examine diversification, vertical integration, acquisitions, divestitures, and other decisions related to the strategies, organizational structure, and implementation of change in the firm's portfolio of businesses. Thus, the questions asked by corporate strategy scholars are central to this year's conference theme of expansion and shifting boundaries. Along with proposals related to the general domain of the Interest Group Track, submissions are encouraged that develop theory and evidence regarding how firms grow through leveraging resources (e.g., capabilities, customers, or knowledge) or developing new resources; and how these processes inform our understanding of the growth and development of the field of strategic management. Further, reflecting the conference theme tracks, proposals are desired that address: how firms fragment as they grow and the effect fragmentation has on decisions to restructure, outsource, or divest; how firms use corporate strategies to implement organizational change; the corporate strategy of non-profit and other alternative organizational forms; and the implications of corporate strategy on society.

Track G: Global Strategy

Track Chair: Ronaldo Parente, *Florida International University*

This year's Conference theme lies at the heart of the opportunities and challenges that multinationals face. Thus, we look forward to submissions addressing questions such as: Are there fundamental differences in the way MNEs and subsidiaries from different regions approach strategic management? Are MNEs better able to leverage resources in light of developments such as social media, interconnectedness, and big data? How do multinational firms implement organizational change to support their strategies? What are the opportunities and challenges that firms face in a world of networks? What is the role of MNE headquarters in a dynamic network of subsidiaries? What strategic and organizational responses do MNEs use to cope with increasing technological and market uncertainties? To what extent does strategic collaboration within an innovation ecosystem enhance the internationalization prospects of multinationals? What conditions facilitate the transfer of user-innovation knowledge in multinational organizations? How do MNEs drive cross-border innovation ecosystems? How do rapidly changing rules of business impact the global / local norms of competition? How do MNEs sustain competitive advantage in a fast paced environment?

Track H: Strategy Process

Track Chair: Adelaide King, *University of Virginia*

The Strategy Process IG focuses on questions concerning how strategies are formed, implemented, and changed, and their performance implications at the group, functional, business, corporate, and network levels of analysis. The process focus and the emphasis on multiple levels of analysis can be particularly useful in tackling important questions relating to this conference theme. We particularly welcome contributions that examine how strategy process research provides unifying frameworks that stimulate engagement across differing strategic research communities. Examples include: How might process research provide new insights that link strategy implementation and (successful) organizational change? How might process research inform our understanding of shifting firm boundaries associated with new business models, such as multisided platforms? How might team-level process research serve as a link to examine essential questions in behavioral decision-making and corporate governance? What opportunities do new data sources (i.e., Big Data) provide for novel insights about the formulation and implementation of corporate strategies or the activities and routines that drive successful innovation?

Track I: Knowledge and Innovation

Track Chair: Anu Wadhwa, *Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne*

Knowledge and innovation have become more critical for firms in today's competitive arena in which fluid firm boundaries, new forms of organizing, industry convergence, and emergence of entirely new fields challenge our thinking about how best to access, create, and leverage knowledge for superior outcomes. We encourage submissions consistent with the general domain of the interest group that also address some of the following questions relevant to the conference theme. How does the nature of knowledge flows and innovation change as competition shifts from the firm to the ecosystem level? What kind of capabilities, processes and knowledge structures will be relevant as old industries undergo makeovers and convergence? How can we adapt our theories and models to explain what performance criteria are relevant for alternative organizational forms such as non-profits and benefit corporations? Can firm ability to access and process seemingly unlimited knowledge challenge facilitate or detract from their cognitive abilities and innovative outcomes? What are the key unanswered questions related to knowledge and innovation that can be answered either by consolidating current theories or developing new ones?

Track J: Strategy Practice

Track Chair: Martin Friesl, *Lancaster University*

Strategy work increasingly stretches boundaries. It stretches organizational boundaries as firms engage with their wider community of stakeholders to develop strategy, but it also stretches institutional boundaries. This implies that strategy work is no longer the exclusive domain of for profit firms. It permeates the way organizations in general prepare for an uncertain future. This increasing importance of 'strategy', as a particular type of work, warrants closer attention to the practices and activities of strategizing in these different contexts. The Strategy Practice IG welcomes empirical and conceptual papers as well as contributions from practitioners that engage with the implications of such shifting boundaries for strategy practice. We also welcome papers that critically examine the applicability of strategizing practices across different contexts and heterogeneous organizational and institutional domains. Indeed, we may have to rethink how actors make sense of resources and capabilities and how those are mobilized towards achieving organizational objectives.

