

Research

■ The World Is More Helpful Than You Think

While many people recognize that it's sometimes necessary to ask for help, they most often underestimate how easily that help will come, say Frank Flynn, associate professor of organizational behavior at the Stanford Graduate School of Business in Cali-

found that participants consistently overestimated by 50 percent the number of people they would have to ask before their request would be fulfilled.

Those results were replicated in a real-world scenario that involved volunteers for Team in Training, a division of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Volunteers,

who receive training for endurance sports events in exchange for fund raising for the society, were asked to estimate the number of people they thought they would have to solicit to reach their fund-raising goals and the average donation they expected. In this case, too, volunteers predicted they would have to approach 50 percent more people than they actually did, and they underestimated the average actual donation they received by \$17.

The researchers found that those asking for help often fail to understand the

motivations of potential helpers. Many people, they say, feel a social obligation to be benevolent. However, the request has to be direct and personal. Flynn and Lake found people were less successful in receiving help when using indirect means. In another study, for instance, participants overestimated the number of people who would assist them when they indicated their need for help with a look rather than a direct verbal request. And in another, par-

ticipants overestimated the number of people who would respond when handed a questionnaire that included a written request to fill it out.

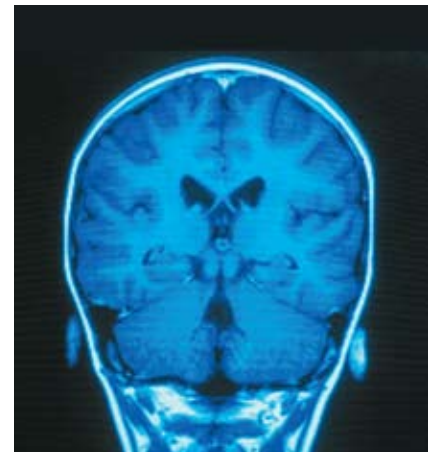
"People seem to miscalculate how willing others are to say yes to direct requests," says Flynn. "People are more willing to help than you think, and that can be important to know when you're trying to get the resources you need to get a job done."

Their paper, "If you need help, just ask: Underestimating compliance with direct requests for help," was published in the July 2008 issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

■ Brain Scans Reveal Cultural Preferences

Brain scans may not be able to tell whether a person is lying, but they can tell what cultural traditions a person prefers. That's the finding of cross-disciplinary research that involved Karen Walch, a professor who teaches crosscultural negotiation at the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale, Arizona.

Walch's research team included 15 medical science academics who



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fornia, and Vanessa Lake, a psychology doctoral student at Columbia University in New York.

In two studies, Flynn and Lake directed participants to estimate how many strangers they thought would comply with a range of requests for help—to lend a cell phone, fill out a questionnaire, or find the campus gym, for instance. Then, participants were instructed to make those requests of people in campus settings. The researchers

work in the areas of brain imaging and cognitive neuroscience. Their intent was to study how brain scans could help those in national security and military intelligence determine whether someone was lying. While their research indicated that brain scans could not be used to indicate deception, they did find something that could prove equally intriguing: that scans could indicate cultural preferences.

The researchers were able to create “brain maps” that revealed differences in people’s emotions, motivations, and hidden biases. Those differences, says Walch, are influenced by their cultural backgrounds.

While these hidden biases are certainly present, people can overcome them, says Walch. They just need the right training to work effectively across cultures.

“These preferences are not necessarily hardwired into the brain. Neuroscience has revealed that the brain has amazing plasticity,” she says. Even so, understanding how the brain works can help global managers realize the difficulties involved in crossing cultures effectively. “Learning new languages and attempting to switch cultural styles can often be difficult on an emotional and social level, even for global managers who know it’s possible.”

Walch hopes that this study and other neuroscience research can help global managers better understand their own cultural preferences. Then, they can adapt their behaviors in ways that help them become more successful linguists, communicators, and negotiators.

The report, “Emerging Cognitive Neuroscience and Related Technologies,” was published in August by the National Research Council.

FOCUS ON FACULTY

The Globalization of Business Research

Professors Charles Baden-Fuller and Vincent Mangematin argue that it’s time for business schools to rethink their research strategies.

The bulk of the world’s business research once came primarily from U.S. business schools—as much as 80 percent in 1992. That’s now changing, say Charles Baden-Fuller of Cass Business School in the United Kingdom and Vincent Mangematin of Grenoble Ecole de Management in France. They predict that academic research output from U.S. business schools will drop to less than 50 percent of all research generated worldwide by 2010.

Why? Globalization. As technol-

ogy continues to foster international collaboration, the shift away from the U.S. is almost inevitable, says Baden-Fuller. “People aren’t interested in studying just U.S. companies, but companies all over the world,” Baden-Fuller says. “That means that the competitive advantage of non-U.S. faculty is increasing. And that means that U.S. researchers will have to engage in more international travel to keep up.”

