**The nuts and bolts of writing a theory paper: A practical guide to getting started**

**EXERCISES**

**Exercise 1: Paths to making a theoretical contribution**

Identify the primary path that you intend to use to make a theory contribution

* Developing new theory

X Challenging or enhancing existing theory

* Synthesizing divergent ideas or literatures into fresh theory
* Improving the process of theory development

**Explain:**

The focus is the theory of the long-term function of the marketing funnel.

This is not a new theory. We are also not improving theory development process. While we are synthesizing divergent ideas and theories but it’s not a fresh theory. However, we are enhancing and challenging aspects of existing theory. In particular, we are challenging how research often treats the marketing funnel as short-term. We are enhancing the existing theory concerning user behavior within the marketing funnel in terms of their interactions with advertisers by delving into the aspects of user behavior and understanding how these behaviors change over the long-term. The enhancement concerns understanding the longer-term aspects of user behavior with regard to their relationship with advertisers.

We also theorize that actions within the marketing funnel are a function of demographics. We argue that particular demographics behave differently in the marketing funnel. The most pronounced difference might occur via age, but location, time of year, device type, and even industries might affect the change of user behavior over time.

This second aprimary path enhances the existing knowledge concerning user behavior in the marketing funnel by exploring its implications in the real-world and studying the differing social analytics among diverse groups.

**Taxonomy of Contributions to Theory:**

**Research Questions Synthesized**: Why do users respond with increased engagement to advertisements? Over the long-term, does an ongoing phenomenon of influence exist? To what extent do users realize the ongoing relationship they have with advertisers? How do different slices within social media behave differently toward advertisements?

**Modes of theorizing (how)**

- we move from behavior toward reasoning. I think this is inductive.

- whereas most theories reason about why the advertiser might act, though it is not as practical.

- our model seeks to handle variance rather than describe the process of conversion.

**Levels of Analysis (who) and phenomenon (where):**

* New level of analysis for the marketing funnel
* Question the validity of the existing models of the marketing funnel.

**Cause of Mechanisms (why?)**

* Effect of advertisements
* The effect of branding in moderating user interactions
* The moderating effect of relationship between a brand and member for accelerating future behavior.

**Constructs/Variables (what?)**

* Validity concerning the current marketing funnel construct
* Clarify the marketing funnel’s operations
* Less outcome focused and more process focused
* Estimate variables such as relationship, brand, and user interest.

**Boundary Conditions (when?)**

* Looking at splices in how audience behavior changes based on demographics.
* Exposte inconsistencies in existing theories on the marketing funnel
* Expose that existing theories do not explain user behavior (maybe).

**Outcome:**

* Conjoin existing theories, more specific theory about user behavior.
* Providing details on theories that need further fleshing out, such as the phenomenon of branding and its moderating effect on user behavior.
* A better delineation of the marketing funnel and its primary variables for velocity and acceleration of the advertiser-user relationship.

Search for at least two published AMR articles that have used the same path that you intend to use and are similar to what you intend to do such that they may serve as exemplar articles to guide your theory development process.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167811621000495>, 2022, long-term effects of the marketing funnel.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11002-011-9136-3> , 2011, looks at emails.

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Beatriz-Casais/publication/357746605_Digital_Content_Marketing_Conceptual_Review_and_Recommendations_for_Practitioners/links/61dd81d7034dda1b9eeda0be/Digital-Content-Marketing-Conceptual-Review-and-Recommendations-for-Practitioners.pdf> , 2022, looks at recommendations for practitioners.

Carefully examine the two exemplar articles and identify elements of each that are relevant to what you intend to do.

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| --- | --- |
| **Exemplar 1** | **Exemplar 2** |
| TODO: what elements that are relevant to my intention. | TODO: what elements that are relevant to my intention. |
| **Relevant elements, lessons, insights and conventions** | **Relevant elements, lessons, insights and conventions** |
|  |  |

**Exercise 2: Theory building apparatus**

This exercise draws on key ideas conveyed in the following article:

Makadok, R., Burton, R., & Barney, J. (2018). A practical guide for making theory contributions in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, *39*(6), 1530-1545.

Please refer to this article if you need guidance in responding to the prompts below.

