

## CALL FOR PAPERS: SPECIAL RESEARCH FORUM

### **GRAND CHALLENGES: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Grand Challenges are ambitious but achievable objectives that harness science, technology, and innovation to solve important national or global problems and that have the potential to capture the public's imagination (U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2014). The term "grand challenge" is credited to the mathematician, David Hilbert, whose list of important unsolved problems has encouraged innovation in mathematics research since the turn of the 20th century. Grand challenges have been identified in diverse fields, including in the natural sciences, engineering, and medicine. The idea of focusing on grand challenges was energized by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which, in 2003, identified fourteen Grand Challenges in Global Health, and invested over \$450 million to promote "big" ideas to address global issues. For organizations and management, urgent grand challenges include issues arising from environmental degradation and climate change (Howard-Grenville et al., 2014), the proliferation of big data (Haas, George & Pentland, 2014), social media and the digital economy, extended life expectancy and health (Kulik et al., 2014), poverty and social inequality, access to housing and the renewal of the built environment, and geopolitical instability, among many others.

The fundamental principles underlying a grand challenge are the pursuit of bold ideas and the adoption of less conventional approaches to tackling large, unresolved societal problems (Colquitt & George, 2011). This Special Research Forum (SRF) encourages research and solicits submissions that offer insights into the implications of grand challenges for management and organizations, including the "what" (i.e., concepts), "how" (new relationships, processes), "when" (new boundary conditions, contingencies) and "why" (new causal logics) of *organizing, managing, leading, and performing* grand challenges in society. These phenomena have the potential to change established approaches to building and leading organizations, employee motivation and aspiration, individual and corporate purpose, strategy, business models, governance, and organizational design and processes. Such emerging trends have, thus far, received limited attention in management research. Manuscripts that incorporate new concepts, tools, and/or theories – potentially including those from other disciplines or fields -- are welcome. However, these submissions should connect with, and extend, the existing management literature. These challenges typically call for new theories, concepts, and methods regardless of whether they assume a micro or macro perspective. Nevertheless, a new theory or method is not a requirement.

The grand challenge should be central to the paper rather than serve as the backdrop or framing to a manuscript that builds on established research. We do not expect authors to solve grand challenges – rather we expect them to offer first steps toward better understanding and addressing such issues from the perspective of management scholarship, and to open up new areas of study. Inherent in addressing questions related to grand challenges, scholars may focus on important outcomes (e.g. equity, social good, physical and socio-emotional well-being, employment, productivity, wealth creation). We anticipate that grand challenge questions can be identified and resolved within and across multiple levels of analysis including societies, communities, institutions, organizations, teams, and individuals. We encourage submissions that

use innovative approaches to addressing the problems, including multidisciplinary lenses, multiple theoretical lenses, and novel methodologies and data sources.

**Submitted papers will be handled by the current editorial team.** Given the radical nature of this call, we will be reviewing these papers with an open mind to new approaches, especially those that push the boundaries in addressing critical problems.

#### TIMELINE AND SUBMISSION

Submissions are due between **May 15 and July 15, 2015**. Contributors should follow the directions for manuscript submission described in "Information for Contributors" in the front of each issue of AMJ and on AMJ's Contributor Information Page. For queries about submission, contact AMJ's managing editor, Michael Malgrande, at [mmalgrande@aom.org](mailto:mmalgrande@aom.org).

#### References

- Colquitt, J. A., & George, G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ: Topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54: 432-435.
- George, G., Haas, M. R., & Pentland, A. 2014. Big data and management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57: 321-325.
- Howard-Grenville, J., Buckle, S. J., Hoskins, B. J., & George, G. 2014. Climate change and management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57: 615-623.
- Kulik, C. T., Ryan, S., Harper, S., & George, G. 2014. Aging populations and management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(4): 929-936.
- U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy. 2014. *21<sup>st</sup> Century Grand Challenges*. The White House: US Government. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/grand-challenges> Accessed July 15, 2014.