To measure just how pronounced this trend has become, Baden-Fuller



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and Mangematin created one of the largest databases ever amassed to track business school research. It includes 65,480 articles published in 149 journals from 1992 to 2005. The articles were generated by 58,418 authors from 8,040 business schools. Mangematin spent three years compiling and cleaning the data, which he believes will shed more light on how “organizations are competing for knowledge creation.”

In their study, the researchers found that the U.S.’s share of research is declining at a rate of approximately 1.5 percent each year. They note that their findings should serve as a wake-up call to U.S. research institutions. In the U.S., says Mangematin, there are a limited number of universities creating PhD-level scholarship, and their methods are often rigid and expensive. “The U.S. model tends not to use teams of postdoctoral students,” he says. “European institutions, on the other hand, use large labs of postdoctoral students and specialized researchers.” That more flexible model allows institutions outside the U.S. to produce world-class research at lower cost.

The researchers argue that, to stay competitive in business research, all business schools will have to adopt an integrated approach in the ways they train researchers and conduct research. That is, they will need to combine the global emphasis on creativity and flexibility with the U.S. empha-

sis on robust training, intellectual curiosity, and the desire to work independently.

In their next study, the pair plans to examine the effects globalization and technology promise to have on academic research. For instance, most business schools now compete to produce general knowledge in management. However, Baden-Fuller and Mangematin predict that many business schools will choose to pursue increasingly specialized

research niches. “With the entry of new players, the rules of the game may change,” says Mangematin. “Specialization strategies may be sustainable as the size of the market increases.”

The researchers also predict that newer methods of research proliferation and evaluation will lead to new ways of evaluating the impact of research. For example, the value of an article might be measured not only by its appearance in peer-reviewed journals, but also by the number of times it is downloaded

online from sources such as Google Scholar and the Social Sciences Research Network. “In five years, I think we’ll see even more sophisticated ways of measuring research productivity, which will create an entirely new debate,” says Baden-Fuller.

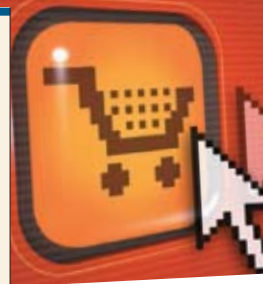
Their current paper, “Global Contests in the Production of Business Knowledge: Regional Centres and Individual Business Schools,” was published in a recent issue of *Long Range Planning*.



Charles Baden-Fuller



Vincent Mangematin



Amar Cheema

Surcharges Matter To Shoppers

Online retailers who offer a sale-priced item with over-the-top shipping and handling charges, beware: You might be losing more sales than you think. In the past, consumers may have failed to account for these charges in their decisions, but no more, says Amar Cheema, assistant professor of marketing at the Olin School of Business at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, in a paper published in the June 2008 issue of *The Journal of Consumer Research*.

For his paper “Surcharges and Seller Reputation,” Cheema examined four studies that incorporated information about the pricing data of online sellers, catalogs, and service providers. He looked at the effect of surcharges on buyers’ decisions in two situations: first, when sellers added surcharges to the cost of the item; and second, when sellers included surcharges in the base price. Cheema found that whether or not a buyer was likely to pay the surcharges depended heavily on how much trust that buyer placed in the seller’s reputation.

For example, one study examined eBay auctions of DVD trilogies from low-, middle-, and high-reputation sellers. Among low-reputation eBay sellers with little feedback,

winning bids decreased by \$1.18 for every \$1 sellers added in surcharges. However, for mid- to high-reputation sellers, the surcharges had little to no effect on the amount of winning bids.

In his examination of this and other studies, Cheema concluded that high-reputation sellers would do better to add surcharges at checkout, while low-reputation sellers who do the same risk losing sales. The latter group should instead combine surcharges with the cost of the product or service in the base price.

UPCOMING & ONGOING

FUND FOR STARTUPS

Officials of the Purdue Research Foundation at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, have announced a new initiative that will provide financial support to help startup companies develop their research discoveries for commercialization. The Emerging Innovations Fund will provide \$1.5 million to support early-stage technologies through small, limited grants.

NEW STUDIES OF ACCOUNTING

Two accounting professors have each received \$100,000 in grant funding from the Institute of Management Accountants Foundation for Applied Research (FAR). Marc Epstein, distinguished research professor of management at Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Management in Houston, received a grant from FAR to support his investigation into how managers are making social, economic, and environmental trade-offs while simultaneously man-

Racial Bias and Leadership

Although many companies are trying to make their senior leadership more diverse, that message still has not changed the perceptions of average Americans: They, often subconsciously, expect leaders to be white. That was the result of a study by Ashleigh Shelby Rosette of Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, Geoffrey Leonardelli of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, and Katherine Phillips of Northwestern

University's Kellogg School of Management. V. Kumar, ING Chair Professor and executive director of the ING Center for Financial Services at the University of Connecticut School of Business in Storrs, also received a grant. Kumar will explore ways that managers can bridge the gap between marketing and finance/management accounting and develop a framework to measure and maximize customer lifetime value.