Track K: Entrepreneurship and Strategy

Track Chair: Igor Filatotchev, *City University London*

Field re-configuration and changing boundaries of firms provide new opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures which constantly search for new ways of value creation. They are part of broader socio-cultural-environmental changes such as the rapid development of new business models based on social media; growing significance of “crowdfunding” as an alternative to the traditional sources of finance; the increasing importance of addressing ethical aspirations of diverse groups of stakeholders. This calls for a very important capability on part of entrepreneurs to recognize and respond to external pressures that require significant shifts in firm boundaries as well as changing roles of intermediaries. Submissions to the Entrepreneurship and Strategy IG are encouraged on these lines consistent with the theme of the conference. Some of the questions that may address these matters include (but are not limited to): How do entrepreneurs think about the boundaries of their firm? What drives decisions related to modes of growth (i.e., alliances, acquisitions, internal development)? How should we develop further entrepreneurship theories to accommodate these shifts in organizational fields and changing firm boundaries?

Track L: Strategic Human Capital

Track Chair: Deepak Somaya, *University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign*

Research in Strategic Human Capital examines human capital’s influence on firm performance. The capacity of firms to attract, retain, and develop human capital is central to their ability to generate sustained high performance. Accordingly, we invite research that addresses the following types of questions: What role does human capital mobility play in shaping firm outcomes? How do firms manage the value appropriation challenges of ‘star’ employees? Why and how do competitive interactions in labor markets differ from competitive interactions in other strategic factor markets? Scholarship that is interdisciplinary and/or spans multiple levels of analysis is especially welcomed. In light of this year’s conference theme, we are particularly interested in work that explores the role that human capital plays in the shifting boundaries of fields and firms: How do firms manage the human capital of workers who are not in traditional, full-time employment relationships? What role does human capital play in shifting the scope of firms and fields? How do individuals manage their human capital in a world of shifting boundaries, and how should firms respond?

Track M: Stakeholder Strategy

Track Chair: Doug Bosse, *University of Richmond*

Whereas prior definitions of the strategy field focus on product market (industry) rivals striving to outperform one another, the growing body of stakeholder theories embraces larger questions about value creation and trade recognizing firms are in constant competition for all of their stakeholders. This work tends to challenge and provoke shifts in the boundaries of strategic management. An expanding list of research questions addresses such issues as: the managerial tensions of competing and cooperating with a plurality of stakeholders; the complex behaviors that affect the content and nature of human relationships that both create and destroy value; the ethics, duties, and norms associated with participating in developed and developing free markets; and the spillover costs and benefits for society. We warmly invite you to join in these conversations so that together we might improve our collective understanding of how managers – in conjunction with people at other private, public, and nonprofit institutions – contribute to societal welfare and improvement.

Track N: Cooperative Strategies

Track Chair: Laura Poppo, *University of Kansas*

Cooperative strategies are essential for coping with the challenges imposed by evolving industries and shifting fields as well as extending the firm’s activities beyond its organizational boundaries. We welcome proposal submissions related to the general domain of the Cooperative Strategies Interest Group. In addition, we encourage submissions that address questions that are related to cooperative strategies and shifting boundaries of firms and industries, such as: What guides a firm’s choice of alliances versus internal development or acquisitions? How do firms adapt their inter-firm and intra-firm relationships to respond or buffer against change? How do firms balance competition and cooperation in alliance portfolios as industry dynamics shift traditional competitive boundaries? How does an evolving environment influence firms’ abilities to cooperate with partners? What governance mechanisms, organizational processes, and experiences do firms employ to manage portfolios of relationships in a constantly evolving environment? What role do alliances play in firm growth?

Track O: Strategic Leadership and Governance

Track Chair: Vincent Barker, *University of Kansas*

Strategic leadership and governance have experienced shifting boundaries since recognition as fields. Leadership is necessary for firms to recognize and act on broader responsibilities to society. Are there leadership or governance structures where this recognition is more likely? Or is it truly about individual leaders? What about leadership and governance is associated with a firm’s choosing to invest (or pull back from investing) in broader societal issues? Further, leadership and governance has long investigated alternative organizational forms, but new forms are constantly emerging. For example, research on public-private partnerships is lagging current practice. Additionally, new forms of funding early-stage enterprises (angel funding, crowd funding) will inevitably lead to leadership and governance challenges. Finally, leadership and governance entities are critical to initiating organizational change. Alternately, when leaders or governance entities desire transformation, what facilitates or blocks change? What role does the unit of analysis play in change—industry/competitors, firm, board of directors, individual directors, or the CEO? All of these emerging questions challenge the boundaries of the strategic leadership and governance fields.

