

Call for Papers
Special Issue of the *Journal of Operations Management*

Managing the Marketing-Operations Interface in Omnichannel Retail

Background

For the better part of the past 50 years, the retail industry has not only been a significant contributor to the economy but also a leader in the design and development of advanced operational concepts. Operations management (OM) in retailing continues to represent a substantial area of potential research, particularly with the emergence of omnichannel retailing. The goal in omnichannel retailing is to conflate online and brick-and-mortar channels to provide a seamless service experience to consumers throughout their shopping journey. Omnichannel retailing continues to disrupt the management of operations in most retail segments (apparel, consumer electronics, grocery retail, DIY, etc.). It has also changed how traditional brick-and-mortar retailers like Wal-Mart or Macy's operate their store channels, as well as how pure-play online retailers like Amazon or Alibaba operate their online channels. Nevertheless, academic research addressing operational challenges in the omnichannel context is scarce.

Successful omnichannel operations rely on integrating the objectives of both marketing and operations. Overall, the interface between the marketing and operations disciplines is more pronounced in omnichannel settings because, for example, operations is in (more) direct contact with the consumer (e.g., order in one channel, fulfillment in the other). Moreover, omnichannel retailing gives consumers access to a wider range of product selection, ordering, payment, delivery, and return options, making operational excellence increasingly difficult and/or costly to achieve. Research is needed that addresses the interplay between these two disciplines – marketing and operations – to determine how consumer choice of products, delivery service offerings, and channel selection, among others, influence retail operational performance.

We therefore seek papers that address the considerable operational challenges that exist when competing within an omnichannel context. Submissions that merely describe the omnichannel phenomena are insufficient. Instead, we welcome papers that focus specifically on managing the interface between marketing and operations in omnichannel retailing.

Topics

We are open to any paper that addresses an OM research question within the omnichannel retail context. As noted above, we expect such questions will fall on the marketing-operations interface due to the characteristics of omnichannel retailing. Topics of particular relevance include e-fulfillment operations, last-mile logistics, returns management, assortment planning, or demand management. A list of potential research question follows:

- *E-Fulfillment Operations*: Capacity planning in fulfillment largely deals with workforce planning. Demand is sometimes seasonal but typically differs by day of the week and even by moment in the day (e.g., we shop online in the evening). Simultaneously, late order cut-off times leave less time for order processing, shipping, and delivery. How can fulfillment operations be organized and planned to account for these changes given the varying delivery requirements of consumers? How can marketing and operations activities be used to smooth demand across channels?
- *Last-Mile Logistics*: Integrated pickup and distribution routing with time slot deliveries is a significant managerial challenge. How should last mile delivery networks be organized? Is there any difference between rural and urban delivery networks? How can crowdshipping initiatives help? What are options to optimize jointly the pricing of time windows and vehicle routing?
- *Returns Management*: Because of lenient return policies, some retailers (e.g., Zalando) experience returns of 50% or more of their shipments. The area of product returns is of growing interest, though the number of studies on product return focusing on consumer behavior in omnichannel retailing is limited. How should product returns be integrated in warehouse and transportation processes? How can marketing activities be employed to reduce returns? *JOM* recently published a [literature review on product returns](#).
- *Assortment Planning*: Assortment decisions are a relatively under-researched area compared to, e.g., stocking decisions. Because of a decoupling of the place where customers shop and where inventory is located, the economics of omnichannel assortment decisions change drastically compared to traditional retail. In omnichannel ecosystems the role of channels is changing and may vary across customers. For instance, customers could search online and then buy in store (webrooming), or, conversely, browse the store to buy online (showrooming). How should retailers best allocate products and inventories to the different channels? What products benefit most from being viewed in a store than online in terms of increased revenues and/or reduced returns? To what extent should the retailer move inventory closer to the customer (shops)? What opportunities remain for pooling stock? How can dynamic prices and revenue management techniques contribute to optimal cross-channel coordination of assortment and inventory?
- *Demand Management*: Omnichannel retailers not only offer more delivery and return options but also have more opportunities to differentiate prices than traditional retailers, giving rise to new ways to increase revenue. What are appropriate service levels and prices and what does that mean for supply chain design options? Other questions may pertain to understanding customer demand: What determines the heterogeneity in consumer demand domestically and internationally, and what is the impact of this heterogeneity on omnichannel supply chains?

We welcome empirical papers, as well as modeling papers grounded in field-based observations, that fulfill *JOM*'s requirements. All empirical research approaches are welcome, including laboratory or field experiments, surveys, secondary data analyses (utilizing methods from statistics or computer science), case studies, or empirical validation/refinement of analytical results.

Regardless of the methodological approach, all papers should be rigorously executed and highly relevant to practicing managers, providing clearly actionable insights into the operational management of omnichannel retailing.

Deadlines

- Beginning of submissions: September 1, 2020
- **EXTENDED Deadline for submissions: February 28, 2021**
- Initial (first-round) decisions: March 31, 2021

Manuscripts should conform to the instructions given in the Guide for Authors for the *Journal of Operations Management*

(<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/18731317/homepage/author-guidelines>).