ECONOMICS INITIATIVE

BB&T Corporation has donated \$500,000 to the department of economics and finance at the College of Charleston in South Carolina to support the Initiative for Public Choice and Market Process. In a ten-year effort to explore free enterprise and political economy, the initiative will include a course that examines the moral and ethical foundations of capitalism, a speaker series, an award for best student investigative paper on the foundations of a capitalistic economy, and grants to support research studies in the areas of public choice and free enterprise.



University's Kellogg School of Management.

For their paper, "The White Standard: Racial Bias in Leader Categorization," the researchers asked 943 undergraduate and graduate students with work experience to review fictitious newspaper clippings and performance reviews. The students were asked to evaluate fictitious CEOs, project leaders, and division leaders. Even when told that the racial composition of this group of leaders was 80 percent African American, Hispanic, or Asian, students consistently assumed that leaders were white when an individual leader's race was not disclosed.

When a leader's race was disclosed, students indicated that white leaders were more likely to exhibit the traditional characteristics of a leader—such as successful performance—than was a leader of another race. Students also rated a white leader as being more effective than a minority leader, even when the information indicated that both had achieved the same level of success.

The researchers found no relation between the race of the study participants and their responses. "Our results challenge a common explanation for racial bias—that people who are white give preferential treatment to other people who are white," Leonardelli says. "That Americans of all races associate successful leadership with being white demonstrates just how embedded this bias can be."

This study has special relevance to the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign, in which Barack Obama became the first African American to be nominated by a major political party. “He does not match the leader prototype,” says Rosette, who predicts that Obama will continue to confront challenges in his campaign—and during his presidency, if elected—as a result.

The study was published in the July issue of the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

■ More Fuel-Friendly Road Trips

When it comes to getting from Point A to Point B, most drivers think more about how quickly they will arrive than how much fuel they will consume. But as fuel prices rise and

environmental concerns loom larger, a professor at the Cranfield School of Management in the United Kingdom thinks there might be a more fuel-efficient way to plan a driving route.

Andrew Palmer, a professor at Cranfield’s Centre for Logistics and Supply Chain Management, has developed the Vehicle Routing Emissions Analysis Model (VREAM), a computer-based vehicle routing model that calculates not only the time and distance a car travels to get to a given destination, but also the amount of carbon dioxide it emits.

VREAM uses a digitized road network that contains predicted traffic volumes. It then uses available driving cycle data, which reflect acceleration and deceleration patterns, and applies formulas that optimize speed



flow. In this way, the model is able to choose roads on which a vehicle can maintain optimum speeds and offer alternative routes that ease congestion, decrease

fuel consumption, and reduce CO₂ emissions.

Palmer notes that he created the model not to test mathematical theories, but to “produce a pioneering basis for routing, which will provide new information and knowledge about how CO₂ emissions vary for different minimization and congestion criteria.” So far, Palmer’s research has shown that drivers who follow VREAM-generated routes can reduce their fuel consumption and emissions by more than 5 percent, providing drivers with another way to reduce their fuel costs—and their impact on the environment.

RESEARCH RECOGNITIONS

■ **Lan Luo**, assistant professor of marketing at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and P.K. Kannan and Brian Ratchford, associate professor and professor of marketing, respectively, at the University of Maryland in College Park, have won the John D.C. Little Award from the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences. They received the award for their paper, “New Product Development Under Channel Acceptance,” published in the March/April issue of *Marketing Science*.

■ *The Tax Adviser*, a publication of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, has named **Lawrence Witner**, accounting professor

at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, as the winner of its 2007 Best Article Award. Witner received the award for his two-part article, “Treatment of Capitalized Costs of Intangible Assets,” which appeared in the publication’s 2007 April and May issues.

■ **Candida Brush**, a professor at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, was inducted into the 21st-century Entrepreneurship Research Fellows, a group formed by the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers. Brush is the Paul T. Babson Chair in Entrepreneurship, chair of the entrepreneurship division at the Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship, and a founding member of the Diana Project International, a research collaborative

of scholars who study growth and financing strategies of women entrepreneurs worldwide. Fellows are chosen because their work is viewed to have a positive and ongoing impact on entrepreneurship research.

■ **Gerald Zaltman**, the Joseph C. Wilson Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus, at the Harvard Business School in Boston, Massachusetts, has received the sixth annual Buck Weaver Award for Marketing. Established by the MIT Sloan School of Management in 2003 and sponsored by General Motors, the award recognizes individuals who have made important contributions to the advancement of theory and practice in marketing science. Zaltman’s research focuses on customer behavior and marketing strategy. **Z**