



Cornell University

Getting Published: An Editors View

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Selecting an Angle

- ▶ Finding a way to fit your work into the literature
- ▶ Three types of papers get published
 - Hot topics
 - ▶ E.g. environmental damage from oil spills
 - ▶ Much like news – need to be an ambulance chaser
 - ▶ Short citation life, but reputation builder
 - Filling a hole
 - ▶ X and Y complain of needing a technique to measure Z, here it is
 - ▶ Wealth as a proxy for risk aversion
 - Starting (or continuing) an argument
 - ▶ Show weaknesses in previous research
 - ▶ Estimates do not reconcile data

Slicing it Up

- ▶ Find the right way to pitch what you have done
- ▶ You want general appeal
 - Journals want readers and citations
- ▶ Others working in similar topics is a good thing
 - Provides ready reviewers
 - Find ways to differentiate your work within the area
- ▶ Your pitch will determine reviewers
 - Some literatures are more friendly or open than others

Research Strategy

- ▶ For tenure, you need a portfolio of research on an upward trajectory
- ▶ The Akerlof strategy
 - He didn't start out as a research success
 - Persistence paid off – one of the best published and most cited economists of all times
 - He is one of the most humble and enthusiastic mentors
 - Second year macro requirement
 - ▶ He taught us his method of moving forward
 - ▶ This is what he had learned that made him productive

The Akerlof Strategy

► Read

- Read about 1 hour a day (one article)
- Get to know your literature
- QJE, AER, JPE, Econometrics, AJAE, JDE, JEEM
- Choose a topic that interests you
- As you read
 - Question the assumptions of what you are reading
 - What are the implications for other contexts
 - Are there unanswered questions

The Akerlof Strategy Cont.

- ▶ Keep a journal
 - Write questions you have while you are reading
 - Spend one hour each week writing down research ideas
 - ▶ Partial ideas
 - ▶ Questions from your readings
 - ▶ Data needs
 - ▶ Theories to use

Selecting an Outlet

- ▶ You want the highest impact outlet (impact factor measures citation rates)
- ▶ Look at Journal Citation Reports
 - Journal of Political Economy – 4.190
 - Quarterly Journal of Economics – 3.688
 - Econometrica – 2.972
 - Review of Economic Studies – 2.539
 - American Economic Review – 2.239
 - Journal of Econometrics – 1.990
 - Journal of Environmental Economics and Management – 1.438
 - American Journal of Agricultural Economics – 1.034
 - Journal of Development Economics – 0.912
 - Economic Inquiry – 0.535
 - Southern Economic Journal – 0.463

Selecting an Outlet

- ▶ Type of Journal – topic must fit with the journal
 - General journals look for something with wide appeal
 - Field journals look for appeal within a field
 - Have they published similar articles?
 - What journals do you cite in your paper?
- ▶ Prestige of Journal – How innovative, or widely important
- ▶ Timing – Generally 3 months for review
 - Longer at some (JDE, many general journals)
 - Desk rejections are a good thing
 - Can take more than a year to go through the whole process

Submitting

- ▶ Journals are attracted to pieces that look like they fit
 - Use their formatting rules when submitting
 - Make sure the level of rigor is appropriate
 - Is the literature review similar to others within the journal
- ▶ Tables and figures should stand alone
- ▶ Explain everything you have done clearly

Writing

- ▶ Note writing styles as you read
 - Intro is short and draws the reader into the topic – why is it interesting or important?
 - Write compactly – eliminate unnecessary wording
 - Shorter papers have a higher probability of being published
 - ▶ Usually try to keep it to 30 pages double spaced including figures and tables
- ▶ Provide a clear example of what you are talking about
- ▶ Intro and conclusion should read stand alone
- ▶ Eliminate unnecessary jargon
- ▶ Define terms that you use
- ▶ Use proper English

Preparing a Manuscript

- ▶ Most papers go through several drafts prior to submission
 - Ask profs or friends to read and comment
 - Present it at meetings
 - Send it to an expert in the field for comments
- ▶ Take whatever feedback you get and modify
- ▶ You may not get much feedback, but you may win over some potential reviewers
- ▶ Don't make outrageous claims
 - We are the first to ...
 - Instead say we contribute to the literature by ...

Get the Reviewers You Want

- ▶ Reviewers are generally selected from your citations
 - Cite people who are familiar with your paper and have been positive
 - Cite those who may agree with your work
 - Be positive when criticizing the work of another
- ▶ Agree with the referees, even when you don't
 - Always state a proactive response – don't be combative
 - If you cannot do what the reviewer asks, give reasons
 - Complement the reviewer for the improvements they make to your paper

Rejection

- ▶ When you submit to a top general journal, you should expect to be rejected
 - Still a good idea to submit
 - Rejections will often give you a clue as to what needs to be improved, and where the article will fit
 - ▶ Fit, writing, wrong
- ▶ If you get rejected from lower tier journals, you may have more serious issues

Conclusion

- ▶ Always work on generating ideas
- ▶ Every good idea can get published in the right place
 - Go for a portfolio approach
 - Let the review process work for you
- ▶ Learn to write (admit you have a problem)
- ▶ Be entrepreneurial in developing relationships with more experienced researchers
 - Use their advice in submission process