**Complete the following statements as best you can:**

|  |
| --- |
| **The research question I seek to address is …** |
| How does user behavior vary within the marketing funnel when studied at longer durations? |
| **The primary modes of theorizing I will adopt are …** |
| Not sure on the modes, remember to list these later. |
| **The primary level of analysis for my theorizing is …** |
| User engagement |
| **The phenomenon that I am interested in is …** |
| Take a more granular look into how user behavior differs by demographics.  Understanding what are the long-term aspects of the marketing funnel. |
| **The primary causal mechanisms underlying relationships in my theorizing are …** |
| * Time; to observe less obvious, long-term user behaviors over time that vary. * Separating data by demographic, observing how existing behaviors, e.g., velocity, and engagement changes. |
| **The core constructs or variables in my theorizing include …** |
| * Impressions, clicks, shares, comments, likes, velocity. |
| **The boundary conditions of my proposed theory are …** |
| * Need to only include normative behaviors of users * New behaviors need to be significantly different enough to point out, such as a difference of one standard deviation. |
| **The output of my theorizing will be …** |
| Faceted understanding of which aspects of the marketing funnel shift when considering its long-term aspects.  Understanding of how movement within the marketing funnel is a function of demographics. |

**Exercise 3: Theoretical background and foundation**

1. Identify 2 to 4 foundational literatures for your theorizing
2. For each foundational literature, identify 3 to 5 critical references
3. For each foundational literature, identify the key insights from that literature that serve as input for your theorizing

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| --- | --- |
| **Foundational Literature 1** | **Foundational Literature 2** |
|  |  |
| **Critical References** | **Critical References** |
|  |  |
| **Key Insights** | **Key Insights** |
|  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Foundational Literature 3** | **Foundational Literature 4** |
|  |  |
| **Critical References** | **Critical References** |
|  |  |
| **Key Insights** | **Key Insights** |
|  |  |

**Exercise 4: Theory development**

This exercise draws on key ideas conveyed in the following article:

Cornelissen, J. (2017). Editor's comments: Developing propositions, a process model, or a typology? Addressing the challenges of writing theory without a boilerplate. *Academy of Management Review*, *42*(1), 1-9.

Please refer to this article if you need guidance in responding to the prompts below.

You can also watch a short video about this article at: <https://youtu.be/iCHa_ZtdxDs> (11 mins)

1. Identify your intended primary style of theorizing and briefly explain your choice:
   * + Proposition
     + Narrative
     + Typology

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| **Explain** |
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1. Draw a figure (or construct a table) that represents the essence of your theory at this stage of development

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| **Draw** |
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1. Share your figure (table) with someone else and see if they can grasp the essence of your theory from your drawing

**Exercise 5A: Theory paper introduction**

This exercise draws on key ideas conveyed in the following article:

Lange, D., & Pfarrer, M. D. 2017. Editor’s comments: Sense and structure – the core building blocks of an AMR article. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(3): 407-416

Please refer to this article if you need guidance in responding to the prompts below.

Jot down some bullet point notes in response to the following:

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| --- |
| *Para 1*  **Common Ground: *From prior research we know that…*** |
|  |
| *Para 2*  **Complication: *Yet a complication comes about because…*** |
|  |
| *Para 3*  **Concern: *This complication is of concern because...*** |
|  |
| *Para 4*  **Course of Action: *The course of action to address this concern entails...*** |
|  |
| *Para 5*  **Contribution: *This paper contributes to the literature by...*** |
|  |

**Exercise 5B: Theory paper introduction**

This exercise draws on key ideas conveyed in the following article:

Barney, J. 2018. Editor’s comments: Positioning a theory paper for publication. *Academy of Management Review*, 43(3): 345-348.

Please make reference to this article if you need guidance in responding to the prompts below.

Jot down some bullet point notes in response to the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Para 1** | **Line 1: *This is the conversation I want to join…*** |  |
| **Para 1** | **rest of paragraph: *I have been listening to this conversation and these are its main elements…*** |  |

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| **Para 2** | **Line 1: *However an unresolved theoretical issue in the conversation is…*** |  |
| **Para 2** | **rest of paragraph: *The reasons for writing a new theory paper include*…** |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Para 3** | **Line 1: *The purpose of this paper is to*…** |  |
| **Para 3** | **rest of paragraph: *The paper will pursue this purpose as follows*…** |  |

**Exercise 6: Discussion and conclusion**

1. Map out key elements of your discussion
   * + - Summary
       - Theoretical contributions
       - Practical contributions
       - Opportunities for future research
       - Conclusion

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Summary** | **Theoretical Contributions** |
|  |  |
| **Practical Contributions** | **Opportunities for Future Research** |
|  |  |
| **Conclusion** | |
|  | |

**Exercise 7: Abstract and paper title development**

**Create a 5-sentence abstract using the prompts below:**

**Sentence 1 - Common Ground:** *From prior research we know that…*

**Sentence 2 - Complication:** *Yet a complication comes about because…*

**Sentence 3 - Concern:** *This complication is of concern because...*

**Sentence 4 - Course of Action:** *The course of action to address this concern entails...*

**Sentence 5 - Contribution:** *This paper contributes to the literature by...*

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| **Abstract** |
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**Create a paper title:**

* Draw inspiration from prior titles that have captured your attention
* Will a reader see your title and be curious enough to read the abstract?
* Does your title make sense given your abstract and theory paper?
* Will search engines connect your paper to the types of readers you want to attract?

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| **Title** |
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