Guest Editors



Nicole DeHoratius is an expert in the management of retail operations. As a faculty member of the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, she has published in leading journals such as *Management Science*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *California Management Review*. The Manufacturing & Service Operations Management (M&SOM) Society awarded her its Best Paper Award for the article "Retail Inventory Management When Records Are Inaccurate" (coauthored with Adam Mersereau and

Linus Schrage).

Nicole's industry projects include work with Fred Meyer, McDonald's, Procter & Gamble, Staples, Target, Ulta Beauty, and Walmart, among others. For her work with Hugo Boss (coauthored with Nathan Craig and Ananth Raman), Nicole received the Ralph Gomory 2016 Best Industry Studies Award. She serves as the Past-President of the Production and Operations Management (POM) Society's College of Supply Chain Management, an associate editor for JOM and MSOM, and a department editor for POM.

Nicole received her D.B.A from Harvard Business School, her M.Sc. from the University of Sussex as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, and her A.B., magna cum laude, from Harvard College. She joined Chicago Booth in 2001 and since then has taught operations management, service operations, and supply chain management to executives in programs and companies around the globe. For exemplifying the characteristics students most value in their professors, Nicole earned the 2015 and 2016 Rotman School of Management Teaching Award.



Sander de Leeuw is Professor of Logistics and Operations Management at the School of Business and Economics of Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, and a Professor of Supply Chain Management at Nottingham Business School at Nottingham Trent University (UK). He obtained his M.Sc. in Industrial Engineering & Management Sciences (cum laude) and his PhD in Operations Management from Eindhoven University of Technology.

Sander has held academic positions at MIT's Center for Technology, Policy and Industrial Development, at Babson College and at Eindhoven University of Technology. He worked for almost 10 years as a management consultant at among others KPMG.

Sander's latest research has been published in a variety of outlets, including *Journal of Operations Management*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Supply Chain Management: an International Journal*, *Transportation Research Part E*, *International Journal of Logistics Management*, *Journal of Business Logistics*, and *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*. He serves as a senior associate editor for the *International Journal of Logistics Management* and has guest-edited special issues for the *International Journal of Operations and Production Management* and the *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*.



Alexander Hübner is a Full Professor for Value and Supply Chain Management at the Technical University of Munich. He obtained his Diploma in Business Administration (logistics specialization) and his Ph.D. in Operations Management from Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, both cum laude.

Before joining TUM, he was head of the Institute of Supply Chain Management at the European Business School, Germany, Associate Professor at the MIT Logistics Centre of the University of Luxembourg and Assistant Professor for Operations Management at the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. His latest research has been published in *Production and Operations Management*, *European Journal of Operational Research*, *Transportation Science*, *Omega*, *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, and *Operations Management Research*.

He serves as a reviewer for several top journals in marketing, management, operations management, and operations research. He is also the co-coordinator of the EURO working group in Retail Operations and organizes the retail stream at the EURO conferences since 2009. He is Editor-in-Chief of Logistics Research and served as guest editor for the special issue on Retail Operations in *OR Spectrum* and Omnichannel Operations at *European Journal of Operational Research*.

Before his academic career, he worked for 10 years in the industry as business planner in Operations Management and as consultant. Alexander worked as project manager at McKinsey & Company and consulted retail and consumer goods clients across the globe in sales, marketing and supply chain questions. He is member of the academic council of the German Logistics Association.



Robert P. Rooderkerk is Associate Professor of Operations Management at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He obtained his M.Sc. in Econometrics (logistics specialization) from Erasmus University Rotterdam and his Ph.D. in Marketing from Tilburg University, both cum laude.

His research addresses challenges on the Marketing-Operations interface, with an emphasis on (omnichannel) assortments and product lines. His work has been published in *Customer Needs and Solutions*, *European Journal of Operational Research*, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, *Marketing Letters*, and *Marketing Science*. Robert is the recipient of the Dutch Marketing Science Award, a finalist for the *JMR* best paper (Paul E Green) award, and a finalist for the Dutch Insights Scientist of the Year 2019 Award.

He serves as a reviewer for several top journals in marketing, management, operations management, and operations research. His research has been covered by national and international newspapers (Algemeen Dagblad, Laatste Nieuws, Standaard, and Volkskrant), Dutch radio (BNR and VARA Kassa Radio) and tv (Teleac Hoe?Zo!), the Dutch Consumer Reports magazine, and BBC's Capital blog. He is the coordinator of the Analytical and Behavioral Operations Management cluster at RSM.

He regularly advises companies on matters including assortment and product line optimization, marketing research, and the effective use of digital and social media. He is also a popular speaker on these topics. Between April 2009 and January 2012 he served on the academic board of the NYC based Marketing Productivity Group. He is a member of the Board of Scientific Advisors of In4mation Insights (US) and a Scientific Advisor to Abbi Insights (The Netherlands).