

BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY, STEVEN POSTREL

2017

CONTACT:

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POSITIONS:

9/09-Present: Lecturer and Researcher, Merage School of Management, University of California at Irvine

9/07-8/09: Visiting Assistant Professor, Policy Department, Anderson Graduate School of Management, University of California at Los Angeles

9/00-8/07: Assistant Professor, Strategy and Entrepreneurship, Cox School of Business, Southern Methodist University

9/98-8/00: Lecturer and Researcher, Graduate School of Management, University of California at Irvine

9/95-8/98: Visiting Professor, Management & Strategy, Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University

9/94-8/95: Visiting Professor, Strategy, Graduate School of Management, University of California at Irvine.

9/86-8/94: Assistant Professor, Policy & Organization, Anderson Graduate School of Management, University of California at Los Angeles

EDUCATION:

PhD (Economics), 1988, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

A.B. (Economics), 1982, Princeton University

DISSERTATION:

Three Essays in Industrial Organization. Garth Saloner, chairman

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

- I am developing a comprehensive theory of how integration, the control of spillovers among agents' activities, affects organization output. The hallmark of this theory is that integration works primarily by preventing discrete failures of interaction. These failures have observable symptoms and stem from just four possible proximate causes ("impediments"). The methods used to develop the theory range from formal modeling to deep qualitative empirical work.

Findings to date include the substitutable relationship between specialist know-how and cross-domain understanding (with broad implications for team formation and capability development); the importance of knowledge gaps across specialties (e.g. design and manufacturing) in affecting design productivity; the high potential for wasted effort when groups or individuals must collaborate on multiple tasks, some of which involve complementary and some substitutable effort; and the importance of "official" goal clarity for project performance even if all agents are cooperative and there are no coordination problems. In addition, along with David Hoopes, I am developing novel empirical methods for precisely diagnosing the causes of instances of integration failure observed in real organizations.

- The strategy field's core concepts, notably competitive advantage and positioning, lack clear technical definitions and relationships. I have developed a rigorous framework for addressing this problem that is suitable both for research and teaching. The basic idea is that all profits come out of total gains from trade, or economic surplus, in a transaction. Competitive advantage of one firm over another in a given potential transaction is the difference in its surplus *creation* compared to the rival firm. It can be shown that this concept of competitive advantage, besides possessing a number of desirable features, is non-tautologically related to superior profits regardless of the level of price competition between the rivals. This framework for positioning analysis provides an essential foundation for the rigorous analysis of broader strategy topics, such as long-term capability development.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Economics of organization, including the role of knowledge specialization and integration under bounded rationality; economics of design processes; heterogeneity of firm structure and strategy; formal modeling of business strategy; retailing strategy.

PUBLICATIONS:

"Transaction Surplus Superiority in Canonical Market Segments: Using the Profit Map to Guide Positioning and Investment Choices Across Price-Rivalry Regimes," forthcoming (2018), *Strategic Management Journal*.

"Effective Management of Collective Design Processes," in *Managing Knowledge Integration Across Boundaries*, 2016, edited by F. Tell, C. Berggren, and A. Van de Ven. Oxford University Press.

"Multitasking Teams with Variable Complementarity: Exploring Impediments to Capability," *Academy of Management Review*, 2009, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 273-296.

(With Edward Fox and John Semple) "Optimal Category Pricing with Endogenous Store Traffic," *Marketing Science*, *Marketing Science*, Vol. 28, No. 4, July-August 2009, pp. 709-720

"Islands of Shared Knowledge: Specialization and Mutual Understanding in Problem-Solving Teams," *Organization Science*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 397-425, May-June 2002.

(With David Hoopes) "Shared Knowledge, 'Glitches,' and Product Development Performance," *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 20, pp. 837-865, Sept. 1999.

Review of *Games Businesses Play* (Ghemawat, 1998), *Academy of Management Review*, 1999.

"Burning Their Britches Behind Them: Can Policy Scholars Bank on Game Theory?," *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 12, Winter 1991 Special Issue. Reprinted in *Fundamental Issues in Strategy*, 1994, R. Rumelt, D. Schendel, D. Teece, editors.

(With Richard Rumelt) "Incentives, Routines, and Self-Command," *Industrial and Corporate Change*, Vol. 1, no. 3, pp.397-425, 1992.

"Competing Networks and Proprietary Standards: The Case of Quadraphonic Sound," *Journal of Industrial Economics*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp.169-185, December 1990.

SELECTED WORKING PAPERS AND WORK IN PROGRESS:

(With Edward Fox and Amanda McLaughlin) "The Impact of Retail Location on Retailer Revenues: An Empirical Investigation," working paper

(With David Hoopes) "Complex Capabilities & Goal Congruence: Science and Entrepreneurship," working paper

(With David Hoopes) "Professional Cultures as Resources: Adaptation and Conflict in an Entrepreneurial Firm," working paper

(With David Hoopes) "Impediments to Capability: an 'Engineering Science' Approach," working paper

(With David Croson) "Strategic Stretch and Modularity Management in Product Development," working paper in progress

"Organizational Complements and Substitutes: Separating Mix and Level," working paper in progress

"Who Makes the Rules?," working paper in progress

SELECTED CONFERENCES ATTENDED AS PRESENTER OR DISCUSSANT:

Academy of Management Annual Meetings (Multiple years)
Atlanta Competitive Advantage Conference (Multiple years)

Strategic Management Society Annual Meetings (Multiple years)
Washington University (Olin School) Entrepreneurship Conference 2007
BYU-Utah Strategy Conference (2005 and 2011)

SELECTED LOCATIONS OF INVITED TALKS:

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
INSEAD
Ohio State University Fisher School of Business
Rice University Jones Graduate School of Business
UC Berkeley Haas School of Management
UC Irvine Merage School of Management
UC Los Angeles Anderson School of Management
University of Illinois School of Business and Economics

SELECTED REFEREEING ACTIVITIES:

Management Science
The Quarterly Journal of Economics
The Rand Journal of Economics
Strategic Management Journal
Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization
Organization Science
Academy of Management Review
National Science Foundation
Oxford University Press
Organization Studies

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

PhD:

Game Theory and Business Strategy (UCLA)
Industrial Organization and Strategic Management (UCLA)
Modeling Techniques (UCLA)
Use of Knowledge in Organizations (UCLA)
Use of Knowledge in Organizations (UCI)
Economics of Strategy (UCI)

MBA, Fully Employed MBA, and Executive MBA:

Core strategic management (UCLA, UCI, Northwestern, SMU)
Corporate and international strategy (UCLA, SMU)
Global business (UCI)
Global strategy (UCI)
Economics (SMU)
Health Care Strategy (UCI)
Industry Dynamics (SMU)
Product Development Strategy (UCI)
Corporate Governance (UCI)

Undergraduate:

Introductory Microeconomics (MIT)

Management of the Total Enterprise/Strategic Management (SMU)