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# **A Vision for Responsible Research in Business and Management**

## **-Striving for Credible and Useful Knowledge**

A White Paper Co-Authored by the Community for  
Responsible Research in Business and Management

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# White Paper Content

## (Consultation Draft RRBM.NETWORK)

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Executive Summary

Vision 2030

Background

Principles of Responsible Science

Actors and Possible Actions

Current Research Eco-system

Science for a Better World

# Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management

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## **Accounting and Finance**

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## **Management**

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## **Marketing**

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## **Operations Management**

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## **Deans**

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## **Institutions**

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# Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management

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16 senior scholars, 8 deans and 3 institutional supporters

5 business disciplines, 23 universities and 10 countries

Collectively, they are:

- Intellectual leaders of their fields
- Lead journal editors and association leaders
- Disciplinarily and regionally diversified

**White paper on RRBM.NETWORK**

# What is Responsible Research in Business and Management?

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- Responsible research produces **credible and reliable** knowledge with either direct or indirect **usefulness** for addressing problems important to both business and society
- Based on the belief that “**business can be a means for a better world**”
- White paper: What, How, Who, Why, and So What?
  - System level change on the research ecosystem

# Vision 2030

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**“In 2030, business and management schools worldwide are ...produc[ing] well-grounded knowledge on pressing problems. Both schools and scholars are committed to the *principles of responsible research*... Research has helped ... to develop effective systems leading to high economic performance, great innovations, positive employee and customer wellbeing, a clean environment, and strong communities. Many schools have contributed valuable knowledge to support humanity’s highest aspirations, e.g., poverty alleviation; access to food, clean water, and education; a green environment, gender and social equality; economic growth and fair wealth distribution...”**

# Background: Two Core Issues

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## Results - Credible, reliable and trustworthy

- Rigorous but not reliable – non-reproducible results
- Questionable research practices – threat to integrity

## Knowledge - relevant and useful for practice

- Topics of research very distant from practices or challenges in business and society
- Publication numbers and citation counts as primary measures of success

**“Without the assurance of credible research findings, the question of relevance is irrelevant”  
(white paper, p. 9)**

# Principles of Responsible Research

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1. *Service to society*
2. *Stakeholder involvement*
3. *Impact on diverse stakeholders*
4. *Valuing both basic and applied contributions*
5. *Valuing plurality and multidisciplinary collaboration*
6. *Reliable knowledge*
7. *Broad dissemination*

# Principles of Responsible Research

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## **1. Service to Society**

- *Business research aims to develop knowledge that benefits business and the broader society, locally and globally, for the ultimate purpose of creating a better world.*

## **2. Stakeholder Involvement**

- *Business and management schools value the involvement of stakeholders who play critical roles at various stages of the research process, from selecting problems to creating impact on practice.*

## **3. Impact on Diverse Stakeholders**

- *Business and management schools measure and reward research that has a positive impact on diverse stakeholders, especially recognizing the importance for business and society.*

# Principles of Responsible Research

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## **4. Value Both Basic and Applied Contributions**

- *Business school deans, journal editors, and other stakeholders respect and recognize contributions in both theoretical and applied research.*

## **5. Value Plurality and Multidisciplinary Collaboration**

- *Business school deans, senior leadership, ... value diversity in research themes, methods, forms of scholarship, types of inquiry, and especially interdisciplinary collaborative research to reflect the plurality and complexity of societal problems.*

## **6. Reliable Knowledge**

- *Business research implements sound scientific methods and processes, acknowledging different standards of reliability in deductive and inductive work.*

## **7. Broad Dissemination of Discoveries**

- *Business and management schools value diverse forms of knowledge dissemination that collectively advance basic knowledge and practice.*

# Principles of Responsible Research

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# Current Research Ecosystem: Persistent and Systemic Institutional Problems

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Entrenched and inter-twined norms, practices and incentive structures at all levels of the business school research ecosystem

B-school reputation based on faculty publications in journals defined as prestigious based on self-referential criteria

Within academics, rewards are clear and self-sustaining, but benefits to the public are not so clear

Pressure to conform – rankings and assessments - hard to change by any one group or any one school

# Actors and Possible Actions toward Vision 2030

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- 1. Journal editors and publishers*
- 2. Scholarly association leaders*
- 3. University and school leadership*
- 4. Business school associations and accreditation agencies*
- 5. Funding agencies and governments*
- 6. Scholars*
- 7. Other stakeholders: alumni, businesses, students*

# Possible Actions: Scholarly Groups

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## *1. Journal Editors and Publishers*

- a. Publish research important to business and society...
- b. Emphasize research context, phenomena...
- c. Publish replications, negative findings, and nonsignificant findings ....

## *2. Scholarly Association Leaders*

- a. Issue professional commitment...to a higher aim of service to society...
- b. Identify ...opportunities for research with impact...
- c. Promote applied and impactful research in their mission statements...
- d. Encourage inter-disciplinary research...

## *6. Scholars*

- a. Commit to pursue scholarship that contributes to ...
- b. Engage in responsible review of other scientists' manuscripts ....
- c. Follow the principles of responsible science in their roles as authors, reviewers, editors, educators, and evaluation committee members...

# Possible Actions: Other Groups

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## *3. Univ Leaders, Deans, Department Heads, Senior Scholars*

- a. Develop a vision ...
- b. Design promotion and tenure criteria....
- c. Expand the metrics for assessing research contributions ...
- d. Revamp the PhD program....

## *4. Business School Associations and Accrediting Agencies*

- a. Include impact of research in assessment standards...
- d. Share best practices...

## *5. Funding Agencies and Government*

- a. Broaden the criteria for funding decisions ...
- b. Expand the criteria for assessing research accomplishment...
- c. Funding agencies provide grants on studying grand challenges....

# What about the “Do Nothing” Option?

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## Falling behind on the educational mission

- “Fail to prepare students for the changing business landscape”.

## Slow to meet the challenges of technology, globalization and emerging markets

- New industries, new organizational forms, new work arrangements, negative externalities (inequality, un- and under-employment, sustainability)

## Legitimacy and survival of business schools at risk

- Global competition (140K business schools), declining enrollment, increasing cost, MOOCs, corporate universities, increasing call for impact, accountability and transparency, talent exit

# Call to Action

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**“Responsible  
research for better  
business and a  
better world.”**



# Current Initiatives to Improve Research Credibility

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Center for Open Science offers the Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) guidelines

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*SMJ* calls for repeatable results with emphasis on data accessibility and transparency

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*MOR* policies of replication, data accessibility and two stage review process (pre-approvals) to prevent the problem of post-hoc hypothesizing and cherry picking

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Also *JIBS*, *AER*, *OBHDP*, *SIOP*, *AEA*, etc.

# **Current Initiatives to Improve Research Usefulness**

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UK Research Excellence Framework 20% social impact

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UK Stern Report – 35% on social impact

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U.S. NSF funding criteria – science and social impact

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Journal initiatives: AMJ, JMkt, AMD, M&SOM, POMS

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Engaged research – e.g., Van de Ven co-production

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# RRBM Community: Current Actions and Future Ideas

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- Panel discussions at association meetings, university workshops and open forums
- Responsible research “jam”
- Deans and editors retreat
- Pioneer schools
- RRBM awards
- Accreditation standards
- Media publicity

# Discussion Questions

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- Is RRBM realistic?
- Is RRBM really good for science?
- What might be the downside of RRBM?
- Who or which groups should be added?
- Any other warning, advice, or suggestion?