Track P: Behavioral Strategy

Track Chair: Rhonda Reger, *University of Tennessee*

This year's conference theme highlights the ambiguity and uncertainty that risk managers face in formulating and implementing strategy. The theme calls for sense making and interpretation: for managers and scholars alike to create meaning in new and novel situations. The Behavioral Strategy track encourages submissions that consider questions such as: How do managers cope with expanding boundaries given realistic assumptions about human cognition, emotion, and social interaction? How do new types of organizations, blurring organizational and field boundaries, and larger eco-systems influence managers' mental models of the competitive landscape? How do changing industry boundaries, social, political, and ecological environments influence individual and group cognition in organizations? What is the impact of shifting field and firm boundaries on individual and organizational learning? We welcome submissions from many methodological traditions, on topics such as cognition and decision making; biases and heuristics; mental models, frames, schema, and cognitive categories; reference points and risk-taking; managerial goals, expectations, and perceptions; emotions, motivations, personalities, and pathologies; the psychology of bargaining and organizational politics; individual and organizational learning; and the social psychology of group decision making.

CONFERENCE SPECIALTRACKS

Track R: Research Methods

Track Chair: Karen Schnatterly, *University of Missouri*

In an effort to make "sense of shifting field and firm boundaries," we face many challenges. Research methods need to expand data gathering techniques across cultures, analysis methods across levels, as well as seek new data types, sources, and new statistical methodologies. This year's conference theme focuses attention on new methodological questions, including: How does the expansion of strategy as a field affect our ways of seeking knowledge? As we become more "sophisticated", what are we gaining and what are we losing in rigor, validity, view (fine-grained vs coarse-grained), etc.? What tests must new ways of gathering and analyzing data pass to move us closer to understanding? Are we using methods that define the data used or is data availability defining our methods? These are just a few issues our Research Methods Community will address at the conference. While we seek proposals pertaining to the conference's theme, we welcome all those that open new perspectives on advancing research practices within the SMS.

Track T: Teaching

Track Chair: David King, *Iowa State University*

The conference theme applies to the methods and means of teaching strategy. Traditional modes of instruction are increasingly being supplemented and in some cases replaced with online modes of instruction. At the same time, changes are also driving an update to concepts of what and how strategy is taught. Just as strategy instructors advise students and by extension firms to create a fit with their environment, we as instructors need to heed our advice and update topics we cover (e.g., family business, non-profits), methods we use (e.g., cases, simulations), tools we teach (e.g., 5-forces, stakeholder analysis), content delivery (e.g., lecture, online, video), and so on. We welcome proposals addressing these themes that have implications for teaching strategy. In particular, we request proposals that challenge conventional wisdom, provide a fresh perspective, and open up new approaches to education on strategy development and implementation. For example, business and consultant perspectives of business education, needs, and approaches are welcome.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

Proposals (5-7 pages, for paper and panel sessions)

Only original, unpublished work is sought.

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: February 26, 2015

To learn more about the
SMS 35th Annual International Conference in Denver
and the submission process, please go to:
denver.strategicmanagement.net

Timeline:

February 26, 2015	Submission Deadline for Proposals
March 5, 2015	Co-Author Confirmation Deadline
Mid-April, 2015	Notifications of Program Review Committee Decisions
May 15, 2015	Presenter Registration Deadline
Mid-July, 2015	Conference Program Available Online
October 3- 6, 2015	SMS 35 th Annual International Conference in Denver

a professional society for the advancement of strategic management

The Strategic Management Society (SMS) is unique in bringing together the worlds of reflective practice and thoughtful scholarship. The Society consists of nearly 3,000 members representing over 80 different countries. Membership, composed of academics, business practitioners, and consultants, focuses its attention on the development and dissemination of insights on the strategic management process, as well as fostering contacts and interchange around the world.

The Society is probably best known through the Strategic Management Journal (SMJ) published by John Wiley & Sons. This Class A journal has become the leading scholarly publication in the field of Strategic Management and is consistently rated one of the top publications in the management area. In 2007 the Society launched the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal (SEJ) and in 2010 the Global Strategy Journal (GSJ). The intent is for these new quarterly publications to soon also become Class A journals and to promote the development and dissemination of advances in the field by maintaining the highest standards of intellectual thought combined with practical relevance, just as their sister publication SMJ has done for many years.



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